

**The Politics of Style:
Ideology, Fashion, and Popular Culture
in Iran from 1965 to 1979**

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To Marjan and Baba Mammad,
and to Homa Katouzian

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
ABSTRACT.....	7
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	9
NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION	11
INTRODUCTION: TO STYLE A NATION	13
DRESSING FOR MODERNITY: A MATTER OF QAJAR TASTE, A MATTER OF PAHLAVI POLICY	14
NOT BY DECREE, BUT BY EXAMPLE: MODERNIZATION UNDER MOHAMMAD REZA PAHLAVI ...	22
NEW DESIRES AND SATISFACTIONS: MODERNITY, CONSUMERISM, AND MEDIA	27
DRESSING FOR “THE GREAT CIVILIZATION”: EURO-AMERICAN STYLE AS PAHLAVI STANDARD	32
THE RESEARCH: IDEOLOGY, MEDIA, AND STYLE.....	36
THE SOURCES: A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF MAGAZINES AND TELEVISION IN IRAN	43
THE SCOPE: A CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	47
A SOFT TOP-DOWN: STYLING THE NEW IRAN THROUGH PRINT CULTURE	
FROM 1965 TO 1969.....	53
INTRODUCTION: DRESSING FOR A REVOLUTION.....	53
IMAGINING THE IMAGE FOR THE WHITE REVOLUTION	55
ON DISPLAY: THE ROLE OF WOMAN IN THE WHITE REVOLUTION.....	58
USHERS OF IDEOLOGY: THE ROLE OF MAGAZINES AS SEMI-OFFICIAL MEDIA.....	60
THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF ADVERTISING	65
<i>ZAN-E RUZ</i> : STYLE IRANIAN-STYLE	67
<i>SHAHBANU</i> AS ARCHETYPE.....	69

FARANGI WOMEN AS MARKERS FOR APPRAISAL.....	74
THE POLITICS OF TASTE: IRANIAN CELEBRITY AS NON-ENTITY	79
THE TEEN PRINCESS: A TASTEFUL CELEBRITY	83
JAVANAN: OPEN NEGOTIATIONS, CLOSED PARAMETERS.....	93
RIVALRY NOT IMITATION: REDEFINING THE <i>FARANGI MO'ĀB</i>	94
JUST AS BRIGHT: REALIGNING THE IRANIAN STAR	103
A FORCED COMPROMISE: THE CASE OF THE MINISKIRT	110
THE NEW ORDER OF THE 1970S: CONSUMERISM, STANDARDIZATION, ALIENATION.....	123
INTRODUCTION: THE ARRIVAL OF THE GREAT CIVILIZATION	123
THE FOREIGN ALLURE: FASHIONABILITY AS WESTERNISM	126
DEMAND AND IDEOLOGY, HAND-IN-HAND: THE MODERN BOUTIQUE	131
NOVEL SPACES, NOVEL ACTIVITIES: FASHION AS RECREATION	135
BODY MANAGEMENT AND MODERNITY: THE EURO-AMERICAN WOMAN AS PROTOTYPE	138
FAULTS IN OUR TRADITIONS: THE SLENDER AND THE FLESH-POLLUTED.....	141
WHO TO BE: OMMOL OR EMRUZI?.....	149
A HAIR TO DYE FOR, A NOSE TO RECLAIM	153
THE EURO-AMERICAN STANDARD, REALIZED.....	155
THE SHOCK OF THE NEW: THE URBAN ALIEN, THE RUSTIC, AND THE DEVOUT.....	157
MARKERS OF DIFFERENCE: DISCRIMINATION BY DRESS.....	164
ETHNIC DRESS, (UN)WILLINGLY FORSAKEN	170
SKIRTED SALAD DAYS: THE SCHOOL UNIFORM	173
LIFE ALONG THE MARGINS: UPSHOTS OF URBAN OSTRACIZATION	182

THE IDEOLOGY SHALL BE TELEVISED: A NEW MEDIUM, A WIDER REACH.. 189

INTRODUCTION: THE ADVENT OF TELEVISION.....	189
THE CHOSEN MEDIUM: TELEVISION AS THE CARRIER OF IDEOLOGY	190
TELEVISION OF IRAN: A COMMERCIAL NETWORK, UNALTERED.....	194
NATIONAL IRANIAN TELEVISION: CULTIVATION FROM THE LIVING ROOM.....	197
TELEVISUAL DETERMINISM: THE LERNER DOCTRINE.....	209
A GALLERY OF (STEREO)TYPES: THE CASE OF QAMAR KHĀNOM.....	213
SAMAD AS THE HOLY FOOL: THE RUSTIC AS COMEDIC FOIL.....	224
THE WORKING CLASS HERO: MORĀD BARQI AND THE VIRTUES IN UPWARD MOBILITY	233
THE TRAPPINGS OF GENRE: DRAMA VIS-À-VIS COMEDY ON NITV	239
THE GENERATIONAL PULPIT: TALKH-O SHIRIN AS TEMPLATE TO THE MODERN COMPORIMENT	242
AN EQUAL PLAYING FIELD: TALĀQ AND BALANCED REPRESENTATION.....	248
BUYING INTO MODERNITY: ADVERTISEMENT IN THE AGE OF TELEVISION	256
RESISTANCE FROM BELOW: TELEVISION CONSTRUED AS CULTURAL INVASION.....	263
THE TURN: A FALL OF IDOLS.....	274
INTRODUCTION: REVERSAL OF FORTUNES	274
FIT TO VIEW: THE NATIONALIZATION OF THE IRANIAN STAR.....	277
STARS AND STYLES: THE EURO-AMERICAN MADE IRANIAN	282
ANTI-STAR, ANTI-FASHION: THE CASE OF RAMESH.....	291
UNDRESSING THE NORMATIVE: THE CASE OF FERAYDOUN FARROKHZAD	299
POP-PROP: THE STAR AND PAHLAVI PROPAGANDA	308
FAULTS IN OUR STARS: THE MODERN WOMAN AS A PAINTED DOLL	311

CLASSICIDE/FILICIDE: REAPPROPRIATING THE RESISTANCE	324
DISTINCTION: IRANIAN HANDICRAFTS AS THE PAHLAVI ALTERNATIVE	334
DESPERATION: IRANIAN HANDICRAFTS AS THE PUBLIC ALTERNATIVE	342
SMALL MEDIA, SEASONED STYLES: A WHOLESALE REJECTION	348
BIG MEDIA, REFASHIONED: IDEOLOGY’S RHYMING REVERSALS.....	352
CONCLUSION: THE TIDES THAT TURN.....	363
BIBLIOGRAPHY	370
ENGLISH SOURCES	370
PERSIAN SECONDARY SOURCES.....	389
PERSIAN PRIMARY SOURCES.....	392

Abstract

This thesis examines the intersection of ideology, popular culture, and style in Iran from 1965 to 1979. This period saw a drastic shift in Iranian beauty standards, with prevalent aesthetic standards inching closer to Euro-American markers of beauty as opposed to indigenous beauty standards already entrenched within the culture. This aesthetic shift also happened to be closely bound to the ideology purveyed by the White Revolution, which sought to modernize Iran by way of westernization. Though not as pronounced as the dress reforms decreed by Reza Shah Pahlavi, the modernizing efforts undertaken by Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi also happened to constitute its own distinctive approach to dress reform. No longer contingent on top-down policy, styles compliant with Euro-American beauty markers were not necessarily decreed at this time, so much as they were encouraged and standardized by media that were heavily regulated by the Pahlavi state. These media often echoed the Pahlavi credo to “transform the culture whole,” and as such, endeavored, in their own distinctive ways, to promote Euro-American beauty culture as the modern Iranian standard.

As this thesis shall investigate by ways of its examination of highly circulated magazines like *Zan-e Ruz*, *Tamasha*, and *Javanan* as well as National Iranian Television, this period saw the state utilize its official and semi-official media in encouraging the modernization of Iranians in dress and conduct. Both popular magazines and Iran’s nationalized television network were taken up by the state as means through which to modernize the contemporary Iranian, instructing them on the appropriate dress and behavior befitting “the Great Civilization.” Ethnic dress and religious dress were likewise discouraged in favor of sartorial items more appropriate to the state’s vision of a modern Iran. The concomitant proliferation of an urban consumer culture also happened to bolster the standardization of Euro-American styles during this period, soon giving way to the

popularization of plastic surgery and body management regimens among the urban classes, which, in turn, further widened the gap between the westernized urban classes and segments recalcitrant toward such methods of modernization.

With the socio-economic gap widening evermore, these conspicuous changes managed to alienate a significantly large portion of the population ill at ease with the state's modernizing efforts. As informed by the oppositional discourses of critics and dissidents like Jalal Al-e Ahmad, Ali Shariati, and Ayatollah Khomeini, the Pahlavi state's modernizing efforts were soon met with more vociferous opposition. These oppositional discourses further pointed to the aesthetic shifts of the era, dubbing them as illustrations of *gharbzadegi* (weststruckness), and likening these acts of westernization to an ailment or disease having befallen Iran. In line with this, by investigating both the top-down modernization efforts of the state as well as the bottom-up reactions to this endeavor, this thesis will ultimately provide an extensive examination of the politics of style pervasive in 1960s and 1970s Iran.

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Note on Transliteration

The transliteration for this thesis has been done in accordance with the Association for Iranian Studies (AIS)'s recommended scheme. I have copied it below as a guide.

Consonants:

ب	b	ج	j	د	d	س	s	ع	'	ل	l
پ	p	چ	ch	ذ	z	ش	sh	غ	gh	م	m
ت	t	ح	h	ر	r	ص	s	ف	f	ن	n
ث	s	خ	kh	ز	z	ض	z	ق	q	و	v
				ژ	zh	ط	t	ک	k	ه	h
						ظ	z	گ	g	ی	y
										ء	'

Vowels and diphthongs:

a (<i>dast</i>) دست	ā (<i>kār</i>) کار	ay (<i>hay</i>) حی	āy (<i>āy</i>) آی
e (<i>gereft</i>) گرفت	i (<i>did</i>) دید	ey (<i>pey</i>) پی	ow (<i>rowshan</i>) روشن
o (<i>shod</i>) شد	u (<i>bud</i>) بود	uy (<i>guy</i>) گوی	oy (<i>khoy</i>) خوی

It bears noting the names that already have standardized spellings in the English language – such as Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Gogoosh, Parviz Sayyad, Parviz Kardan, Ramesh, Fereydoun Farrokhzad – have not been transliterated in compliance with the abovementioned scheme.

Publication names like *Ettelaat*, *Keyhan*, *Javanan*, *Tamasha*, and *Banovan* have likewise been spared transliteration according to their own, official Romanized forms.

Introduction: To Style a Nation

Style is not just a matter of mere appearance. Nor is it so simple a matter as dressing or behaving in a particular way. Though style unquestionably comprises dress, behavior, and appearance, it also happens to signify more than just the sum of its parts. Imbued in style are “meanings and values” that “are produced and exchanged” within a given society.¹ Much in the same way as any other media, style happens to be a communicative device, able to plainly express the values and norms of an individual or a community. It constitutes, as Malcom Barnard argues, “parts of the process in which social groups establish, sustain and reproduce positions of power, relations of dominance, and subservience.” As such, style is also profoundly “ideological.”²

In fact, the history of style can attest to the many ways in which dress, behavior, and appearance have been “put to the service of political power.” Not only can style be implemented by the upper classes as a means to distinguish themselves from their subordinates, but it could just as well be dictated by powerful states as a way through which to achieve “legitimation”³ for a distinctive ideology. So too can the politics of style come into play in delegitimizing subcultures inharmonious to the “official culture.”⁴ A subculture might also adopt particular styles so as to visually express resistance to a concomitant dominant culture. As we shall see in this thesis, such ideological applications of style were likewise conspicuous in Iran’s project of nation-building throughout the twentieth century.

The focus of this thesis is on the manners in which an ideology founded on modernity happened to influence style in late Pahlavi Iran. The content under examination in this thesis will

¹ Malcolm Barnard, *Fashion as Communication*, 2 edition (London: Routledge, 2002), 45.

² *Ibid.*, 40.

³ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁴ Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema, Volume 2: The Industrializing Years, 1941–1978* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2011), 118.

be bookended by two distinctive revolutions: the Pahlavi state's self-styled White Revolution of 1963 and the Iranian Revolution of 1979. I will argue that styling the modern Iranian in accordance with tastes befitting the state's principally modernist ideology remained a significant focal point of the second Pahlavi state's project of nation-building. In so doing, I will shed light on ways in which the Pahlavi state, together with its official media, happened to espouse a distinctly Euro-American sartorial standard in its envisagement of the modern Iran.

As I will show, however, this was not merely a top-down story. I will also explore how subcultures opposing the Pahlavi state's overarching modernization project responded to the sartorial standards promoted by the state and media. Additionally, I will examine how these resistance discourses were appropriated by the elite to further their own modernist goals. In doing so, this thesis aims to reveal the inherent contradictions between the objectives of the modernist elites of that time and the resistance from below. Primarily, I intend to provide a comprehensive examination of the ways in which style, ideology, and popular media remained intertwined during the period under review, managing to foment cultural contradictions so untenable that all finally culminated in revolution.

Dressing for Modernity: A Matter of Qajar Taste, A Matter of Pahlavi Policy

In the case of twentieth century Iran, the foremost instance of styling the nation in accordance with an all-encompassing ideology based upon an endeavor to modernize the country came in the form of the dress reforms instigated by Reza Pahlavi upon the establishment of the Pahlavi Dynasty in 1925. Under Reza Shah, the pursuit of a modernized Iran in line with European ideas stood among the state's principal objectives. Spurred largely by the travels of reformist Iranians to Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as well as a "frequently mentioned sense of

inferiority and backwardness” vis-à-vis the western world,⁵ the “modern culture” toward which early Pahlavi Iran aspired primarily comprised “the adoption of western modernity.”⁶ During this period, as Hannah Welslau notes, the term “modern” became “almost interchangeable for western.”⁷ Moreover, this period saw the state slowly expand its grip over the country’s cultural and public life, as it began issuing multitudinous regulations under the belief that “if people would not act according to their precisely formulated instructions, the initiated modernization would fail and possibly even bring harm to the society – or at least to Iran’s image as a progressive nation.”⁸

Reza Shah’s modernization project, therefore, encompassed “rapid, state-guided European-style development of industry, infrastructure, administration, and the military from above.”⁹ As Homa Katouzian notes, such modernization projects happened to fall under the definition of “pseudo-modernism,” as opposed to any form of bottom-up and steady-paced modernization continuous with indigenous traditions.¹⁰ For Katouzian, the aptly-named “pseudo-modernism” referred to manners in which the Pahlavi state often sought to modernize Iran by imposing the emulations of certain aspects of western societies from the top-down – such as rapid industrialization, urbanization, and secularization – without necessarily allowing for bottom-up social and political transformation. These endeavors, according to Katouzian, amounted to “a superficial version of this European modernism” without any “real understanding of European ideas, values, and techniques.”¹¹

⁵ Bianca Devos and Christoph Werner, “Introduction,” in *Culture and Cultural Politics under Reza Shah: The Pahlavi State, New Bourgeoisie and the Creation of a Modern Society in Iran*, Iranian Studies 18 (London ; New York: Routledge, 2014), 5.

⁶ Ibid., 4.

⁷ Hannah Welslau, “Buying Modernization. Western NGOs and Gender Politics in Pahlavi Iran,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, January 3, 2023, 2.

⁸ Devos and Werner, “Introduction,” in *Culture and Cultural Politics under Reza Shah*, 7.

⁹ Ghoncheh Tazmini, “‘To Be or Not to Be’ (like the West): Modernisation in Russia and Iran,” *Third World Quarterly* 39, no. 10 (October 3, 2018): 2004.

¹⁰ Homa Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1981). 216.

¹¹ Ibid. 103

In line with such top-down developments, modernization under Reza Shah happened to also encompass what one author termed “sartorial social engineering.”¹² In the words of another scholar, Ghoncheh Tazmini, these were “sartorial policies mimicking the West [that] suggested an unambiguously Western orientation.”¹³ The first of such sartorial regulations came about in 1927, when Reza Shah enacted into law the replacement of indigenous headdresses for men in favor of a front-brimmed hat similar to the French Cappie, then described as the Pahlavi hat. Reza Shah, together with his associates, had made this decree on account of their belief “that these headdresses were all representative of Iranian backwardness.”¹⁴ Considering that these headdresses, ranging from the religious *amāmeḥ* to the common *dastār* to the aristocratic, sheepskin *kolāh* were not only meant to signify the religion of its wearer, but also his social standing within his community, this decree also signalled that the state’s modernization program intended to pivot entirely from Iranian traditions, rendering all previous customs moot in its wake.¹⁵ That the stipulated “Pahlavi hat” comprised a visor that obstructed its wearer from “touching the ground in prayer” further symbolized the lack of concern shown by the Pahlavi state toward entrenched customs, especially with respect to the traditions of its largely religious citizenry.¹⁶

The emulation of western norms in dress had not just materialized spontaneously at the onset of Reza Shah’s rule. In fact, Afsaneh Najmabadi shows that such endeavors to “[dress] up for modernity” were already conspicuous in late nineteenth century Iran, at least among the secular modernist segments of the Iranian population. Najmabadi’s historical account establishes the direct associations made by the nineteenth century’s Iranian modernists with respect to achieving

¹² Houchang E. Chehabi, “Staging the Emperor’s New Clothes: Dress Codes and Nation-Building under Reza Shah,” *Iranian Studies* 26, no. 3–4 (1993): 222.

¹³ Tazmini, *To Be or Not to Be*, 2004.

¹⁴ Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 126.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Chehabi, “Emperor’s New Clothes,” 212.

modernity by looking European.¹⁷ For these Iranian modernists, “to become modern required one's modernity be legible for the already modern,” in particular, the Europeans.¹⁸ As a result, they sought to transform their appearances by minimizing the “visual marker of difference” between Europeans and Iranians.¹⁹ Furthermore, the modernists’ aspirations concerning sartorial westernization were largely envisioned “through undressing women,”²⁰ as well as altering “the size and shape of... beards, hair, hats, and other kinds of attire” for men.²¹ Style and appearance thus came to play a prominent role in these modernistic pursuits.

However, as Najmabadi emphasizes, this push for modern sartorial standards in nineteenth-century Iran still remained exclusive to the secular, non-religious members of the elite. Reformist “Islam-Iranian modern”²² writers such as Abd ol-Raḥīm Tālibov, for instance, opposed the idea of Iranians “looking like a European,” believing that such a transformation would imply “looking like a non-Muslim other.”²³ According to critics like Tālibov, Iranians showing partiality to western mores as a means through which to achieve modernity “absorbed only European mannerisms, fashion, and some half-baked knowledge of language and landscape.”²⁴

Consequently, it was also during this era that the cultural critics of the time began employing the term “*farangi mo’āb*”²⁵ (westernized) to identify those who had begun to gravitate “toward Europe.”²⁶ While it had originally been a “neutral and positive” term, the phrase “*farangi mo’āb*”

¹⁷ Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 137.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, 134.

²³ *Ibid.*, 138.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 139.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 138.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

eventually became “ambiguous, ambivalent, and completely negative.”²⁷ This term came to distinguish figures of “mimicry,”²⁸ who boasted “superficiality and excess.”²⁹ The so-called *farangi mo’āb* were, in other words, considered to be only superficially modern – no more than overzealous mimics of another culture. As Najmabadi also demonstrates, even the satirical press of the time took aim at these westernized Iranians, depicting this concoction of the *farangi mo’āb* as characters whose “superficial excess” came through “a series of commodities, such as matches, boots, his European-style clothes, his vest-pocket watch, his affected reading glasses, his walking stick or umbrella, his gloves, his bow tie, his pipe, his use of perfume.”³⁰

As one might gather, therefore, the popular understanding of the *farangi mo’āb* was marked especially by their style and forms of dress. Such styles happened to also be perceived as a reflection of the morals, politics, and ideals of those that had come to take them up. As such, some critics went so far as to claim that the *farangi mo’āb* posed a threat to “the moral order of the country.”³¹ No doubt, such criticisms later influenced the polemics of Jalal Al-e Ahmad and Ali Shariati during the mid-twentieth century as well. Both theorists, as we will explore in this thesis, also associated the Western styles – and lifestyles – promoted by the Pahlavi state with some form of ailment or disease. All the same, it is also worth noting that despite such polemics reading like nativist perspectives on Iranian tradition and modernity at first glance, further engagement with these texts evince that the underlying anxieties entrenched within these anti-modern critiques were, in fact, produced as justifiable responses to forced forms of modernization, especially those discontinuous with Iranian traditions.

²⁷ Ibid., 139.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

The emphasis on fashion and dress in these cultural critiques were often used as metaphors for a much larger anxiety - this anxiety being the enforcement of modernistic methods in a largely traditional society. These can best be observed in early twentieth-century cartoons from the satirical newspaper, *Tanbih (Alert)*, which, as Najmabadi remarks, “showed two ‘old-fashioned’ street men, one advising the other to change his outfit and pick up a few French words if he wants to get a job in the new administration.”³² Another, in *Gol-e Zard (The Yellow Flower)*, depicted “the conditions of the ordinary working people of Iran, in contrast with the... site of the Iranian parliament... with well-dressed folks in bow ties milling about.”³³ Consequently, the anxiety over the *farangi mo’āb*, together with their styles of dress, stood for general fears of a new order hastily supplanting what was deemed traditional so as to catch up with Europe and modernize. By way of example, it would also be appropriate to point to Qajar court official E’temad ol-Saltaneh’s observations regarding those accompanying Naser al-Din Shah to Europe in November 1875, wherein he remarked that while many of them have taken up European styles, “their inner core is the same old iron.”³⁴

As happenstance would have it, these fears manifested into reality when Reza Pahlavi took the throne in 1925, soon enacting a series of extensive, state-mandated dress reforms that would politicize style outright.³⁵ It was during Reza Shah’s rule that this mode of modernization, rooted as it was in styling the Iranian nation in a manner discontinuous with indigenous traditions, rendered style into a matter of policy as opposed to mere taste. The categorical politicization of style as a top-down policy was hammered further with a 1928 law stipulating an official uniform for all male members of society. This uniform constituted “a Pahlavi hat and a European suit.” All

³² Ibid., 146.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 278.

³⁵ Homa Katouzian, *Political Economy*, 101.

“other forms of dress” were henceforth also prohibited.³⁶ Later, in 1935, an order went out that the new hat must be replaced by the European bowler hat. Any headdress other than European hats were deemed inappropriate dress, inharmonious as they purportedly were to the state’s intended modernization. After this decree incited opposition, a peaceful sit-in protest was organized in Mashhad, only for the protesters to be gunned down by the Shah’s order. When the unveiling of women was decreed in 1936, authorities throughout the country were swiftly instructed to “prevent veiled women from entering shops, cinemas, public bath houses, or riding in horse-drawn carriages and cars.”³⁷ To add insult to injury, only prostitutes were permitted to keep their veils.³⁸ Once again, the symbolic significance of style was made evident by these actions. By disallowing anyone other than prostitutes to keep their veils, the state thus rendered the veil into a social sign of vice rather than piety. All the while, European clothing for both men and women were espoused and celebrated as symbols of aspirational modernity. Indeed, as Houchang Chehabi notes, modernization under Reza Shah’s rule seemed to have been “literally staged, with directors who had not fully understood the play, and actors who had not volunteered for their parts.”³⁹

As Camron Michael Amin further expounds, the reconfiguration of the female body was central to the discourse of modernization at the time. It was the female body that “needed to be unveiled so that the regime could display and celebrate the progress of women in Iran.” More importantly, the progress exhibited through the unveiling of the female body was intended to be seen as progress that the state had, in fact, initiated, co-opted, and controlled.⁴⁰ As such, even the

³⁶ Chehabi, “Emperor’s New Clothes,” 214.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 219.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 229.

⁴⁰ Camron Michael Amin, *The Making of the Modern Iranian Woman: Gender, State Policy, and Popular Culture, 1865-1946* (University Press of Florida, 2002), 80.

changes made to male attire were expressly directed vis-à-vis “the hope that women would gradually abandon the veil so as not to be ‘incongruous’ with the appearance of their men.”⁴¹

Not long after, the period’s fledgling press also became involved with the promotion of the westernized women as the harbinger of modernity to Iran. As Bianca Devos and Christoph Werner remark, “the aspect of entertainment” played “a crucial role in popularizing modern culture and was tightly connected to the spread of new forms and pastime activities and technical innovations.”⁴² Magazines like the *Ālam-e Nesvan* (Women’s World) and the Nazi-funded *Iran-e Bāstān* (Ancient Iran), for instance, sought to demonstrate to readers what both they and the state “meant by progress.”⁴³ They did so by presenting “numerous examples of vigorous, active European women including a picture of a German woman parachutist and a member of a Nazi motorbike club for women,” thus advocating “only European, and primarily German” examples of women as the part of “modern European culture” worthy of emulation.⁴⁴ Soon, glamorous images of starlets from the European film industry as well as Hollywood “also penetrated the Iranian periodical press,”⁴⁵ intended to conflate “the Euro-American standards of beauty” with the “ideal modern Iranian woman.”⁴⁶

Since much of this endeavor to westernize the country rested on the modernists’ ambitions to undress previously veiled female bodies, Amin further emphasizes that the manners through which modernization became equated with western style – particularly for women – during Reza Shah’s rule “came to define the image of the modern Iranian woman in the 1930s and the ruthlessness of the regime’s modernizing policies.”⁴⁷ What Reza Shah’s state had deemed “the

⁴¹ Ibid., 86.

⁴² Devos and Werner, “Introduction,” in *Culture and Cultural Politics under Reza Shah*, 5.

⁴³ Amin, *Making of the Modern Iranian Woman*, 171.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 208.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 212.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 248.

Woman's Awakening," therefore, came to permanently transform not only "the culture in which children [were] educated" but also the "culture that [produced] news and entertainment on a mass scale" thereafter.⁴⁸ Modernity became tied to the image of the Euro-Americanized Iranian woman, and progress was equally defined as a state's initiative to co-opt and control a nation's image of modernity.

All the same, the aforementioned examples during Reza Shah's rule were only among the earliest instances in which style was utilized to promote a state's modernist ideology in twentieth-century Iran. Although the strict sartorial measures implemented by the elder Pahlavi were quietly abandoned after his abdication in 1941, the Pahlavi project to modernize Iran according to European norms persisted during the reign of his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. While no longer enforced through top-down policies, the notion of a modern Iran remained closely associated with the image of its seemingly Euro-Americanized population, with the press and modern media playing a leading role in disseminating this perception. However, equally significant in this new era of Euro-American styles was the emergence of a new international ally for Iran, along with the principles by which this ally imagined modernization could be achieved in developing countries like Iran.

Not by Decree, but by Example: Modernization Under Mohammad Reza Pahlavi

While Reza Shah's son and successor shared similar intentions to modernize Iran along Western lines, his reign also coincided with the strengthening of ties between his country and the United States. This development facilitated a pathway for more expedited and faster-paced modernization during this era. The alliance with the United States was particularly forged after the CIA-backed coup d'état in 1953, which removed Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq from power. The coup,

⁴⁸ Ibid., 250.

being a notable development in the early days of the Cold War, thus paved the way for the United States to commence a period of closer ties with Iran as part of its geopolitical strategy to contain the Soviet Union.

Underpinning this geopolitical strategy was a cultural capitalism framework, shaped by the concept of “modernization theory.” According to this theory, economic growth, consumerism, and the westernization of institutions and cultures were perceived to comprise key elements in transforming developing countries into modern societies. The theory posited that adopting Western technologies and infrastructures was crucial for achieving modernity and, in turn, preventing these newly modernized societies from embracing communism associated with the Soviet Union.⁴⁹ Walt Rostow, an early proponent of modernization theory, posited that all societies followed a teleological path from traditional society through to a modern society, with a “take-off” stage bridging the two eras. He likewise believed that the United States “embodied the final stage, the age of high mass consumption, itself a rebuttal to Lenin’s pejorative description of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism.”⁵⁰

As such, Rostow considered it to be the United States’ imperative to furnish developing societies with the tools through which to modernize, and eventually, to achieve the high mass consumption emblematic of the United States. In line with this, proponents of modernization theory such as Rostow and Daniel Lerner theorized that “the process of development could be artificially accelerated through the judicious use of foreign aid, monetary assistance, and technical advice.”⁵¹ Rostow, who later became Deputy National Security Advisor under President John F.

⁴⁹ Richard Garlitz, “U.S. University Advisors and Education Modernization in Iran, 1951–1967,” in *Teaching America to the World and the World to America: Education and Foreign Relations since 1870*, ed. Richard Garlitz and Lisa Jarvinen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2012), 208.

⁵⁰ Ben Offiler, *US Foreign Policy and the Modernization of Iran* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 13.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 31-32.

Kennedy, went so far as to believe in the necessity of a National Institute of Modernization Studies that could, in turn, be tasked with “developing and teaching a common modernization doctrine and training US personnel ... in all aspects of the modernization process, including the complexities of countering Communist subversion and revolutionary insurgency (‘wars of national liberation’).”⁵² Modernization theorists, therefore, subscribed to the belief that modernization was, in itself, an ideology.⁵³ And, as an ideology, modernization theory “supposed that the world was converging from tradition into a single modernity,” thereby constructing an arbitrary binary between tradition and modernity.⁵⁴

As it happened, following the 1953 coup, the United States came to view Iran as “the most crucial Middle Eastern country for the US policy of containment” against the Soviet Union.⁵⁵ As Mark Lytle notes, the United States’ preoccupation with Iran came largely on account of its “desire for secure Middle Eastern oil reserves, the State Department’s efforts to incorporate Iran into a new conception of American security, the department’s long-term efforts to contain the Soviet Union, and the faith in American exceptionalism.”⁵⁶ As Welslau further remarks, “Iran was seen as a country expected to conform to the course of modernization and to lead other Middle Eastern countries to do the same.”⁵⁷ In consequence, Iran became a focal point for “the measures, methods, policies, principles, and objectives of the United States in its cultural Cold War.”⁵⁸ The most conspicuous among these objectives was the United States’ increasing efforts to “build relations, transfer technology, work regionally, and most importantly connect with the state” so as to

⁵² Roland Popp, “An Application of Modernization Theory during the Cold War? The Case of Pahlavi Iran,” *The International History Review* 30, no. 1 (March 2008): 89.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Mahdi Ganjavi, *Education and the Cultural Cold War in the Middle East: The Franklin Book Programs in Iran* (I.B. Tauris, 2023), 3.

⁵⁶ Offiler, *US Foreign Policy*, 18.

⁵⁷ Welslau, “Buying Modernization,” 3.

⁵⁸ Mahdi Ganjavi, *Education and the Cultural Cold War in the Middle East*, 13.

accelerate modernization in Iran, and in turn, to deter Soviet influence.⁵⁹ Thereafter, the two countries became closely allied within “a modern, far-reaching apparatus of production and distribution of bourgeois knowledge,” under which the United States would monetize and support certain “capitalist policies” intended “to foster industrialization in Iran.”⁶⁰

The cultural capitalism model pursued by the United States aimed to achieve several objectives in Iran, including fostering economic growth, promoting consumerism, and westernizing the country's culture and institutions. This approach was driven by the United States' strong belief in modernization theory, which influenced its support for various initiatives in Iran. One aspect of this support was evident in the establishment of modern educational institutions in Iran, which received assistance from the United States. Additionally, the Kennedy administration encouraged the Shah to enhance women's rights and implement land reforms in Iran, both aligning with the principles of modernization theory. Parallel to the American technical advisors sent to Iran so as to accelerate its modernity project were also the Iranian elites, technicians, and bureaucrats that likewise happened to subscribe to modernization theory. Occupying key positions in Mohammad Reza Shah's court, these individuals, echoing the Shah's own tenets, “embarked on a program of state-sponsored westernization based on the conviction that industrial competitiveness and cultural proximity with the West would clear the way for Iran's passage to modernity.”⁶¹ As such, those in positions of power within Pahlavi Iran steadfastly “pursued a development path fashioned in the West.”⁶² It should come as no surprise therefore that Mohammad Reza Shah's so-called White Revolution in 1963 also happened to be greatly informed by modernization theory, emanating as it did from the Shah's decision to “bow to US pressure”

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 134.

⁶¹ Tazmini, *To Be or Not to Be*, 2004.

⁶² Ibid., 2005.

(specifically, the aforementioned encouragements by the Kennedy administration), and announce the reforms that were to transform Iranian society.⁶³

Mohammad Reza Shah's period of rule, therefore, happened to be intrinsically linked to what scholars commonly refer to as Cold War cultural diplomacy, with Iran playing a central role in the United States' experiments with modernization theory.⁶⁴ As we shall see throughout this thesis, rather than modernize the country solely by way of top-down decrees like his father, Mohammad Reza Shah's rule happened to also see the state harness its media so as to encourage modernity by example. Even though modernization itself was initiated by top-down policies during Mohammad Reza Shah's rule, the styles and lifestyles ostensibly brought about by such modernization projects were no longer as strictly regulated or enforced as they had been during Reza Shah's rule. As we shall see throughout this thesis, they were to be codified into the culture instead, thus clearing the path for a more novel mode of coercion, which sought to make use of modernization theory's derivative binary of modern and traditional by pitting the two arbitrarily-defined cultures against one another, while markedly championing one culture's lifestyle over another.

That said, even this mode of coercion happened to fall under modernization theory's guiding tenets. As per modernization theorists like Daniel Lerner, the ideal method by which to carry out modernity in developing nations was perceived to occur by way of gradually guiding the populace towards modernity – and not by necessarily enforcing it. It was only by way of providing “clues as to what the better things of life might be,”⁶⁵ Lerner believed, that “new desires and new satisfactions” could be taught.⁶⁶ Only by way of example, Lerner believed, might antiquated

⁶³ Popp, “Modernization Theory,” 91.

⁶⁴ Ganjavi, *Education and the Cultural Cold War in the Middle East*, 13.

⁶⁵ Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (Macmillan Pub Co, 1958), 411.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 400.

traditionalists come to see the fault in their ways and embrace modernity's promise for “the better things of life” instead.⁶⁷ Needed was “a massive growth in imaginativeness about alternatives to their present lifeways,” according to Lerner, with media posited as the ideal tool through which such imaginativeness could be stirred.⁶⁸ As we shall also see throughout this thesis, media did, in fact, come to play a substantial role in encouraging the modern lifestyles advocated by the likes of Lerner.

New Desires and Satisfaction: Modernity, Consumerism, and Media

Thus, the period defined by an intensified socio-cultural exchange between the United States and Iran also witnessed the rise of a burgeoning consumer culture, emulating the patterns and norms prevalent in Western consumer societies. As A'zam Qā'edi-Sharafi remarks by way of illustration, 1960s Iran saw “considerable attention given to western cultures and civilizations, with mass media at the forefront of familiarizing people with the social currents of the West,”⁶⁹ and with “a large portion of the publications at the time devoted to describing the lifestyle habits, behavioral markers, and the dress styles of Europeans, and especially Americans.”⁷⁰

Since the consumer culture that emerged in Iran was arguably propelled by the modernization programs outlined above, they were, therefore, much informed by consumer cultures that had already manifested in the western world. As such, it is imperative to expound on what a consumer culture comprises, and indeed, how it is “joined at the hip” with modernity.⁷¹ As noted by Arthur Asa Berger, consumer cultures are those “in which there has been a great

⁶⁷ Ibid., 411.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 412

⁶⁹ Azam Qā'edi-Sharafi, *Bāztab-e tahavolāt-e farhangi dar tannavo' va kār kard-e pushāk dar sad sāl-e akhir-e Iran* (Ministry of Culture and High Education, 2000), 265.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 266.

⁷¹ Natan Sznaider, “Consumerism as a Civilizing Process: Israel and Judaism in the Second Age of Modernity,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 14, no. 2 (2000): 297.

expansion of commodity production, leading to societies full of consumer goods and services and places where these consumer goods and services can be purchased.”⁷² Within such a culture, “traditional values” give way to “the influence of the expanding market with its propaganda for commodities.”⁷³ Goods and services thus come to provide the consumer with new ways in which to present themselves or reinvent themselves in the social sphere. In consequence, both leisure and pleasure manifest as individual and social priorities, with images of “youth, beauty, luxury and opulence” becoming directly linked to “awakening long-suppressed desires,” working constantly to remind “the individual that he has room for self-improvement in all aspects of his life.”⁷⁴ In a manner no different from Pahlavi Iran, as Rebecca Arnold argues, the “dream of consumer goods” also happens to be “held out in many countries as a morale boosting vision of the future.”⁷⁵ This suggests that within a consumer society, acts of consumption are imbued with a “civilizing” tint.⁷⁶ By partaking in the buying and selling goods and services, individuals not only put on display the “ease and comfort”⁷⁷ provided by the new order, but they become involved in a process of constant reinvention, calling attention to their “agency” and the “pleasure” that it entails.⁷⁸

This also explains why fashion stands as a key visual marker to projects of modernity as well as the consumer culture espoused. Marked by “perpetual innovation, by the destruction of the old and the creation of the new,”⁷⁹ fashion becomes “essential to the world of modernity” as the “connective tissue of our cultural organism.”⁸⁰ Like modernity’s link to consumer culture, fashion

⁷² Arthur Asa Berger, *Ads, Fads, and Consumer Culture*, Sixth edition (Rowman & Littlefield, 2020), 35.

⁷³ Mike Featherstone, “The Body in Consumer Culture,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 1, no. 2 (September 1, 1982): 19.

⁷⁴ Featherstone, “The Body in Consumer Culture,” 19.

⁷⁵ Rebecca Arnold, *Fashion: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 79-80

⁷⁶ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis, Minn: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 7.

⁷⁷ Featherstone, “The Body in Consumer Culture,” 21.

⁷⁸ Appadurai, *Modernity At Large*, 7.

⁷⁹ Finkelstein, *The Art of Self Invention*, 206.

⁸⁰ Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams*, 12.

has been long associated with “the civilizing process,” where “civilization” was perceived as being incompatible with the “primitive” or “barbaric” traditions of humankind prior to “science, technology, or art.”⁸¹ Fashion, as per Herbert Blumer, served to “detach the grip of the past in a moving world,”⁸² while also derogating all that it left in its wake. Fashion symbolized freedom, because it encouraged individuals “to move in new directions,” detached “from the hold of the past.”⁸³ Terms such as “outmoded,” “old-fashioned,” “backward,” or “out-of-date,”⁸⁴ therefore not only implied that someone was simply not in fashion, but that they were exactly the “primitive” and “barbaric”⁸⁵ kinds of individuals with whom modernity wanted to do away.

Just as significant was the influence of media. Consumer culture in the western world was interwoven with the circulation of new sartorial practices by way of more advanced forms of visual media, namely “motion pictures, tabloid press, mass circulation magazines and radio extolling the leisure lifestyle.”⁸⁶ From the nineteenth century onward, visual media served as an essential tool in “publicizing new norms and standards of behavior.”⁸⁷ These media played a large role “in increasing knowledge of and attention” to any trend emerging within popular culture, “in some cases making changes in style appear more widespread than they actually were.”⁸⁸ In this manner, “day-to-day awareness of the current state of one’s appearance” became “sharpened by comparison” with “the idealized images of the human body” proliferated in visual media and advertising.⁸⁹ These images invited comparisons, and in turn, encouraged individuals to utilize

⁸¹ Ibid., 13.

⁸² Herbert Blumer, “Fashion: From Class Differentiation to Collective Selection,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 10, no. 3 (1969): 289.

⁸³ Ibid., 289.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 289.

⁸⁵ Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams*, 13.

⁸⁶ Betty Luther Hillman, *Dressing for the Culture Wars: Style and the Politics of Self-Presentation in the 1960s and 1970s* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), XVII.

⁸⁷ Featherstone, “The Body in Consumer Culture,” 19.

⁸⁸ Hillman, *Dressing for the Culture Wars*, XVII.

⁸⁹ Featherstone, “The Body in Consumer Culture,” 22.

their purchasing powers so as to narrow the gap between the real and the ideal. Media thus facilitated fashion's capacity to serve as a prism through which one's modernity could be gauged.

Spurred by consumer culture and fashion, this race toward newness also provoked "new bodily ideals."⁹⁰ By way of newer media, such new bodily ideals, all emanating "under the combined impact of the cosmetic, fashion and advertising industries, and Hollywood" came to influence the styles of the 1920s onward. Short skirts, rouge and lipstick, and rayon stockings came to replace the previously modish corsets and girdles to such a degree that J. B. Priestley noticed it in as remote a place as Lincolnshire, England. Priestley remarked: "Even twenty years ago, girls of this kind would have looked quite different even from the girls in the nearest large town; they would have had an unmistakable small town rustic air; but now they are almost indistinguishable from girls in a dozen different capitals."⁹¹ His reasoning: "For they all have the same models, from Hollywood."⁹²

Fashion is thus deeply linked with both modernity and consumer cultures. Media, in turn, strengthens this linkage. Marked as it is by "restlessness, an openness to new experience, and fascination with the new,"⁹³ fashion facilitates "detachment from a receding past"⁹⁴ – a putting to rest of a bygone era in the name of progress and civilization. It is thus "suited, par excellence, to the demands of life in such a moving world."⁹⁵ Yet, as noted by Grant McCracken, the ideology of modernity is not wittingly reproduced within these consumer rituals. Rather, meaning is simply "transferred between these locations" without an overarching ideology in mind.⁹⁶ While

⁹⁰ Ibid., 23.

⁹¹ J. B. Priestley, *English Journey* (New York, London, Harper & Brothers, 1934), 299.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Fred Davis, *Fashion, Culture, and Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 117

⁹⁴ Blumer, "Fashion," 290.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Grant McCracken, "Culture and Consumption: A Theoretical Account of the Structure and Movement of the Cultural Meaning of Consumer Goods," *Journal of Consumer Research* 13, no. 1 (1986): 80.

“advertising and the fashion system move meaning from the culturally constituted world to consumer goods,” in the same manner, “consumer rituals move meaning from the consumer good to the consumer.”⁹⁷ Neither consumerism nor fashion thus reproduces the ideology of modernity deliberately. As John Fiske notes, “producers and distributors” do not “intend to promote capitalist ideology with their product; they are not deliberate propagandists.”⁹⁸ Rather, it is the economic system itself within which they are functioning that presupposes “mass production and mass consumption,”⁹⁹ and thus reproduces ideology in commodities.

Like Fiske attests, a commodity is merely “ideology made material.”¹⁰⁰ For this reason, though consumption occurs within an ideology of modernity, it does not occur in abidance by it. The ways in which commodities are consumed – be they clothing or otherwise – are likewise subjective; not necessarily dictated by some indistinct, hegemonic order. Fashion, for instance, is not simply “a channeled movement laid down by prestigious figures.”¹⁰¹ Rather the primary goal of fashion is to simply “be in fashion.”¹⁰² As Blumer makes note, the fashion mechanism occurs “in response to a wish to be in fashion, to be abreast of what has good standing, to express new tastes which are emerging in a changing world.”¹⁰³ Be it cinema, advertising, or prestige afforded to particular items of clothing by fashion leaders – none of these should be viewed as concerted efforts to promote a particular ideology. Simply, all vectors involved function within a particular “economic system,” where “every commodity reproduces the ideology of the system that produced it.”¹⁰⁴

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ John Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture*, Reprinted (London: Routledge, 2007), 14.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Blumer, “Fashion,” 281.

¹⁰² Ibid., 280.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 282.

¹⁰⁴ Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture*, 14.

All the same, the modern ideology that facilitates a consumer culture also presupposes the spending power of potential consumers, their leisure time, as well as their exposure to the “interconnected realms” of popular culture and fashion.¹⁰⁵ Any lack with respect to these prerequisites serves as an impediment to one’s ability to be in fashion, and thus, to engage with modernity. Moreover, since the popular culture that triggered the mass consumption of new fashions – and thus the appearance of modernity – was deeply rooted in Hollywood, fashionability was largely coupled with the star system as well. After all, after World War II, even the previously exclusive European couture houses joined with Hollywood, due to the film industry’s sheer might in promulgating new fashions to a wide audience. With its connections to Hollywood, western fashion houses, as well as the overarching ideology of modernity, consumer culture in the twentieth century was therefore deeply entrenched in Euro-American standards of beauty and consumption. Similarly entrenched in Euro-Americanism was the consumerism to which 1970s Iran also became heir.

Dressing for “the Great Civilization”: Euro-American Style as Pahlavi Standard

Just as consumerism, fashion, and visual media were all distinctly embedded in the Euro-American experience of modernity, the consumer culture promulgated within Iran in the 1970s was similarly Euro-American, with its goods, content, visual cues, and beauty standards remaining thoroughly entrenched within it as well. Though much pertaining to the growth of consumer culture during this period also had to do with the changing tastes of the populace on account of the industrialization that the country had begun experiencing these developments nonetheless happened to be complementary to the state’s modernity project as well, intent as it was on its concurrent endeavor to style the modern Iranian in accordance with Euro-American standards. As

¹⁰⁵ Breward, *Fashion*, 150.

it happened, consumerism – like Pahlavi modernization – was similarly uncongenial to any adherence to indigenous traditions; be it in dress or comportment. As also noted by Qā’edi-Sharafi, this move toward consumerism was not necessarily welcomed by all members of Iranian society. “Moving from the north to the south,” she relates, “the maintenance of both hair and facial hair seemed to slope downward like the city’s streets.”¹⁰⁶ While the northern, more westernized parts of the capital, Tehran, seemed to welcome these consumerist tendencies, the southern sectors of the city were less pleased.

It goes without saying that Iran, even in the 1970s, was a country whose vast majority – located in villages, townships, religious cities, as well as modernized cities such as Tehran – still abided by “Iranian national and religious traditions.”¹⁰⁷ Many were still illiterate, and their livelihoods were still very much “dependent upon agriculture”¹⁰⁸ and traditional “family mores and values.”¹⁰⁹ The sudden, mere decade-long shift “from the veil to jeans, from illiteracy to western-style education, from domestic secularization to early dating,” a shift that concurrently failed to provide alternative or “new sources of family cohesiveness,” worked to engender discontent, significantly undermining the state modernity project.¹¹⁰ Modernization, sometimes imposed on these locals through initiatives such as 1963’s land reform program, happened to ultimately generate a vast “cultural gap between the westernized middle class and the class of new migrants in major towns”¹¹¹ as well as those still residing in townships, now deprived of the traditional ways of life with which they were habituated. Bearing witness to the “conspicuous

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Hamid Mowlana, “Technology versus Tradition: Communication in the Iranian Revolution,” *Journal of Communication* 29, no. 3 (September 1, 1979): 107.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 108.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Fred Halliday, “The Iranian Revolution: Uneven Development and Religious Populism,” *Journal of International Affairs* 36, no. 2 (1982): 204.

consumption of the elite all around them,”¹¹² this other, larger, but less visible (in the media, especially) category of Iranian citizen was indeed shocked to the point of alienation; an occurrence that, as Hamid Mowlana notes, later “set the stage for an inevitable confrontation of the old and the new.”¹¹³

This alienation was further intensified by the newer media and newer modes of entertainment that also happened to espouse westernism as the ideal form of Iranian modernity. The period’s popular culture, enthused by glossy magazines, locally-produced films, television shows, and music programs not only continued to encourage these purportedly modern lifestyles, but also often pitted the modern against the non-modern, thereby constructing an arbitrary dichotomy between the *emruzi* (contemporary) Iranian and the *ommol* (old-fashioned) through which the Iranian consumer could gauge themselves vis-à-vis their increasingly industrialized society.¹¹⁴ If the *ommol* woman embodied a pious and chador-wearing Iranian, the *emruzi* was a fashionable young girl adorned in the latest vogues. In the same vein, if the *ommol* man was personified as plump, unshaven, and similarly pious, then the modern man stood in contrast to him as dressed in a suit and tie, and freshly shaved.

This dichotomy was closely linked to the derivative modernist/traditionalist discourse already prevalent in the period, and like that discourse, modern society was presented as being no place for the *ommol*. Merely presented as markers by which the modern Iranian consumer might gauge themselves against, the media often utilized the *ommol* stereotype so as to imply the “backward” traditions of the Iranians unfit for the Great Civilization. As such, those constituting

¹¹² Nikki R. Keddie and Yann Richard, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 162.

¹¹³ Mowlana, “Technology versus Tradition,” 108.

¹¹⁴ Majid Tehranian, “Communication and Revolution in Iran: The Passing of a Paradigm,” *Iranian Studies* 13, no. 1/4 (1980):16.

such characterizations of the *ommal* – the religious, the traditional, or simply those noncompliant with the modernity project at large – became the subjects of regular derision for the modern media. This was not just limited to magazine pages, but came to translate into the era’s television programming as well, with characters representative of such classes often serving parodic purposes.

The derision accorded to these segments within the media happened to also translate into the urban environment as well. These locales became increasingly fraught with discrimination, consequently prompting ostracization cast onto the purportedly non-modern elements of society. Owing largely to discriminatory practices accorded onto these segments – such as the refusal of entry to veiled women in modern establishments or the regular harassment of rural migrants on account of their different dress and comportments – these segments of the society were recurrently barred from even interacting with these modern milieus. Their dress, their comportment, as well as their overall appearance were all regarded as being incompatible with the vision for a modern Iran. Such acts of discrimination further fed into the belief that the modern Iran seemed only befitting of a certain kind of Iranian: one adorned with the Euro-American markers of beauty presented as the prerequisite for modernity. This brought resentments to a simmer, widening the gap between these two arbitrary characterizations of society evermore.

In consequence, on the march toward the second Pahlavi state’s self-proclaimed “Great Civilization,”¹¹⁵ a reconfigured politics of style came to pervade the social climate. While style was no longer a matter of legality as it had become during Reza Shah’s rule, it nonetheless remained the prime communicator of respectability, visibility, and social mobility under

¹¹⁵ Borzou Faramarzi, *Towards the Great Civilization* (Tehran: Ministry of Information, 1974), 1.

Mohammad Reza Shah. One mode of sartorial presentation clearly happened to be favored over others: namely, modern Euro-American styles over those indigenous to the country's traditions.

The Research: Ideology, Media, and Style

This research is principally focused on the intersection of the Pahlavi's state's modernist ideology, its concomitant popular media, and the standardization of Euro-Americanized styles from 1965 to 1979, spanning the aftermath of the Pahlavi state's self-styled White Revolution through to the Iranian Revolution. The White Revolution, arguably spurred by the United States' increasing geopolitical interest in Iran, marked a significant turning point for the Pahlavi state's modernization program, bringing forth reforms such as female suffrage, land reform, and accelerated industrialization. These reforms, instigated by an initiative that sought to further modernize the country, happened to also impact the material culture of the period, as both sartorial tastes and normative expectations with respect to body management also began to inch closer to what was considered western, and thus, modern. As such, an extensive analysis vis-à-vis the transformation of material culture in the era – and, in the case of this thesis, the concomitant transformations in style – can provide us with great insight concerning the shifting aesthetic standards to which the late Pahlavi era bore witness.

The period that immediately followed the White Revolution was characterized by a surge in consumer culture, a highly circulated print media, a fledgling and soon-to-be-nationalized televisual media, and a national star system that made its mark on popular culture. Both media and popular media content were subject to strict state oversight, making the examination of the cultural material disseminated during this period crucial for understanding the ways in which the dominant culture aimed to shape public opinion and promote the modernization paradigm shared by the state. Specifically, this thesis will examine the cultural material related to the increasing Euro-

Americanization of sartorial style in these media, as well as the implications inherent to these shifts. In so doing, it shall provide further insight into the ways in which the strictly-regulated media of the time echoed the state's modernization project, endeavoring to shape public opinion and promote social change in line with what the concomitant dominant culture viewed as modernization. I submit that although a-style-at-the-service-of-ideology was not necessarily decreed during this period, an *ideological style* was nonetheless in play. This was a hegemonic style marked by Euro-American beauty standards, which stood in stark contrast with – and in opposition to – long-established aesthetic markers rooted in indigenous traditions.

The timespan of this thesis is so structured to intersect with the founding of the period's most highly-circulated magazines, *Zan-e Ruz* (the Woman of Today) and *Javanan* (the Youth), marking an appropriate starting point for this thesis's examination into popular culture following the White Revolution. Since modernization served as the foundation to many of the reforms the state was pursuing in line with the White Revolution, the mass media content provided by the magazines and the locally-produced television shows of the period shall demonstrate thoroughly the ways in which the media served to reflect this ideological pursuit. The primary research material for this dissertation involves conducting content analysis on these widely circulated magazines as well as the era's most popular television programs following the nationalization of Iranian television in 1969. These media sources serve as the contextual foundation for the examination of contemporary popular culture in this thesis. By analyzing the period's media alongside historical evidence of the concurrent socio-economic climate, this research will provide valuable context for understanding the intricate interplay between modernization, media, and style during the late Pahlavi era.

Indeed, as Ali Mirsepassi and Mehdi Faraji remark with respect to the popular media climate of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's Iran, the concomitant media, alongside the various state-run institutions of the country, "were involved in a vast propaganda campaign." This was an especially accurate depiction with respect to the manners in which the media at the time were "dedicated to showcasing the pervasiveness of the Pahlavi-era modernization experience." Just as the state "represented itself as a modern and modernizing monarchy," the media, in turn, served to reflect the "socio-economic achievements and modernization programs" of the state.¹¹⁶ Consequently, the Euro-American styles popularized through consumer culture in the Pahlavi era became a common feature in the media, both in print and later on screens.

Evincing the state's ideals with respect to how modern Iranians should or should not present themselves, these media were utilized to visualize and reinforce the sartorial standards of the purportedly modern Iran that the Pahlavi state sought to cultivate. As such, the Euro-American beauty markers that came to pervade the urban environment during this period owed as much to the Pahlavi state's embrace of modernization as an ideology – which in turn spurred on the consumer culture to which the 1970s bore witness – as they did to the state's semi-official media's espousal of these beauty markers as the most representative style for the Iranian entering modernity. With the media and popular culture often harnessed to echo the "ideological constructions" of the hegemony,¹¹⁷ much of this process of visualization and reinforcement came by means of value-ridden juxtapositions that pitted the modern Iranian man and woman – whose cultivation the state sought in line with its ideology – against the supposedly backward and undesirable traditional segments of society. In turn, these media helped reinforce "particular

¹¹⁶ Ali Mirsepassi and Mehdi Faraji, "De-Politicizing Westoxification: The Case of Bonyad Monthly," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 45, no. 3 (2018): 13.

¹¹⁷ Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2000), 21.

cultural practices that instruct [audiences] in how to present [themselves] to others.”¹¹⁸ In such a way, the official culture’s preferred style thus came to also stand as a metonym for the modernist ideology of the Pahlavi state, intent as it was not only on industrialization, development, and westernization, but also on the gradual dissipation of the customs, mores, and sartorial traditions it deemed unsuitable to its planned advances.

Even still, the official culture’s sartorial standards also happened to be frequently subject to resistance by those at odds with these new aesthetic markers. While negotiation with the hegemony was not readily achievable due to the authoritarian characteristics of the Pahlavi state, acts of resistance gradually became more and more pervasive. Throughout this thesis, I will not only demonstrate the ways in which the official culture’s Euro-American conception of style was reinforced within the state’s version of popular culture, but I will also assess the reception to said styles by those constituencies ill at ease with the Pahlavi state’s modernization program. By doing so, this research will highlight the disparities between the dominant culture's vision of a modern Iran and the actual realities of the country upon which such ideals were imposed.

By and large, this thesis is primarily a historical investigation of style and beauty culture during Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's reign, drawing heavily on the scholarly works of Annabelle Sreberny, Hamid Naficy, and Michael Camron Amin. Sreberny and Naficy's studies on Pahlavi era media, along with Amin's research on the emergence of Euro-American beauty cultures in the first Pahlavi period, inform the analysis in this thesis. The main focus is to explore how popular media disseminated Euro-American beauty culture to the wider Iranian public as part of the Pahlavi state's modernization project. While the sartorial modernization during Mohammad Reza Shah's rule was not imposed through top-down policies like in the first Pahlavi period, this thesis argues

¹¹⁸ Finkelstein, *The Art of Self Invention*, 2.

that Euro-Americanization of Iranian beauty culture still persisted, albeit codified within popular media according to hegemonic standards.

To analyze the promotion and negotiations of style within the realm of media and popular culture, this research employs Stuart Hall's theoretical framework of “decoding” prevalent texts and images.¹¹⁹ Hall suggests that content can be interpreted by way of three distinct methods. Either the “hegemonic” and “dominant message of an image or text,” is decoded by a reader as is, or a negotiated reading takes place where consumers act as “active meaning-makers and not merely passive recipients in the process of decoding images.”¹²⁰ Lastly, Hall hypothesizes an “oppositional reading” as well, whereby the content is read in opposition to the historical and political context in which it has been produced, and thus decoded in a “globally contrary way.”¹²¹ As such, I will be investigating the content under review by taking into account all three of these reading practices, with the acceptance that although most content is “caught up in dominant ideologies,” it is nonetheless subject to “different subjectivities, identities, and pleasures of audiences.”¹²² In consequence, I not only investigate the ideological messages echoed within the state-sanctioned popular cultures of these period, but also the manners in which they were received, opposed by, or accepted by the readership as well. With respect to this, the “Letters to the Editor” sections of the aforementioned magazines, alongside contemporary news articles and op-eds, as well as cultural critiques either written or orally communicated at the time by Islamic figures such as Ali Shariati or revolutionary personalities like Ruhollah Khomeini will provide me with the means to gauge these responses.

¹¹⁹ Stuart Hall, “Encoding/Decoding,” in *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79*, ed. Stuart Hall et al. (Routledge, 2003), 117–28.

¹²⁰ Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking*, 57.

¹²¹ Hall, “Encoding/Decoding,” 127.

¹²² Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking*, 58.

While previous scholarly works have extensively explored the evolving sartorial standards of Qajar Iran, such as Afsaneh Najmabadi's *Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards*, and early Pahlavi Iran, including Camron Michael Amin's *The Making of the Modern Iranian Woman: Gender, State Policy, and Popular Culture, 1865-1946*, there has been limited direct scholarly engagement with how Iran's popular media during Mohammad Reza Shah's era reflected societal sartorial standards and, how they, in turn, reinforced the state's hegemonic norms. One notable exception is Liora Hendelman-Baavur's 2019 monograph, *Creating the Modern Iranian Woman: Popular Culture Between Two Revolutions*, which examines how women's magazines like *Zan-e Ruz* facilitated the lifestyle and social status of the newly liberated Iranian women in the 1960s. However, I argue that Baavur's work may have a selective reliance on primary sources, presenting a somewhat sympathetic view of the role of popular magazines while overlooking the ideological associations of the popular press with the state as a whole. Moreover, Baavur's research primarily focuses on print media and does not delve into other prevalent forms of popular media during that time, such as the significantly more accessible television apparatus of the 1970s. Despite the extensive works of scholars like Hamid Naficy and Annabelle Sreberny on media history in Pahlavi Iran, there is a noticeable dearth of in-depth examination of the National Iranian Television (NITV) and its productions. Therefore, the research conducted in this thesis aims to address this gap in the study of Pahlavi Iran's popular culture, with the hope of inspiring further comprehensive works on Iran's national television system.

It is important to note that while this thesis introduces historical concepts such as Cold War cultural diplomacy and philosophical discourses related to theories of modernity, its primary focus is not to argue for or against the validity of these theoretical discourses. As with Mahdi Ganjavi's work on the Franklin Book Program in Iran under the auspices of the United States' Cold War

diplomacy in Iran, or Mehrzad Boroujerdi and Ali Mirsepassi's myriad works on the discourse of modernity vis-à-vis Iran, such discourses demand exhaustive examinations befitting their complexity. As such, they are not necessarily in the purview of the current project. Rather, I have introduced the above concepts solely in order to shed better light on the socio-political climate of the period under review. Be it the equation of modernity with westernism, or the Cold War's direct association with the modernization programs that were underway in Iran during the timespan under review, or modernization theory's arbitrarily generated binary between tradition and modernity in developing countries – these discourses, as borrowed from the scholarly works cited above, have only been broached so as to provide a clearer context through which to understand the manners in which the media standardized the Euro-American styles I wish to examine as ideal markers befitting for the modern Iranian.

Although the current thesis does not extensively explore the aforementioned discourses, I believe that the examination of the material culture disseminated during the Pahlavi era is nonetheless crucial for understanding the manners in which media, popular culture, and style happened to be bound together under the Pahlavi state's modernization paradigm. As such, I believe that dissertation will contribute to the field of media studies by providing a detailed analysis of the ways in which popular media such as print and television were implicated into state ideology during the Pahlavi era in Iran, often echoing the state's credo and encouraging its audience by way of myriad discursive strategies to also follow suit. I also believe that this thesis will also contribute to the field of fashion studies by highlighting the role of the media during the period under review in shaping a concomitant beauty culture that reflected the state's vision of a modern Iranian society. Through visual representation and reinforcement, this research sheds light

on the nuanced influence of fashion on cultural practices, self-presentation, and the negotiation of identity.

The Sources: A Brief Account of Magazines and Television in Iran

In exploring the sources that shaped the media landscape in Iran, it is equally important to give a brief, introductory overview on the role of popular magazines and television during this period. Hamid Mowlana provides valuable insights into the influence of magazines during that era, particularly in promoting styles that were exclusive to the secular, urban elite. Mowlana remarks that “nearly 70 percent of the space in the press [was] devoted to advertising,” rife as they were with news on “the latest cosmetics, dresses, and Hollywood gossip.”¹²³ A mere glance at the magazines demonstrate his point. For instance, *Zan-e Ruz*, “the country’s only magazine for women with a circulation of 100,000,”¹²⁴ was among the foremost publications that familiarized women of the period with the latest fashions in Europe and the United States. However, its content often did so by denigrating the religious traditions of the country.

By way of example, the January 1968 issue of *Zan-e Ruz* magazine provides a striking example of the cultural divisions prevalent during that period. Celebrating the anniversary of Reza Shah’s unveiling decree, the issue’s cover boasted a picture of a woman in miniskirt wearing a striped, colorful, and short-sleeved sweater, and confidently leaning one knee on a metal chair. Beside her stood a woman who was fully veiled. While the woman in a modern dress was pictured as smiling happily at the camera, the veiled woman was looking ahead somberly. Further in the issue, a series of cartoons depicted the divide between these two different types of women. Therein, the unveiled woman was depicted as being ludicrously unfit for the modernized Iran of today. In

¹²³ Mowlana, “Technology versus Tradition,” 108.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

one such cartoon the *chadori* (veiled) woman was drawn to be engaged with an activity as preposterous as sky-diving. The caption that followed derisively remarked: “The traditional woman, while parachuting, was afraid that *nā-mahram* (non-familial) ducks in the sky might have a gander at her parts, and so she had to wrap her veil around herself even while descending onto the ground.”¹²⁵ These visual comics played an especially outsized role during this era, as illiteracy was still at large, and with a readership as relatively large as *Zan-e Ruz*’s at the time, one could only imagine the alienation that stemmed among the more traditional communities through these characterizations.

Television became an even greater ideological force following its nationalization. While print media still retained a status as only semi-official, National Iranian Television (NITV) was wholly official. Television had begun as a private enterprise in 1958, and as noted by Hamid Naficy, this commercial station was largely “patterned after American commercial television... which disseminated to a wider public American culture.”¹²⁶ Yet, when the state took over this private television enterprise in 1969, absorbing it into the less-popular state-owned network it had previously established in 1966 – NITV – the programs broadcast from this state-regulated organization remained singularly concerned with “the cultural tastes of an urban elite, and their metropolitan preferences.”¹²⁷ As such, its content managed to “strong feelings of impropriety”¹²⁸ for the largely traditional and religious Iranian viewership.

All the same, television access and coverage continued to grow exponentially during this period. By the new decade, television was no longer a luxury item solely available to the upper

¹²⁵ J. Tojjārchi, “Agar kashf-e hejāb nashodeh būd!,” *Zan-e Ruz*, January 7, 1968.

¹²⁶ Hamid Naficy, *Social History*, Volume 2, 63.

¹²⁷ Tehranian, “Communication and Revolution,” 16.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

classes. By 1976, for instance, its coverage had already expanded to 70% of the population,”¹²⁹ covering almost four million households, with approximately 1.7 million of the population owning their own sets.¹³⁰ Similarly, as per the statistics presented by the 1976 population census, over four million households owned their own radio sets, which was equivalent to 128 radio sets per every 1,000 persons in the population.¹³¹ Yet, despite a large segment of the population having access to television, the content produced was far from representative. As such, “few days passed without some outraged remarks from the pulpit, parliament, or the press on the immorality and violence of NIRT’s television programs.”¹³² The content shown on television held up “cosmopolitan lifestyles... as the model of modern life.”¹³³ These were characterized by the constant content broadcasting “Westernized housing styles, interior design, clothing, cuisine, and food habits” as representative of mass Iranian culture, which certainly was not the case.¹³⁴ Rather, the styles held up by the state-regulated popular culture of the time were “affordable by a small urban elite.”¹³⁵ This proved to be significantly alienating since “the economic and sociocultural gaps of Iranian society” were broadcast “into everyone’s living room, so that instant comparisons could be made between the viewer’s own situation and the situation of the players in the television programs.”¹³⁶

As many among less affluent neighborhoods had come to share a television set at this time, often inviting adjoining houses over so as to communally watch the programming provided by NITV, the content of these shows did not go by unnoticed. Despite the entertaining aspects of the

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Majid Tehranian, *Socio-Economic and Communication Indicators in Development Planning: A Case Study of Iran*. (Paris: UNESCO, 1979), 77.

¹³¹ Tehranian, *Socio-Economic and Communication Indicators*, 80.

¹³² Tehranian, “Communication and Revolution,” 16.

¹³³ Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ali Mohammadi, *Small Media, Big Revolution: Communication, Culture, and the Iranian Revolution* (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 1994), 71.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

programming provided, many of these shows happened to incite deep unease among the religious or traditional demographics. So much so that members of some neighborhoods even began engaging in conspiratorial discourses with respect to televisual content, believing that these programs were deliberately produced so as to deterministically alter the lifestyles of those viewing the medium.

As it happens, television was indeed harnessed as an ideological apparatus during this period of Iranian history. “Cultivation” of the Iranian viewership happened to play a central part in the institution’s ethos, and many occasions saw both NITV personnel and the state-regulated press pointing to this new medium’s capacity to civilize the purportedly retrograde Iranian.¹³⁷ The locally-produced television programming broadcast on the station were thus fraught with the state’s ideological concerns. Much like print media’s characterizations, the simplistic binary between the traditional Iranian vis-a-vis the modern Iranian was also prevalent throughout NITV’s programming. In such a way, characters standing in for the westernized upper classes were habitually highlighted as sympathetic heroes or saviors, and those segments deemed “folk devils”¹³⁸ by the official culture were regularly rendered into the programs’ stereotypical villains. According to British sociologist Stanley Cohen, “folk devils” are identified by the hegemony as the groups that pose a perceived threat the established social order, who are, in turn, rendered into fodder for the media to be demonized and stigmatized.¹³⁹ As we shall see, style was used as an aesthetic marker by which to identify these folk devils – a marker by which to distinguish those characters deemed honorable, and those deemed laughable or deplorable.

¹³⁷ Nādali Hamedāni, “Yek televiziyon-e khāmush...”, *Tamasha*, June 10, 1971.

¹³⁸ Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, 2011), 37.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

Throughout this thesis, in analyzing both genre-types and stereotypes with respect to these television programs – together with extensive analyses of the socio-cultural climates in which these programs were produced – I will appraise the ideological coding underpinning NITV’s most popular content. Doing so will shed further light on the manners in which the hegemony’s dominant values, rooted as they were in the modernization of the Iranian citizen according to Euro-American markers, remained entrenched in NITV content throughout this period.

The Scope: A Chapter-by-Chapter Summary

With the overall scope of this research cursorily clarified, I will now provide an outline of what each chapter in this thesis shall comprise. Chapter 1 will examine the intersection of print culture, ideology, and a burgeoning advertising industry during the White Revolution. By investigating the content of both *Zan-e Ruz* and *Javanan* magazines throughout this period, the chapter will enquire into the manners in which these two popular publications implemented the White Revolutionary slogan of cultural transformation by not only providing their readerships with visual markers for a modern and largely western style, but also by incentivizing them to dress as such by either calling on all Iranians to “compete with the West”¹⁴⁰ or with nation-wide contests such as *Zan-e Ruz*’s Teen Princess pageant. The largely western styles promoted by these magazines, however, were also not taken up passively by the readership. A conspicuous case of bottom-up reaction to the Euro-American styles promoted by the press was evidenced by the *Amaleh o Minizhup* (Bricklayer and Miniskirt) controversy that occurred during the summer of 1966, where an event of sexual harassment, further cultivated by rumor culture, helped curb both magazines’ promotion of the miniskirt as an appropriate mode of dress.

¹⁴⁰ E’temādi, “Mā gharbzadeh nistim,” *Javanan* 35, May 29, 1967.

Following this, Chapter 2 will concern itself with a comprehensive examination of consumer culture as it emerged in Iran following the country's oil boom in the 1970s. Budding consumerism in the period had as much to do with the White Revolution's modernist initiatives as it did with the changing tastes of the country's more westernized constituencies. This period saw a proliferation in boutiques and shopping centers throughout the country's urban areas. While many of these establishments had been spurred by youth recently returned from Europe and America, who had wished to see their sartorial standards met in their home country, the state's increasing reliance on imports further fed into these changing sartorial standards and new demands.

All the while, a new cultural subset had also begun flowing into these urban areas. These individuals had largely emigrated from rural areas in consequence of the White Revolution's land reform program. Less inclined toward the modernity that the state espoused, their arrival into the cities were met with discrimination from the relatively westernized urban middle classes, prompting, in turn, a burgeoning sense of alienation. Media did little to assuage these divisions. These more traditional segments were often cast as old-fashioned and detrimental to society's progress; their sartorial traditions were ridiculed, their lifestyles demeaned. Their weight, the sizes of their noses, even their cuisine were treated with contempt in media content. This was, after all, the era that saw the standardization of thinner noses, slimmer figures, a cuisine less dependent on rice, and most significantly, of sartorial choices less rooted in religious or ethnic traditions.

As it happens, the media's Euro-American aesthetic standards seemed also to mirror the state's position on cultivating Iranian aesthetic tastes. We will become witness to this when we examine the compulsory dress codes that the state enforced on the country's secondary-school girls in the early 1970s. These uniforms not only forbade teenage girls from wearing religious wear

in schools, but also compelled them to bare their legs in skirts. In consequence, families with more traditional attitudes forbade their daughters from continuing their education, and the school uniform policy became the most conspicuous example of an attempt at “sartorial social engineering”¹⁴¹ under Mohammad Reza Shah’s rule.

Chapter 3 shall finally turn to television. It will examine the history, goals, and the content of Iranian television, specifically following its nationalization in 1969. In this chapter, I will look into the manners in which NITV actively sought to “cultivate” the Iranian population by way of content, an objective which happened to be entrenched into the national television apparatus. The chapter will make extensive use of oral histories as well as official assertions by NITV personnel so as to emphasize the broadcasting service’s ideological approach to television. It will then delve into the content broadcast on NITV, so as to investigate the manners in which this ideology was implemented into its most popular programs. Like print media, television regularly projected an image of a modern Iran at the cost of the more traditional segments of the population. It did so even in programs meant to identify with the religious or traditional constituency. Such programs were solely broadcast as comedies, thereby rendering religious or traditional characters into comedic foils.

As happens, style was at the forefront of these depictions, feeding into stereotypes relating to retrograde and rural Iranians, who thus served as counter-images to the more sophisticated and purportedly better-dressed protagonists of these programs. Through this chapter, content from *Tamasha* (Watch) magazine – which served throughout television’s nationalization as the NIRT’s official publication – will also be examined alongside these more direct examinations of NITV’s televisual programs. Printed content like those published in *Tamasha* will provide the chapter with

¹⁴¹ Chehabi, “Emperor’s New Clothes,” 222.

further information with respect to the period's popular televisual content, as well as the official culture's viewpoints on its televisual content.

This chapter shall also look into the advertisements aired on NITV at this time. It will examine the manners in which televised advertisements, regulated by NITV but produced largely by contemporaneous advertising agencies, were solely concerned with the westernized middle classes, thereby overlooking the needs of the non-modern classes as frivolous and immaterial. Moreover, the rare advertisements which happened to target the rural and traditional classes as consumers did so by deriding those constituencies for lifestyles deemed inappropriate for modern living. Once more, aesthetic appearance was the sole marker for distinguishing between the urbane and the supposedly retrograde, further feeding into the politics of style that this thesis seeks to explore.

Ultimately, Chapter 4 will begin with a comprehensive examination of the fully-fledged star system that emerged alongside the popularization of television. These stars came at the forefront of visualizing the long-purported aesthetic ideals of “the Great Civilization” towards which the state aspired. They happened to inspire new styles among their fanbases, especially on account of them being the first to be seen donning these Euro-American styles on television. The Googooshi hairstyle, for instance, became a sensation among everyday television viewers. So too did the long-hair and beards – up-to-then unfashionable on account of the increasing Euro-Americanization of male fashion habits in the country – sported by popular male stars such as Sattar, Ebi, Dariush Eghbali, and Shahram Shabpareh. Stars outside heteronormative standards, namely Fereydoun Farrokhzad and Ramesh, likewise challenged unspoken taboos at the time, inspiring styles of their own; some unpopular, some vastly popular like the denim jeans, which Ramesh championed time and time again. As we shall see, Ramesh's help in popularizing jeans

also gave way to schoolgirls at odds with the compulsory secondary school uniform directive to make use of this celebrity-endorsed new fad for jeans in sidestepping the state's sartorial mandate.

Inflation, however, was looming. So, too, was growing discontent. Terms such as *gharbzadegi* (weststruckness) and *dokhtar-e arusaki* (doll-like woman) had begun being cast at the westernized constituencies more frequently than before. Soon, in attempt to co-opt these oppositional discourses, the state was to fashion new "folk devils" from its stars as well as its newly well-heeled classes. In an abrupt about-face, and in line with its endeavor to co-opt the oppositional discourse, the state media began spurning the western aesthetic markers it had up to then championed, doing so especially in favor of Iranian handicrafts. All these attempts, however proved ineffective, and opposition continued to swell.

On this account, this chapter shall also examine the oppositional discourse. This examination will include clerical reactions concerning the "sinful" nature of television viewing,¹⁴² Ali Shariati's criticism that the new styles flaunted by state media were transforming Iranian women into "Western dolls,"¹⁴³ the opposition's ongoing critiques of *gharbzadegi*, through to more proactive efforts of the resistance leading up to the 1979 Iranian Revolution. As such, it will also discuss the manners in which an oppositional style was also appropriated leading up to the Iranian Revolution, marked by the same religious and ethnic aesthetic markers long spurned by the official culture. During this revolutionary period, a subculture of resistance emerged, signified stylistically by women donning the chador or scarf and men wearing "plain-colored clothes"¹⁴⁴ to

¹⁴² Homa Katouzian, *The Persians: Ancient, Mediaeval and Modern Iran* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 309.

¹⁴³ Fatemeh Sadeghi, "Fundamentalism, Gender, and the Discourses of Veiling (Hijab) in Contemporary Iran," in *Media, Culture and Society in Iran: Living with Globalization and the Islamic State*, ed. Mehdi Semati, (New York: Routledge, 2007), 217.

¹⁴⁴ Qā'edi-Sharafi, *Bāztab*, 275.

exhibit their resistance to the Pahlavi state. These modest styles worked to define the oppositional group's "boundaries more sharply in relation both to its members and all outsiders."¹⁴⁵

As even this brief introduction suggests, any study pertaining to the prevalent styles and fashions of a given period can provide immense insight vis-a-vis the political, ideological, and social climate of the historical juncture under review. Tracing and examining visual markers such as clothing and styling habits also offer a deeper understanding of the social stratification and cultural alienation experienced at a given time. In consequence, this thesis hopes to provide much-needed insight as to the manners in which ideology, style, and media were closely interwoven in the period following the White Revolution through to 1979's Iranian Revolution. They were to interweave once more following the revolution. That, however, is subject beyond the scope of the present thesis.

¹⁴⁵ John Clarke, "Style," in *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*, ed. Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, 2 edition (London ; New York: Routledge, 2006), 153

A Soft Top-Down: Styling the New Iran through Print Culture from 1965 to 1969

Introduction: Dressing for a Revolution

As evidenced by Reza Pahlavi's top-down cultural reforms, modernization in Iran came hand in hand with dress policies that were implemented as a model for nation-building. In rendering "people's appearance uniform"¹⁴⁶ through compulsory unveiling for women and European dress codes for men, the first Pahlavi period's dress policies sought to attest to the country's new-found modernity in two ways. These dress policies not only intended to invite Iranians "to imagine each other as a community,"¹⁴⁷ but also endeavored to show "the Europeans that one was worthy of their company in the society of nations."¹⁴⁸ Indeed, such endeavors also happened to carry over to the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah. So, too, did the state's emphasis on modern styles of presentation, with sartorial distinctions between the modern and the nonmodern becoming especially conspicuous following the state's United States-encouraged introduction of more novel cultural reforms in 1963, dubbed then as either "the White Revolution" or "the Revolution of the Shah and the People."¹⁴⁹

Rather than be decreed, however, the new state's similar interests in presenting Iran as a modern nation by way of aesthetic appearances and style manifested itself through less stringent discourses of development and civilizational advancement. In this case, the task of championing a distinctive Iranian style in line with the state's ideals was often left to the semi-official media of the time as opposed to any specific governing body. While this also constituted a mode of top-

¹⁴⁶ Houchang E. Chehabi, "Dress Codes for Men in Turkey and Iran," in *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization Under Ataturk and Reza Shah*, ed. Touraj Atabaki and Erik J. Zürcher (London: I.B.Tauris, 2003), 209.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 227.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 226.

¹⁴⁹ Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 225.

down cultural modernization, it was certainly subtler than the previous state's attempt to dress its nation for modernity.

Zan-e Ruz (the Woman of Today) and *Javanan* (The Youth), the two weekly magazines that I will be examining in this chapter, provide ample visual and contextual evidence with respect to these modernizing efforts. These two highly circulated magazines were launched, respectively, by *Keyhan* (Universe) and *Ettelaat* (Information), both of which were not only Iran's two leading daily newspapers but were also noted for their "cozy relationship with the Pahlavi State."¹⁵⁰ As such, both *Zan-e Ruz* and *Javanan* regularly acknowledged their credo to lead the newly modern Iran by example, especially in line with the promises of the White Revolution. As I will show, however, both magazines went by these modernizing efforts in distinct manners. While *Zan-e Ruz* took on a more didactic approach to encourage styles often in line with the western high culture standards, *Javanan* took a more inclusive route by focusing on rural youth as well as local celebrities. Throughout the decade, both weeklies' ideals of taste and beauty were likewise reconfigured as a result of either experiments on the world stage, or negotiations with the reading public. Despite these developments, the archetypal model for this modern Iranian style nonetheless remained closer to western iterations of style, almost entirely doing away with any local beauty standards already entrenched within the culture.

The timeline for this chapter spans from 1965 to 1969, bookended by the first issue of *Zan-e Ruz* in February 1965 as well as *Javanan's* inception in September 1966, and ultimately, the burgeoning celebrity culture that emerged in 1969 on account of the newly nationalized and more widely available television media. While the celebrity culture that succeeded this period happened

¹⁵⁰ Camron Michael Amin, "Importing 'Beauty Culture' Into Iran in the 1920s and 1930s: Mass Marketing Individualism in an Age of Anti-Imperialist Sacrifice," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 24, no. 1 (May 1, 2004): 93.

to abide by more overtly western lifestyles and Euro-American fashion systems, the timespan under review saw a more delicate approach taken by state sponsored media to style the nation in a manner that it professed to be both modern and Iranian at the same time. That said, as the evidence in this chapter will hope to show, this apparently subtler attempt at modernization nonetheless amounted to a roundabout attempt to reinforce Euro-American markers of taste for the country, its dress, and its popular culture in accordance with the overarching state's ideology.

Imagining the Image for the White Revolution

As also highlighted in the Introduction, the most distinctive feature of the White Revolution was its “aggressive steps in remolding the economic and social structure of Iran.”¹⁵¹ Articulating his vision for the White Revolution in his book of the same name, Mohammad Reza Shah himself harkened to myths surrounding the ancient Persian empire and the prospect of a future Iran resituated as “one of the most developed societies in the world”¹⁵² before pronouncing that these reforms were aimed at providing “sustenance for all, clothing for all, housing for all, and culture for all.”¹⁵³ As scholars like Parvin Paidar have pointed out, however, these reforms seemed especially concerned with “an image of prosperity and compatibility with Western civilization”¹⁵⁴ – an image especially contingent on publicity and prestige. As such, this era saw the state engage in numerous acts of cultural diplomacy in the name of such modernization, including the initiation of “prestigious festivals of music, art and culture,” “sportsmen and women... sent to compete in the Olympics” alongside the construction of “glamorous holiday resorts, casinos, hotels, palaces,

¹⁵¹ Afsaneh Najmabadi, “Hazards of Modernity and Morality: Women, State and Ideology in Contemporary Iran,” in *Women, Islam and the State*, ed. Deniz Kandiyoti (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1991), 51.

¹⁵² Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, *Enqelāb-e Sefīd* (Tehran: Pahlavi Library, 1967), 7.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁵⁴ Parvin Paidar, *Women and the Political Process in Twentieth-Century Iran* (Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 148.

high-rise buildings and stadiums.”¹⁵⁵ As it happened, modernization during this period was “viewed as a uniquely western process that non-western societies could follow only in so far as they abandoned their traditional cultures and assimilated technologically and morally ‘superior’ Western ways.”¹⁵⁶ Modernity was equated with westernization, and traditional society was, in turn, equated with “backwardness.”¹⁵⁷ As Parvin Paidar further remarks, “success or failure of the modernization process was gauged by the replacement of ‘traditional’ sources of identity such as ethnicity and religion with ones based on modern institutions.”¹⁵⁸

Though, according to Afshin Matin-Asgari, the texts published under Mohammad Reza Pahlavi’s name were “not taken seriously at the time or later by intellectual historians,” it is nonetheless important to examine the manners in which “the Shah’s intellectual pretensions [were] traceable” in the books published in his name. They happen to be, after all, “uniquely important due to their ‘authorship’ by the regime’s only official ideologue.”¹⁵⁹ As such, it is imperative to also refer to *Mission for My Country* – written three years prior to the White Revolution – so as to precisely trace the manner in which Mohammad Reza Shah equated westernization to modernization. In the abovementioned work, the Shah remarked: “Today we have far to go to catch up... and we need also to adapt... [by] ‘adjusting the technology [of the West] to our culture and our culture to the technology.’”¹⁶⁰ These adjustments and adaptations in the name of modernization, with its “amazing tempo of physical and cultural change,” he asserted, were certain to engender a number of “strains and stresses.” These stresses, however, “were the price we must

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 81.

¹⁵⁶ Ronald Inglehart and Wayne E. Baker, “Modernization, Cultural Change, and the Persistence of Traditional Values,” *American Sociological Review* 65, no. 1 (2000): 19.

¹⁵⁷ Paidar, *Women and the Political Process*, 9.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Afshin Matin-Asgari, *Both Eastern and Western: An Intellectual History of Iranian Modernity*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 226.

¹⁶⁰ Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country* (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1961), 132.

pay for westernization and modernization.” In the same passage, Pahlavi maintained that he did not “propose that we abandon our great heritage,” but rather, he proposed “selective and judicious westernization.”¹⁶¹ Which traditions were worth upholding was never mentioned, neither were the methods by which a selective and judicious westernization could uphold those unspecified traditions.

In a later passage, however, Pahlavi revealed that westernization would naturally obsolete particular traditions antagonistic to state modernization – most notably, traditional female dress, and especially, the veil. Modernity’s promise of “secularization, industrialization, urbanization, nuclearization of the family, education, paid employment”¹⁶² was assumed to wipe out any tradition disharmonious to the prospect. When the future Pahlavi promise of “clothing for all”¹⁶³ was to be made real, it was supposed that the “the veil, along with the characterless female clothing that one found in some so-called developed countries” would naturally “pass out of favor.”¹⁶⁴ Pahlavi claimed that unlike his father, “my Government and I decided to overlook” the fact that women resumed wearing the veil after the 1941 abdication of the previous Shah, clarifying that he preferred to “see a natural evolution, rather than to force the pace.”¹⁶⁵ Misleadingly remarking that veiling was merely exclusive to “our rural areas” by the 1960s, Pahlavi then discounted the influence of religion on veiling, accordingly ascribing the sartorial tradition to poverty. What prompted these women to cover themselves, he claimed, was “utility and convenience,” especially owing to the fact that “among our lower-income families, a woman may have a very limited number of dresses.” And if the lower-income woman did indeed possess some nice dresses, “she

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 160.

¹⁶² Paidar, *Women and the Political Process*, 9.

¹⁶³ Pahlavi, *Enqelāb-e Sefid*, 18.

¹⁶⁴ Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country*, 232.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 232.

will want to avoid wearing out any good ones she may possess;” hence when “she wants to go out shopping, she finds it easy and practical to put on her veil.”¹⁶⁶

On Display: The Role of Woman in the White Revolution

Indeed, women were “crucial to the state’s project of social transformation.”¹⁶⁷ Women’s elevated status in both periods of Pahlavi nation-building were to symbolize the achieved modernity of the nation. The “image of an educated and professional Iranian woman who had a genuine civic presence”¹⁶⁸ was thus central to this modernization paradigm. The particular emphasis on the term “image,” however, is vital to this argument. On closer analysis, the White Revolution’s promised reforms for women, including the 1967 Family Protection Law and the 1968 act permitting female conscription were “of a limited contradictory nature.” While intended to improve the social position of women, these laws served more to grant women ceremonial freedoms as opposed to endeavoring to “go deep enough to fundamentally alter the patriarchal basis of the family and the women’s role in it.” After all, Paidar reminds us that under these reforms, the position of women in Iran did not necessarily change. The “problem of male-female inequality and the law still concentrated on curbing the excess of male power in the family rather than fundamentally shifting it.” Because these reforms did not necessarily go beyond “legal” and outward changes to the “social” and familiar positions of women, they rather worked to complicate the modern conception of an Iranian woman.¹⁶⁹

With these reforms, the status of the modern Iranian woman was suddenly reconstructed in myriad contradictory manners. While on the surface, the state passed laws that “contained

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Najmabadi, “Hazards of Modernity,” 70.

¹⁶⁸ Camron Michael Amin, “Selling and Saving ‘Mother Iran’: Gender and the Iranian Press in the 1940s,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33, no. 3 (2001): 349.

¹⁶⁹ Paidar, *Women and the Political Process*, 157.

emancipatory potentials for women” both in the family and in the public sector, modern women were also concurrently “exposed... as sex-objects through the mass media” while also having their sexuality regulated in deference of Islamic law.”¹⁷⁰ These laws, in turn, according to Afsaneh Najmabadi, added to “the tension between modernity and modesty that... devastated Iranian women” since the turn of the century.”¹⁷¹ Women and their emancipation, as a result, were to serve as symbols in the Pahlavi state’s project of modernity while also having to toe the moral codes that Islamic law had laid out for them, leaving the female figure “in a perpetual state of uncertainty.”¹⁷²

Just as crucial to the image of a modern Iran, and accordingly, that of the modern Iranian woman was the mass media promoting the country’s development. In the words of the Pahlavi monarch, print and broadcast media were central in raising the population’s “social knowledge” in line with the state’s modernization.¹⁷³ This era thus bore witness to mass media regularly engaging with questions relating to what an Iranian woman on the cusp of modernity should look like. State supported publications such as *Zan-e Ruz* and *Javanan* hence came to play an especially crucial role in guiding the Iranian women on how to appropriate the “particular codes of conduct and styles of dress”¹⁷⁴ so as to best embody the promises of the White Revolution. In turn, these publications attempted to show their readership the frills of tastefulness and style through regular contests, glamorized advertisements, the portrayal of royalty, interviews with beauty experts, and outwardly impartial reporting that heralded heated debates within the magazine’s own pages – debates that were often centered on the Iranian readership being forced to compare themselves with western counterparts. While suggestions in style and dress were often reserved for women in

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 157-158.

¹⁷¹ Najmabadi, “Hazards of Modernity,” 65.

¹⁷² Ibid., 66.

¹⁷³ Kristin Batmanghelichi, “Revolutions and ‘Rough Cuts’: Bodily Technologies for Regulating Sexuality in Contemporary Iran” (Columbia University, 2013), 45.

¹⁷⁴ Batmanghelichi, “Revolutions,” 44.

their pages, these magazines also sought to educate men in facilitating this aesthetic transition. Such social education for men principally comprised articles admonishing men for cat-calling or harassing the newly modernized woman in streets, or satirical comics reprimanding the so-called modern men who nonetheless kept to traditional views on women.¹⁷⁵

Ushers of Ideology: The Role of Magazines as Semi-Official Media

Lucie Ryzova reminds us that although modernity is projected in manners distinctive to its locales, “it everywhere involves visual experience.”¹⁷⁶ In order to transform the sociocultural aspects of any culture in line with the promises of modernity, it was essential to present the public sphere with visual representations of what that modernization would look like. In line with this, the role of media in bolstering the Pahlavi project of modernization cannot be understated. After all, print media, and especially magazines, were largely embedded in projects of modernity as seen in a number of developing countries. Media served as the primary mechanism to visually represent and distribute such images to a large audience. The levels to which one would accept such images was immaterial to the fact that they would be exposed to them in the first place. As Dick Hebdige remarks, mediated images nonetheless provided audiences “with the most available categories for classifying out the social world.” In such a manner, “that experience [was] organized, interpreted, and made to cohere in contradiction as it were.”¹⁷⁷ Often too, such mediated messages performed their work in line with the “discourses of the dominant ideologies.”¹⁷⁸ The dominant ideology in

¹⁷⁵ Ardeshir Mohassess, “Mansur khān va ghoncheh khānum va malus khānum,” *Zan-e Ruz* 93, December 10, 1966.

¹⁷⁶ Lucie Ryzova, “‘I Am a Whore but I Will Be a Good Mother’: On the Production and Consumption of the Female Body in Modern Egypt,” *The Arab Studies Journal* 12/13, no. 2/1 (2004): 82.

¹⁷⁷ Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, (New York: Routledge, 1979), 85.

¹⁷⁸ Stuart Hall, “Culture, Media, and the ‘Ideological Effect,’” in *Mass Communication and Society*, ed. James Curran, Michael Gurevitch, and Janet Woollacott (London: Edward Arnold in association with the Open University Press, 1977), 346.

Pahlavi Iran, as we have argued already, was principally concerned with the modernization of Iran by way of westernization.

During the period under review, although print media “lost some of its vitality” owing to the proliferation of newer media such as radio and television, as well as the repressive censorship set down on the similarly subservient print giants of the time, it nevertheless enjoyed large circulations.¹⁷⁹ The 1960s saw a proliferation of periodicals and magazines that achieved circulations “equal to, if not greater” than the daily newspapers of the time.¹⁸⁰ By mid-decade, *Zan-e Ruz* and *Javanan* had respective circulations of 80,000¹⁸¹ and 50,000.¹⁸² These numbers were especially impressive considering that, by the end of the decade, Iran’s two leading dailies, *Keyhan* and *Ettelaat* boasted circulations of 70,000 and 80,000.¹⁸³ While one cannot simplistically presume the manners in which a reader received the visual information laid out by these magazines, both weeklies’ increasing circulations as well as their purported focus on not only Tehran but also the country’s provinces, further corroborated the influence that these magazines retained in the 1960s.

The ideological work carried out by the contemporary press was especially conspicuous on account of the rampant censorship that became prevalent during the post-1953 rule of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. As the bureaucratization of Iran intensified under the White Revolution’s reforms, so did the state’s methods of censorship. Mas’ud Barzin notes the numerous arbitrary ways in which publications were either censored, reclaimed, or banned during this period. Any publication that was proven to be “disharmonious to the politics or the methods of the state” gave the censors

¹⁷⁹ Amin Banani, “The Role of Mass Media,” in *Iran Faces the Seventies*, ed. Yarshater, Ehsan (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 331

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 337.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² *Javanan* 20, February 6, 1967.

¹⁸³ Banani, “Mass Media,” 332.

enough grounds to prevent its distribution.¹⁸⁴ The censors were charged with reading every article either prior to its publication or after. If a discordant article had initially passed the censors' judgement, every issue that contained said article "would be rounded up from the stores, and they would be either shredded or burnt."¹⁸⁵ Another tactic constituted stealing or confiscating the newspaper from post offices or loading trucks before they could be distributed between cities. In some cases, the censors would make daily telephone calls to the editors of the publications telling them which written article could not be published. Likewise, the Shah's secret police, SAVAK, kept hefty records of journalists, editors, or investors, leading to arbitrary arrests, or in extreme cases, prison sentences, torture, assassinations, or executions. These repressive tactics also coaxed editors to self-censor so as to avoid such costs.¹⁸⁶

This culture of repression likewise forced the local press' hands in regularly having to echo the state's credos and initiatives in order to subsist. While *Zan-e Ruz* and *Javanan* nonetheless enjoyed a more direct association with the state, especially considering their position as affiliates to the country's two publishing giants,¹⁸⁷ the case of another pop culture magazine, *Sepid-o Siyāh* (White and Black) paints an insightful picture of the state's hand in most national publications under Pahlavi rule. A spiritual predecessor to *Zan-e Ruz* and *Javanan*, Ali Behzadi's *Sepid-o Siyāh* was a magazine launched in 1953, enjoying a circulation of 50,000 by mid-1960. In 1975, however, the magazine was shut down under arbitrary state orders, which justified the shutdown as part of its strategy to prevent unnecessary over-saturation in print publications.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Mas'ud Barzin, *Shenāsnāmeḥ-e matbu'āt-e irān az 1210 tā 1307 shamsi* (Tehran: Behjat Publications, 1992), 10

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁸⁷ Keyhan and Ettelaat enjoyed between them seventy percent of all press circulation during this period.

¹⁸⁸ Ali Behzadii, *Shebh-e khāterāt* (Tehran: Zarrin, 2001).

Although a more politicized iteration of the magazine was briefly resurrected when the country enjoyed a brief press resurgence just prior to the Iranian Revolution, throughout its history, *Sepid-o Siyāh* often strayed from politics so as to innocuously highlight Hollywood culture, romance fiction, global affairs, or recaps of the Pahlavi royal family's state visits. This, however, did not keep it safe from government regulation. Indeed, available SAVAK files concerning the first, non-political iteration of this magazine is testament to the thorough screenings to which such publications were subject.

From an image taken of Farah Pahlavi to an advertisement for *Bānk-e Pārs* (Pars Bank) to caricatures published in the magazine – nothing escaped SAVAK's scrutiny with respect to print publications of the time. A SAVAK report filed on 13 August 1969, for instance, expressed concern over a Pars Bank advertisement published in *Sepid-o Siyah* presenting “a stick-figure whose entire body is covered in cash.”¹⁸⁹ The problem with this image, it emphasized, was that “the image of His Imperial Highness the August Light of the Aryans and King of Kings on the currency has covered the right leg of this stick-figure.”¹⁹⁰ Another report filed on 23 May 1971 brought attention to a photo of the Empress published in the magazine, “in which one can also discern an individual behind Her Majesty *Shahbanu* looking perplexed and making confused movements all the while he is facing her audience.”¹⁹¹ It then requested a superior to issue a warning to the magazine's editor so that he could refrain from publishing any image that could “engender opinions expressed by the rumor-mongering classes.”¹⁹² Another more humorous instance encompassed outrage over a *Canada Dry* advertisement in the magazine's pages, where

¹⁸⁹ *Matbu'āt-e asr-e pahlavi be revāyat-e asnād-e SAVAK: majalle-ye sepid-o siyāh* (Tehran: Ministry of Information, 1382), 43.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

the advertiser had used an image of an umbrella clad Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, and had superimposed the logo for the soda on the opened umbrella.¹⁹³ Similarly, before the popularization of like images later in the decade, a mere caricature featuring a man and a woman together at a cinema drew the ire of the Ministry of Information on 7 July 1962 with claims that it was “adverse to the public’s chastity and decency.”¹⁹⁴

By way of this case, it is therefore evident that no newspaper or periodical – large or small, political or non-political – was spared of scrutiny akin to that experienced by *Sepid-o Siyāh*. The Ministry of Information’s detailed probe into images produced by these publications also pointed to the fact that officials understood the strength that an image alone might have in projecting particular ideas to the reader. It also demonstrates the state’s strict procedures in controlling the images published of the Pahlavi family. These instances, in turn, implied not only the state’s sensitivity to the inherent power of images, but also its capacity to sustain hegemonic control over images in this period.

As such, the content of most magazines in this era was likewise “produced within dynamics of social power and ideology.”¹⁹⁵ Bearing in mind the arbitrary ways by which highly circulated magazines could be shut down, it is rather unrealistic to assume that the longevity of popular magazines such as *Zan-e Ruz* and *Javanan* was due solely to their commercial successes.¹⁹⁶ Equally important to their durability were the ideological messages of “progress, reform, and ideology”¹⁹⁷ imbued within their outwardly innocuous celebrity reporting, their regular weekly contests, as well as their purportedly-objective reporting.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 171.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 185.

¹⁹⁵ Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2000), 21.

¹⁹⁶ Both magazines also survived long after the Islamic Revolution, with obvious ideological shifts in tone under new editorial boards.

¹⁹⁷ Batmanghelichi, “Revolutions,” 40.

The Changing Landscape of Advertising

At the same time, it would be a mistake to reduce the function of these magazines as mere mirrors to state ideology. Although state ideology played a large part in the ways that these magazines portrayed the modern Iranian nation, the role of Iran's burgeoning advertising industry cannot be overlooked. Indeed, the growth of advertising in Iran came concurrent to Reza Pahlavi's dress reforms in the mid-1930s. As Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet examines, immediately following the first Pahlavi state's dress reforms, "tailors and fashion designers were quick to jump on these opportunities to market their goods and services."¹⁹⁸ These initial reforms helped pave the way for an advertising industry to gradually emerge within the country, which, in turn, led to newspapers and periodicals printing a female figure for the first time in the 1930s, first strictly in sketches, only for the images to later evolve into photographs. Hand-in-hand with advertisers, publications soon also initiated distinctive campaigns to "educate Iranian women on a new look for a new era."¹⁹⁹ This look encouraged the use of "cosmetics and Western hairstyles,"²⁰⁰ buttressed by advertisements within the periodical to help Iranian women achieve said looks.

From mid-1950s onward, the advertising industry only continued to grow in Iran.²⁰¹ This was due not only to the influx of American companies to the country following the United States-supported coup d'état, but also state mandates put in place to support locally manufactured products. While in 1950, only five established advertising agencies existed inside the country, by 1960 the number had reached fifty. This timespan also saw the utilization of new techniques such

¹⁹⁸ Kashani-Sabet, Firoozeh, "Dressing up (or down): Veils, Hats, and Consumer Fashions in Inter-War Iran," in *Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the Muslim World: Gender, Modernism and the Politics of Dress*, ed. Stephanie Cronin, eBook (London: Routledge, 2014), 281.

¹⁹⁹ Amin, "Beauty Culture," 9.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ "Ashnāyi bā tārikh-e irāni-ye tablighāt dar goftegu-ye hamshahri ānlāyn bā mohsen mirzāyi," Hamshahri Online, December 12, 2013.

as the use of colored advertisements, colloquial sloganeering, market research, neon billboards, as well as improvement in cinematic and, later, televisual commercials.²⁰² Also beneficial to the industry was the emergence of new colored magazines in this era, which utilized their advertising revenue to further experiment with new print technologies such as making their transition from single-color printing to the expensive four-color-printing.

Thus, parallel to the state-imposed unveiling policies in 1936 emerged a gradually expanding advertising industry, in which westernized fashions were often portrayed as the sole manner in which both men and women could step into modernity. Advertising not only provided revenue for the magazines, but also offered the products with which the new Iranian could be imagined. While the continued existence of publications even in later decades was contingent on both state approval and revenue, that of the growing advertising industry was contingent on continually encouraging a “new mood of a consumption-oriented environment.”²⁰³ As implied by the Shah’s own proclamations with respect to the westernization of Iran as well as the state’s increasing reliance on imports, this consumption-oriented environment was a milieu that the state was also intent on cultivating. As such, while state ideology helped cultivate a new culture of consumerism within Iran, the country’s ever-developing advertising industry further bolstered the state’s idealized image of a modern Iran by way of not only the products advertised, but also the manners in which they promoted these product.

²⁰² “Pishine-ye tablighāt-e tejāri dar irān,” Vista.

²⁰³ Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ali Mohammadi, *Small Media, Big Revolution: Communication, Culture, and the Iranian Revolution*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 63.

Zan-e Ruz: Style Iranian-Style

As I have tried to show so far, magazines constitute more than just entertainment. Through its integral link with advertising, magazine also help provide an “idealized image” to the reader.²⁰⁴ These images often provide “symbolic commentary”²⁰⁵ for the context in which they are produced, serving as the systematic embodiment of the relationship between the image-makers, their advertising clients, and the ideology within which the given culture is produced.²⁰⁶ As a result, although a magazine does not wield any influence on its own, its influence is nonetheless implicated within the ideological milieu in which it is produced.

A testament to this interrelation between ideology, media, and advertising was *Zan-e Ruz*. Under the leadership of founder Mostafa Mesbahzadeh, *Zan-e Ruz*'s parent company, *Keyhan* was launched in 1942 with thanks to a \$50,000 sum gifted to the upstart newspaper by a young Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. In time, *Keyhan* became one of the top five dailies in Tehran within its first year in print. Over the years, *Keyhan* expanded and tried its hand at publishing weekly magazines as well, including *Keyhan-e Varzeshi* (Sports), *Keyhan-e Farhangi* (Cultural) and *Keyhan-e Bache-hā* (Children), and, finally, *Zan-e Ruz* in 1965.²⁰⁷ Forugh Mesbahzadeh, the *Keyhan* founder's spouse, acted as the managing director of the magazine, while American-trained journalist Majid Davami took the reins as editor.

Comprising Iranian and non-Iranian romance stories that spanned dozens of issues, spotlighting women from all over the world, and covering the lives of famous western – and less-so Iranian - stars, the guiding principle of *Zan-e Ruz* was to be “the flag-bearer for modernism and

²⁰⁴ Alfred Gell, “Technology and Magic,” *Anthropology Today* 4, no. 2 (1988): 9.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Brian Moeran, “The Portrayal of Beauty in Women's Fashion Magazines,” *Fashion Theory* 14, no. 4 (December 2010): 499.

²⁰⁷ Amir Taheri, “The Grand Old Man of Iranian Press Passes Away in America,” *Asharq Al-Awsat*, December 14, 2006.

feminism following the Revolution of the Shah and the People.”²⁰⁸ As such, the magazine marked an appropriate meeting point for the interweaving of state ideology, advertising, and print media; all of which had already experienced immense developments by 1965. In emphasizing this transitional period for the modern Iranian woman, especially as it pertained to her newly-achieved status under the auspices of the White Revolution, the social dynamic constructed by these three vectors of ideology, advertising, and publishing worked to not only educate this newly modernized woman, but to style her as well.

That each vector functioned in an independent manner is nonetheless important to emphasize. As Norbert Elias notes in *The Civilizing Process*, changes brought about to the moods, tastes, and mannerisms of a culture in “transitional periods” are not “set in motion by people with... [a] long-term perspective.”²⁰⁹ Rather, the direct or indirect intermingling of industries as individually distinct as the press, advertising, and the state happen to bring into effect a uniform social dynamic – in this case, an emphasis on style and beauty as an expression of modernity. “This basic tissue from many single plans and actions of people, Elias remarks, “can give rise to changes and patterns that no individual person has planned or created.”²¹⁰ From this interdependence “arises an order *sui generis*, an order more compelling and stronger than the will and reason of the individual people composing it.” As with the interweaving relations of state, advertising, and publishing, “the order of interweaving human impulses and strivings” operate, unwittingly, to “determine the course of historical change,” which is termed by Elias as a “civilizing process.”²¹¹

The next sections will look at the methods in which *Zan-e Ruz* followed through with this “civilizing process.” The magazine did so by not only saturating its pages with images of

²⁰⁸ Mas’ud Behnud, “Dargozasht-e majid-e Davami, bonyān gozār-e zan-e Ruz,” BBC Persian, March 5, 2007.

²⁰⁹ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000), 365.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

Hollywood stars whilst discounting Iran's own burgeoning star system, but also by appraising women vis-à-vis western beauty markers, idealizing images of royalty, and most critically perhaps, by way of its introduction of the annual *Dokhtar-e Shāyesteh* (Teenage Princess) contest.

***Shahbanu* as Archetype**

In her study of women's magazines, Ellen McCracken remarks that a cover page "is, in fact, the magazine's most important advertisement."²¹² Through the cover star's "poses, facial expression, photogenia and accompanying semiotic objects [presented] as natural," including, for instance, the blue eyes of models and their blonde hair and revealing outfits, a viewer is "encouraged to view the pose as natural and expected for women."²¹³ A magazine cover also happens to be photographed so that it "coincides with a male perspective of the women portrayed."²¹⁴ If a public local figure happens to grace these covers, Ellen McCracken observes, the significance is rendered even weightier. The images are now depicting a familiar face, one that shares the same space as the reader, and one whom they could more directly emulate. The coded message in such a cover photograph, therefore, is to project onto the woman viewer the appropriate manner in which she herself should appear – or, in other words, the manner in which a male figure would like to see her. Prior to McCracken's work, John Berger had also investigated the ways in which women in society were taught to "watch themselves being looked at," learning to see herself as a man might see her, and accordingly turning "herself into an object – and most particularly an object of vision: a sight."²¹⁵ This is an especially powerful insight considering that Iranian women had fairly

²¹² Ellen McCracken, *Decoding Women's Magazines: From Mademoiselle to Ms.*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992), 4.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 24

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 112.

²¹⁵ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, (London: Penguin Classics, 2008), 47.

recently been encouraged to appear in public without traditional covering, amplifying *Zan-e Ruz*'s influence in educating them as to how they might best appear in the social sphere.

Gracing the cover of the inaugural issue of *Zan-e Ruz* happened to be Farah Pahlavi, the *Shahbanu* (Empress) of Iran, together with a message from the Queen issuing her support for the magazine's emancipatory purposes. The magazine's positioning of Farah as its inaugural cover star was not without its implications. Considering even the name of the magazine, whomever to grace an introductory cover to a publication of this name had to represent not only what a "woman of today" should look like, but how she should behave. As such, the inaugural cover image found the Queen and her children sitting in a living room; and though a television was seen in the background, she was instead pictured reading to the two children. Her bouffant-hairdo and knee-length skirt was at the center, and next to it, on one side was her son, Alireza, in a clean white shirt covered by a blue sweater, and on the other was her daughter, Farahnaz, in a white, knee-length dress, both of whom were leaning over the book being read to them.²¹⁶ An ideal image of a modern Iranian woman, as embodied by Farah Pahlavi, was thus projected to the viewer. She was a mother, a reader, and she was in a dress that was both tasteful and modern.²¹⁷ She was, as the magazine was later to call her, "the primary model of an authentic and supreme Iranian woman."²¹⁸

As *Zan-e Ruz*'s frequent reports on the Queen's visits throughout the country also revealed, the Queen's dressing habits happened to also be central to her status as a figure worthy of public emulation. Regularly featured in the first pages of each issue, depictions of Farah Pahlavi's style were often followed by pedagogic elucidations reasserting that women best model themselves on the Queen. Written by journalists who also enjoyed a congenial relationship with the Pahlavi court,

²¹⁶ *Zan-e Ruz* 1, February 28, 1965.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ "Rita Jebeli, Dokhtar-e Shāyesteh-e Sāl-e 1348-e Iran," *Zan-e Ruz* 216, May 10, 1969.

these pronouncements regularly made no mention of the fact that the Queen's sartorial preferences was not only exclusively modelled on western notions of chicness and taste, but that these often luxurious dresses happened to be inaccessible to most of the population. By way of illustration was a 10 December 1966 report in *Zan-e Ruz* recounting Farah's attendance of a school friend's wedding. In this piece, the reporter relayed her admiration that "the *Shahbanu* of Iran was dressed in such an affable manner" that her dress "stands as a testament to the potential of all Iranian women in projecting character, sincerity, and sympathy." Her clothes, "a turquoise coat and dress, adorned in pearls," it bafflingly reiterated, expressed nothing but simplicity. Compared to the other guests in attendance, dressed in "ostentatious and expensive clothing," the *Shahbanu* was portrayed as being the embodiment of simplicity and frugality.²¹⁹ When attending a meeting with national artists on 26 May 1967, she was again praised by *Zan-e Ruz* for her austerity in dress, donning "amethyst earrings and a ring of the same rock," which had "bestowed her face with a unique simplicity and sense of dignity."²²⁰

Despite the contradictions inherent to the above descriptions, the Queen's relatability as an Iranian everywoman was nonetheless continually emphasized in *Zan-e Ruz*. This was best evidenced in an editorial titled "We Should Learn from *Shahbanu!*" recounting a visit the Queen had made to Kurdistan and Western Azerbaijan in August 1968. In the piece, the magazine reiterated its other oft-repeated assertion that Farah Diba had been just another Iranian woman before she became queen, "having emerged from the midst of a social class with perks no different from those of the middle-class lives of Iranian families." Because of this, the article maintained, her status should in no way affect her everywoman characteristics. "This is why," it explained,

²¹⁹ "Shahbanu, dar jashn-e arusi-ye yek ham kelāsi," *Zan-e Ruz* 93, December 10, 1966.

²²⁰ Mansureh Pirnia, "Shahbanu Farah, mizbān-e shā'erān va nevisāndegān budand," *Zan-e Ruz* 116, May 27, 1967.

“we cannot help but compare her with all the other women of our country.”²²¹ The areas she visited were accordingly portrayed as being so poor that its people could not believe that a woman as “chic as the Queen, dressed in opulent clothes” was Iranian, arguing amongst themselves that she either had to be American or British. For the reporter, the reason that the populace could not tell that she was Iranian was a testament to impoverished state of these areas.

Being able to distinguish an Iranian form of chicness and beauty was thus projected to be equally crucial to bringing modernity to these disadvantaged areas. The magazine often suggested this by regularly stressing that while education and public knowledge were essential for the modernized Iranian woman, beauty was not something to overlook either.²²² In an interview conducted on 3 April 1965, after dubbing her “an undeniable *zan-e ruz*,” the magazine’s reporter asked the Queen about her daily habits with respect to dressing and cosmetics. While some of those habits, like *Shahbanu*’s affinity for Dior were ascribed to conduct exclusive to a queen, others came off as more relatable, and thus loaded with emulative potential. The Queen, for example, revealed that though she might sometimes need a hairstylist to style her hair, she often tried to do it on her own. Likewise, she did not indulge in buying too many clothes, often wearing out her clothes and buying new ones only when she had to go on official state visits. The only reason she had to wear elegant clothes for state visits, she was quoted as saying, “is to preserve my country’s reputation.” The interview concluded with the *Shahbanu* expressing her twofold wish for Iranian women, hoping that they “can interweave simplicity with *chic-pushhi* (chicness), and also recognize that beyond just make-up and cosmetics... we must learn about our social rights and obligations, so that we can raise our intellectual standards and avoid falling behind the rest of

²²¹ Majid Davami, “Az Shahbanu biyāmuzim! (Let us learn from Shahbanu!),” *Zan-e Ruz* 179, August 17, 1968.

²²² Mansureh Pirnia, “Gard-o ghobār-e dehkade-hā bar mozhgān-e Shahbanu neshaste bud!” *Zan-e Ruz* 179, August 17, 1968.

the world.” This statement suggested that equally important – or perhaps corollary – to a modern women’s social obligations, was training herself to dress in a manner becoming of a woman with new obligations in the public sphere.²²³

The same was repeated in the Queen’s “advice to the new generation,” as relayed to the magazine on 2 September 1967, once again pairing outer beauty with public information. Though the former depended on cosmetics and dress, and the latter was contingent on knowledge.²²⁴ In turn, the magazine tasked itself with offering both elements of beauty and public knowledge to the modern Iranian woman. What was put on offer within the same pages of this issue, however, was largely limited to “cosmetics for the year 1968” (the millennial calendar was used here, as opposed to the Shamsi calendar); Coco Chanel’s views on the miniskirt; the cinematic pairing of Brigitte Bardot and Alain Delon; advertisements for dishwashers, “diva shampoo,” “slimming garments,” and “Pretty Feet Cream.” Conspicuously absent from these pages were reports of current events or any educational features other than celebrity recaps and beauty advice. As opposed to insight on the wider issues of the day, public knowledge thus seemed to exclusively comprise information on how to make oneself beautiful in public.

Further highlighting the Queen’s positioning as the ideal archetype for the modern Iranian woman was the fact that from 1965 to 1969, the only Iranians featured on *Zan-e Ruz*’s 200 covers – with the exception of the annual Teen Princess contestants, one special issue commemorating unveiling, and another celebrating female conscription – was Farah Pahlavi. This suggested that only Farah and the magazine’s handpicked Teen Princess contestants were suitable enough to regularly pose under the moniker of a “modern woman.” Every other cover not featuring these

²²³ “Malekeh-ye takht-e tavus (the Queen of the throne),” *Zan-e Ruz* 6, April 3, 1965.

²²⁴ Mansureh Pirnia, “Towsiyeh-hā-ye Shahbanu be dokhtarān-e javān (Shahbanu’s advice to young girls),” *Zan-e Ruz* 130, September 2, 1967.

individuals were reserved for close-up images of largely anonymous and western blonde or brunette models in various attires, including swimwear or low neckline décolleté. The only true archetypes for a modern Iranian woman, then, were either the Queen or the Teen Princess contestants as chosen by the magazine itself. If not for these two categories, then the ideal for a modern Iranian woman was, paradoxically, a non-Iranian.

Farangi Women as Markers for Appraisal

Beyond just *Zan-e Ruz*'s idealization of Euro-American styles in its pictorial content, a more conspicuous attempt at its standardization of western beauty came in series of articles the magazine published in its inaugural year. These articles were intent on spotlighting an alleged Iranian preference for *farangi* women (derived from “Frankish”²²⁵ with reference to all Europe, and later, the West as a whole) as opposed to Iranian women. The first of these articles, presented on 17 April 1965 under the title “Boycotting *Farangi* Women!” recounted a comment made by Amānollah Rigi, a member of parliament, who “touched upon a historic complex” by suggesting that parliament pass a law prohibiting marriage between Iranian male students and foreign women. An unnamed *Zan-e Ruz* reporter resolved to interview Rigi for further comment. The reason for his demand, Rigi maintained, was that a great number of young, educated Iranian women were unable to find a husband, owing to the fact that “men are either marrying western women, or avoid marrying educated women altogether.”²²⁶

The issue then dedicated two additional articles to the controversy, working to further inflate a passing comment made by a single individual. The first article shared the results of a discussion circle that had been conducted with four randomly selected Iranians, all of whom put

²²⁵ “Ma’ni-ye ‘farang’ (Definition of ‘Farang’),” in *Mo’in Dictionary*.

²²⁶ “Tahrim-e zan-e farangi!,” *Zan-e Ruz* 8, April 17, 1965.

the blame on either Iranian women or their parents, and another who wearily blamed it on the “beauty” of *farangi* women. The second article offered biographical details and interviews with six *farangi* women married to contemporary cabinet ministers within the government. Immediately in the page following the four-page spread retelling this controversy was an article titled “The Tragedy of Filicide,” reporting on an Iranian woman who had killed her daughter. A disclaimer noted that the magazine’s intent in publishing such a piece was to demonstrate that women in Iran “have become subject to mental illnesses” to which the new citizenry of women, “now freed from their cages” should pay more attention. “Read this article,” it suggested, “to recognize that, in addition to dressing well, a contemporary woman must also tend to the wounds of her society” – once more subtly equating social responsibility with dress as a sign of modernity. Adjoined to the page was a large photo the length of the disclaimer, featuring a scarved and traditionally-dressed Iranian woman looking askance.²²⁷ Several pages later, another article on Iranian women featured Mashti Nesā’, a scarved and this-time masculine-looking Iranian woman, who was “the only Iranian woman that runs a mechanic’s shop.” When asked about whether she had ever been in love, Mashti Nesa’ laughed and answered, “Though I have always wanted to capture someone’s heart, it has never happened.”²²⁸

Indeed, these were the only two photos of Iranian women to be found within this issue’s seventy-nine pages. Scattered throughout the other pages were multiple photos of Julie Andrews as well as a large number of nameless models in swimming suits, lingerie, and décolleté. The same pattern repeated itself in the following month’s issue of *Zan-e Ruz*, its opening feature asking, “*Farangi* Girl or an Iranian Girl?” In this feature, the titular question was asked of the country’s senators. One female senator, in particular, agreed with Rigi’s suggestion to ban international

²²⁷ “Terāzhedi-ye farzand koshi!,” *Zan-e Ruz* 6, April 17, 1965.

²²⁸ “Zan-e injuri,” *Zan-e Ruz* 6, April 17, 1965.

marriages, because “when *farangi* girls often arrive to the country with distorted information about Iran,” it prompts them to “look at us condescendingly” upon arrival, prompting them to pester their husbands thereafter over the regressive social conditions of the country.²²⁹ Predictably, two pages further in this issue, there was a feature on “Daughter-Selling,” this time featuring two chadori (veiled) women staring somberly into the photographer’s lens.²³⁰

While, at first sight, all this might have been construed as sober reporting, the manners in which Iranian women were portrayed throughout the pages of these respective issues pointed to the fact that these series of articles also intended to prompt Iranian women to compare themselves with their western counterparts. As McCracken argues, the ideals of beauty “are often subtly intertwined with their opposites.”²³¹ When presenting a beautiful image, magazine often warn that ugliness is close-at-hand. “To be in fashion,” she claims, “one must fear being out of fashion; to be self-confident, one must first feel insecure.”²³² As evident, these reports hence constructed a dichotomy between Iranian and *farangi* woman by insinuating that the only way Iranian men might marry Iranian women in the present predicament was if a law banned them from marrying a *farangi* woman. In turn, this also reinforced the notion that the present array of eligible Iranian women inside Iran would always be lacking the beauty and the character that their western counterparts already indubitably possessed. Correspondingly, the opening pages of these two issues served to immediately remind Iranian women of the supposedly superior beauty of western women, with the few pages dedicated to Iranian women often finding them in less-than-ideal clothing and social positions, either mentally ill or unloved. How, then, was one to find a solution to the throng of *farangi* women cleaning out the spousal market? The logic of the magazine’s visual patterns

²²⁹ “Dokhtar-e farangi yā Irāni?,” *Zan-e Ruz* 12, May 15, 1965.

²³⁰ “Dokhtar forushi!,” *Zan-e Ruz* 12, May 15, 1965.

²³¹ McCracken, *Decoding*, 136.

²³² *Ibid.*

suggested that they must either stay scarved and resort to either crime or masculine occupations, or they could try to be like Julie Andrews.

Most conspicuous among such comparative strategies utilized by *Zan-e Ruz* was not its patronizing feature the following summer, encouraging Iranian women to wear hats because “hat-wearing is a sign of etiquette and chicness in the West,”²³³ but the feature immediately following it. Titled “Is the Iranian Woman Ugly or Beautiful?” the article comprised an interview with a Swedish-educated Iranian plastic surgeon, who went on to offer his views on the ways that Iranian women should improve themselves. Praising, for instance, the increase in plastic surgeries in the country, Dr. Honari-Jahān remarked that Iranian women had only recently shown any interest in “becoming beautiful.” As the surgery most common among Iranian women were rhinoplasties, the doctor also justified the public’s sudden interest in nose jobs by remarking that “the Iranian woman’s nose is ugly,” and so, “any Iranian woman wishing to look beautiful must categorically visit a plastic surgeon and change her nose.” The perks of a rhinoplasty, the doctor explained, was that it might help the Iranian woman in finding herself a husband – a key statement concerning the focal point of the *farangi* woman controversy. When asked about the other aesthetic shortcomings besetting an Iranian woman, he expressed lament over their less-than-ideal figures, and then went on to criticize the shapes of the Iranian woman’s ears. An Iranian woman’s ears is “so big that they twist into themselves like a cauliflower,” he remarked, praising “smart” Iranian women who hid their ears behind their hair. Then, comparing Iranian beauty methods with European methods, he conveyed his satisfaction over the latter. “In Europe,” he falsely claimed, “if her daughter’s ear is ugly, the mothers surgically alter those ears before they let them enter school.” When asked whether or not these alterations might bring fortune to the women in question, the surgeon replied:

²³³ “Zan va kolāh dar pā’iz-e emsāl,” *Zan-e Ruz* 37, November 2, 1965.

“If by fortune you mean that a woman might better attract a man, might marry better, might be treated with more kindness by their peers, then plastic surgery will surely make their lives better.”²³⁴

Preceding this article and reinforcing this image of a flawed and not-yet-modern Iranian woman also happened to be a report reviewing the arrival of rural women in Tehran for the inaugural Iran Women's Organization Congress. Rather than focus on policy or progress, however, the reporters pointed to the disordered array of attire as witnessed in the conference. One of these rural women, it derided, “was not pregnant but wearing a wide maternity dress” when greeting Ashraf Pahlavi, the Shah’s twin sister. Another had attended the congress with her hair donned in “disordered and multicolored curling rolls.” Then, reminding readers that *Zan-e Ruz*’s sole purpose was to represent all Iranian women and invest in their “advancement and evolution,” the reporters went on to express their responsibility in “pointing to the numerous flaws” in the aesthetic presentation of these female attendants, hoping that “they could strive to overcome them.” In line with this, and as a result of these flaws “in the manners of dress, make-up, and behavior in public congregations,”²³⁵ the reporters then promise to henceforth feature even more articles on etiquette, dress, and behavior in *Zan-e Ruz*. And, indeed, just a few pages later appeared the interview with Dr. Honari Jahan, pointing out, as the magazine had promised, the flaws of the Iranian woman on her path to modernization.

Thus, by 1966, no Iranian women with the exception of the Queen seemed to have passed *Zan-e Ruz*’s litmus test for style or beauty. Rather, their dresses and the manner in which they wore them were criticized, and the dangers of not marrying well if they did not assimilate were continually suggested. Likewise, the western woman – images of whom daubed every page – was

²³⁴ “Zan-e Irāni zeshteh yā zibā?,” *Zan-e Ruz* 37, November 2, 1965.

²³⁵ Mansureh Pirnia and Homa Ehsan, “56 nafar mihmān az 20 shahrestān,” *Zan-e Ruz* 37, November 2, 1965.

treated as a threat to the Iranian woman. This threat came not just from the western woman's purported beauty – beauty which an Iranian could only achieve through plastic surgery – but also because her superior way of life might also prompt condescension toward other Iranians if she were to ever visit Iran, as experience had shown with the aforementioned senator's worries over *farangi* wives.

Also suspect was that within its promotion of styles and archetypes, the presence of glamorous Iranian figures was largely absent in the pages of *Zan-e Ruz*. Ever so rarely, the magazine might have featured a short interview with a radio-based musician or film celebrity in its Radio and Television section. These features, however, were not necessarily as full of praise as they were with figures more suitable to the image of modernity. Especially conspicuous was the fact that Iranian celebrities, who had already achieved some measure of fame through cinema or radio, were nowhere to be found on these covers between 1965 and 1969. Their absence suggested that no Iranian celebrity was considered chic, tasteful, or elegant enough at the time to pose under the *Zan-e Ruz* insignia.

The Politics of Taste: Iranian Celebrity as Non-Entity

Indeed, practices of omission were as significant an instrument in portraying beauty ideals as was inclusion. The absence of Iranian celebrities in *Zan-e Ruz* pointed to the politics of taste as devised by the purportedly high culture ethos of the magazine. In keeping with the state ethos of “equating secular Iran with westernized Iran” and “conceiving of secularization only along westernizing lines,” *Zan-e Ruz* also mirrored the “westernized elite's disdain for their country's popular culture and the social strata that carried it.”²³⁶ The 1960s saw quite a few Iranian artists rise to the rank of

²³⁶ Houchang E. Chehabi, “Voices Unveiled: Women Singers in Iran,” in *Iran & Beyond: Essays in Middle Eastern History in Honor of Nikki R. Keddie*, ed. Rudolph P. Matthee, Beth Baron, and Nikki R. Keddie (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Pub, 2000), 166.

celebrity through both radio and local cinema. Both male and female, such emerging young stars were plenty in the popular culture of the time, ranging from the everyman cinema actors like Behruz Vosuqi and the charismatic likes of Foruzan and Puri Bana'i, to ever-present radio and cabaret stars such as Googoosh or Aref. However, due especially to the media and locales from which these stars had achieved their fame, neither such individual was touted as ideal representations of male or female taste.

As Pedram Partovi examines, commercial Iranian cinema (*filmfarsi*) was often “a term of exclusion” according to Iranian high culture. Quickly put-together and comprising traditional rags-to-riches romance plots and fraught with song and dance numbers as inspired by the previously popular Egyptian and Indian cinema of the time, these films were treated as antagonistic to “pure and autonomous art”²³⁷ of Iran. The popularity of these films was deemed to rest only on the strata of society outside the purview of high culture. Pigeonholed as either “mindless entertainment” or “a diversion for the illiterate and semiliterate classes.”²³⁸ critics of these films did not shy from going so far as accuse them to be ideological obstacles to the advancement of Iran into modernity. Even though the underlying themes within many of these films were often in line with the state’s conflation of modernity with westernization, Hamid Naficy suggests that the crudeness and the “naivete” with which they projected these aspirations “pointed to an underlying anxiety” among elite critics.²³⁹ Likewise, those *filmfarsi* that did not touch on modernistic themes instead engaged with the subcultures of the *luti* or *jāhel* (toughmen), which also prompted modernist elites to disregard them as either tasteless, or “hopelessly out of step” with the paradigm they were trying

²³⁷ Pedram Partovi, “Popular Film and the National Imagination in Pahlavi Iran” (Ph.D., The University of Chicago, 2010), 4.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema, Volume 2: The Industrializing Years, 1941–1978* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2011), 150.

to project. After all, these elites – *Zan-e Ruz* among them – had their own “new vision of Iran and Iranian masculinity” as well as Iranian femininity.²⁴⁰

The archetype for the modern Iranian man, after all, no longer donned an oversized cap and a twirled mustache, fighting for family honor and coming home to dine on *āb-gusht* (lamb soup), while seated cross-legged on the rug. According to the dominant culture, the modern standard for the Iranian man had undergone a drastic change, and unlike the ever-shifting standards for the new woman, it seemed to have been set in stone. A chic man – as per a *Zan-e Ruz* article advising women to help with their husbands’ cleanliness – was presumed to be clean shaven (or occasionally, sporting a clean mustache), cutting his hair every fortnight, owning several sets of collared shirts, and wearing either a bowtie or a tie “as per custom” as well as long enough socks that would “cover his legs when he is wearing pants.”²⁴¹

Such sartorial expectations for modern Iranian males was not just limited to the pages of *Zan-e Ruz* either. As even demonstrated in contemporaneous textbooks, the new Iranian man was exclusively depicted as wearing a clean-cut white shirt and a cardigan, while smoking his cigarette only with his right-hand, as etiquette demanded. Another lesson in the same textbook also served to visually teach children that beards and caps were exclusive only to the past – and even then, they were limited to *maktabs* (religious schools) as opposed to the Pahlavi-established schools of today. That lesson also reminded schoolchildren that “back then, they also thought that girls did not need an education,”²⁴² a distinguishing factor compared to the picture of the modern family displayed some lessons after, where Goli, the daughter, “has just returned from school” to sit at an unsegregated table, next to her father, together with the rest of her modern Iranian family, donning

²⁴⁰ Partovi, “Popular Film,” 236.

²⁴¹ “Khānom, kami ham be āqā beresid?,” *Zan-e Ruz* 184, September 21, 1968.

²⁴² *Ketāb-e sevvom-e dabestān* (Tehran: Ministry of Culture, 1342), 46.

her black dress with a white collar and cuffs.²⁴³ Only the grandmother was visualized as wearing a *rusari* (scarf), pointing further to changing times.

As seen in not only the content of the *Zan-e Ruz* but contemporaneous textbooks as well, politics of taste was pervasive in the official popular culture of the 1960s. Indeed, as delineated by Pierre Bourdieu, the notion of taste is contingent on “a set of unifying principles which express and organize the interests of different social classes.”²⁴⁴ These principles are not only central to education systems within a given culture (as seen in the aforementioned case of a third grade textbook), but also any other cultural institution charged with “mediating the relations between the status hierarchies associated with different tastes and cultural preferences on the one hand, and the organization and reproduction of the occupational class structure on the other.”²⁴⁵

Since, as John Berger argues, “publicity” often works to provide a large audience with “an image of himself made more glamorous by the product or opportunity it is trying to sell” – thereby “making him envious of himself as he might be”²⁴⁶ – to publicize a celebrity like a *filmfarsi* star or singer would be to elevate them to a position worthy of emulation, which would stand in stark contrast to the high culture that *Zan-e Ruz* was already putting on offer. After all, Bourdieu reminds us that taste is a “practical affirmation of an inevitable difference,” and by distinguishing one marker of taste over another, tastes assert themselves through “the refusal of other tastes.”²⁴⁷

In this case, while tasteful western-ness was treated as a marker of distinction in a high cultural print institution like *Zan-e Ruz*, vulgar displays of either leisure or tradition as portrayed in *filmfarsi* or the cabaret performances of emerging musical artists were treated as an indicator

²⁴³ Ibid., 69.

²⁴⁴ Tony Bennett, “Introduction to the Routledge Classics Edition,” in *Distinction*, (London: Routledge, 2010), 24.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 132.

²⁴⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 88.

for tastelessness. The hegemonic demotion of certain elements in Iranian popular culture like *filmfarsi* or the pop music scene of the period suggested a like categorization of tastes according to each Iranian social class, together with their alleged preferences. Rather than risk alienation in visibly decrying this popular culture, however, *Zan-e Ruz* merely opted to deny its existence by rarely mentioning it. In lieu of this, as I will try to demonstrate with the Teen Princess pageant, the magazine resolved to construct a celebrity of its own from the ground up. This new celebrity would then work to not only signify what a high culture celebrity might look like but also help educate readers as to the ways in which they, too, could achieve a like status.

The Teen Princess: A Tasteful Celebrity

Originally introduced as *Dokhtar-e Bahār* (Spring Girl) in the third issue of *Zan-e Ruz*, the magazine's inaugural beauty contest was not initially presented as the momentous event it was later to be portrayed. Rather than depict the potential Spring Girl as a representative of an entire nation, the first incarnation of the competition was more akin to a commonplace magazine contest. Despite this, the vetting process for the contestants still carried loaded implications. A young female that wished to take part in this competition had to possess a "nice figure" and "photogenic characteristics," as well as "an ability to dress well and tastefully" with an overall "delicacy" to her disposition. She also had to be single, below twenty-five, born in Iran, and, nebulously, "of a respectable family." Correspondingly, she had to submit to the magazine a photograph, a biography, details about her education, as well as a report on her "family situation."²⁴⁸

From the outset, therefore, previously delineated markers of taste were apparent in the insinuations made in this call for potential contestants. The girl had to be not only beautiful according to the magazine's revealed standards of taste (in line, as it often suggested, with western

²⁴⁸ "Dokhtar-e bahār..." *Zan-e Ruz* 3, March 14, 1965.

fashions), but her family also had to be of some renown. Moreover, her family was expected to be progressive enough to allow their daughter's photograph to be published countrywide. Due to a low turnout in this initially elitist attempt, however, the magazine reframed its call in the following month's issue, replacing the requisite for a "respectable" family with a more general requirement that she be "kind and beloved." Eventually, in spring of 1965, a committee comprising "a sociologist, a painter, a housewife, a fashion designer, a hairstylist, and a member of the editorial board,"²⁴⁹ selected the winner, Malek Simā Izadju from Tehran. Rewarded with a magazine cover and a trip to Europe, and a number of beauty appliances, the inaugural winner, together with the title *Dokhtar-e Bahār*, were swiftly forgotten. All the same, the following year saw this contest as well as its purportedly nationwide implications take on a completely different tone.

When the contest returned the next year, it had been revamped completely. No longer was the winner to be called the *Spring Girl*, nor was she eligible if she was over eighteen years old. Henceforth called the *Dokhtar-e Shāyesteh* (Teen Princess), this new contest managed to raise the stakes as well, suffusing the contest with socio-political implications. Upon her victory inside the country, Iran's Teen Princess now had to represent the entire country in the International Teen Princess pageant in Chicago, Illinois. These stakes, in turn, prompted a vigorous campaign on the part of the magazine in emphasizing the national implications of the contest. Backed by hefty sponsorships from Swiss Air and Iran Air, Iran's Teen Princess was now "the representative for all of Iran's young women," to be appraised by an American jury not just for her style, but also her "modernity and civilization." Furthermore, the magazine continually clarified that neither the Iran Teen Princess nor the International Teen Princess contest was a "beauty contest" *per se*. Rather, it was a "test to find a human being representative of the twentieth century, one that has

²⁴⁹ "Dokhtar-e bahār..." *Zan-e Ruz* 15, June 5, 1965.

found herself and has been prepared to live in this progressive-scientific and modern world” – and added to this was a slight to pre-Pahlavi Iran – “as far and away from superstition and zealotry as possible.”²⁵⁰

Thirty finalists for *Dokhtar-e Shāyesteh* were then invited to a formal review at the Hilton Hotel in Tehran. They were to be appraised while appearing in dresses specifically designed for the occasion with thanks to the pageant’s annual sponsors. Reports of the first Hilton Hotel evaluations lay particular stress on the girls that had arrived from *shahrestān-hā* (provinces), commending them for their “moral courage” to attend such an event. As the reporter remarked, attending these events was especially important to the provincial girls, “because it gives them a chance to observe and take part in social functions.” After praising them for their surprising elegance, the magazine then claimed that these girls’ styles were proof that “the new generation of Iranian woman have learned to become themselves all over the country and are now moving forward with intellectual progress.” Conflating beauty and style with the notion of becoming-oneself, the magazine then remarked that “this awakening will surely prompt women from both Tehran and the provinces to find brighter futures in social and cultural affairs.”²⁵¹

Ultimately, a girl from the southwest Iranian city of Dezful, Mitrā Nikānpur, won 1966’s honor. During the five-day-long proceedings at Hilton Hotel, she was tested for her allure, figure, English-speaking proficiency, sportsmanship, “modern tastes in dress and up-to-date etiquette,” as well as her “eastern-looking appearance, which could serve as a proper introduction to the healthy race of Iranians on such an international stage.”²⁵² Sprinkled with body-length images of the finalists in different types of dress for different occasions, the issue recounting her victory also

²⁵⁰ Majid Davami, “60 dokhtar entekhāb shodand,” *Zan-e Ruz* 58, April 9, 1966.

²⁵¹ “11 dokhtar be fināl residand,” *Zan-e Ruz* 59, April 16, 1966.

²⁵² “Shenel-e eftekhār bedush-e yek dokhtar-e Dezfuli,” *Zan-e Ruz* 60, April 23, 1966.

emphasized that the dresses worn by the contestants were “all covered,” and that girls were requested not to wear “décolleté, or make-up that would be antagonistic to the dignities of a family-girl.”²⁵³

Unfortunately, all the praise for Mitrā came crashing down when she failed to win or even place as a finalist at the Chicago’s International Teen Princess pageant, eventually awarded to “Princess Japan,” Reiko Oshida. In its opening feature on 4 June 1966, titled “Why Didn’t Iran’s Girl Win?” the magazine disparaged Mitrā for her “whining” and “haggling” during the contest, using it to make a general claim about all Iranian girls that they, too, shared in such qualities. It then reminded readers that the teen pageant contest was a cultural contest looking to appraise the character and behavior of its contestants; as such, it could in no way approve “a superficial, counterfeit, and imitative creature; a girl whose style, mode of speech, laughter, and overall behaviors was appropriate to a modern girl, and not an imitation of her adults or cinema stars.” Mitrā’s problem, it remarked, was that “she put an excessive amount of attention on her appearance” and often “whined and complained about clothes and shoes to wear.” Once again, the report then cast a general warning to all Iranian families, claiming that young Iranian women cannot just cultivate themselves with clothes, *polow-khoresh* (rice and stew), math formulas, and memorized poems, but they must also learn the “formula of being human as well” together with the “ethics of living properly, socializing properly, and speaking properly.” If “Mitrā was raised as an arrogant child, it was the fault of her educational environment,” an environment that comprised “millions of others like Mitrā.”²⁵⁴

Ironically, the same magazine that had thus far encouraged women to look and act more western was now criticizing those same women for too much emulation. Mitrā’s failure on the

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ “Cherā dokhtar-e Irāni barande nashod,” *Zan-e Ruz* 66, May 25, 1966.

world stage was consequently attributed to the failure of all Iran for not instilling in its population the proper characteristics with which they could shine on an American stage.²⁵⁵ The inability to project onto an American stage a “modern” and “civilized” identity was not something that was to be merely overlooked. As per *Zan-e Ruz*’s vehement report, this disappointment justified ire toward all Iranians, and especially the Iranian woman, who had failed to properly project their newly-achieved modernity. While some years prior, the magazine had lamented the humiliations bore by women throughout the century and the ways that this pageant had worked to rectify those humiliations, the failure of Mitrā Nikānpur prompted the magazine to humiliate women further.

In consequence of this disappointment, the magazine’s standards for style and taste also shifted. When, on 23 October 1966 the call for applicants was made again for the 1967 pageant, the magazine’s cover featured a collage of Mitrā standing beside Reiko Oshida. While Oshida was pictured in a confident pose smiling in her yellow gown, Mitrā was pictured stiff and uncomfortable in the same dress. Citing the flaws in the previous year’s beauty standards, *Zan-e Ruz* claimed that “Princess Iran will have a much better chance at the contest this year, as we have learned how to prepare her.” The way to prepare her, as it happened, was to style her closer to Miss Japan’s winning demeanor. Putting emphasis on Oshida, the magazine remarked that she was “the ideal archetype for this year’s juries for Iran Teen Princess.” It then described her as “modest and dignified, who nonetheless exudes modernity based on the appropriate standards of the day.” Also emphasized was Oshida’s discipline, as the magazine then quoted Oshida recounting the ways her mother beat her “so that I would never disobey her.” Immediately following this description of Oshida, the article stated that “Iran’s Teen Princess must be concurrently modern, contemporaneous, tasteful as well as *serene* and *noble*,” the addition of the latter two

²⁵⁵ “Dokhtar-e Irān az āmrkā bāzgasht,” *Zan-e Ruz* 68, June 18, 1966.

characteristics perhaps pointing to the qualities that Mitrā had previously lacked. Thus, the marker for taste had now shifted from merely looking modern to now also exuding modesty and nobility.²⁵⁶

Chosen for her “*shārm* (charm), etiquette, and grace” as well as her “familiarity with a western modern life” as per her four years-long education in Switzerland and France, 1966’s Teen Princess, Shahlā Vahābzādeh, was chosen as the next girl to represent “today’s free Iranian women and the praiseworthy mothers of tomorrow.”²⁵⁷ When Shahlā took third place in Chicago, the magazine spent most of the feature recounting the praises bestowed on Iran’s Teen Princess by American media, quoting only the American media experts’ opinions as to why Shahlā was indeed praiseworthy and representative of the “proactive progress” apparent in Iran.²⁵⁸

So celebrated was Shahlā’s victory in Chicago that it granted her an audience with Queen Farah. Such an occasion marked the first instance that *Zan-e Ruz*’s already-established epitome of a modern Iranian style was pictured side-by-side with the magazine’s own constructed archetype. At the meeting, Farah emphasized the importance of such contests in informing the world about contemporary Iran. The meeting proved so auspicious that when *Zan-e Ruz* announced its next rollcall for 1968’s Teen Princess, an audience with *Shahbanu* was first in its list of prizes. From then on, not only would the winner of the local contest go on to represent Iran’s modernity on an international stage, but she would also have the chance to sit down with the Queen of Iran, the nation’s paragon of a modern style.

At this juncture, it would be best to also discuss the socializing implications of this contest. While the contest was open to everybody inside the country, it nonetheless required them to dress,

²⁵⁶ “Āghāz-e mosābeqe-ye entekhāb-e dokhtar-e shāyeste-ye Irān,” *Zan-e Ruz* 88, October 23, 1966.

²⁵⁷ “Dushizeh Shahlā Vahābzādeh dokhtar-e shāyeste-ye sāl-e 1346-e Irān,” *Zan-e Ruz* 113, May 6, 1967.

²⁵⁸ “Dokhtar-e Irān sevvom shod!,” *Zan-e Ruz* 117, June 3, 1967.

or – as per the local pageant’s procedure – to be dressed in the modern styles advertised by the magazine. Likewise, this required them to display themselves socially to a wide audience, first a jury of their own country people, and then the world at large. While the first contest only required them to dress in a specific fashion – meeting with alleged disaster in Chicago – the second one also encouraged them to act in accordance with particular behaviors also representative of modernity. The perks of at least attempting to rise to such standards afforded them not just a free trip to Tehran and potentially the United States, but also an audience with the Queen of the country.

Indeed, such undertakings bore a striking resemblance to what Marcel Mauss considers to be the “techniques of the body” implicitly instilled in individuals by their overarching societies. According to Mauss, individuals are often encouraged to carry out “prestigious imitation,” whereby a child or an adult “imitates actions which have succeeded and which he has seen successfully performed by people in whom he has confidence and who have authority over him.” These actions often involve “the body,” as “the individual borrows the series of movements which constitute it from the action executed in front of him or with him by others,” especially those who might have a semblance of “prestige.”²⁵⁹ By offering interested parties particularly attractive incentives in fashioning themselves according to modernistic tenets, a magazine like *Zan-e Ruz* thereby encouraged particular techniques of the body over others, including manners in which one might dress and behave inside that dress. In order to obtain the status of *Dokhtar-e Shāyesteh* or International Teen Princess, an individual was thus encouraged to train and fashion herself in a manner that might best embody the winning qualities required of her. The burden was especially amplified when they were tasked with representing not just their country, but also their Queen,

²⁵⁹ Marcel Mauss, “Techniques of the Body *,” *Economy and Society* 2, no. 1 (February 1973): 73.

who had been presented within the pages of this magazine as the archetype for a modern Iranian woman.

Indeed, the employment of beauty pageants as an instrument for modernity was not exclusive to only Iran. As Ada Holland Shissler notes, the mid-twentieth century saw plenty of countries undergoing modernization efforts, such as Turkey or Mexico, utilize beauty contests “as tools for effecting a social revolution at home, and for projecting a revolution to audiences.”²⁶⁰ Participation in such contests served as a “nationalistic expression and a means of representing the new state on the world stage, as an equal accepted among the ‘great’ and ‘civilized’ nations of the earth.”²⁶¹ Also, as evidenced in the increasing role of corporate sponsorships bestowed on the *Dokhtar-e Shayesteh* contest, while these contests encouraged domestic consumption, they were, fundamentally, “exercises in nationalism and the projection of a ‘modern,’ positive national image.”²⁶²

Likewise, as we have examined through Mauss’ theories on bodily technologies, for nations that were redefining and transforming the visibility of women in the public space, these contests were also meant to challenge traditional concepts as “gender roles, or family honor.” In putting forward this challenge, the contests looked to change “the parameters of where women could go and what they could do”²⁶³ without these actions being interpreted as dishonorable – a concept that is especially useful when examining the constant praise bestowed on oft-more traditional provincial participants for their “moral courage.”

²⁶⁰ Ada Holland Shissler, “Beauty Is Nothing to Be Ashamed Of: Beauty Contests As Tools of Women’s Liberation in Early Republican Turkey,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 24, no. 1 (2004): 108.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 112.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 107.

And so, when 1968's Teen Princess, Elāheh Azodi, went on to Chicago to become International Teen Princess that year, a new local star was born. Not only was she a figure to be celebrated, but one to be emulated as well. The issue reporting her victory, with its circulation of 140,000 copies, framed it as a victory for all Iran.²⁶⁴ The following issue, picturing Elāheh exchanging compliments with Mohammad Reza Shah, also featured a translated interview conducted with Elāheh by the Associated Press, as well as interviews with sociologists and school principals about the significance of this victory.²⁶⁵

Granted an audience with *Shahbanu* in September 1968, Elāheh was also praised by the Queen, who complimented the Teen Princess for winning the pageant by “successfully adopting European and American standards,” and thereby “raising the repute of her country” and “serving her country.”²⁶⁶ While the Queen then went on to say that girl must be “natural, sincere, and free of ostentation,” she then commended the *Dokhtar-e Shāyesteh* contest for “providing” its contestants with “character, art, sports, spiritual health, and moral courage,” claiming that this was a positive step in “making the new generation of girls natural.” She then explained that a “modern” and “civilized” and socially-inclined woman was “one who does not exaggerate in self-fashioning herself but is concurrently clean and uses cosmetics, while also engaging in sports, arts, and healthy hobbies.” The magazine then reminded readers that “the helpful and wise advice of Her Majesty the *Shahbanu*, which is an educational lesson for all young women, could be particularly deduced from Elāheh Azodi's selection as an International Teen Princess.” That the Queen had also based

²⁶⁴ “Zang-hā rā bezanid mā piruz shodim: tāj-e eftekhār bar tārek-e zan-e irāni,” *Zan-e Ruz* 170, June 15, 1968.

²⁶⁵ “Az piRuzi-ye shicāgow che āmukhtim?,” *Zan-e Ruz* 171, June 22, 1968.

²⁶⁶ “Shahbanu farmudand: dokhtar-e emRuz ham zāher-e ārāsteh dārad ham bāten-e shāyesteh,” *Zan-e Ruz* 182, September 7, 1968.

her standards of an ideal modern woman on Elāheh was presented as “the most treasured prize” that could have been bestowed on the teen princess.²⁶⁷

After all, Elāheh’s selection as *Dokhtar-e Shāyesteh* had largely been based on tastes in line with Euro-American standards. The issue announcing her local victory laid particular stress on her “fluency in both English and French,” “her skill in the piano,” “her understanding of classical music,” as well as her athletic abilities concerning “ice-skating, swimming, volleyball and ping-pong.”²⁶⁸ What none of the publicity pertaining to Azodi made mention of, however, was the fact that she happened to also come from a well-heeled family that were descendants of Fath-Ali Shah Qajar. In consequence, Azodi’s tastes not only constituted those of the westernized classes, but her social status was also complementary to these tastes. Each of the standards Azodi adhered to happened to be the markers of taste exclusive to the “cultural nobility.”²⁶⁹ This definition of culture likewise adhered to both the state elite’s as well as *Zan-e Ruz*’s own prescriptions for taste. Ever slightly, therefore, the standards of style again shifted as a result of Elāheh’s victory. Not only were inner and outer beauty required of the modern Iranian woman, but also necessary was cultural cultivation according to western markers of nobility.

With a standard of style finally fixed, by the following year’s rollcall, *Zan-e Ruz* accordingly amplified its methods to promulgate these standards to an audience much wider than its own already-impressive readership. With the prestige afforded to the pageant by an international victory as well as the support of both Pahlavi rulers – including a redefinition of a modern Iranian female dress by the Queen herself – *Zan-e Ruz* announced that it would no longer limit its promotion for *Dokhtar-e Shāyesteh* to the pages of its magazine. Instead, half a million

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ “Elāheh, dokhtar-e shāyeste-ye sāl-e 47,” *Zan-e Ruz* 165, May 11, 1968.

²⁶⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, “The Titles of Cultural Nobility,” in *Distinction*, (London: Routledge, 2010).

catalogues were to be sent out to every girls' school in Iran, delineating both the requirements and prizes, but also "the ways in which any fourteen to eighteen-year-old *Dokhtar-e Shāyesteh*... can bring pride to her family and her country." To further incentivize participation, three scholarships were also to be rewarded from 1968 onward; one for "The Girl of Intelligence and Scholarship," another for "The Girl of Chicness and Good Taste," and lastly, one for "The Girl of Housewifery and Homemaking." Meant to "encourage them to travel to modern and progressive countries," the scholarships would provide them with the means to study "their preferred field of study in any European country."²⁷⁰

A chief purpose of the *Dokhtar-e Shāyesteh* pageant was thus the cultivation of local tastes according to Euro-American standards. After all, such cultivation of tastes would not only assist the magazine in the sales of the cosmetics advertised within its pages, but also in styling the nation according to informal but nevertheless top-down dictums. By responding to these "mediated constructions of ideal femininity," girls were not only encouraged, but incentivized to "struggle to be what the culture wants them to be."²⁷¹ And with the standard being the blue-blooded Elāheh Azodi, it was already clear precisely whom they were expected to become.

Javanan: Open Negotiations, Closed Parameters

Rather than go so far as to construct its own celebrity, *Ettelaat's Javanan* magazine, a direct rival to *Zan-e Ruz*,²⁷² sought to reduce the gap between Iran's indigenous popular culture and that of the elite's. Veering from an initiative to educate, *Javanan* endeavored to reflect youth culture as

²⁷⁰ "Khabar-e bozorg-e sāl! āghāz-e marāseme entekhāb-e dokhtar-e shāyeste-ye sāl-e 1348-e irān," *Zan-e Ruz* 200, January 11, 1969.

²⁷¹ Meenakshi Gigi Durham, "Dilemmas of Desire: Representations of Adolescent Sexuality in Two Teen Magazines," *Youth & Society* 29, no. 3 (March 1, 1998): 373.

²⁷² R. Etemadi recalls contacting Mas'udi and attesting to the commercial threat posed to *Ettelaat* by youth-oriented magazines such as *Zan-e Ruz*. Etemadi then convinced him to launch on a youth-oriented publication under the *Ettelaat* banner. See, "Mosāhebeh bā r. Etemadi sardabir-e pishin-e Ettelaat-e Javanan dar āstāne-ye 80 sālegi," Pezhvāk Iran.

observed in not just Tehran but all of Iran. In directly negotiating with its readers through polling, regular contests absent of *Zan-e Ruz*'s rather strict requirements, regular reports from the provinces, and through continual promises to reflect rather than prescribe, *Javanan* established itself as a democratic and more broadminded print publication. This strategy proved more than successful. In just over a year, the magazine went from a circulation of 5,000 in September 1966 to 50,000 in January 1968.²⁷³

All the same, despite *Javanan*'s locally-inclusive and people-centric focus, the magazine's claim to reflect Iranian youth was nonetheless embedded with a particularly western template. In this section, I will examine two instances through which this template revealed itself as well as its vital links to style during this period. These instances constituted the magazine's attempts to reframe the concept of the *farangi mo'āb* (western-inclined) so that it would connote generational conflict, as well as its undertakings in reframing the politics of taste as imposed on *filmfarsi* and indigenous pop music by high culture elites. By applying the same stylistic ideals as *Zan-e Ruz* to indigenous figures as opposed to Euro-American figures, this magazine, in turn, attempted to normalize western and modernistic styles within a more relatable and local context.

Rivalry Not Imitation: Redefining the *Farangi Mo'āb*

With Italian actress Claudia Cardinale gracing its inaugural cover in a red summer dress, the first issue of *Javanan* opened with a two-page spread distinguishing the new generation from the old. Titled "We Are Another Generation," the passage professed, rather lyrically, that "We are the generation whose ceaseless hunger for new ideas, and revolutionary thoughts is unrelenting," before pronouncing some lines later, "You used to laugh at us in the same way that your own predecessors used to call you *farangi mo'āb* and arrogant and *fokoli*," going on to accuse its

²⁷³ *Javanan* 20, February 6, 1967.

imaginary antagonist that “Now, you, too, within that same antiquated frame of mind are mocking the novel and the new.” Ultimately, the magazine reminded readers that “These are not our statements, but those of today’s generation, on whom – whether we like it or not – our future relies.” Promising to tend to the new generation’s needs by providing them the “useful diversions” they require, the magazine emphasized that it would pay equal attention to lives of both urban and provincial youth.²⁷⁴ Following this feature came another article, this time focused on education, with the magazine promising to take seriously the Shah’s White Revolutionary slogan to “transform the culture whole.” The culture of the country, the editor went on, “must become harmonious with the revolutionary spirit,” in turn, professing his expectations for the education system to follow suit, while also subtly suggesting that a magazine like *Javanan* already has.²⁷⁵

Hence, in its first pages, the magazine not only proclaimed itself a soldier in the state’s revolutionary movement, but also worked to redefine previously-coined pejoratives such as *farangi mo’ābi* and *fokoli* (derived from the French ‘*faux col*’ for detachable collar). In so doing, it also pre-emptively mitigated potential accusations of the recently-coined *gharbzadegi*. *Gharbzadegi*, which itself was an updated version of the previously coined *farangi mo’āb* and *fokoli*, was a term only recently made popular by Iranian writer Jalal Al-e Ahmad. In his 1962 polemic of the same name, Al-e Ahmad had critiqued the manner in which Iranians had passively embraced western products and consumption habits without necessarily grasping the context behind the imported culture they had appropriated. In the book, Al-e Ahmad professed that western-inclined Iranians were only “copying the West outwardly and superficially” without making any discernible effort to actually understand the inherent implications of this new way of

²⁷⁴ Etemadi, “Mā nasl-e digari hastim,” *Javanan 1*, September 26, 1966.

²⁷⁵ Etemadi, “Farhang bāyad ziroru shavad,” *Javanan 1*, September 26, 1966.

life.²⁷⁶ It bears mentioning, however, that Al-e Ahmad was not necessarily criticizing the West *per se*, so much as he was critiquing the passive manners in which Iranians had adopted western consumerism. He had deemed such passive Iranians as “weststruck” (*gharbzadeh*), characterizing them as individuals who had not only lost their connection to the past but had also “no idea about the future;” instead attending to only the most superficial aspects of modern life. According to Al-e Ahmad, the *gharbzadeh*’s only preoccupation comprised regiments by which “to groom himself... giving importance only to his shoes, his clothes, and the furnishings inside his home.”²⁷⁷ All that the *gharbzadeh* allegedly cared about was how he might best adopt the Euro-American aesthetic as opposed to going beyond the superficialities of the West and understand the culture as a whole. Though almost immediately after the book’s publication, the term *gharbzadeh* was rendered into a pejorative directed toward westernized Iranians, *Gharbzadegi* itself was not necessarily aimed at disparaging a class of society so much as it was a call to all west-inclined Iranians to go beyond imitation in appropriating western mores.²⁷⁸ This, however, did not deter those among the intelligentsia ill at ease with the Shah’s modernization program to gradually weaponize the word so as refer to all those who had since embraced Euro-American lifestyles.²⁷⁹

So as to combat accusations of this ilk, *Javanan*’s inaugural issue thus immediately co-opted the terms surrounding it, framing them instead as no more than reactionary opprobria coined by an old-fashioned generation feeling threatened by the new. In a like manner, the content inside *Javanan*’s inaugural issue, featuring a spread of French actress Claudine Auger, a biography of Marilyn Monroe, Cassius Clay, the diaries of “Europe’s Casanova” as well as suggested styles to

²⁷⁶ Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Gharbzadegi*, 2007 Reprint (Qom: Nashr-e Khorram, 1962), 20.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 123.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁷⁹ See also Homa Katouzian and Morad Moazami, “Gharbzadegi: mojāhedat-ha va masā’eb-e ān,” trans. Farzaneh Qojlu, *Bokhārā*, no. 145 (August 6, 2021).

take on for 1967 (once again with emphasis on the millennial calendar) were thus immediately ascribed to the tastes of the new generation of Iranians, regardless of class or station. Indeed, according to *Javanan*, most conspicuous among the new generation of Iranian – both rural and urban – was its embrace of western styles. These new tastes, according to the magazine, were not symptoms of *gharbzadegi*, so much as they were simply the tastes of a new, more refined generation that preferred the better things of life. Emphasizing that “provincial youths were particularly interested in what their peers in Tehran are up to and how they look like,” the magazine also introduced a recurring feature titled “Within the Circles of Girls and Boys” in its first issue as a means to publicize to rural readers the fashions prevalent in Tehran. In the recurring feature, Tehrani boys and girls were generalized as all donning fashionable clothes as per the Euro-American vogues of the day. And as typified by the undisclosed sample size presented by *Javanan*, each week was defined by a new set of clothing. At the beginning of the 1966 school year, for instance, all girls were reported as wearing “above-knee skirts and the latest fashions in *mod*, alongside new colors (orange, turquoise, yellow), with tight-fitting designs.” Equally so, the fashions of last year had all but disappeared, according to the magazine, suggesting that a particular fashion system was in full swing within the country, based largely “on the element of change,”²⁸⁰ where what was in vogue in yesteryear was no longer valued. Boys, too, according to this issue, were experiencing changes in their styles, donning mop-top haircuts as inspired by the Beatles and wide-leg trousers with equally long trench coats.

These fashions also happened to coincide with the styles advertised within the magazine’s *Mod* (Fashion) section. Providing readers with images of British pedestrians dressed in above-knee miniskirts, the section reminded readers that Britain’s primary characteristic was that they

²⁸⁰ Fred Davis, *Fashion, Culture, and Identity*, (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 14.

managed to concurrently “preserve their old traditions while also making room for the new by also maintaining their modern lifestyles.”²⁸¹ As remarked by Roland Barthes, captions are especially significant to fashion magazines as they help “reduce the risk engendered by a multiplicity of meanings.”²⁸² The aforementioned caption, therefore, implied that Iranian youth could also preserve old traditions while embracing the new with such outfits. In further accordance with Barthes’ theories on fashion, one can also discern a “system of meaning”²⁸³ revealed within these series of promotions. While the “Within the Circles of Girls and Boys” section was meant to offer provincial kids with templates on which they could model themselves, the *Mod* section was then reserved for the urban Tehrani readers, who were advised on what to wear and what not to wear as per a piece of clothing’s capacity to balance tradition with modernity. Tehran was thus positioned as a standard-bearer of style for the provinces, and Europe as the standard-bearer of style for Tehran.

This system repeated itself throughout every issue of the magazine, often omitting any variance in style based on socio-economic positions. The 24 April 1967 issue, for example, reported on the styles donned by those in southern Tehran, an area that often housed the less socio-economically endowed of the population. Despite this segment’s lack of means, however, the article nonetheless proclaimed that *mod* was in full tilt in these areas as well, with “blue suits and trouser” popular within this segment of the population.²⁸⁴ By 6 October 1967, when reporting the *mod* popular among the youth of northwestern Iran, there was little difference to be found between Tehran and these other areas. The girls of Rezaiyeh, “as usual,” were also reported to be wearing above-knee skirts, complementing these skirts with “black and blue sleeveless dresses” and

²⁸¹ Malekeh Yusefiyān, “Mod,” *Javanan* 2, October 3, 1966.

²⁸² Roland Barthes, *The Language of Fashion*, eBook (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 93.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 69.

²⁸⁴ Shahriyār, “Dar mahāfel-e tehrān,” *Javanan* 30, April 24, 1967.

donning “Audrey Hepburn sunglasses.” Likewise, boys, inspired by either Italian or American fashions, were clothed in “indigo suits and trousers... with white polka-dotted dark-green ties.” The youth of the more urban Tabriz were reported to have been dressed in similar fashions as well.”²⁸⁵ As per the following issue’s report, styles were also no different in Rasht – with only slight differences in Rashti youths’ preferred color-schemes. When boys and girls from Rasht were asked about the significance of following *mod*, they all responded that fashion-forwardness was imperative to a modern life. One claimed that “in today’s world it is important to follow fashion.” Another remarked that it was necessary for people to follow *mod* in order to “blend into society.” However, as another respondent reminded the magazine, there was also a limit to fashionableness, as one also had to adhere to clothes that preserved the “chastity and dignity” of womanhood and did not diminish the society in which she lived in.²⁸⁶

Although these were indeed subjective opinions of youth chosen to be interviewed, the magazine’s sample size in such interviews was primarily absent of individuals living in opposition to changing fashions. What, then, of the sectors of society that did not abide by these styles? The politics of exclusion were once again apparent here. Omitted from these pages were those individuals not following said trends, perhaps still keeping with more traditional modes of dress such as the chador or *rusari* for girls, or plainer clothes and hairstyles for boys. Such omissions suggested that these latter youths were perhaps not part of the movement engendered by the “new generation.” With the magazine having already constructed a dichotomy between the older, less receptive and the new, more inquisitive generations in its first issue, this specific sector of society was thus assumed to be either a part of the antagonistic generation, or as non-entities not part of the cultural conversation at all.

²⁸⁵ “Dar mahāfel-e Javanan,” *Javanan* 54, September 23, 1967.

²⁸⁶ “Pesarān-e rashti qabel-e etemād nistand,” *Javanan* 77, March 25, 1968.

A like process of normalization was therefore underway within the pages of *Javanan*, as well as a coded definition of what it meant to be young. Youthfulness, according to the magazine, was not a matter of age; rather, it was contingent on one's reception to modern entertainments and modern dress. To be young, according to *Javanan*, it was imperative for one to also risk being dismissed as a *farangi mo'āb*. Although youths were presented as looking for "progress," progress was not just a matter of education or healthy recreational activities, but also a matter of wanting to possess what was already available in the West.

As per its editor's own response to an accusation of *gharbzadegi* on 29 May 1967, *Javanan's* primary goal was to encourage the new generation to "compete with the West" rather than to imitate it. Already imbedded with this project, therefore, was an idealized vision concerning the standards of the western world. After all, in order to "compete with the West," *Javanan's* version of Iran could not just casually ignore the West. Rather, it had to work up to its standards so that it could then, optimistically, surpass it. Explaining this spirit of competition by invoking the Beatles as an example, editor Rajab-Ali Etemadi falsely claimed that the band had single-handedly rescued Britain from bankruptcy. In a like manner, he maintained, "other great governments have also recognized that bands such as the Beatles can divest their soil of measurable capital." In response to this, "they, too, have worked to cultivate their own musical bands," as the United States has allegedly done with the Monkees. Attributing the importance of musical groups to state power and capital, Etemadi then remarked that *Javanan's* goal was to "cultivate Iranian *jāzz* (pop) groups that could not only prevent capital from escaping our country, but could also demonstrate the skills of our own youth, and to prove that they do not lack the things that other

youths already possess.” Etemadi, therefore, attributed both cultural and political reasons to *Javanan*’s intent to cultivate Iran’s cultural scene, so that it could compete with the West.²⁸⁷

One particularly unsuccessful attempt at engendering competition was *Javanan*’s efforts in organizing a local fashion contest, as announced on 8 July 1968. Collaborating with Maison Kent in Tehran, the magazine claimed that the purpose of this contest was “to prove that Iranian youths do not imitate, but they also create, and that their designs should be made accessible to the world.” Maison Kent was tasked with sewing the winning designs and putting them on display in its own space. Peculiarly – bearing in mind that the magazine often equated youth with modernity – a primary requirement for the contest was that designs should only cater to youth, and that “any design meant for older ages are to be immediately rejected.”²⁸⁸ This contest also made a call for potential models, suggesting that any Iranian boy or girl, between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five, could refer to the magazine’s offices in case they were interested. The deadline for submitting the designs were 22 August, and while the 26 August issue proclaimed that 8,000 designs had been submitted, it continued to nonetheless emphasize its call for potential models, promising a five-day training period for any interested applicant who would submit their applications by the following week.²⁸⁹

By 16 September, however, the magazine still continued its call for models. Though the lessons were to commence in a week’s time, and though the magazine had already reached full capacity for male models, it announced that it was still searching for potential female models.²⁹⁰ After three months of radio silence, the magazine once again made mention of the contest in its December 1968 issue, explaining that Maison Kent could not fulfill its promises when faced with

²⁸⁷ Etemadi, “Mā gharbzadeh nistim,” *Javanan* 35, May 29, 1967.

²⁸⁸ “Mosābeqe-ye koleksiyon-e mod-e Javanan,” *Javanan* 92, July 8, 1968.

²⁸⁹ “Javānan namāyeshgar-e bozorg-e mod-hā-ye nasl-e emRuz,” *Javanan* 96, July 23, 1968.

²⁹⁰ “Eftetāh-e kelās-e āmādegi-ye mānekān-haa,” *Javanan* 102, September 16, 1969.

the unexpectedly ample number of submitted designs, and *Forushgāh-e Bozorg-e Iran* (Iran's Grand Mall) will be stepping in to fulfil those duties instead. The call for potential female models, however, was again in this announcement, claiming the need for more models as per the sizeable number of sewed designs. An added incentive for potential models was that they would receive sizable discounts from Iran's Grand Mall if they chose to participate.²⁹¹

This announcement, however, proved to be the last instance where any such fashion contest was mentioned. Due to the emphasis laid on the need for new models, it is possible that a scarcity in potential female models was a chief reason behind the contest's discontinuation. As it happens, a 20 July 1968 interview conducted with a fashion designer by the competing *Zan-e Ruz* shed further light on the hesitations felt by Iranian girls concerning potential modelling. In the interview, the designer, Ali Eskāfi, explained that in Iran, modelling was still looked down on, just as "the past generation used to claim that no person from a good family should go into music." Eskāfi continued that this familiar taboo, together with the "shyness" and "bashfulness" of Iranian girls prevented modelling from taking off inside Iran. These remarks also explained for the dependence of corresponding local advertisements on photos of stock western models as opposed to Iranian models who might conceivably let themselves be photographed in the like styles or dresses.²⁹²

Moreover, the potential failure in finding models could have also been indicative of the fact that not only was *Javanan's* generalization of Iran's modernistic youth largely skewed, but that, despite its repeated claims, the magazine was not necessarily as inclusive or as representative of all youth. It bears mentioning that *Javanan*, like *Zan-e Ruz*, also conducted monthly style contests, though decisively not with the same, buildup, pomp, or publicity as *Dokhtar-e Shāyesteh*.

²⁹¹ Etemadi, "Namāyesh-e mod-e Javanan," *Javanan* 113, December 2, 1968.

²⁹² Manizheh Dowlatshāhi, "Āqa-ye mod!," *Zan-e Ruz* 175, July 20, 1968.

Rather, *Javanan*'s contests were simply meant to venerate both the ideal boy and the girl of each month. Required of them, naturally, was the pluck to don modern dresses and send beautified photographs to the magazine. These winners were then asked to refer to *Javanan*'s offices to be pictured in full-bodied poses in their modern clothing. And yet, these attempts were apparently not enough to encourage any boy or girl of the month to necessarily volunteer to actually model for a particular occasion.²⁹³ While the former was a mere contest with prizes and incentives, the latter perhaps seemed more like a distasteful profession.

Just as Bright: Realigning the Iranian Star

Still, among *Javanan*'s more successful projects within its ethos of cultural competition was its attempt to legitimize the stature of the Iranian celebrity vis-a-vis the star of the West. To do so, however, the magazine first had to restore the already-deigned image of the Iranian star on account of the denigration imposed on it by high society. In its first year, by way of interviews or profiles, the magazine offered pop artists such as Googoosh or the contemporaneous film artists space in which they could also share their disenchantment with the platforms on which they performed.

Javanan's first issue, for instance, featured a short profile of Googoosh titled "Googoosh, Are You the Plaything of Tehran's Cabarets?" In it, writer Bizhan Emāmi first recalled the story of an adolescent Googoosh forced to wear "thick make-up and semi-sexy clothing" as a child to make money for her impoverished household. Only then did the reporter blame the "broken art scene" of Iran for divesting the singer of better venues in which she could perform. Then, comparing her to similar child prodigies like the English Haley Mills, Emāmi asked her why she did not star in films anymore. Met with reticence on Googoosh's part, he then lamented that "this young and powerful singer" should be as famous as any other famous singer of this generation,

²⁹³ "Dokhtar-e ordibehesht," *Javanan* 35, May 29, 1967.

and yet, was instead forced to appear in front of a microphone at cafes, weddings, or cabarets without any enthusiasm on her own part.²⁹⁴ In this example, the high culture taboo of performing at cafes or cabarets was sought to be rectified by rationalizing it as a consequence of Iran's flawed art scene; likewise, Googoosh's suggestive choices of clothing and gestures since a young age were delegated to her being impelled to dress and act in such manners to make money for her family. What was more important, the article claimed, was Googoosh's voice and talents, which deserved cultivation under better circumstances.

Such interviews were also appended by images of young artists adorned in styles in line with the Euro-American fashions promoted by the magazine. Googoosh's interview, for instance, featured a height-length photograph of her in a white shirt tied at the waist, high heels, and wide-leg trousers. In a similar interview conducted with singer Aref, where he claimed that the low pay in radio often compelled artists like him to have to perform at weddings and cabarets, he was likewise pictured in chic male clothing, this time in a check jacket and black trousers. These instances perhaps augured the role that celebrity was to gradually play in further normalizing the fashions of the time, especially by the beginnings of 1969 when television began to play a larger role in projecting these styles to a wider audience.

In *Javanan*'s first year, a similar attempt was made to rectify the image of *filmfarsi* actors, though not necessarily the medium in which they performed. Beginning with an interview with film and theatre actor Ezzatollah Entezami in its second issue, these articles highlighted the equal disgruntlement felt by the contemporaneous actors for having to star in the poorly-produced *filmfarsi*.²⁹⁵ In the same vein, a similar interview with actor Behruz Vosuqi saw the actor decry the ways in which the commercial tendencies of both producers and actors-turned-directors work

²⁹⁴ Bizhan Emāmi, "Googoosh to bāziche-ye cābāre-hā-ye tehrāni?," *Javanan 1*, September 26, 1966.

²⁹⁵ Emāmi, "Gofteguyi ba mard-e hezār chehreh," *Javanan 2*, October 3, 1966.

toward “the degeneration of Persian cinema,” claiming that only a few directors such as Samuel Khachikian stray from such tendencies.²⁹⁶ In its 30 January 1968 issue, *Javanan* further attempted to shed light on the shortcomings of *filmfarsi*. After interviewing a random selection of youth who claimed that the emphasis on *lutis*, *ab-gusht* and cheapened musical numbers divested these films of credibility, the magazine then interviewed French-educated Fereydoun Rahnema on the ways in which *filmfarsis* could perhaps improve. Rahnema remarked that a state-supported film industry could counteract the commercial mindsets of local producers and reduce the number of “valueless” films, thus suggesting that the only way to revive Iran’s film industry was to instill in it the state’s high cultural values.²⁹⁷ By 13 February, the magazine had drafted a resolution to improve the *filmfarsi*, while also apologizing to a reader who had shared his frustration with the magazine for praising a particularly distasteful film, by claiming that “the praise given to the film was meant as an advertisement, and from now we will be careful to offer a disclaimer.”²⁹⁸

In such a way, *Javanan* managed to curb judgement on praising *filmfarsi* while simultaneously praising the stars themselves. Separating the stars from their derided medium allowed the magazine to cover them in the same manner as they would a western film star, without having to resort to the exclusionary tactics practiced by *Zan-e Ruz* as per the dictums of high taste. Rather, these stars were projected as those also abiding by lifestyles of good taste. One such instance manifested in series of articles beginning on 27 March 1967, where a film or radio star would receive a grade according to their “talents” and “praiseworthiness.” Grading to an overall score of 100, stars would be assessed for their “artfulness,” “canon of works,” “sense of taste,” “public relations,” and “character.” The first of these articles put former-athlete-turned-film-star

²⁹⁶ Emāmi, “Chehreh-i por omid,” *Javanan* 14, December 26, 1966.

²⁹⁷ Emāmi, “Luti bāzi, dizi ābgusht, dārām-rām...,” *Javanan* 19, January 30, 1967.

²⁹⁸ “Qat’ nāme-ye majal-e Javanan darbāre-ye filmfarsi,” *Javanan* 21, February 13, 1967.

Mohammad Ali Fardin to the test, giving him a grade of 20 for his taste, but only a 13 for his lifestyle. To accentuate his high taste, the writer emphasized the star's choice of a "chic and expensive" Buick Riviera, his equally chic house, as well as his well-dressed presentation. Though he received a bad grade for his vice for gambling, he was nevertheless granted an average grade "because of his captivating style."²⁹⁹ In the following issue, grading the Iranian *jāzz* (rock and roll) band O'jube-hā (The Wonders), the group's lead singer received a 20 for taste, because the attire he had chosen for the band "looked as though it had been bought in London." The band, however, received an overall grade of 15 for their taste, because despite "their chic and modern clothing," they had an excessive compulsion toward sports cars.³⁰⁰

As established in these features, a marker of good taste was thereby framed as a well-furnished home, an elegant car, and an ability to dress according to modern fashions. Conversely, bad taste or character was judged based on excessive compulsions than any character flaws in particular. Another similar contest was the long-running celebrity knick-knack lottery, inspired by European magazines, called "*Javanan Bāzār*," where readers could sign up and win a "private item" by their favorite "film actors, artists, or authors." In its first iteration, the auctioned prizes included a make-up case from singer Ramesh, a doll from film star Katāyun, or a cashmere suit as worn by O'jube-hā.³⁰¹

By way of such methods, the magazine worked to lessen the gap between the Iranian pop culture stars and the high culture that excluded them in consequence of their mediums. Certainly, it is impossible to assume anything concerning the effects that this reconfiguration had on the readership's views on Iranian stars subsequent or previous to this. That said, following a

²⁹⁹ "Emtiyāz dar āzmāyesh-e este'dād va shāyestegi bārāye fardin," *Javanan* 26, March 27, 1967.

³⁰⁰ "Emtiyāz dar āzmāyesh-e este'dād va shāyestegi bārāye O'jube-hā," *Javanan* 27, April 3, 1967.

³⁰¹ "Bāzār-e Javanan," *Javanan* 38, June 19, 1967.

questionnaire the magazine had carried out in its previous issues, the 12 August issue of the magazine announced that, due to popular demand, more Iranian artists would henceforth be highlighted in *Javanan*, as demonstrated by that same issue featuring pop singer Vigen on its cover.³⁰²

Subsequent to this, *Javanan* gave equal opportunity to both Iranian and western stars to grace its covers, often featuring Iranian artists, such as Behruz Vosuqi, Puri Bana'i, Homeyra, Googoosh, and Nilufar, in a biweekly manner. An equally conspicuous shift was seen in the descriptions afforded to the appearances of these stars in these cover stories, highlighting their beauty, their handsome dispositions, and their styles. In turn, this not only helped glamourize these stars, but sexualize them as well. Googoosh, featured in a golden jumpsuit, was described as the “beautiful and tiny angel of music” in her cover story.³⁰³ Bana'i, in a sleeveless and yellow flower-patterned dress was termed as “our cinema’s black-haired belle” with a jet-black mane “falling free over her shoulders like a waterfall.”³⁰⁴ Vosuqi, pictured with a pistol like James Bond, was now recognized for his “masculine face” and “mischievous smile.”³⁰⁵ And Nilufar, pictured in a modest sweater and hiding behind a tree branch, was “a creature with glorious beauty... with a birth mark both warm and full with spirit” and a face “like a grape... both transparent and fragile,” who was also “the symbol of beauty in our age.”³⁰⁶ Less lyrical was the magazine’s depiction of Foruzan, featured in a short and geometrically-patterned summer dress, with the words, “Foruzan,

³⁰² E'temadi, “Shomā ke dar referāndom sherkat kardid,” *Javanan* 97, August 12, 1968.

³⁰³ Ja'far Dehqān Niri, “Zendegi va hayejān-hā-ye tāze dar khānevāde-ye kuchak-e Googoosh,” *Javanan* 113, December 2, 1968.

³⁰⁴ Dehqān Niri, “In siyāh gisuy-e sinamā-ye mā anduhgin ast,” *Javanan* 114, December 9, 1968.

³⁰⁵ Dehqān Niri, “Behruz vosuqi dar barābar-e tanhā eshq-e khod,” *Javanan* 115, December 16, 1968.

³⁰⁶ Dehqān Niri, “Eshq dar nakhostin lahze bā man jangid va marā farib dād,” *Javanan* 119, January 13, 1969.

Iran's Sex Bomb" in psychedelic red overhead. She was later described as a demi-Goddess, who had found great success through her sex appeal."³⁰⁷

On prior occasions, the magazine had reserved such imagery and descriptions for western stars such as Raquel Welch or Sofia Loren. By late 1968, ideals for beauty, sexiness and style were slowly reconfigured within an Iranian context, featuring stars who represented the same ethos as the western stars, but were, perhaps, more relatable and accessible. As seen in the 19 March 1969 year-end issue, in a feature titled "Stars and the World of Sex" listing the sexiest stars in popular culture, pictured alongside western stars such as German-American actress Elke Sommer, actress Claudia Cardinale, and Swedish-American Ann-Margret, were Iranian stars Soheila, Fariba Khatami, as well as Foruzan.³⁰⁸ The page immediately following this feature was another beauty article titled "How Do the Stars of This Generation Maintain Themselves?" featuring the measurements and stylistic preferences of not only the famous model Twiggy, but also Googoosh and Nilufar. There, the local stars' preferred fashion designers were also mentioned; Nilufar named Givenchy, and Googoosh named Iranian designer Firuzeh as her favorite designer. Not only were the stars themselves made more available with thanks to *Javanan*, but they had also been refashioned as models for their equally modernistic styles.³⁰⁹

And so, by the beginning of 1969, an Iranian star system was on the horizon. Historically, as P. David Marshall remarks, celebrity culture has "served a certain pedagogical function," with a capacity to "train populations to consumer culture," including the promotion of particular styles over others.³¹⁰ Dependent on this function, however, was also the capacity of given celebrities "to

³⁰⁷ Dehqān Niri, "Foruzan, bomb-e seksi-ye sināmā-ye irān dar bār barābar-e shāye'āt," *Javanan* 116, December 23, 1968.

³⁰⁸ "Setāregān va donyā-ye seks," *Javanan* 128, March 17, 1969.

³⁰⁹ "Setāregān-e donyā-ye nasl-e now cheguneh tanāsob-e khod rā hefz mikonand?," *Javanan* 128, March 17, 1969.

³¹⁰ P. David Marshall, "The Promotion and Presentation of the Self: Celebrity as Marker of Presentational Media," *Celebrity Studies* 1, no. 1 (March 18, 2010): 46.

embody the transformative power writ large of consumer culture.”³¹¹ After all, as correspondingly maintained by Benson P. Fraser and William J. Brown, stars provide audiences with the opportunity to identify with said individuals, where they might, in turn, “develop psychological bonds” and “seek to emulate their lives”³¹² In relation to this, mass media including the magazine, whether deliberately or not, also work to “provide a plethora of attractive models with whom people wish to identify.”³¹³ Hence, the more identifiable a star is, the higher is their level of influence. By dissociating them from their mediums, and, instead, emphasizing their character and style, *Javanan* managed to restructure the stature of the Iranian star and hence project a more local brand of celebrity.

Therefore, despite its claims to cater a more general audience in its credo for inclusivity and open negotiations with the readership, *Javanan* nonetheless managed to carry out a westernizing effort in its own idiosyncratic manner. It did so by realigning the Iranian celebrity and their styles with the standards set by a high culture that already equated modernity with the West. The same styles were now made available in a local context, and the images of the newly-fashioned Iranian celebrity was now open for both consumption and emulation. In contrast to the pedagogic work taken on by the writers of *Zan-e Ruz*, the pedagogy of *Javanan* was embedded within the celebrities it helped reconfigure, together with the ways that these relatable figures were styled, described, and projected.

As I have tried to show, while *Zan-e Ruz* often took on a transparently didactic approach in its promotion of modern styles, *Javanan*'s analogous modernistic paradigm was a more intricate affair, coded as it was in a narrow promise for public negotiations and inclusivity. As it turned out,

³¹¹ Ibid., 36.

³¹² Benson P. Fraser and William J. Brown, “Media, Celebrities, and Social Influence: Identification with Elvis Presley,” *Mass Communication and Society* 5, no. 2 (May 1, 2002): 185.

³¹³ Ibid., 188.

the negotiations contended by *Javanan* were carried out by concurrently excluding non-modern sectors of society while also promoting more western lifestyles within a more local context. Despite the didactic disposition of both magazines, however, local concerns did manage to sometimes sway the editorial preferences of *Zan-e Ruz* and *Javanan*.

A Forced Compromise: The Case of the Miniskirt

As Loubna H. Skalli has maintained with respect to women's magazines in Morocco, magazines nevertheless comprise "a site where the encounter between local concerns, systems of representation, and discourses intersect with transnational trends and tendencies to both shape and reflect the complex realities of gender issues in the country."³¹⁴ While I have already endeavored to show this intersection with respect to the International Teen Princess pageant and its subsequent effects on the ever-changing characterizations of chicness and taste, the aforementioned example nonetheless marked a negotiation dictated by *Zan-e Ruz* itself. In consequence, while the changing definitions of taste and chicness did indeed comprise a process of negotiation, these negotiations were not necessarily a result of the magazine dialoguing with its readership. On one occasion, however, local concerns did manage to prompt open dialogue with the readership, which in turn, curbed the editorial preferences of both *Zan-e Ruz* and *Javānān* – albeit only for a short time. Indeed, the case of the miniskirt in 1967 marked a significant instance of "contention and contestation"³¹⁵ within the pages of both *Javanan* and *Zan-e Ruz*, where an allegedly real-life event forced both magazine's hands in reneging their prior promotions of the miniskirt, and thus, further altering the parameters of taste and chicness in 1960s Iran.

³¹⁴ Loubna H. Skalli, *Through a Local Prism: Gender, Globalization, and Identity in Moroccan Women's Magazines* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 9-10.

³¹⁵ Skalli, *Local Prism*, 31.

Prior to 1967, both *Javanan* and *Zan-e Ruz* promoted the miniskirt as a new marker of modernity and taste as per its appropriation in Europe and the United States. In the midst of 1965's exaggerated "farangi women" controversy, for instance, *Zan-e Ruz* had dedicated a two-page spread to France's embrace of the *minizhup* (miniskirt), thanks to the André Courrèges' "Space Age" designs. It went on to report the new design as "the new change in the dress styles of young European women."³¹⁶ By 10 December 1966, as reported by *Zan-e Ruz*, the popularization of the item in Iranian schools and universities seemed to have caused some controversy. Reporting on a meeting endeavoring to ban the miniskirt in the traditional western and south-western sectors of Tehran, the magazine quoted the locals of these areas blaming schools for "encouraging women to wear colorful Parisian clothes" and hence "encouraging imitation" among the youth. Because of the miniskirt, these campaigners claimed, "women have been fashioned into dolls and mannequins," and thus, the miniskirt, "this inappropriate present" from the West, must either be "burnt" or banned, as they "corrupt the morals of society."³¹⁷

In response to this meeting, the 24 December 1966 issue of *Zan-e Ruz* began with Majid Davami's biting editorial against these claims. Evoking the war in Vietnam so as to assure readers that there were far worse events to be outraged about than the appropriation of the miniskirt, the editor claimed that "the age for fanaticism and *ommoli* (old-fashioned-ness) has passed." Focusing on the "age of science and practicality," Davami claimed that one should not judge the young generation for the "length of their skirts." Just as an "*a la mode* girl might be impetuous, so, too, can a girl wearing the *chāqchur*." While Davami did not encourage the miniskirt in the editorial, he did not discourage it either.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ "Dāman-hā 12 sāt bālā parid!," *Zan-e Ruz* 18, June 26, 1965.

³¹⁷ "Aleyheh mod-e bālā zānu qiyām kardand!," *Zan-e Ruz* 93, December 10, 1966.

³¹⁸ Davami, "Jang-e dāman! In hayāhu-ye puch!," *Zan-e Ruz* 95, December 24, 1966.

Criticism over the miniskirt nonetheless continued and accordingly published by *Zan-e Ruz*. Although these outraged letters and polemics continued to be published so that a magazine like *Zan-e Ruz* could establish their impartial interrelationship with its readership, the letters published in full, nonetheless, comprised the most vehement and seemingly irrational of criticisms. As opposed to signifying direct engagement with the controversy, the publication of such letters worked to shed light on the self-explanatory, outraged-based nature of the controversy. These were not the critiques of the open-minded, it suggested, but the traditional, immature, and the conservative. One of these criticisms, for instance, featured the complaints of male university students who claimed that the miniskirt distracted them during their exams.³¹⁹ Another letter sent to the editor, quoted in full, described the miniskirt as the “dress of Osman,”³²⁰ the derided Sunni caliph in Shia mythology. In spite of such – justified or unjustified – criticisms, the magazine concurrently continued its coverage of the miniskirt’s growing popularity. In its “Teen” section on 25 February, for example, a piece titled “Princess and the Miniskirt” described Princess Anne as having also embraced the miniskirt. It ended with the suggestive statement that “Now, even Princess Ann can be counted as a real and true teenager.”³²¹ A “real” teenager was, hence, insinuated to be one that had already embraced the miniskirt.

In its endeavor to stray from straightforward didacticism, *Javanan* did not necessarily provide detailed coverage of the miniskirt controversy in Iran. As already examined though, its “Within the Circles of Boys and Girls” sections nonetheless displayed the ostensibly growing popularity of fashionable dresses, including the miniskirt, throughout Iran. Moreover, a feature grading the star Katayun in 13 March 1967 also went so far as giving the actress a high grade for

³¹⁹ “Janjāl-e mod-e bālā zānu dar dāneshgāh,” *Zan-e Ruz* 98, January 14, 1967.

³²⁰ “Minizhup pirāhan-e osmān!” *Zan-e Ruz* 128, July 23, 1967.

³²¹ “Peranses va minizhup,” *Zan-e Ruz* 104, February 25, 1967.

“taste” due to her preference for the miniskirt.³²² Likewise, in the summer of 1967, weeks prior to the event that would prompt both magazines to renege on their reporting, the magazine’s 23 July 1967 featured a poem dedicated to the miniskirt. Age-old poems, the magazine claimed as prelude, often featured passages dedicated to “long-haired or curved-eyebrowed or thinly-dressed women,” and this poem was no different. It was a “mirror to life” written in the midst of “the flood of miniskirt wearing girls in Tehran.”³²³

In September 1967, however, both magazines suddenly changed their tune with respect to the miniskirt. The opening feature of the 9 September issue of *Zan-e Ruz* was a two-page spread announcing the magazine’s position against the miniskirt, remarking that “This fashion is an ugly and loathsome grimace to the character of Iranian women.” In the announcement, Davami remarked that “Although *Zan-e Ruz* has always been against traditionalism, superstition, and fanaticism, it nonetheless does not want to be categorized as among those who see the seed but not the livestock.” Because of this, and “considering the unique circumstances of our country, we do not think that whatever is advantageous to America or England or France is advantageous to the women and girls of our nation – the *minizhup* among them” It then explained that above-knee skirts were different from miniskirts, as the former was only five centimeters above the knee, and was accepted throughout the world as well as Iran. Moreover, the magazine promised to no longer publish photos or articles on the miniskirt in the same vein, as “it has set aside impartiality” and would now only publish criticisms of the skirt. After all, “the *minizhup* is for Europe, and not Iran.”³²⁴

³²² “Emtiyāz dar āzmāyesh-e este’dād va shāyestegi bārāye katāyun,” *Javanan* 25, March 13, 1967.

³²³ Kāmbiz, “Delbar-e nāz-e minizhup push-e man,” *Javanan* 45, August 7, 1967.

³²⁴ Davami, “Tahrim-e minizhup!” *Zan-e Ruz* 131, September 9, 1967.

The reason behind this decision to no longer support the miniskirt, according to Davami, was the fact that “the miniskirt has become weaponized by oppositional individuals and fanatics as a way to drag women in the mud, an excuse to call them corrupt or empty-headed.” It then advised all Iranian women to refrain from wearing the miniskirt, reiterating that the miniskirt was not conducive to “the current situation of our country.”³²⁵

Javanan, too, offered a similar warning in its 4 September issue. Anterior to the announcement about Iran was a much larger headline, referencing French police’s similar advice to French women to wear longer skirts. This was placed so as to demonstrate that outrage over the miniskirt was not exclusive to Iran. Below this article, in small text, was another piece titled “*Javanan* Gives Warning.” Rather than discourage the miniskirt entirely, this piece, instead, reminded women that “legitimate miniskirts” were those that are ten centimeters above the knee, as opposed to those worn by a number of Iranian women, which were, instead, “thirteen centimeters above the knee.” The reason for this warning, the article explained, was to curb the tantalization of “our boys, who feel great despair due to the unbearable limitations they feel in their situations.” It then explained that the “*micro-minizhup*” was in no way appropriate for the streets, especially because “the social disposition” of Tehran was quite diverse.³²⁶

What, then, had prompted this sudden about-face concerning the miniskirt in Iranian society? While the event in question was not directly mentioned by either magazine, in late summer 1967, an apparent incident in Tehran had brought popular outrage over the miniskirt to a decisive boiling point. Later to be called the *Amaleh o Minizhup* (Bricklayer and Miniskirt) incident, the episode involved a young woman and a local laborer, both of whom were rumored to have been situated on the intersection of Sa’di and Manuchehri street in downtown Tehran. As the story had

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ “*Javanan* ekhtār mikonad,” *Javanan* 49, September 4, 1967.

gone, the laborer had been resting somewhere nearby, while the miniskirted young woman was bending to pick up fruits at an open-air fruit market in his direct line of sight. Incited by the scene, the man had attacked the young woman moments later, sexually assaulting her in the process.

As recounted by Abbas Pahlevan, *Ferdowsi* magazine was first to report on the incident the following week. Titled “*Amaleh o Minizhup*,”³²⁷ the report soon became the talk of the town. Intellectual circles then began framing the event as a direct testament to the “conflict of tradition and modernity” in Iran, while cabarets and cafes appropriated the incident as performance fodder for local actors and comedians.³²⁸ By the time satirical magazine *Towfiq* (Grace) published its own interpretation of the event in illustrated form for its front cover the following week, Tehran’s attorney general had already gotten wind of the direness of the controversy, subsequently fining *Ferdowsi* magazine for having published “pure falsehoods” and “inciting the general public.” By then, however, the story had already made its rounds, paradoxically, inciting outrage over the skirt as opposed to the rape itself. Even still, the story remained popular well into the spring of next year, when *Towfiq* magazine, spoofing Time Magazine’s “Man of the Year,” awarded the honor to the *amaleh*.³²⁹

Though the veracity of the alleged event or the parties involved was never quite confirmed, the *Amaleh o Minizhup* incident, nonetheless, joined the ranks of local folklore, mostly as a cautionary tale with respect to the miniskirt. Considering the already-divisive issue of the dress prior to the alleged incident, it is equally feasible to attribute the episode as well as its sociopolitical implications to the mobilizing effectiveness of rumor culture as a mode of popular resistance. As Murat Metinsoy observes regarding “everyday resistance to unveiling” in modern Turkey, rumors

³²⁷ Abbas Pahlevan, “Zekr-o kheyr az daftar-e honar va yādi az yek vāqe’-e-ye matbu’āti,” *Ferdowsi EmRuz*.

³²⁸ “Dāstan-e tajāvoz-e amal-e be zan-e minizhup push dar 1346-e tehrān,” *Bālātārin*, 2018,

³²⁹ “Mard-e sāl: amaleh (Man of the Year: Laborer),” *Towfiq*, 1968 1347.

often served as “informal media” used to “to express and to disseminate competing and negative views” against top-down reforms, especially with respect to dress.³³⁰ Having already examined the methods through which highly-circulated magazines such as *Zan-e Ruz* and *Javanan* attempted to present western modes of dress as the norm for youth during this period, the alleged *Amaleh o Minizhup* incident and the outrage that it sparked can perhaps shed light on the popular, bottom-up perspectives and reactions to these processes of normalization. Considering the existing association state ideology and the politics of style in this period, it should come as no surprise, then, that state organs, such as Tehran’s attorney general, were tasked with curbing the further dissemination of incident.

Therefore, by dint of either an actual incident or rumor culture, public reactions against the miniskirt helped shift 1960s Iranian print media’s ever-changing precepts of an appropriate and modern style. While direct implorations from the public to both *Javanan* and *Zan-e Ruz* had led to immediate dismissal or condescension in previous circumstances, the *Amaleh o Minizhup* incident forced their hands in curbing their promotion of the miniskirt. Even though both magazines explained their rejection of the miniskirt by reasoning that Iran was not yet prepared for it – thus suggesting a latent expectation for said situation to change and for the miniskirt to return to the public sphere upon the advent of such changes – the miniskirt was nonetheless condemned and subsequently disappeared from the modernizing efforts of popular media. Considering the immediate action taken by state officials in dispelling the uproar following the incident, it is also equally feasible that *Zan-e Ruz* and *Javanan*’s decision to stop their promotion of the miniskirt was coerced by the state. Yet, this does not detract the power of public mobilization that nonetheless reacted against this shift in style during this period.

³³⁰ Murat Metinsoy, “Everyday Resistance to Unveiling and Flexible Secularism in Early Republican Turkey,” in *Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the Muslim World, 195-196*.

All the same, the cases of *Javanan* and *Zan-e Ruz*, together with their content as examined in this chapter, serve to highlight the ways in which the media of the period worked to reflect and reinforce the state's modernization project. Enjoying a wide circulation throughout the country, both weeklies took different routes in their endeavors to represent the White Revolution: *Zan-e Ruz* did so by positioning royalty as the only true marker for modern style; and *Javanan* began its publication history by echoing the Shah's White Revolutionary slogan to "transform the culture whole." According to the editorial preferences of both magazines, however, culture was not so inclusive a term. Culture was reserved for those who had either already accepted or was willing to finally accept the new direction that the state – together with its affiliated media – had taken. This state-initiated direction sought not only to modernize its socio-economic policies, but its cultural policies as well. The appearance of a modern style, particularly for women, was likewise embedded within this modernistic cultural paradigm.

Styles, however, could no longer be imposed as they had been in the previous regime. Instead, a clear hierarchy of preferred styles was publicized, reinforced by the meticulously-contained popular media of this period. Naturally, these styles were interrelated with age-old precepts of high or noble tastes that happened to coincide with Euro-American standards. While nobody was necessarily forced to appropriate these styles as they had been previous, they were nonetheless excluded from the cultural conversation if they chose not to partake; non-modern women were often portrayed as either criminals or spinsters, or they were hardly mentioned at all. Even in a more inclusive weekly like *Javanan*, where rural townships were equally represented, such cultural policies were no less apparent. To be featured, a rural youth must have also accepted modernization as an inevitable process in which to partake, dressing in its styles and embracing the consumeristic tendencies that it encouraged.

Often, these ideals of style were portrayed by these magazines through western models or celebrities. So as to bridge this gap, the two weeklies worked to construct local Iranian celebrities that could also be pictured as both modern and accessible. *Zan-e Ruz* did so through its much-publicized Teen Princess pageants, and accordingly shifting its standards of style when its local winners had to compete against the winners of other modern countries in annual International Teen Princess pageants. In contrast, *Javanan* emphasized the modern styles already donned by local, Iranian celebrities, providing them with equal space in its pages as they did with western stars. In turn, this helped realign the Iranian star with the stars of Hollywood or Europe, and by 1969, Iranian stars were described in the same sexualizing manner as those latter stars, perhaps auguring the Iranian celebrity culture that emerged from 1970 onward.

This time-span is especially noteworthy, because certain practices like modelling, image-based advertising using local figures, and a television culture that could further flaunt this stylistic hierarchy were still in their infancy. Because of this, publications like *Zan-e Ruz* and *Javanan* had to take a more cautious approach in concurrently promoting these modern, Euro-American styles while also securing widespread circulations – both of which were central to their continued success well in the 1970s, through to the Iranian Revolution and onward. *Javanan* went so far as to instantaneously define its readership, invoking generational conflict to categorize all of Iran's youth as individuals condemned for their fascination with the western world. In so doing, the magazine not only oversimplified the complex circumstances of youth in 1960s Iran, but also continued to profess to reflect and represent all youth impartially. In turn, a distorted image of all Iran was featured in the magazine, where Iranians from both urban areas and *shahrestāns* were characterized as having identical, modernistic needs.

Even a magazine more didactic in nature like *Zan-e Ruz* could not simply parade western styles as the end-all and be-all for a modern nation. In lieu of this, they encouraged modern styles through rather coded practices, such as the invocation of the dichotomy between western women and Iranian women, especially concerning marriageability. In other cases, they sought to lead by example by projecting the Iranian Queen as the archetype for modernism. Lastly, with the grand incentives offered over partaking in the annual Teen Princess contests, they encouraged young women to train in modernistic “techniques of the body,” training them in not only dressing more stylishly, but also acting appropriately.

The above processes were also buttressed by a veneer of negotiations with the reading public. While each instance was projected as attempts to represent all Iranian society, dissenting individuals were encouraged to write to the magazines and have their critiques published in their pages. These alleged promises for open discourse, however, were deeply slanted and selective. Critiques published by the magazines often encompassed the most vehement and unreasonable of letters sent, and the magazines correspondingly tried to frame dissenting opinions as polemic nonsense, offering sharp rejoinders such as E'temādi's denial of *gharbzadegi* or *Zan-e Ruz*'s original reactions to the miniskirt outrage.

An equally interesting case of bounded negotiations, deserving of far deeper investigation that goes beyond the scope of a chapter focused primarily on style was also evident in *Zan-e Ruz*'s decision to invite Ayatollah Morteza Motahhari to pen a series of articles on Islam's position on Iranian women, antecedent to the Family Protection Act of 1967. These articles, however, were unavoidably surrounded by printed images of emancipated Euro-American women characteristically challenging Motahhari's progressive-yet-traditionalist positions. Even in this instance, the prospect of open negotiation was nonetheless delimited by partisan images arguing

against Motahhari's arguments the entire time. With pictures speaking louder than words, this marked a particularly resourceful strategy on *Zan-e Ruz*'s part to concurrently parade inclusivity in words while unfailingly arguing otherwise in pictures.

Yet, as shown with the *Amaleh o Minizhup* controversy, actual resistance to the dominant culture's sartorial standards was not impossible. A mobilized public nonetheless managed to curb editorial preferences over the miniskirt through either rumor culture or by underscoring a local tragedy, demonstrating the inevitability of bottom-up reactions even within a strict state-based print culture like 1960s Iran. Albeit, even this successful mode of resistance carried over for only a short time. The inevitable rise of television, the growth of Iran's celebrity culture, together with the enrichment of Iran's advertising industry the following decade made resistance to the sartorial standards promoted by the media a more complex and strenuous affair. The frustrations brought about eventually stewed to a particularly portentous boiling point, and style was once more invoked as a particularly divisive bone of contention.

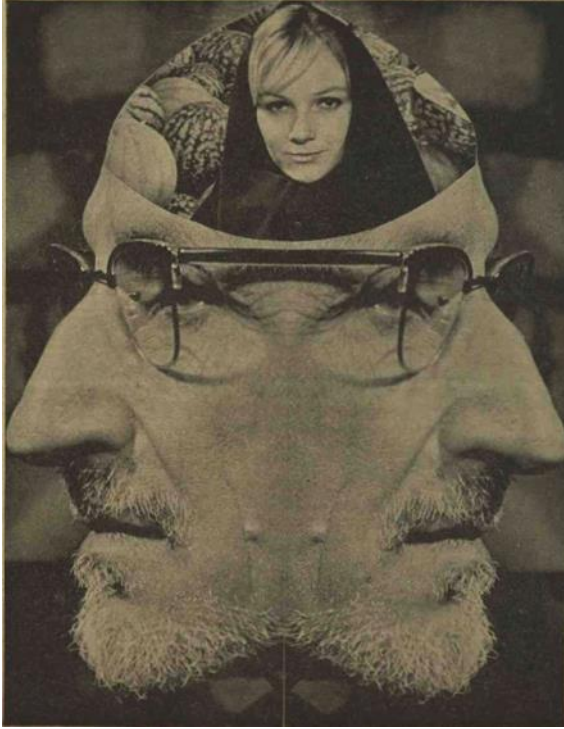


Figure 1: Zan-e Ruz depicting an Iranian man preoccupied with a blonde farangi woman.



Figure 3: A modern Iranian family, as per a third grade textbook.

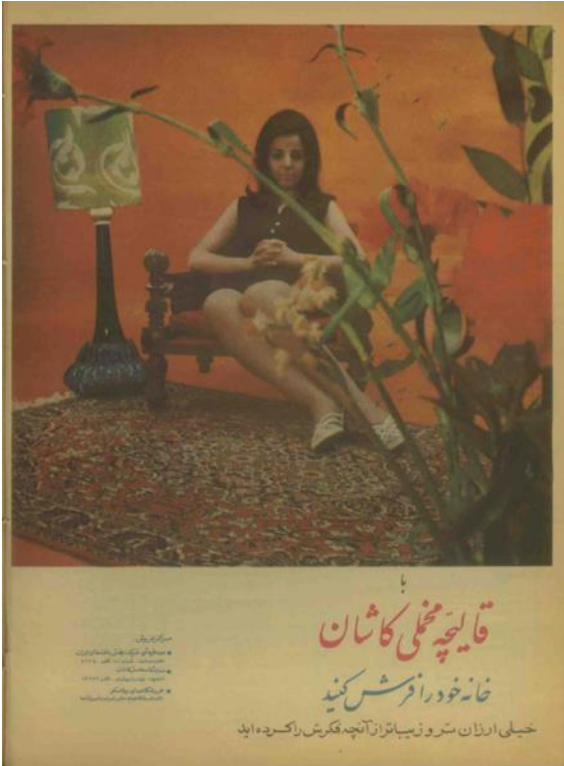


Figure 2 One of the first advertisements featured in Zan-e Ruz boasting an Iranian model. This is a carpet advertisement.



Figure 4: Queen Farah as the paragon of the modern woman.



Figure 5: Mitrā Nikānpur looking glum vis-à-vis the International Teen Princess.



Figure 6: Teen Princess meets the Queen.



Figure 7: Behruz Vosuqi on the path toward stardom.



Figure 8: Foruzan, Javanan's "sex bomb."

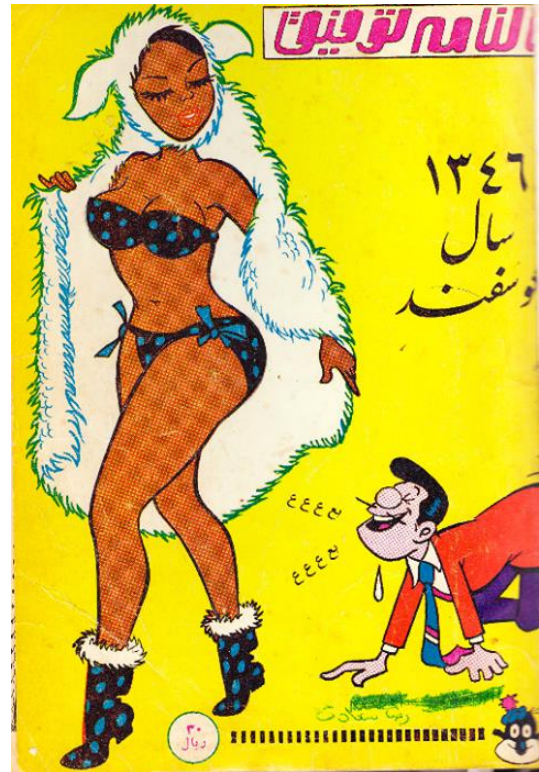


Figure 9: A precursor to the Amaleh o Minizhup controversy, Towfiq's depiction of a man swooning over an oversexualized woman.

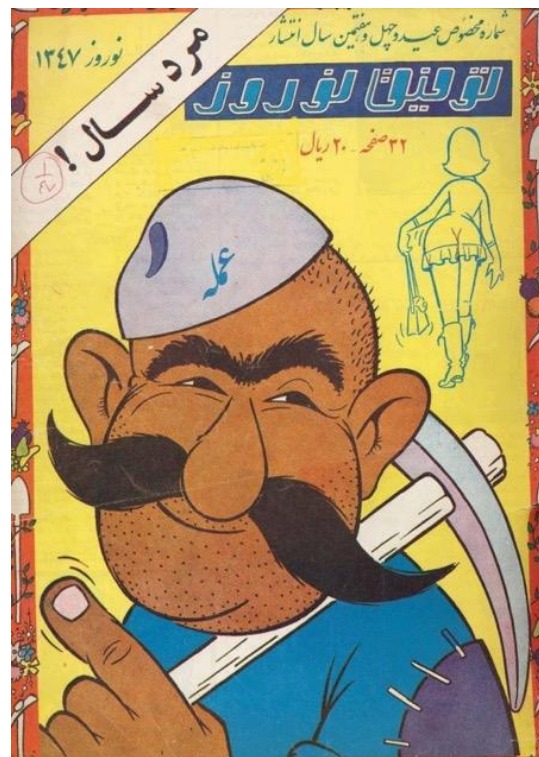


Figure 10: Towfiq bestows its Man of the Year award to the Amaleh.

The New Order of the 1970s: Consumerism, Standardization, Alienation

Introduction: The Arrival of the Great Civilization

Wound swiftly on the path toward the “The Great Civilization,”³³¹ Iran in the 1970s saw the Pahlavi state and its media apparatus take more audacious approaches in their espousal of modernistic values. During this decade, the country experienced “new affluence for a minority, new technologies, new international connections, and new possibilities for popular culture.”³³² These promising horizons, however, came hand-in-hand with “new or intensified fears – of political repression, war, cultural loss, displacement and disconnection from well-loved traditions.”³³³ While some recalled this era as a “period of pleasure and liberation, of dancing and bright colors,” less affluent segments of society saw it as “a time of apprehension” and “communal commiseration.”³³⁴

The consumerist boom of 1970s Iran was marred by myriad inconsistencies, with one segment of the population experiencing an entirely different configuration of the “Great Civilization” trumpeted by the Shah. In the 1970s, Iran saw the best and worst of the White Revolution concurrently manifest. While the decade’s oil boom had fostered great economic growth in the country’s urban areas, the effects of the previous decade’s land reform initiative also became fully felt in the 1970s, having facilitated the displacement and disillusionment of Iran’s peasantry. For the affluent urban Iranian, spending power had increased exponentially on account of the decade’s oil boom. Urban centers, namely Tehran, became replete with cinemas, department stores, hotels, and cabarets, in which the well-heeled could effortlessly partake in on account of

³³¹ William Shawcross, *The Shah’s Last Ride* (New York: Touchstone, 1989), 197.

³³² Gay Breyley, “Hope, Fear and Dance Dance Dance: Popular Music in 1960s Iran,” *Musicology Australia* 32, no. 2 (December 2010): 225.

³³³ *Ibid.*

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

the leisure time granted to them. Even the street side kiosk was a sight to behold: its magazine stands flaunting Iranian singers with their latest glittery attire. These urban hubs likewise saw passersby donning the latest fashions and engaging in diversions unthinkable to the Iranian recently arrived in the capital.

Yet, owing to the oil boom, there was an “uneven growth of purchasing power among the urban community,” which resulted in “raised social and material expectations which could not be possibly fulfilled.”³³⁵ The boom had also augmented imports to the degree that “by the second half of the 1970s, the Iranian market was saturated with American products,” which were “increasingly advertised in the popular press and women’s magazines.”³³⁶ Since a principal factor in fashion becoming ubiquitous in consumer cultures owed to the consumer’s own yearning “to be in fashion, to be abreast of what has good standing, to express new tastes which are emerging in a changing world,”³³⁷ it was unsurprising that both the lower and higher strata of the urban Iranian population found themselves partaking in “the sphere of pseudo-modernist mass consumption” during this period.³³⁸

All the same, the 1960s’ White Revolution also helped deepen instances of alienation and displacement, especially because the land reform law of 1962 had incited mass migrations on the part of villagers to larger cities, notably Tehran, Isfahan, and Mashhad.³³⁹ The move from more traditional villages to urban environments dominated by a “westernized middle class”³⁴⁰ sparked new levels of alienation. Such alienation was best embodied in Dariush Mehrjui’s 1970 film *Āqā-*

³³⁵ Homa Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran: Despotism and Pseudo-Modernism, 1926-79*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1981), 255-256.

³³⁶ Z. Pamela Karimi, *Domesticity and Consumer Culture in Iran: Interior Revolutions of the Modern Era* (London ; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 14.

³³⁷ Blumer, “Fashion,” 282.

³³⁸ Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 255-256.

³³⁹ Eric J. Hooglund, *Land and Revolution in Iran, 1960–1980* (University of Texas Press, 1982), 115.

³⁴⁰ Fred Halliday, “The Iranian Revolution: Uneven Development and Religious Populism,” *Journal of International Affairs* 36, no. 2 (1982): 204.

ye Hālu (Mr. Gullible), released at the cusp of these developments. In the movie, the titular character, recently arrived from a village, is regularly portrayed standing in awe of the capital's technological and urban developments, whispering "*ajab!*" (Wow!) to himself as he visits every shop and street corner. Like many of his real-life counterparts who had migrated to the urban centers on account of both the oil boom and the Pahlavi state's land reform program, the film's protagonist first attempts to acclimatize himself to the capital in both attire and behavior – best represented in the moment he recognizes that the sandals customarily worn in his township were inhospitable to Tehran's terrain, dispensing with them in favor of the more appropriate but alien and uncomfortable leather shoes so as to appear more agreeable. Yet, by the film's denouement, Mr. Hālu finds himself mistreated, literally and figuratively beaten. Disaffected by the city which he had adopted, he is thus compelled to return to his village, alienated, ashamed, and broken-hearted.³⁴¹ Yet, while this cinematic character was given the opportunity to return to his village, the chance of return was not afforded to many of those forced to migrate to urban centers.

In this chapter, I will be examining the ways in which consumer culture took root during this era. I will do so by surveying the manners in which consumerism was reflected in print media at the time, only to then examine the effect that consumerism had on both the affluent as well as the segments ill at ease with the rapid process of modernization. By providing an overview of Iran's socio-cultural climate in the 1970s, I will also survey the manners in which consumerism manifested in the country with the ever-increasing establishment of boutiques, fashion institutes, and department stores. This consumerist culture, in turn, helped foster an Iranian beauty culture greatly entwined with Euro-American beauty standards. While much concerning the urban milieu's idealization of western beauty standards was cultivated independent from state directives,

³⁴¹ Dariush Mehrjui, *Āqa-Ye Hālu (Mr. Gullible)*, Comedy, Drama (Studio Caspian, 1970).

the state was likewise a participant in the standardization of and coercion toward western aesthetic ideals – as shall be observed with the decade’s sudden imposition of a controversial school uniform for secondary school girls. Such state impositions managed to not only discourage traditional families from sending their children to secondary school, but also fomented enough resentment among these classes that they, in turn, chose to spurn further participation in the modern urban milieu.

The Foreign Allure: Fashionability as Westernism

“Never in a Third World country,” William Shawcross remarked, “have European and American dressmakers, luxury car manufacturers, executive jet salesmen, art brokers, wine merchants, furriers, jewelers, done so well as in Tehran in the seventies.”³⁴² Indeed, wealth was on full display in urban centers like Tehran during this time. Just by browsing through advertisements in the weekly issues of the women and youth magazines, *Zan-e Ruz* and *Javanan*, one could bear witness to the upsurge in department stores, boutiques, and beauty establishments coming onto the scene.

Tellingly, most of these enterprises often relied on utilizing European-sounding names and Euro-American models in advertising their products. The few that photographed their Iranian clientele in their advertisements showed their models shorn in the latest Euro-American hairstyles or made-up according to the latest cosmetic fad of the time. These institutions ranged from boutiques marketed toward teenagers – Persianized as *tineyjer*, as a direct transliteration of the English word and directly inspired by the western youth movement on the 1960s and ‘70s – in the already well-established *Forushgāh-e Bozorg-e Iran* (Iran’s Grand Mall),³⁴³ to private boutiques promoting their wares as being European in origin, such as *Gāleri Frāns* (France Gallery), to

³⁴² William Shawcross, *The Shah’s Last Ride*, Reprint edition (New York: Touchstone, 1989), 193.

³⁴³ “Advertisement,” *Zan-e Ruz*, May 9, 1970.

beauty parlors with European names, such as the Elizeh (Elysée) Beauty Parlor,³⁴⁴ named thusly to establish its tastes and beauty standards as likewise European, and hence, luxurious. The examples are plentiful; to name a few more: Boutique Jaqueline,³⁴⁵ King's Beauty Institute,³⁴⁶ *Mezon-e Khanum Pamini* (Lady Pamini's Maison), *Panjereh-ye Paris* (Window to Paris),³⁴⁷ *Mezon-e Miss Māry* (Maison Miss Mary),³⁴⁸ and Number One.

Additionally, the oil boom had led to multitudinous imports into the country, which paved the way for the influx of even more western beauty products into urban centers. Some foreign brands even opened respective branches, led by assigned representatives that communicated to locals the proper ways in which to properly use their products. By way of illustration, June 1972 saw Helena Rubenstein cosmetics opening a branch in Isfahan, promising in the advertisement's subheading that throughout the first week of the month of June, the branch would "bring to completion the beauty of Isfahani women."³⁴⁹ In the same vein, the 1970s saw mass imports of both Mary Quant and Margaret Astor products in Iran, accompanied by company representatives visiting the country so as to similarly "introduce" the products and teach their application in select department stores.³⁵⁰

Though theorists like Jennifer Craik condemn the belief that fashion is habitually associated "with Western dress,"³⁵¹ the habits of Iranian consumers in the 1970s demonstrate that to the Iranian shopper and producer, luxury was indeed oft equated with westernism. For instance, a feature on boutiques in Tehran in the 16 October 1971 issue of *Zan-e Ruz*, quoted a boutique

³⁴⁴ "Advertisement," *Zan-e Ruz*, June 5, 1971.

³⁴⁵ "Advertisement," *Zan-e Ruz*, June 19, 1971.

³⁴⁶ "Advertisement," *Zan-e Ruz*, October 30, 1971.

³⁴⁷ "Advertisement," *Zan-e Ruz*, December 22, 1973.

³⁴⁸ "Advertisement," *Zan-e Ruz*, February 20, 1975.

³⁴⁹ "Kārshenās-e zibāi-ye helena rubenshtāyn dar esfehān," *Zan-e Ruz*, June 17, 1972.

³⁵⁰ "Brizhit motekhasses-e beynol melali-ye lavāzem-e ārāyesh," *Zan-e Ruz*, March 1, 1973.

³⁵¹ Elizabeth Wilson and Joanne Entwistle, "Introduction: Body Dressing," in *Body Dressing* (Oxford ; New York: Berg, 2001), 2.

owner, who claimed that “in terms of fashion, Tehran follows London and Paris.” When asked about the inspiration behind the clothes he himself designed for his boutique, he admitted that he exclusively looked at “foreign collections” for inspiration.³⁵² At the same time, however, the boutique owner also criticized the Iranian practice of copying western designs, remarking that unlike Iranian designers, “the great [western] designers we follow happen to take inspiration from everything.”³⁵³ Such a statement implied that, unlike foreign designers who used a wide palette for inspiration, Iranian taste at the time was all the while still bound to foreign designers. In consequence, producers and designers were likely motivated to imitate exclusively western collections because consumer interest and demand was more inclined towards Euro-American clothing than garments inspired by local sartorial habits.

A later passage in the same feature revealed as much when a female boutique owner criticized Iranian women for being “imitators” (*moqalled*) as opposed to being chic.³⁵⁴ All that mattered to the modern Iranian shopper, she maintained, was whether a piece of clothing was in vogue or not: “They do not know what clothing is appropriate for them, and do not choose clothing based on their skin tones or their measurements.” She further remarked that the contemporary Iranian shopper “need only to see a piece of clothing on a model to decide whether it is attractive or not and buy it.”³⁵⁵ With modelling not yet an acceptable occupation in Iran at the time, one can likewise determine that the models to which the boutique owner referred were the Euro-American models found in magazines and fashion catalogues.

Demand in the Iranian sartorial market, therefore, seemed mainly attentive to western styles and brand names. Indeed, western brands proved so popular at the time that in the 21 March

³⁵² Butik-hā-ye Tehrān (Tehran’s Boutiques),” *Zan-e Ruz*, October 16, 1971.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

1971 issue of *Tamasha* (Watch), National Iranian Television writer and producer Nādali Hamedāni revealed that even inside Iranian textile factories, foreign brand-names were stitched onto Iranian products, because, as a factory manager told the reporter, “Retailers specifically order us to knit these fabric- and velvet-designs with *mār-k-e khāreji* (western brand names).” Since these local fabrics did not cost more than “twenty, thirty tumans per meter,” branding them as foreign, the manager told Hamedāni, allowed the retailer to sell it for “seventy, eighty tumans per meter” to customers. The said revelation prompted Hamedāni to wonder: “Can we really name such an industry” – based around stitching foreign brand names on Iranian fabrics – “a national industry?” Actions like this, predicated on a derivative notion that what was foreign was naturally of higher quality, Hamedāni lamented, “puts Iranian production under the direct sway of western products.”³⁵⁶

Hamedāni went on to claim that such habits espoused by the industry would likewise have dire consequences for the predilections of the Iranian customer. When, unbeknownst to the customer, even Iranian products were marketed as western, the Iranian consumer naturally assumed that “good products have western names, and bad products are under Iranian branding.” Such false assumptions, he worried, could lead to “disillusionment and a lack of trust on the part of the Iranian people with respect to local products.”³⁵⁷ Yet, even then, producers were simply responding to a mass demand for western products. They were not purposefully conditioning Iranians to prefer western brand names and vogues. Rather, they were merely reacting to an overall trend within the market.

The urban Iranian male of the 1970s was similarly captivated by western fashions, a trend marked mainly by the long hair and beards now donned by the Iranian youth, mirroring the western

³⁵⁶ Nādali Hamedāni, “Hemāyat, che gunch va tā kojā” *Tamasha*, March 26, 1350.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

hippie movement of the late 1960s. Ironically though, the standards that the 1970s Iranian male youth was now following as a response to the fashion trends observed in the West happened to be, in fact, rooted in the vogues of pre-modernity, nineteenth century Iran. Short hair and shaved faces, after all, only became a norm in Iran by way of Reza Pahlavi's attempts at "Europeanizing Iranian clothes" and appearances in the late 1920s.³⁵⁸ As Afsaneh Najmabadi remarks, the "erasure" of "male sexuality" was part and parcel with the Pahlavi modernity project during Reza Shah's reign. Traits of "womanliness," such as long hair were thus "despised" and made taboo, in favor of the allegedly more masculine, less sexualized male with shorter hair and trimmed facial hair.³⁵⁹ These sartorial changes had occurred in response to what English physician C.J. Wills had considered to be "the more civilized affect" of "the cropped hair worn by Europeans."³⁶⁰ Yet, the long hair and beard was now being donned by fashion-forward Iranian men unaware that the tastes to which they were inclined had been, in fact, the norm in Iran a century previous – not as something western, but as a beauty standard deeply entrenched in the country before the introduction of European modernity. These vogues, after all, were being taken up as a response to western vogues, and not as a means to reappropriate to past beauty standards.

As a result, just as the western model had compelled the Iranian in the previous century to crop their hair, it had now inspired the Iranian male to regrow his hair some decades later. In fact, the 1970s male figure with long hair and an equally long beard became the fashion to such an extent that the 29 February 1972 issue of *Ettelaat* devoted an entire page to the financial harm the trend was inflicting on male barbers. In an article histrionically titled, "The Hippies Are Killing us

³⁵⁸ Houchang E. Chehabi, "Dress Codes for Men in Turkey and Iran," in *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization Under Atatürk and Reza Shah* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2003), 218.

³⁵⁹ Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 93.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

with Sorrow,” the head of the Iranian Barbers’ Guild, Hāj Amini, groused that more and more barber shops were closing, because long-haired men were no longer occasioning hairdressers. Hāj Amini made direct mention to the fact that “Our people, in imitation of other countries, are now growing their hairs to their shoulders, and no longer visiting barbershops.”³⁶¹ The reporter then went on to paint a picture of how barbers around the country could no longer do anything but idly watch through empty barbershop windows the “shaggy hippies whose hair they cannot cut.”³⁶²

Demand and Ideology, Hand-in-Hand: The Modern Boutique

That said, that so many Euro-American-inspired styles and establishments became pervasive in urban centers at the time cannot be merely relegated to the simplistic assumption that Iranians only wanted to mimic the vogues of the West. Another reason for the prevalence of these fashions and the establishments they had sprung was the new sartorial demands spurred by the many Iranian students that had recently returned to the country from the West. Indeed, these newly returned students, already accustomed to Euro-American sartorial practices, were now seeking to rectify the scarcity of fashionable clothing in their home country.

A feature in the 27 May 1971 issue of *Tamasha* claimed as much when it explained that the increase in Tehran’s boutiques was by virtue of “fashion-conscious youth returning to Iran from *farang* (the West), and, in turn actively creating “a demand” for consumer establishments.³⁶³ In response to their own needs, the feature claimed, “a number of these youth gathered together and worked to establish the first-ever boutiques in Tehran,” their stock principally comprising dinner jackets, trousers, waistcoats, blouses, cravats, socks, and shoes.³⁶⁴ One of these progenitors,

³⁶¹ “Hipi-hā mā rā deq kosh mikonand!,” *Ettelaat*, February 29, 1972.

³⁶² *Ibid.*

³⁶³ “Padide-i be nām-e butik,” *Tamasha*, May 27, 1971.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

who had likewise returned to Iran after spending some years in Paris working as both an architect and an apprentice to architect-turned-designer Pierre Balmain, was Keyvan Khosrovani.

Khosrovani's story largely mirrored the description provided by the *Tamasha* article. In 1966, upon returning to Iran, Khosrovani and another architect, Kamran Diba (cousin to Queen Farah Pahlavi), both felt a dearth in adequate clothing to satiate their tastes in Tehran. In consequence, the two friends established a menswear boutique, named *Elegant 27*, in a garage in downtown Tehran's 27 Rasht Street. Though the boutique itself lasted only six months, it was nonetheless credited as "the first modern *prêt-a-porter* boutique" in Tehran.³⁶⁵ Following the dissolution of *Elegant 27*, Khosrovani opened another menswear boutique in 1967, the aforementioned *Number One* in downtown Tehran's Sani'al-Dowleh Street. The establishment became a hub for not only celebrities and upper-class males, but also the quotidian Iranian looking to acclimatize to the modern, consumerist milieu.

For these entrepreneurs, satiating their own needs for western clothing constituted only part of their purpose in establishing such institutions. As Khosrovani himself explained, his goal likewise comprised "education" for young Iranians. Indeed, for Khosrovani, the education of both "hygiene" and "stylishness" became his prime motivator, dating back to his very first days back in Tehran. "When I came back," Khosrovani said, "I saw that the youth were handsome, but they were shoddily dressed and not very hygienic. All I wanted to do was share my experiences with them." In line with this, he recalled that in the early days of *Number One*, many of the clientele were not only badly dressed but, they lacked proper hygiene as well. "I had to tell them to wash their feet, to clean their clothes," he remembered; at some points having to "disallow them from

³⁶⁵ "Number One," *Keyvan Khosrovani*.

entering if they had not washed.” Khosrovani considered this the “pedagogical” aspect of his establishment.

Yet unlike the Pahlavi state’s pedagogy, Khosrovani’s initiative was not enthused by a supercilious pursuit to “civilize” or Europeanize the Iranian entering into modernity. Rather, Khosrovani understood that, in order for Iranian youth to find success in the city, they had to be made aware of the criterion for hygiene and dress that the modernizing urban milieu demanded of them. As such, Khosrovani’s pedagogy did not transpire in corroboration of state ideology, but in response to it. Under the new modern standards that cities were operating, Khosrovani understood that socially-mobile youth would be unable to obtain employment if they did not look the part. His purpose was to make the youth “presentable when they came of age, when they went out into the city on their own, and had to apply for jobs to make a living.”³⁶⁶ Indeed, Khosrovani’s initiative for styling the everyday Iranian with affordable, ready-to-wear clothing proved so popular and effective, that just few years later, he and his partners, Āzar Tavakkoli and Pari Zolfaqāri, also established one of Iran’s first ready-to-wear womenswear boutiques, Miss Number One, across the street from the original Number One.

Despite his “educational, pedagogical” endeavor being spearheaded independent of any state directive, Khosrovani’s attempts to edify the youth on proper sartorial practices in the urban milieu nonetheless sheds light on the modernistic standards of propriety that had already been entrenched under Pahlavi rule. Success in the urban milieu now demanded a similarly urban uniform, inspired as it was by western fashions. And similarly, urban sartorial demands now closely mirrored the modernist sartorial standards encouraged by the state and popular media. Therefore, though these consumer establishments happened to be generated and cultivated due to

³⁶⁶ Keyvan Khosrovani, Interview with Morad Moazami, December 2019.

the personal Euro-American preferences of their progenitors as well as the demands of their clientele, they nonetheless reinforced the Pahlavi state's modernity project. Not only were the clothes often western in design, but the modern state's job market often necessitated those seeking to make a living in the capital to be dressed based on these western markers of presentability as well.

Operating independently from the state project of modernity, these consumer establishments were thus nonetheless unwittingly involved in the aesthetic modernization of the contemporary Iranian. As Şakir Özüdoğru observes within the context of modern Turkey, ready-to-wear fashion design cannot be helped but be “read as an evolutionary process” that circumstantially begins “with imitations of European designers” before it can take on a more local flavor through succeeding decades.³⁶⁷ Indeed, though the retail trade did not purposefully attempt to lead the sartorial sophistication of its clientele towards more westernized preferences, they were nonetheless operating within the consumerist ethos that modernity had facilitated. It was no surprise then that, as Homa Katouzian notes, the Iranian retail trade “was the only major group of urban economic activities from which riches were made incidentally... without being a part of the pseudo-modernist designs of the state.”³⁶⁸

Fashion establishments in Iran were not just limited to the capital. At the time, most urban centers throughout the country boasted their fair share of beauty institutes and clothing boutique. That said, those located in more religious cities such as Isfahan and Mashhad embraced these establishments less keenly than their Tehran counterparts. In the 13 March 1976 issue of *Zan-e Ruz*, for instance, a teenager in the more religious city of Mashhad wrote to express her shock at

³⁶⁷ Şakir Özüdoğru, “Ottoman Costume in the Context of Modern Turkish Fashion Design,” in *Modern Fashion Traditions: Negotiating Tradition and Modernity through Fashion* (Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2018), 127.

³⁶⁸ Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 293.

experiencing a “modern boutique” in her city during her shopping spree for the Nowruz holidays. “When we entered one of these boutiques,” she wrote, “I initially doubted whether it was actually a boutique or not; it looked more like a canteen than it did a boutique.” She mentioned in disgust the “loud, piercing music” that was playing over the speakers throughout the shop, while also expressing dismay at the establishment’s walls being littered “with large and strange sexual posters... all photos of women in the nude that were in no way pertinent to the clothing displayed in the shop window.” She claimed to have ultimately fled the scene without buying the blouse she had planned to purchase.³⁶⁹ The manners in which modern consumerist establishments operated, therefore, were still alien to many of those located outside the modern urban centers.

Novel Spaces, Novel Activities: Fashion as Recreation

As the abovementioned letter implies, ready-to-wear boutiques, department stores, and beauty establishments facilitated more than just spaces for shopping. These businesses not only furnished a place for young urban Iranians to “express their taste in their efforts to seek newness”³⁷⁰ – as a boutique owner told *Zan-e Ruz* – but they were also ample ground for youth of either the same or opposite sexes to meet and socialize. This was especially an especially essential boon to the – albeit affluent – middle class woman, who could break away from mundane duties in the home by becoming involved in an activity, even if it was indeed an activity as commonplace as shopping. Since its emergence, Elizabeth Wilson remarks, the consumer establishment “became a place where women could meet their women friends in safety and comfort, unchaperoned, and to which they could repair for refreshment and rest.”³⁷¹ Whilst previous to the prevalence of department

³⁶⁹ “Qesse-hā-ye talkh az mājarāhā-ye eyd,” *Zan-e Ruz*, March 13, 1976.

³⁷⁰ “Butik-hā-ye Tehrān,” *Zan-e Ruz*, October 16, 1971.

³⁷¹ Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 150.

stores, most garments, similar to other Middle Eastern countries, “were produced by anonymous tailors in anonymous workshops,” often inside the neighborhood, with clients often “loyal to one tailor, who was usually a member of the family,” and solely called on for special occasions such as “weddings and religious celebrations,”³⁷² these consumer establishments, especially those furnished with ready-to-wear material, helped facilitate changes to not only tastes and preferences, but also “purchase behavior” as well as the relationship between “buyer and seller.”³⁷³

Consequently, as Mike Featherstone indicates, the very act of shopping inside a boutique or department store predicated “technique of the body”³⁷⁴ previously inessential to traditional shopping practices. Spaces with an “increasingly sophisticated display of goods,” he maintains, encourage “voyeuristic consumption.”³⁷⁵ Shopping in these environments “ceases to be a quick visit down the streets amidst neighbors.” Rather, it “becomes a more organized expedition into more anonymous public spaces where certain standards of dress and appearance are deemed appropriate. The individual is increasingly on display as he/she moves through the field of commodities on display.”³⁷⁶ As such, according to Yuniya Kawamura, modern shopping establishments “must be seen not only as a reflection of changing consumer patterns, but also as a decisive agent which actively contributed to the culture in which consumption took place.”³⁷⁷ These observations shall prove especially important when we examine the exclusionary practices of dress in the 1970s Iran, and the ways in which chador-wearing women were treated in these shopping environments.

³⁷² M. Angela Jansen, “Beldi Sells: The Commodification of Moroccan Fashion,” in *Modern Fashion Traditions: Negotiating Tradition and Modernity through Fashion* (Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2018), 145.

³⁷³ Yuniya Kawamura, *Fashion-Ology: An Introduction to Fashion Studies*, Dress, Body, Culture (Oxford ; New York: Berg, 2005), 93.

³⁷⁴ Marcel Mauss, “Techniques of the Body,” *Economy and Society* 2, no. 1 (February 1973): 76.

³⁷⁵ Featherstone, “The Body in Consumer Culture,” 19.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁷ Kawamura, *Fashion-ology*, 93.

Accordingly, this new culture for shopping paved the way for novel public activities for the modern, middle to upper class Iranian woman. On its account, concomitant events such as fashion shows likewise became prevalent in the country, principally in the capital. Though they were once again limited to the more affluent classes, fashion shows provided an additional entertainment to urban Iranians – added to the ever-growing numbers of bars, cabarets, boutiques, and department stores. Indeed, Liora Handelman-Baavur writes that in 1975, a reported 14,000 of Tehran’s residents had attended fashion events in the capital.³⁷⁸ Though not a large number in a city of four million people, it nonetheless signified increased interest among Tehranis with respect to western sartorial vogues.

Customarily, these fashion shows were hosted by clothing retailers both local and foreign, presented in prominent hotels – such as the Hilton – and featuring a notable Iranian pop star or two performing. Most significantly, the runways of these fashion shows mostly boasted European models – be it on account of the taboo nature of modelling in those early years, or a general preference for the European figure. Among these fashion shows were the annual Golbāng Fashion Show, instituted by the Golbāng clothing company in 1969,³⁷⁹ and the *Mod-e Bozorg* (Grand Fashion) Festival, the June 1977 iteration of which took place in the Arya-Sheraton Hotel, hosted by Fereydoun Farrokhzad, and featuring blonde European models donning clothes designed by Iranian maison owners such as Miss Āfik and Mahmud Golchin.³⁸⁰

Only later in the 1970s did the fashion scene begin incorporating female Iranian models onto its runway. While modelling seemed to be a taboo occupation for Iranian woman in the early 1960s, the prevalence of boutiques and shopping as an activity seemed to have dampened the taboo

³⁷⁸ Liora Handelman-Baavur, *Creating the Modern Iranian Woman: Popular Culture between Two Revolutions* (Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 167.

³⁷⁹ “Mod-e golbāng,” *Javanan*, February 17, 1975.

³⁸⁰ “Butik-e Javanan,” *Javanan*, June 13, 1977.

by the tail end of the decade into the 1970s. A fashion show recap printed in the 10 October 1972 issue of *Ettelaat*, for example, groused that “whenever a fashion show is announced in Tehran, many expect a row of western models,” before boasting that on this particular occasion, the models were all Iranian. What was deemed most praiseworthy about these models strutting in “clothes produced by Iranian textiles,” however, was the fact that they all boasted “European figures,” leaving the reporter to ask if these items will be compatible with the ordinary Iranian women.³⁸¹

Yet, the pride shown by the abovementioned reporter vis-à-vis the European-ness of the Iranian runway models happened to shed light on an especially problematical aspect of fashion’s growing influence in Iran. To the modish Iranian eye, it seemed, a beautiful figure could only have been European. As we shall see next, this period saw an outright demarcation established with respect to what did, and did not, constitute beauty in Iran. Indeed, the more European-looking an individual, the more beautiful-seeming.

Body Management and Modernity: The Euro-American Woman as Prototype

In the western world, as Fiona Skillen argues, the female body was consistently allocated as a “contested site of modernity.”³⁸² Modernity, according to Skillen, “placed an emphasis on the shape of women’s bodies.”³⁸³ Indeed, hair style, dress, as well as the shape of the female body were considered “intrinsic symbols of a woman’s conformity to modernity and its associated ideals.”³⁸⁴ Specifically, increasing emphasis was placed on “the measurements of the body; its size, weight and toning.”³⁸⁵ After all, the woman of the modern era was assumed to be “symbolic of youth and freedom,” as an individual that “embraced life and spent her time in the pursuit of

³⁸¹ “Mod-hā-ye zibātarin mānkan-hā-ye irāni,” *Ettelaat*, October 10, 1972, 13922 edition.

³⁸² Fiona Skillen, “‘Woman and the Sport Fetish’: Modernity, Consumerism and Sports Participation in Inter-War Britain,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 29, no. 5 (April 2012): 752.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 755.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 730.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 755.

fun and enjoyment.”³⁸⁶ A cultivated, modern society was hence equated with its women; women that not only happened to pursue leisurely activities, but also appeared beautiful according to the beauty standards of the society itself.

Moreover, on account of her “increased role outside the home and recognition of greater rights,” the modern woman was also “marked out as a distinct group of consumers by advertisers.”³⁸⁷ With an entirely new category of consumer having now emerged, advertisers and retailers hence encouraged recurrent acts of consumerism by presenting ideal lifestyles “packaged as part of modern living” through adverts and media content. Even the modern woman “on the smallest of budgets” was made to feel that they could be “part of modern life” so long as they were willing to abide by the beauty ideals advised to them.³⁸⁸ As such, everybody was made to feel like they had an “opportunity to ‘buy’ into a lifestyle” – the said lifestyle being a modern one.³⁸⁹

By the same token, new technologies such as scales and photography came to facilitate the modern individual – particularly women – “to measure and classify their own bodies in ways that they had never done before.” In so doing, they were to gauge their weight against those of others, to compare, and in turn, become entrapped within the politics of body management. Corresponding to this was also “an industry of self-help books, advice columns and products which aimed to help bring the body ‘into line.’”³⁹⁰ The politics of “body management” thus came to pervade discussions of female life within the modern context, where a woman’s “desire for beauty” was linked with her “health,” and in turn, with the health of her society as a whole.³⁹¹

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 731.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 758.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 759.

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 755.

³⁹¹ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, “Introduction,” in *Managing the Body* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

Following the emergence of consumer culture in the country, Iran also experienced similar developments as it pertained to “body management.” In the same manner as western media, Iranian popular media likewise followed suit by encouraging its female readership to engage with activities that might lead to healthier and more beautiful bodies. Yet, even within the Iranian context, the definition of both female health and beauty was conflated with the Euro-American beauty standards prevalent in the western world. Iranian women were encouraged to style themselves and their figures in accordance with the purported body of the western woman, defined as it was by a slender figure, a thin nose, and blonde hair.

Although, as Gilles Lipovetsky argues, media anywhere is “engaged more in reproducing the dominant values than in proposing new ones.”³⁹² the dominant values of Iran at the time was intimately associated with official state sentiments. As we have already argued, the lines between ideology, media, and even independent commerce in Pahlavi Iran were ambivalent at best. After all, no media organ in Iran subsisted without state supervision, with popular media oft trumpeting values identical to the state’s. The link between state ideology and independent commerce in Pahlavi Iran was not entirely unconnected either, as the new demands for western beauty products had been initially incited by the state’s modernity project as well as its dependence on imports from western countries. Since modernizing the Iranian woman was also part and parcel of the Pahlavi state’s modernity project, the popular media’s contemporary encouragement of “body management” in line with Euro-American beauty markers similarly adhered to the overarching state’s modernist precepts.

All the same, while images of the increasingly westernized, made-up, and fit Iranian woman, both in the streets and in media content, happened to bolster the state’s claims to having

³⁹² Gilles Lipovetsky, *The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 190.

emancipated the Iranian woman from the dark ages, it would be erroneous to suppose that the state was entirely responsible for the standardization of beauty during this period. The changing standards with respect to beauty culture in Iran were not “rationally planned.”³⁹³ Neither were they exclusively imposed from above by state or media. Rather, they occurred on account of an “interweaving, of mutual dependence between people, set in motion.”³⁹⁴ Such interweaving of mutual interests occurred on account of the modernistic tendencies of the state, the consumerism manifested at the time, the leisurely wants of recently returned students, the independent advertising industry seeking to expedite a desire to buy, and a press subscribed to the state’s modernity project while also looking for financial profit. As such, these aesthetic transformations did not transpire through “purposive deliberation of individual people;” rather, they were the outcome of the “autonomous dynamics” of the aforementioned “web of relationships,” that functioned independently, despite ultimately reinforcing the consumerist ethos saturating urban life at the time.³⁹⁵ And yet, they also happened to reflect and bolster the state’s own ethos of westernization and pseudo-modernity.³⁹⁶

Faults in Our Traditions: The Slender and the Flesh-Polluted

Mirroring Skillen’s remarks about the female body and modernity, Iranian print media became similarly fixated on the female figure during this period. Such obsessions with size and figure were especially rife in *Zan-e Ruz* – arguably the country’s most widely read magazine. The first of such instances was evidenced in the 2 January 1971 edition of the magazine, in a feature titled “The Iranian Woman Has Become Standardized,”³⁹⁷ as written by regular magazine contributor and

³⁹³ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000), 366.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 367.

³⁹⁶ Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 216.

³⁹⁷ “Zan-e irāni estāndārd shod!,” *Zan-e Ruz*, January 2, 1971.

friend to the Pahlavi court, Homa Sarshar. Indeed, the article's subheading brazenly proclaimed that the piece's intent was to foster insecurity – and optimistically, change – with respect to the contemporary Iranian woman's body. "The appearance of the Iranian woman," the subheading read, consisted of "a beautiful face, and a disproportionate and disharmonious figure."³⁹⁸ Beside this subheading, on the adjoining page, were two additional photographs that clearly invited comparison for the reader of this feature. The first was a page-length photograph of a European or American woman's backside, taken from a low-angle, emphasizing the woman's slender legs, back and buttocks. Transposed over this photo was a portrait of a blonde woman smiling at the lens – a photograph that on closer inspection had little to do with the issue of size, beyond inviting comparison with respect to whom an Iranian woman should also model herself on.

In the feature, Sarshar wrote that the Standardization and Industrial Research Organization of Iran had conclusively finished its seven-month long statistical research vis-à-vis the "height, figure, and sizes of Iranian women and girls." The goal of the research was to ease the buying and selling of clothes for Iranian woman by categorizing sizes based on numbers. These measurements – the English word Persianized as "*sāyz*" – began with "size 36, which should be harmonious with the figure of a young girl with proportionate figure" and went as far up to sizes 44 for dresses and 46 for coats "with respect to overweight women." Remarking that this new measurement system might finally render Iranian-sewn clothes "worthy and chic," the article then compared the Iranian woman's disproportionate figure to their European counterparts, claiming that "the Iranian woman's buttocks, back, and legs are heavier than those of women from other countries."³⁹⁹

Dispassionate, scientific descriptions of the Iranian woman's size, however, came to a stop after the first several paragraphs of the seven-page feature. The rest of the feature was spent

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

interviewing Iranian boutique owners and beauty experts, all of whom groused about the disharmony of the Iranian female figure. A boutique owner, Mr. Mansur, remarked that in the ten years that he had owned a boutique, he had witnessed “very few women” whose figures were proportionate. After visiting another seamstress in Tehran, Sarshar reported that the seamstress, too, believed that “the Iranian woman’s figure is entirely ugly, and it is always difficult to fit it into a sewn item of clothing.”⁴⁰⁰ At another establishment, Sarshar went on to describe one of the clienteles as “*gusht-āلود*” – literal translation being “flesh-polluted,” though often used to refer to a fleshly and plump figure.⁴⁰¹

Yet, even if these descriptions were meant merely to mirror aesthetic realities in Tehran, the final passage as written by Sarshar revealed a concentrated effort on the part of the magazine to henceforward encourage the Iranian woman to fashion their bodies according to the Euro-American images published in the article’s first page. Concluding the article, Sarshar quoted a “reflection-worthy” take by the magazine’s in-house beauty expert, who praised the endeavor to standardize clothing sizes, and yet opined that such an enterprise was not enough. The Iranian woman, the beauty expert claimed, should not just depend on clothing that is fitted for just whatever malformed figure she boasts; rather, she should work hard “render her figure proportionate to conventional sizes” – meaning, she should try to slenderize the aforementioned corpulence of her buttocks, backs, and legs. “Is that not a better idea?” the expert asked in conclusion, remarking that at this juncture, “the beauty of the Iranian woman begins and ends with her face.”⁴⁰²

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

In such a way did the concentrated effort on the part of Iran's print media to slenderize the Iranian woman take place, driven by a principal effort to beautify her based on Euro-American standards. While, at first, this endeavor emphasized the Iranian woman's figure, throughout the years even nose shape and hair color became a subject of contention as well. All this happened to also be framed within the discourse of the White Revolution, rendering matters as arbitrary as beauty and aesthetics into socio-political points of discourse. In February 1973, for instance, *Zan-e Ruz*'s customary feature apropos the 1936 unveiling in Iran also pseudo-historically referred to the weight of pre-Pahlavi women as an example of the alleged oppression they experienced. The article, titled "The Woman Who Had No Human Life," featuring photographs of worn-out veiled women, surveyed the bitter lives of the Iranian women of yesteryear by providing a list of all that was wrong with the Iranian woman pre-Pahlavi emancipation. Included in the list of embarrassments were key points such as the note that woman's "only art-form" at the time was "pickling vegetables, cooking jam, and birthing sons;" and, most notably, the fact that the woman of yesteryear "took pride in her fatness and roundness."⁴⁰³ These features were then juxtaposed with the Iranian women of the White Revolution, whom, as the photographs in the feature revealed, were not only working women, scientists, and students, but also slender, smiling, and unveiled.

Incidentally, *Zan-e Ruz*'s fixation on the Iranian woman's weight had also been ascribed to the upshots of the White Revolution. In a 2 May 1970 article, pronouncing "Warning! Iranians Are Getting Fat!"⁴⁰⁴ the "increasing weight of urban Iranians in the past five years" was ascribed to the "improved nutrition" of Iranians following the White Revolution, which had prompted Iranians' "increased spending power."⁴⁰⁵ Obesity, the article wrote, was a disease often reserved

⁴⁰³ "Zani ke zendegi ensāni nadāsht," *Zan-e Ruz*, February 13, 1351.

⁴⁰⁴ "Irāni-ha dārand chāq mishavand," *Zan-e Ruz*, May 2, 1970.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

for continents replete with “welfare” and “leisure,” such as Europe and America, which had now “assailed Iran” as well. Beside subtly linking Iran to Europe and America with respect to welfare and leisure, the feature then cautioned readers against overeating. These warnings, however, seemed only to concern Iranian women, as opposed to both sexes. Among the advice given to women so that they can “combat obesity” was that they should comply with the fashion system. “Fashion,” the piece claimed, compels a woman “to keep up with the vogues of the day,” and as a result, “pressures them to do everything within their power to slim themselves down.”⁴⁰⁶ Without any proper reference, the article then remarked that doctors pined for “fashion to be enforced among prepubescent girls” as well, “so that they can be trained to be healthy and have good figures from childhood onwards.”⁴⁰⁷

The discourse on the Iranian female’s weight also constituted a class dynamic, as best observed in a 4 September 1971 *Zan-e Ruz* feature, titled “The Iranian Man and Fat and Round Women,” written by Nāser Mojarrad. Under the guise of historicity, the article began by demarcating the tastes of yesteryear with those of the modern day. A mere “look at photos from Qajar harems, or just the lifestyles of people fifty years ago,” the article claimed, would reveal that men at the time saw beauty in the “flesh-polluted.”⁴⁰⁸ These initial allusions to the tastes of yesteryear – an era often derided by both magazine and official self-proclamations as a “backward”⁴⁰⁹ time in Iran – served as a prelude from which to gauge whether or not particular segments of society still adhered to similarly “backward” standards.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Nāser Mojarrad, “Mard-e irāni va zanān-e chāq va chelle,” *Zan-e Ruz*, September 4, 1971.

⁴⁰⁹ “Amuzesh va parvareh va amuzesh-e āli,” *Tamasha*, January 11, 1973.

⁴¹⁰ Mojarrad, “Mard-e irāni va zanān-e chāq va chelle,” *Zan-e Ruz*, September 4, 1971.

Following this, the article promised a comprehensive survey of this anti-obesity movement. It did so, however, by using a class-based approach to examine the matter. Namely, the report examined the manners in which the more religious, less affluent segments of Tehran gauged weight, as compared with the affluent, whose values were, in turn, more in line with the modernizing press and state. The so-called “backward” were thus to be compared with the progressive Iranian. The report’s subsequent examination of the life of an overweight Iranian man, Hasan *āqā* (Mr. Hassan), and his wife, Parvin *khānom* (Mrs. Parvin), was intended to depict such “backward” tastes. Without directly making mention of the couple’s social class, the article nonetheless repetitively implied the more traditional nature of Hasan *āqā*’s household not only in its transliterations of the man and his wife’s mode of speech, but also in its descriptions of Parvin *khānom*’s sartorial preferences. Mrs. Parvin’s decision to immediately wear the chador in the presence of a male reporter was the most conspicuous of such implications. So too was manner in which her speaking was transcribed, replete with *ta’ārof* and formal references to her husband as “Mr. Hasan.” These implications were to feed into the magazine’s class-based discourse on weight when the reporter finally asked Mrs. Parvin about whether or not she was satisfied with her husband’s weight. Wholly dissimilar to the supposed preferences of more modern Iranians, Mrs. Parvin responded that “a husband must be fat, and pencil-thin men are not appropriate for spousal life.”⁴¹¹

Immediately following the chador-wearing Mrs. Parvin’s outlook on weight, the article segued to a section titled “What Do Those in Northern Tehran Say?” In contrast to the supposedly backward Iranian, this latter section opened with the reporter wondering whether “modernized” (*motejadded*) and “modern” (*emruzi*) Iranians “also preferred a fat spouse or not.” As it turned out,

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

according to the article, obesity in women happened to be so troubling a matter for northern Tehranis that it could even compel men to leave their wives over it. As an upper class, “overweight” female interviewee remarked, her labors to lose weight came in consequence of not just yearning for a healthier lifestyle, but because “I might lose my husband on top of it all.” A sauna manager confirmed these fears, claiming that “the common anguish of all fat women is that they are afraid to lose their husbands; they are not afraid of high blood pressure or the risk of a heart attack.”⁴¹²

Significantly, the article then portended another noteworthy trend to come in the press’ endeavor to slenderize – and thus modernize – the Iranian woman: admonishing Iranian cuisine. The piece quoted a doctor’s claim that the Iranian diet of “rice, bread, fats, salt, and pastries” was specially to blame for the so-called obesity crisis in urban areas. “Truthfully,” Dr. Tavakkol asserted, “Iranian foods are especially fatty and salty, with bread and rice comprising its principal ingredients.” He then remarked that even though other nations, such as Japan, also enjoyed a diet replete with rice, the Iranian lifestyle was more stationary than the Japanese, and thus, more prone to gaining weight. Dr Tavakkol’s suggestion to all Iranians was simple: to do away with Iranian cuisines, and to occasion saunas more often.⁴¹³

Not only were these suggestions problematic in their assumption that all urban Iranians possessed the spending power to occasion upper class recreational locales such as the sauna and eat beyond their means, but they also implied that Iranian cuisine was not befitting the modern Iranian. Indeed, as recalled by Homa Katouzian, upper class distaste over Iranian cuisines happened to be so prevalent at the time that it was even reflected in the menus provided by contemporaneous fine dining establishments in Tehran. The traditional, Iranian appetizer of *āb*

⁴¹² Ibid.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

dokhiyār, comprising plain yoghurt and cucumbers, for instance, was often renamed as *sup-e sard* (cold soup) in menus so that the food could sound more western, and thus more appetizing to upper class tastes. More significantly, Iranian foods were regularly left off the menus of fine dining restaurants in favor of European cuisines such as filet mignon.⁴¹⁴

Beyond just cuisine, popular media also happened to blame myriad other Iranian traditions in having heretofore rendered the Iranian woman's figure less seemly. In an interview with an Iranian, "New York-licensed" plastic surgeon in *Zan-e Ruz's* 3 and 10 August 1974 issues, much space was accorded to the doctor chastising the country's backward traditions for having caused the so-called imperfections of the female Iranian figure. After claiming that the Iranian was part of the Aryan race – and thus equal in "beauties both racial and spiritual" to their European counterparts (the yardstick for beauty again being a nation's mere proximity to Europeanness), the anonymous plastic surgeon insisted that one of the principal culprits in the Iranian women's disproportionate figure was the chador and other such coverings. Back in the day, he claimed, "a woman would put on a chador and would thus not think about the fact that her legs were also part of her existence, and that they should also be as beautiful as her face."⁴¹⁵

Their lifestyles did not help with matters either: "She was habituated to sit on the ground," and out of etiquette, "would not stretch her legs," and carry on sitting "cross-legged on the ground," the doctor said of old-world women. These sitting habits, in turn, "caused her ankles to change shape." Likewise, he explained that the reason that Iranian women were often shorter than their European counterparts was because they were traditionally swaddled as children, "preventing blood flow," and causing stunted growth. Even Iranian squatting toilets were harmful, he remarked, causing female feet "to become crooked." The surgeon, however, expressed optimism

⁴¹⁴ Homa Katouzian, Conversation with Homa Katouzian, December 2021.

⁴¹⁵ "Dokhtar-hāye irāni ruz be ruz khoshgeltar mishavand," *Zan-e Ruz*, August 3, 1974.

for the future of Iranian woman's beauty. After all, he claimed, most of these traditions had been done away with in the past twenty years: "Urban women now sit on chairs," he praised, "and the *farangi* toilet has taken the place of the unhygienic and exasperating Iranian squat toilets, and infants are no longer swaddled." In other words, according to the doctor, because modernity had finally reached over to the country, the Iranian woman was finally given the opportunity to beautify herself in line with her racial kin.⁴¹⁶

Who to Be: Ommol or Emruzi?

Even state officials within the Pahlavi court did not shy from lambasting past traditions as being incompatible with the lifestyles of the modern Iranian. In a speech on 1 November 1974, Queen Farah Pahlavi – often presented by popular media as the archetype for Iranian fashion-forwardness – echoed the Shah's comparable comments that modernizing Iran must learn to "preserve good traditions, and do away with bad ones."⁴¹⁷ As to which traditions were beneficial and which were detrimental, even the Queen seemed torn, the official speech suddenly rendering itself into a riddle: "It is indeed difficult for a group of people to sit down and judge which traditions are good, and which bad," she admitted, "but, nonetheless, if we continue to search for our true identity and find solutions to our culture and traditions, we will naturally have found ourselves."⁴¹⁸

In another speech on 9 April 1975, the Queen pronounced that "over the years, our masses lived with particularly traditional lifestyles and particular philosophical, social and religious mindsets, some of which we like, some of which we do not."⁴¹⁹ Likening Iranians to a "flower" and the technological advancements experienced in recent decades as "bread," she claimed that,

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ "22-e mehr mäh, ruz-e shokufeh-ye mehr," *Tamasha*, October 11, 1975.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

perhaps “the bread has been baked too early,” and that “the flower still needs time to blossom.” As a result, she concluded in a customarily ambivalent manner of speech that it is up to the country’s “enlightened minds and thinkers” to “cultivate” Iranians through “myriad cultural apparatuses,” so that “the flower can become bountiful as soon as possible.”⁴²⁰

As to who exactly her “we” who preferred some Iranian traditions over others comprised, one could only assume. Easier to extrapolate were the implications inherent in these speeches as a whole: that Iran and Iranians were believed to still be on the path of “finding” themselves, that they had not yet matured as a modernizing country, and that the only solution available to them was to experiment with the developments of the modern world, under the guidance of “intellectuals,” until an arbitrary, correct national self was discovered. As Katouzian rather polemically states, those to whom the Queen referred as the “masses” were to serve as “guinea pigs” to the modernity project conferred by the Pahlavi state.⁴²¹

In line with this, as Hendelman-Baavur claims, it went without saying “being modern in [Pahlavi] Iran traditionally meant being attuned to the aesthetic preferences of the upper classes, and at the forefront of the fashion and aesthetic spectacles the press endorsed.”⁴²² As evinced by the aforementioned articles with respect to the Iranian woman’s figure, the lower class or traditional Iranians featured in these pieces were often rendered into admonitory models from which Iranians should stray so long as they aspired to be modern. They were mentioned solely for the sake of comparison, a model meant to harken to the “*ommol*” (old-fashioned) past – derisory paragons for who-not-to-be.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

⁴²¹ Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 265-266.

⁴²² Handelman-Baavur, *Creating the Modern Iranian Woman*, 175.

This juxtaposition with respect to the old-fashioned Iranian vis-à-vis the contemporary Iranian was notably manifested in print media in the weekly caricatures that artist Kambiz Derambakhsh drew for *Zan-e Ruz* throughout the decade. In these comics, the “*ommol*” Iranian was often differentiated from the “*emruzi*” Iranian by way of aesthetics, including the weight, hair color, and fashion choices of the drawn figures featured. The *ommol* woman was often portrayed as being dark-haired, middle-aged, overweight, and wearing loose-fitting clothing to hide her weight, endowed as she also was with a laughably large nose. She did not necessarily need to be covered by a chador in these comics, as the comics reserved the chador for those on the very margins of society – all this despite the fact that the chador-wearing woman arguably constituted the population’s majority. Conversely, the contemporary woman was depicted as young, blonde, hour-glass thin, wearing tight-fitting clothes, and endowed with a markedly sharp and petite nose. Husbands, also regularly present in these comics, were often drawn as being dejected over the demeanor of their old-fashioned wives, while displaying ecstatic expressions when encountering the contemporary woman.

Sometimes, as with Derambakhsh’s 11 September 1971 comic, these old-fashioned women endeavored to follow modern trends, only to blunder it entirely. The aforesaid comic, for example, pictured an overweight, large-nosed woman, with the old-fashioned name – Effat – taking a stab at sunbathing by wearing an ill-fitting bikini unable to contain her excess weight. Haplessly, the woman stays under the sun too long, with the fourth comic pane evincing only an umbrella and ashes on the sand.⁴²³ A subtle, harrowing suggestion in these series of comics, recurring weekly throughout the decade, was that even when the old-fashioned endeavored modernity, they were oft

⁴²³ Kāmbiz Derambakhsh, “Seriyāl-e boronzeh shodan-e effat khānum,” *Zan-e Ruz*, September 11, 1971.

too late to acclimatize, and thus doomed to inertia, with husbands primed to leave them at the very sight of a younger, blonder, thinner modern woman.

As these examples showed, the *ommol* did not necessarily have to be a chador-wearing woman. Similar to the overweight wives parodied in Derambakhsh's comics, the *ommol* could also comprise the woman who had simply refused to keep up with the times. Indeed, most of Derambakhsh's *ommol* women were those that had refused to slim down even when the modern fervor had already linked beauty to slenderness. They were hence deprecated in the same manner as chadori women. The "Effat-s" of Iran were thus categorized closer to the derided chadori than the elite of which they had likely been a part decades past, standing in stark contrast to the more admirable, *emruzi* Iranian.

Zan-e Ruz happened to describe the *ommol* in full in its 27 December 1975 feature, titled "Girls, Do Not Be Afraid of *Ommols*," along with a subheading claiming that "the Iranian woman is distancing herself from the era of the chador, *chāqchur*, and *kajāveh* on four horses." For the article's writer, the *ommol* was no more than a "bindweed fanatic who has stubbornly twisted itself around decayed traditions, and persistently defends and feeds on the customs of an out-of-date age that are no longer harmonious to the present era." These were the same people, according to the magazine, that "societal norms now deem as reactionaries," and indeed, the same kind of "reactionaries" that had even dared lambast the White Revolution's (eventually catastrophic) land reform program, as well as the same "fanatics" that "shouted and moaned and sighed that radio and television have uprooted our faith." Expectedly, that final characterization's use of the word "faith" distinctly connoted another group that the "*ommol*" also encompassed: the pious.⁴²⁴

⁴²⁴ "Dokhtar-hā, az *ommol*-hā natarsid," *Zan-e Ruz*, December 27, 1975.

A Hair to Dye For, A Nose to Reclaim

The novel Euro-American beauty standard that all but the *ommol* were prefigured into embracing was not merely limited to sartorial preferences and the inclination towards a slenderer figure. As we saw in the comics described above, hair color and nose size also happened to be visual markers set to be redefined in Euro-American lines. By way of illustration, *Zan-e Ruz*'s Open Tribune section on 21 July 1973 featured a letter as written by an individual seemingly demoralized by what they deemed as "western fever" engulfing the country. Every few months, the writer claimed, Iranians seem to become feverish over some new western fad; up until now, such fads revolved around the prevalence of "boutiques," "hamburgers," and "canteens" throughout the country. Yet, the most irritating of such new "fevers" assailing the country in the past years, he claimed, was "the complex for golden hair." The writer remarked that "golden hair is the symbol of western beauty," and in Iran, "whichever man or woman who happens to don golden hair seems to overtake our eyes and make us aflutter." If the blonde-haired person happens to also speak a foreign tongue, he maintained, "then we surrender ourselves to them, give our lives to them, and imitate their every move."⁴²⁵

Despite its polemical nature, the letter nonetheless shed light on how, even as it pertained to hair color, contemporaneous beauty culture in the country remained strictly enmeshed within Euro-American aesthetic standards. Certainly, it is difficult to ascribe any underlying reason as to why blonde hair became a fashionable choice for the Iranian woman at this time, other than the fact that contemporaneous standards of beauty, often borrowing from western standards, were likewise ensnared in the image of the blonde, thin, western model. As *Zan-e Ruz*'s Teen Section on 8 January 1974 further elucidated, Iranian women had been led to believe at the time that their

⁴²⁵ "Tab-e farangi," *Zan-e Ruz*, July 21, 1973.

men would become weak-kneed at the sight of “blonde hair and white skin”⁴²⁶ – a claim echoing the *farangi* woman controversy we examined in the previous chapter. It might therefore be possible to assume that another reason blonde hair became so romanticized during this period was in part based on the myth accorded to the Iranian male’s innate attraction to western woman. As such, the contemporary Iranian woman’s increasing embrace of blonde hair at the time might have come in direct consequence of the press’ repeated assertions that Iranian males preferred blonde haired western women to Iranian brunettes.

Indeed, the most glaring example of blonde hair’s standardization in this particular period of Iranian popular media could be observed in *Zan-e Ruz*’s annual advertisements for the Teen Princess pageant. The Teen Princess logo, through to 1974, was a sketched young girl that donned black hair. In 1974, however, the sketched Teen Princess’s hair had faded into a bleached white.⁴²⁷ By 1975, her hair color had gained some warmth: it was now entirely blonde.⁴²⁸ The Iranian Teen Princess, selected to compete internationally and annually praised by Queen Farah herself as the paragon of the contemporary Iranian, was now symbolized by an emblem accentuated by blonde hair. Lighter hair was thusly deemed not only more attractive, but also more befitting of a “princess.”

In terms of desirability, the same was true for a thinner nose. Castigation of the Iranian nose was rampant in the pages of *Zan-e Ruz* throughout 1970s. Consulting plastic surgeons, and even western beauty experts, the magazine persistently printed denigrations of the “big” Iranian nose in its issues. A foreign representative of Ayer cosmetics was even questioned in the 4 September 1971 issue about how the Iranian woman could best “fade” the conspicuity of her big

⁴²⁶ “Dokhtar-e irāni va eshq be sabk-e itāliya’i,” *Zan-e Ruz*, January 8, 1974.

⁴²⁷ “Hamin Panjshanbeh,” *Zan-e Ruz*, April 27, 1974.

⁴²⁸ “Dokhtarān-e jazzāb, shojā’ va emruzi,” *Zan-e Ruz*, March 29, 1975.

nose.⁴²⁹ In the aforementioned interview with the New York-licensed plastic surgeon, *Zan-e Ruz* similarly allotted much space in highlighting the inadequacies of the Iranian nose. Justifying contemporary statistics claiming rhinoplasties as most prevalent surgery among Iranians, the doctor remarked that the nose job in Iran “is but a reaction to a certifiable truth... that if there is one ugly feature in the Iranian woman’s face, it is undoubtedly her nose.⁴³⁰” Conforming to a racial pseudo-science – something to which Pahlavi state ideology also subscribed⁴³¹ – the doctor blamed this on the Iranians’ miscegenation with “Arabs and Jews.” After all, as he misleadingly remarked, Zoroastrian Iranians actually boasted “delicate and pretty” noses.⁴³² Since these large noses were merely a result of mistaken miscegenation, he implied, it was only fair to restructure them. The thinner the nose, the more Aryan the Iranian.

The Euro-American Standard, Realized

All the same, despite these examples, we cannot so easily assume that print media was so effectual in single-handedly standardizing the Iranian woman’s beauty in accordance with Euro-American markers. It bears reminding that, like Lipovetsky suggests, print media such as *Zan-e Ruz* merely reflected and reproduced “the dominant values” of their contemporaneous society.⁴³³ Consumerism at the time had indeed become prevalent among affluent Iranians at the time, with the abovementioned beauty standards pervading the body management regimens of these particular societies.

With respect to the shift toward slimmer figures, an article in the 10 February 1973 issue of *Zan-e Ruz*, for instance, pointed to these changing bodily standards when discussing bygone

⁴²⁹ “Safir-e zibā’i-ye āyer dar irān,” *Zan-e Ruz*, September 4, 1971.

⁴³⁰ “Dokhtar-hāye irāni ruz be ruz khoshgeltar mishavand,” *Zan-e Ruz*, August 3, 1974.

⁴³¹ Reza Zia-Ebrahimi, *The Emergence of Iranian Nationalism: Race and the Politics of Dislocation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

⁴³² “Dokhtar-hāye irāni ruz be ruz khoshgeltar mishavand,” *Zan-e Ruz*, August 3, 1974.

⁴³³ Lipovetsky, *The Empire of Fashion*, 190.

cinema stars. Those stars, the article revealed, happened to possess larger bodies in comparison to today's stars. Surveying "The Famous Fat and Round," the feature noted that "film stars, like Sorraya Beheshti, who had previously found fame for their fatness" no longer received starring film roles as they used to in the past. Pointing to the sudden shift in bodily standards, the article pointed out that "Three, four years ago, most female Iranian actors were fat and round, because this was the type for which male directors had a preference." It claimed that directors, at the time, were certain that the Iranian film viewer "did not like the wicker-thin and pencil-thin woman," even going so far in their certitude to pressure thinner Iranian actors to gain weight with "fat diets." Much, however, had changed in recent years, owing largely to the more sophisticated "tastes and mentality" of the contemporary viewing audience.⁴³⁴

Consequently, a class component once more came to pervade the discussion with respect to weight, in this case in relation to cinema-goers' preferences. The article then maintained that the "curtain of flesh" was now only preferable to only a select segment of the viewing audiences. These viewers, according to the piece, were those who relished films solely for their "sexy scenes."⁴³⁵ Notwithstanding that this comment happened also to be a barb at the *filmfarsi* genre and its largely traditional audiences, its more problematic implication was that the only viewers who still relished fatness as opposed to slenderness were the sexually repressed and traditional old guard that frequented cinemas only for sexual release. As such, the article argued, it should come as no surprise that their "tastes" and "mindsets" had yet to change. They were, after all, still trapped within traditional beauty standards that preferred fleshy women to the slim and slender of the modern age.⁴³⁶ They were, in other words, *ommol*.

⁴³⁴ "Chāq va chelle hā-ye mashhur," *Zan-e Ruz*, February 10, 1973.

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

Yet, these increasingly Euro-Americanized beauty standards Euro-American norms also happened to seep into the urban job market at the time. By way of illustration, as late as 11 February 1978, an unemployed woman wrote to *Zan-e Ruz*'s Open Tribune section to express shock over a newspaper's job listing that exclusively sought "a woman with an English appearance."⁴³⁷ She then pondered what the employer meant by necessitating such an appearance. Surely, she opined, such a woman was expected to have "a lean back, a tall figure, blonde hair, and freckles, with opinions based on the English mindset." The writer then implied that this is not the first time she had been faced with such discrimination in the job market, noting in her byline that she had long been unemployed because her "mug and figure are, perhaps, too eastern."⁴³⁸ Bearing this particular letter in mind, it should thus come as no surprise as to why boutique owners such as Keyvan Khosrovani sought it necessary to "prepare" the Iranian youth for urban employment by dressing them in the period's appropriate attire. Many of these youth had no other choice but look the part demanded of them by this period, marked as it was by its modernity and its inclination towards western appearances.

The Shock of the New: The Urban Alien, the Rustic, and the Devout

As evinced by the above instances, both popular culture and urban Iranian society at large had begun to make concrete aesthetic demarcations vis-a-vis the modern as opposed to the traditional segments of the population in this particular period. This aesthetic distinction was not only on account of dress, but myriad other aesthetic standards likewise encouraged, including thinner figures, lighter shades of hair, and thinner noses. Arguably, even the job market required women to look a certain way so that they could be deemed employable within the urban milieu.

⁴³⁷ "Sekreter-e irāni bā qiyāfeh-ye inglisi," *Zan-e Ruz*, February 11, 1978.

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

To be an urbane Iranian, therefore, one was expected to also look the part, to rid themselves of what the hegemony – with the media comprising a significant part of said hegemony – deemed as “bad traditions” and embrace the new.⁴³⁹ Yet, embracing the new not only necessitated a collective willingness to embrace modernity, but equally, the necessary leisure time and spending power to afford the trappings that typified modernity. Thus far, we have mainly discussed the manners in which consumer culture affected affluent, middle to upper class Iranians during this period. These were the classes endowed with both the appropriate leisure time and spending power to engage with this culture. But what about those without the benefit of such leisure time, or more importantly, those who did not feel impelled to go along with the new wave of consumerism prevalent in the urban arena? Indeed, a significant issue that demands further examination are the manners in which those particular segments of Iranian society experienced this consumerist wave.

Despite our focus being limited to the politics of style and the ways in which media and ideology buttressed sartorial politics of exclusion and inclusion during this era, as a prelude to the discussion that is to follow, it is nonetheless important to provide a brief overview of the White Revolution’s land reform program and its consequences. Indeed, 1963’s land reform program marked a significant turning point with respect to the gap between the westernized middle class and the less modernistic flank of Iran’s population becoming more conspicuous. This cultural gap happened to also be translated sartorially in the urban environment, where urban migrants were compelled to either conform or risk being derided or made invisible in accordance with their choice of dress.

⁴³⁹ “22-e mehr mäh, ruz-e shokufeh-ye mehr.”

That by onset of 1979's Iranian Revolution, the urban population "had increased from one-third to approximately one-half of the nation's population,"⁴⁴⁰ was itself a phenomenon largely contingent on the land reform program initiated fifteen years earlier. On the surface, the primary incentive of land reform was to enfranchise the peasant class and hence modernize Iran's agricultural sector through the redistribution of land among the peasants, so that "nearly one-half of village families" could "acquire at least limited land ownership."⁴⁴¹ It was an enterprise meant to be "implemented in three distinct stages over the course of a decade,"⁴⁴² pushed forward by the Shah owing to "American encouragement" as well as domestic "criticism from a revived nationalist opposition."⁴⁴³

The true motivations behind the program, however, were "political rather than economic or developmental."⁴⁴⁴ Concomitant with "a desire to improve his domestic image" was the Shah's distaste for Iran's traditional agricultural sector, which he and the state "perceived as backwards, rather than modern."⁴⁴⁵ Land reform also presented itself as a means for the Pahlavi state "to weaken landlords' traditional power and bind a grateful peasantry to the state."⁴⁴⁶ Until the 1960s, government control in the rural areas was "very weak." With political influence in the countryside "monopolized by large absentee landlords, especially those who lived in the major provincial towns," landlord had the exceptional local influence to exert "independent challenge to the extension of governmental power."⁴⁴⁷ And so, rural townships were often spared of total state

⁴⁴⁰ S. Kaveh Mirani, "Social and Economic Change in the Role of Women, 1956-1978," in *Women and Revolution in Iran*, 62.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, ix.

⁴⁴² Hooglund, *Land and Revolution in Iran, 1960-1980*, ix.

⁴⁴³ John Foran, "The Iranian Revolution of 1977-79: A Challenge for Social Theory," in *A Century of Revolution: Social Movements in Iran* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 167.

⁴⁴⁴ Hooglund, *Land and Revolution in Iran, 1960-1980*, ix.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁴⁴⁶ Foran, "The Iranian Revolution," 167.

⁴⁴⁷ Hooglund, *Land and Revolution in Iran, 1960-1980*, 46.

control.⁴⁴⁸ By appealing to the peasant class and limiting the influence of landowners, the state's assumption was that it could then not only "extend central government control" over villages, but also modernize the "backward" agricultural sector by welcoming "agribusiness ventures by European and American banks and multinational companies" into these locales.⁴⁴⁹

Alongside women's enfranchisement, land reform became "the symbol" of the Shah's White Revolution in January 1963. The assumption was that it could concurrently undermine the "appeal of the opposition," while also guaranteeing full control over the countryside.⁴⁵⁰ By virtue of these reforms, the Shah could also hone his image as compassionate to the needs of the masses, fully committed to reform, and thus absolutely deserving "of support and loyalty."⁴⁵¹ In so doing, he could decisively "preserve the royal system of government, with himself virtually an absolute ruler."⁴⁵²

From the onset, however, the program was doomed to fail. It not only enraged the now dispossessed landowners previously loyal to the state, but the state did not seem to understand the complex, generational dynamics already entrenched in the agricultural traditions now displaced. The lands redistributed were often not large enough "to grow adequate food for subsistence," with 75% of the new peasant landowners acquiring less than seven hectares of land.⁴⁵³ As a result, with the majority of peasants unable "to maintain their families at a basic subsistence standard of living," the land reform program merely engendered "a class of peasant proprietors comprised of a small minority of profit-oriented farmers and a mass of poor peasants unable to support themselves from their holdings."⁴⁵⁴ The only reason that "a large proportion" survived the 1970s

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁹ Shawcross, *The Shah's Last Ride*, 196.

⁴⁵⁰ Hooglund, *Land and Revolution in Iran, 1960–1980*, 58.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ Ibid., 93.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., 93.

was indeed because they earned their income from working on properties not their own. Even that, however, did not “amount to more than several days’ wages per year.”⁴⁵⁵

After 1971, however, many of these peasants were forced to “seek opportunities beyond the confines of the village.”⁴⁵⁶ Many small peasant landowners were forced to abandon working on their land altogether, leaving them barren if need be. Urban migration became a necessity. As many as 75,000 villagers were forced to migrate in consequence of the land reform program.⁴⁵⁷ Between just 1970 and 1976, “more than fifty thousand villagers were dispossessed.”⁴⁵⁸ To put the abovementioned numbers into context, the surge in urban migration was so that in 1963, the peasant population amounted to 65% of Iran’s total population; by 1978, it had been reduced to 53% – all despite a high population growth rate.⁴⁵⁹

Naturally, these villagers were not journeying to cities contentedly. They were ravaged by a “profound sense of disillusionment.” And despite urban bureaucrats assuming “that peasants were stupid – a view often shared with their Western colleagues/advisors/educators and based upon the fallacious equation of illiteracy with ignorance,” these peasants understood full well that their fate had been wrought upon them by an “interconnection of economic and political influence.”⁴⁶⁰ Yet, they were powerless under the shadows of ever-growing state control, and had to eke out a living above all. Now, not only did they have to seek out new occupations demanding new skills for a modernized industry, but they also had to habituate themselves with a consumerist urban environment that they had not previously encountered.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., 93.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., 93.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., 85.

⁴⁵⁸ Shawcross, *The Shah’s Last Ride*, 196.

⁴⁵⁹ Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 258.

⁴⁶⁰ Hooglund, *Land and Revolution in Iran, 1960–1980*, 94.

Oddly, by 1968, urban migration seemed to have become the state's primary motive in further carrying out its land reform program. Soon, the state was to welcome farm corporations and agribusinesses as well – all of which were also ultimately met with abject failure. Indeed, the focus on local agriculture was so drastically minimized that the state, partly encouraged by American entrepreneurs, opted to rely on importing high-priced cattle and feed and frozen meats in preference to “relying on the nomads’ sheep for much of Iran’s meat.”⁴⁶¹ The local agricultural sector was all but done away with. This act “was a clear indication that the Shah no longer believed in the potential of a peasant proprietor class to be either a base of political support or a means through which to raise agricultural productivity.”⁴⁶² Tactfully, a new mode of operation for the modernization of rural areas was thus decided. The new approach “for modernization was not to perpetuate inefficient and backward villages, but to encourage villagers to leave.”⁴⁶³ Those able to subsist in newly developed farmed corporations could stay, but the “populations of ‘marginal’ villages would be encouraged to migrate to the cities to work in the factories being built for the industrialization of Iran.”⁴⁶⁴

As to where the recently displaced migrants were to live inside these expensive cities – their new abodes were no more than “squalid slums” that had sprung up “to accommodate the rural newcomers.”⁴⁶⁵ These dwellings lacked even basic services such as “electricity, piped water, and sewerage disposal which had become basic features of more established urban residential areas by 1970.”⁴⁶⁶ Additionally, their wages were often earned in helping “build houses and hotels and other facilities for the rich and the foreigners in north Tehran,” where they naturally had to bear

⁴⁶¹ Nikki R. Keddie and Yann Richard, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 156.

⁴⁶² Hooglund, Eric J. *Land and Revolution in Iran, 1960–1980*, 136.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, 136.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 136.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 142.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 142.

witness to the social, economic, and cultural gap separating them.⁴⁶⁷ As Shawcross remarks, “Tempers became uncontrollable. Envy was everywhere.”⁴⁶⁸

Added to this surge of urban migrants was the overall growth of the Iranian population during this decade as well. Between 1963 and 1978, the total population grew from twenty-three million to thirty-five million.⁴⁶⁹ Population growth, in turn, led to more noticeable socio-cultural and economic gaps in the urban areas. Statistics alone revealed that only “the top 10 percent of the population accounted for 40 percent of expenditure” by the mid-1970s.⁴⁷⁰ Though income rose with the oil boom, “works conditions, hours, and urban life generally were still very hard” for those not part of the “educated middle class of professionals, civil servants, and technical workers,” whose numbers also “swelled with industrialization and the growth of the state itself.”⁴⁷¹ Housing costs and inflation, therefore, also rose to an all-time high, with the urban poor having to bear the great brunt of these price hikes. Under such circumstances, as Fred Halliday reports, “some had to spend up to 70 percent of their income on rents.”⁴⁷²

The urban migrant, however, was not the only segment of the population made alien by the state’s modernistic economic policies. By the mid-decade, the state’s dependence on “import-substitution and heavy sectors, high tariffs, guaranteed profits, and inflation-driven wage bills” also limited the number of manufactured goods that could be exported, thinning much of the “petty-commodity urban sector of the bazaar economy.”⁴⁷³ Department stores and chain outlets were replacing the previously “well-to-do merchants,” and guild artisans had already been

⁴⁶⁷ Shawcross, *The Shah’s Last Ride*, 196.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 258.

⁴⁷⁰ Halliday, “The Iranian Revolution,” 194.

⁴⁷¹ Foran, “The Iranian Revolution,” 168.

⁴⁷² Halliday, “The Iranian Revolution,” 194.

⁴⁷³ Foran, “The Iranian Revolution,” 168.

swapped in favor of “cheap imports and state controls.”⁴⁷⁴ Added to these disgruntled classes were the religious leaders, who were likewise losing influence “as modern education expanded at their expense.”⁴⁷⁵ These segments of the population – from the ulama and their pious followers, to the merchants and their dependents, to urban migrants and their families – who had previously relied on a generational and traditional web of socioeconomic relations for their day-to-day activities, were now left unanchored amidst the tide of modernity taking over the ever-centralizing country. Now, compelled to acclimatize to new and unfamiliar dynamics, they were left with no choice but to either adapt or isolate themselves in cluster communities of likeminded marginals. Moreover, their plights were often overlooked in the prevailing media at the time, only glimmers of their dilemmas appearing in magazine features focused on the intergenerational conflicts occurring between traditional *ommol* parents and their *emruzi* children, with a clear bias shown toward the latter.

Markers of Difference: Discrimination by Dress

As made evident throughout our discussion regarding the intersection of style, popular media, and ideology in Iran following the White Revolution, no examination pertaining to the changing sartorial standards of a given period can so simplistically mention these aesthetic shifts without considering the socio-cultural as well as political implications inherent to these transformations. Dress comprises a cultural and political comportment. By linking individuals “to a specific community,” dress not only identifies an individual “geographically and historically,” but also functions in differentiating “the same individual from all others.”⁴⁷⁶ Embedded in dress, therefore,

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁶ Ruth Barnes and Joanne Bubolz Eicher, “Introduction,” in *Dress and Gender: Making and Meaning in Cultural Contexts* (Providence (N.Y.) Oxford: Berg, 1993),1.

are the principles of inclusion and exclusion. Dress communicates “group affiliation,” conveying “a clear message that certain individuals have been chosen – ‘selected’ from the masses to be part of a highly visible and highly desirable group.”⁴⁷⁷

By all means, the evident gap “between the western and indigenous cultural elements”⁴⁷⁸ within the urban environment was made more conspicuous owing to the sartorial choices made by these diverging segments of the population. For instance, when visiting other, less modernized locales throughout the country, westernized urban women often donned the more modern clothing to which they were accustomed. These sartorial choices not only instigated shock and dismay among the locals, but also provided them with a preconceived notion regarding what, to them, was the corrupting influence of modernity.

A letter sent in for the 7 May 1977 issue of *Zan-e Ruz* helps shed light on this argument. In this issue, a girl from the southern port city of Bandar Lengeh wrote to explain how the comportment and sartorial choices of these westernized tourists – in this case, students from Tehran sent on a fieldtrip to the south – bore great consequences for the women residing in these small cities. Evoking the image of young girls walking the streets of Bandar Lengeh in bikinis as though it was “a European coast” or lovemaking on the beaches at night, she cautioned that these actions “inhibit the growth of our port’s youth.”⁴⁷⁹ The reason given was not faith-based. Rather, she maintained that “when our fathers and mothers see Tehrani students in these circumstances, they will obviously recoil at the thought of sending their children to university.” Sympathizing with the older generation’s more traditional precepts as well as their unfamiliarity with the urban mindset, she went further to say that parents from small cities will “naturally imagine that their

⁴⁷⁷ Lillian O. Holloman, “Black Sororities and Fraternities: A Case Study in Clothing Symbolism,” in *Dress and Popular Culture* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1991), 48

⁴⁷⁸ Asghar Fathi, “Introduction,” in *Women and the Family in Iran*, ed. Asghar Fathi (Boston: Brill, 1985), 5.

⁴⁷⁹ Āmeneh Fotuhi, “In ordust ya mäh-e asal?,” *Zan-e Ruz*, May 7, 1977.

own scholarly children will also end up doing the same things in some other city.”⁴⁸⁰ Such images and misconceptions did, in fact, end up dissuading many traditional parents in both urban and rural settings from allowing their children, especially daughters, to pursue a university education.

Just as the modern look alienated those with more traditional predilections, the reverse was also true. Since, as has already been argued, modernity projects often highlighted a woman’s appearance within the public sphere, the visual incongruity of the chador-wearing woman and the one dressed in Euro-American clothing became a principal point of contention in both print media and the westernized sectors of urban locals. Though 1936’s forced unveiling was quietly reversed following Reza Shah’s abdication in 1941, the state, the media, and the westernized middle classes nonetheless openly derided the chador as being one of the foremost culprits in the country’s so-called backwardness. To the westernized eye, it was not only symbolic of religious and cultural fanaticism, but as traditional dress and thus “nonfashion,”⁴⁸¹ it stood in stark contrast to modernity’s embrace of the new. After all, nonfashion was normative, working to “illustrate the confirmation of established custom, and to embody the desire for stable meaning even if custom changes.”⁴⁸² Fashion and fashionability signified an embrace of the new, a projection forward; something part and parcel with modernity. Conversely, the chador represented a constituency’s commitment to exactly the same “bad traditions” of which the Pahlavi state wished to be rid, to which the more westernized middle class was similarly uncongenial.

Even traditionally religious cities like Isfahan were not spared the media’s shock and dismay over modernity’s inability to rid Iranians of the chador in urban environments. Among the letters printed in *Zan-e Ruz*’s 19 September 1970 issue was one titled “the Rural Girl is Still Stuck

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ Anne Hollander, *Sex and Suits* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 17-18.

⁴⁸² Ibid.

Under the Bonds of Past Customs.”⁴⁸³ In the piece, the letter-writer, Iraj Pāyandeh, openly expressed disappointment at the “women and girls of Isfahan, who continue to wear the same cloths and customs of the past.” He went on to say that no matter what direction he took on the streets, he encountered only few “signs of *emruzi* girls and women.” Rather, they all seemed identical “to the generation previous, wearing chadors and pants tucked into their socks.” Only a few, he said “were making an attempt” to bravely “take on the new path, away from superstition.” He then implored magazines like *Zan-e Ruz* to help these women “escape the framework of the home” and to let go “their fears of appearing in the social sphere,” to teach them that they were indeed capable “of rivalling the girls of other cities.”⁴⁸⁴ He continued further by comparing Isfahani girls to those from Tehran and the port province of Khuzestan, claiming that “girls there are dressed in modern styles,” before calling for a homogeneity of western, modern styles to be encouraged throughout the country.

Indeed, as per the Bandar Lengeh letter, one can also ascertain how unempathetic visitors from westernized urban locales were to the quotidian life of other segments in society. They often regarded those from the smaller cities with disdain, judging them especially by way of their appearance, set against the Euro-American standards to which they were accustomed. In a 1972 article for *Tamasha* magazine, the poet Nader Ebrahimi deemed this attitude espoused by modernists as “Tehrani cultural exceptionalism.” According to Ebrahimi, residents of Tehran often “regard themselves as the standard and model by which others must abide.” While not directly referring to class, Ebrahimi’s barb at the Tehrani’s notion of taste, made clear precisely about whom he was talking – those being the westernized elites. Their tastes, Ebrahimi remarked,

⁴⁸³ Iraj Pāyandeh, “Dokhtar-e shahrestāni hanuz dar qeyd-e rosum va ādāb-e gozashteh ast,” *Zan-e Ruz*, September 19, 1970.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

“merely follow the West, with eyes stitched to the hands and mouth and the legs of westerners.” Despite their lack of original taste, the poet implied, westernized Tehranis nonetheless perceived themselves as sole adjudicators of taste for the entire country, discriminating only according to their own subjective tastes as borrowed from the West.⁴⁸⁵ Reading Ebrahimi’s contemporary criticisms, one therefore should not be surprised by the comportment of urban Tehranis in environments not their own, as exemplified in these aforementioned letters.

The discrimination faced by chadori women in Tehran’s more westernized, urban environments was even more pointed. A rare letter that commiserated with the woes of the religious classes and printed in *Zan-e Ruz* on 19 June 1976 shed light on the manners in which the chadori faced discrimination when frequenting modern locales such as department stores. In that particular letter, the writer remarked that “I must contend with the bitter truth that we chadori women are the subject of harassment and mercilessness from society.” She explained that she, a resident of Babol in northern Iran, did not believe this herself until she and her family visited Tehran. Prefacing that she was of “a large religious family, in which all of us wear the chador,” she recalled that upon visiting a department store in northern Tehran’s Pahlavi Street, she overheard the salesperson whisper to his co-worker “to be careful that these people do not steal anything by putting it under their chadors.” The discrimination proved so traumatic that she and her entire family “returned immediately to [their] hometown without having bought anything from Tehran.” She went on to express disdain at “our society, which utilizes clothing and appearance as an instrument to gauge the morals of an individual.” No townie should be naïve enough, she concluded, “to leave the pure environment of their hometowns to go to a city as heartless and unjust as Tehran.”⁴⁸⁶ Oral accounts similarly recall chadori and even scarved women being barred

⁴⁸⁵ Nāder Ebrāhimi, “Tehrāni-ye jamā’at,” *Tamasha*, August 10, 1972.

⁴⁸⁶ Ozrā M., “Tehrān jāy-e qer va atvār ast,” *Zan-e Ruz*, June 19, 1976.

from entering particularly modern, state-sponsored establishments such as northern Iran's Hotel Ramsar during this period.⁴⁸⁷ Such examples painted a grim picture of the discrimination faced by chadori women in the more modernistic landscape upon which they had happened.

Men, too, faced derision if not properly attired according to contemporaneous standards. In the 21 May 1977 issue of *Zan-e Ruz* issue, one particular letter related a bizarre incident that occurred that week in the town of Tabas, a historic and religious town not necessarily expected to abide by urban sartorial standards. With a bitterly comic tone, the letter-writer recounted that several farmers were recently fined by city officials "for appearing in the streets in pajamas." Their clothes, however, turned out not to be pajamas, but the "local dress of the villagers, also known as *shalvār-e band dār*" – trousers akin to sweatpants. The letter then described one farmer, who remarked upon receiving the fine: "If they are to fine people on the crime of wearing clothes like this, then perhaps, the agricultural office or other state officials should buy us formal trousers instead." The farmer's barb clearly referred to the manner in which state officials favored the western dress code over local clothing. The farmer's disillusionment, however, manifested itself further in his next remark, as he wondered aloud why "the women who walk the streets half-nude" were not similarly fined.⁴⁸⁸

Instances like the above clearly signaled the resentment felt by those on the margins of modernity. Seeing themselves cast out – and in this particular case, financially penalized – for abiding by their local dress, this segment of the population gradually came to believe that their customs were being replaced with more modernistic sartorial precepts. As to why any state official should even be present to fine a farmer in a town like Tabas, that event was a testament to the centralization and control provided to the state by way of 1963's land reform program. By 1977,

⁴⁸⁷ Katouzian, Conversation with Homa Katouzian.

⁴⁸⁸ Javād Fulādi, "Lokhti-hā rā jarimeh konid (Fine the Nude)," *Zan-e Ruz*, May 21, 1977.

when this incident occurred, increased state access to marginal townships seemed to have also led to the pervasion of standards principally exclusive to urban environments into the countryside, all in line with the Pahlavi state's commitment toward "modernization and westernization from above."⁴⁸⁹

Ethnic Dress, (Un)Willingly Forsaken

If ethnic dress was treated with such contempt in rural areas, it was doubly condescended to in urban areas like Tehran. As Elizabeth Wilson notes, the "urban proletariat" – comprising both the urban migrant and those noncompliant with the modernistic tenets of the state – was often aware of the fact that they, too, were expected to don the "modern urban dress," because it "symbolized their entry to the world of fashion and consumer goods."⁴⁹⁰ To acclimatize to the new urban environment, therefore, their ethnic attire was habitually shed in the name of the new. For men, the new either comprised the suit and tie, or less ostentatiously, a blouse and jeans. Similarly, the woman's entry into the world of urban consumerism was marked by her use of cosmetics and her refusal to wear anything that indicated traditional convictions, like the *rusari*, chador, or even ethnic dress.

After all, ethnic dress – like religious-wear – was "nonfashion"⁴⁹¹ and helped "capture the past of the members of a group." Worn, they memorialized "tradition" and "cultural heritage,"⁴⁹² all of which were beheld with embarrassment by the modernists. Since clothing indeed served "as a communicative device," revealing "cultural categories" and "principles," these segments were likewise compelled to sartorially alter themselves – and thus, albeit superficially, their standards –

⁴⁸⁹ Fathi, "Introduction," 7.

⁴⁹⁰ Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams*, 30.

⁴⁹¹ Hollander, *Sex and Suits*, 17-18.

⁴⁹² Joanne Bubolz Eicher and Barbara Sumberg, "World Fashion, Ethnic and National Dress," in *Dress and Ethnicity* (Berg Publishers, 1995), 3.

so as not to be derided by the urbanites by whom they were now employed or encircled. Looking more modern – and consequently, less rural – not only improved the urban proletariat’s chances of finding employment in these new locales, but also helped prevent them from standing out from the crowd.⁴⁹³

Keyvan Khosrovani recalled multiple occasions of being told by Number One customers, previously accustomed to ethnic dress, that they felt embarrassed about wearing their traditional clothing in cities like Tehran. Calling to mind an encounter with a Kurdish customer who had entered his boutique wearing customary Kurdish trousers – characterized by their wide, low crotch cut and thick ankle clutch – Khosrovani had complemented the customer’s alluring attire, suggesting in turn that he should make no alternations to his style. Khosrovani’s complement was met with the customer’s lament: “If I were to wear this in Tehran,” the customer told Khosrovani, “I would be a laughing-stock.”⁴⁹⁴ This was not an isolated instance either. Khosrovani also recollected coming across a group of people from Alishtar, Lorestan, dressed in jeans as opposed to their ethnic dresses. Again, he asked why they refused to wear their local dress in cities like Tehran. Once more, he was told that they had discarded their dress for jeans, because they felt disrespected in the city. “Go to the affluent areas of the city,” one of the Alishtaris advised Khosrovani, “and look at the door attendants and the greeters there; they are the one’s wearing our clothes, our grandfathers’ costumes; doing so only to caricature us, to spoof us.” That only the staff employed by ethnically themed restaurants were seen donned in such clothing implied to them that they and their cultural elements were objects of ridicule. “We do not wear our own

⁴⁹³ Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams*, 114.

⁴⁹⁴ Khosrovani, Interview with Morad Moazami.

clothes in Tehran,” the Alishtari emphasized to Khosrovani, “because you Tehranis have disrespected our dress.”⁴⁹⁵

The conditions prevalent in urban areas often compelled inhabitants to conform – unless they were willing to be ostracized by the new consumerist order. As Arjun Appadurai remarks, consumer societies observe “consumption” in the same manner as they do “breathing” – as “a self-effacing habit.”⁴⁹⁶ In such societies, the act of consuming is similarly subsumed in “techniques of the body,” in which, the body becomes “an ideal site for the inscription of social disciplines” by way of “repetition” and “habituation.”⁴⁹⁷ Appadurai notes that cultural disciplines such as cuisine, dress, hairstyling – all elements that we have already observed as having been redefined during this period – are rendered into “social discipline,” as “parts of some habitus, free of artifice or external coercion.”⁴⁹⁸

As we have likewise argued, consumerism in 1970s Iran was not exclusively a state-coerced event; much of it was spurred by the new demands and desires of modernity-inclined Iranians. Despite this, urban inhabitants were still expected to engage with the prevailing norms of consumerism, including its “ideas of bodily beauty and comportment.”⁴⁹⁹ After all, by then, consumerism had simply become part of the “habitus,” and compliance not only assured the avoidance of ostracization, but also made easier any attempt to eke out a living within this environment. In helping foster the disappearance of traditional lifestyles and disciplines, however, the consumerist order also happened to compliment the state’s modernity project. As argued, the ever-centralizing Pahlavi state did not look fondly on instances harking to traditions perceived as

⁴⁹⁵ Khosrovani, Interview with Morad Moazami.

⁴⁹⁶ Appadurai, *Modernity At Large*, 66.

⁴⁹⁷ Appadurai, *Modernity At Large*, 67.

⁴⁹⁸ Appadurai, *Modernity At Large*, 67.

⁴⁹⁹ Appadurai, *Modernity At Large*, 67.

“backward.” In turn, the consumerist tide assisted in envisaging the contemporary Iranian as someone more modern, and, thus, freed from the limitations imposed by ethnic dress and the outdated tenets embedded within said sartorial items.

Skirted Salad Days: The School Uniform

Although within a strictly consumerist context, sartorial standardization in line with Euro-American beauty markers could not so definitively be attributed to some arbitrary Pahlavi-era directive, the same could not be said for the same period’s standardization of western dress within the Iranian school system. Indeed, 1969’s imposition of a school uniform, exclusive to Iran’s secondary school girls, carried hefty ideological implications. Accordingly, this mandate proscribed female students from donning any religious or ethnic clothing incompatible with the state’s modernistic principles.

As per an interview arranged by *Zan-e Ruz* between Iran’s Minister of Education, Farrokhroo Parsa, and the 1970 Teen Princess, Sho’leh Zand, the decision to mandate a uniform for schoolgirls in 1969 had been ostensibly made on account of social inequalities within the country becoming more conspicuous as the next decade loomed.⁵⁰⁰ This uniform was a Russian sarafan (Persianized as a *sārāfon*, despite originally being rooted in Persian as *sarāpā*, meaning, head to feet). It was made of local fabrics and comprised a collared dress shirt combined with knee-length socks and a skirt, with differing colors distinguishing the grades in which the pupils studied. However, despite the original Persian name’s suggestion that the *sarāpā* was meant to cover its wearer’s body from head to toe with a floor-length skirt – and despite the Russian folk costume also keeping true to this designation – the Iranian uniform’s skirt was cut-off at the knee, with the legs meant to be covered by knee-length socks instead. The 1970s *sārāfon* uniform,

⁵⁰⁰ “Molāqāt-e dokhtar-e shāyesteh-ye irān ba khānum-e vazir,” *Zan-e Ruz*, July 4, 1970.

therefore, embraced a fusion of the old Iranian *sarāpā* and a variation of the pleated tartan skirt mostly associated with the British schoolgirl uniform of the early twentieth century.⁵⁰¹

Making no mention of having altered the *sārāfon*'s appearance by adding a western element to its skirts, Parsa nonetheless explained that the imposition of the uniform was a necessary means in neutralizing social stratification in schools. She claimed that “there are no schools in the country where students possess identical spending power.” As such, because the wearing of “colorful” or “expensive clothing” might trigger “distress among both teachers and students,” a uniform was explained away as a necessary means to keep both staff and students at ease.

Offsetting social stratification was not a concern, however, when it came to uniforms for schoolboys. Only girls were compelled to be in uniform, while boys were freed from the imposition. This was justified by Parsa owing to trousers for the male uniform costing more than the shorter fabric required for female skirts. Male uniforms proved “more expensive” than their female counterparts, Parsa explained, and to prevent further financial strain on families, the state had decided that boys’ uniforms remain a local school matter as opposed to a directive involving the state.⁵⁰² Yet, perhaps revealingly, in the same *Zan-e Ruz* interview, Parsa also made mention of the ministry’s hopes that the female uniform might also inspire girls to further cultivate their physical appearances. When referring to the ministry’s choice to color-code each grade, the minister emphasized that these uniforms were also intended to “help engender taste among the girls,” rather than stifle their aesthetic inclinations.⁵⁰³

Taste, however, was a largely subjective matter, leading one to consequently inquire whether or not the particular caveat that girls were heretofore mandated to present themselves

⁵⁰¹ Richard Butt, “Looking at Tartan in Film: History, Identity and Spectacle,” in *From Tartan to Tartanry: Scottish Culture, History and Myth*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 177.

⁵⁰² “Molāqāt-e dokhtar-e shāyesteh-ye irān ba khānum-e vazir,” *Zan-e Ruz*, July 4, 1970.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*

publicly in a knee-length skirt had any bearing on the decision to mandate school uniforms as a uniquely female concern. After all, as Brian J. McVeigh's notes, the "act of donning a uniform produces and reproduces on a daily basis the subjective substructure of norms demanded by politico-economic structures."⁵⁰⁴ As such, the linkage between Pahlavi ideology and the insistence on skirts as a school uniform is one worthy of more comprehensive examination.

As McVeigh remarks, women are often "expected to be more uniformed" as per the status states afford them as "natural repositories of the national spirit and sentiment."⁵⁰⁵ In a sense, this is no different than the manner in which women were also expected to bear the markers of modernity on their bodies and their figures throughout twentieth century Iran. In a similar vein, as McVeigh argues, women are often compelled to aesthetically embody the ideology blanketing the nation to which they belong. That argument also applied to Iran, as adjustments with respect to the male body remained relatively unregulated during the Pahlavi era, while, throughout the same period, the female body was consistently sought after as something to be to be "standardized"⁵⁰⁶ according to modernistic markers.

According to McVeigh, even though the interrelation between state and dress is neither "deterministic" nor "casual," the two are nonetheless bound to one another. This interrelation is "composed of hierarchical state/society layerings, complex connections, and less-than-obvious linkages," which, in turn, reveal the manners in which either "statist and capitalist projects influence the way people dress."⁵⁰⁷ Consequently, as McVeigh notes further, "socializing bureaucratic structures," such as schools, "play an indispensable role in producing and reproducing

⁵⁰⁴ McVeigh, Brian J. *Wearing Ideology: State, Schooling and Self-Presentation in Japan*. Dress, Body, Culture. Oxford: Berg, 2000, 184.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁶ McVeigh, *Wearing Ideology*, 2.

⁵⁰⁷ McVeigh, *Wearing Ideology*, 9.

statefulness,” which is defined not only in terms of “national identity,” but also comprises “unquestioned deep ideological sources bound up with modernity,” such as “social evolutionism, economic progressivism, positivism, scientism.”⁵⁰⁸ As one of the many “tools in the construction of this subjectivity,” the school uniform can, in turn, encourage “dress uniformity” in line with the ideological precepts of the state.⁵⁰⁹ In consequence, it “disciplines minds and bodies for the planned, coordinated, regulated and organized accumulation” of the state’s values.⁵¹⁰ Uniforms, therefore, “are used to socialize individuals (in schools) to accept basic sociopolitical processes (hierarchization, categorization, and standardization) generated by statist and capitalist projects.”⁵¹¹ They work to “[suppress] individual idiosyncrasies of behavior, appearance, and sometimes physical attributes,”⁵¹² especially those deemed undesirable by the state imposing them. Likewise, they “act as a ‘group emblem,’” and are thus rendered into “a means of convenient classification.”⁵¹³ As a result, they come to “symbolize social standardization,”⁵¹⁴ ladening the dressed body with meaning, and rendering it into a “politicized icon.”⁵¹⁵ The uniform is thus rendered into a means for expressing one’s “commitment to the dictates and norms of the group” – in this case, the state. It “becomes the visible expression of a moral system,” where “appearance is equated with character.”⁵¹⁶

While the consumerist tide outlined in the previous sections was defined in line with the aforementioned “capitalist” project of sartorial encouragement, the Pahlavi state’s sudden

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., 12.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., 9.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid., 12.

⁵¹¹ Ibid., 11.

⁵¹² Nathan Joseph, *Uniforms and Nonuniforms: Communication through Clothing*, Contributions in Sociology, no. 61 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 66-67.

⁵¹³ McVeigh, *Wearing Ideology*, 80.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., 80.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid., 81.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

imposition of a school uniform for high school girls in 1969 could indeed be perceived as a “statist” project opting to “construct particular forms of subjectivity” well-suited to the state’s ideological push toward modernity.⁵¹⁷ A mandate purposed with forcefully habituating young girls to wear modern clothing such as a knee-length skirt, therefore, did not seem out of the ordinary with respect to the Pahlavi state’s myriad other modernizing endeavors. Considering that the state had also long expressed its aversion to ethnic and religious dresses – clothing perceived as unmodern and inappropriate to its modernity project – this mandate, especially marked by its compulsory skirt, would also work toward curbing students from wearing such sartorial items in public places like the school.

After all, students, as McVeigh claims, are often “the key socializing targets of the education-bureaucratic system,”⁵¹⁸ a system that, in turn, expects them to don uniforms that reproduce their society’s norms. The state as well as the media’s aversion to the chador during this time was oft unsubtle, as best exemplified by the previously mentioned plastic surgeon who had had claimed outright that the main culprit behind the Iranian woman’s unseemly legs was the chador, or the manner in which veiled women were turned away from state-owned establishments such as the Ramsar Hotel. The chador was, after all, among the “bad traditions” of which both the state and the media that trumpeted its values expected Iranians to grow out. What better way to do this than to socialize the Iranian woman into showing her legs from an early age?

Indeed, following this mandate, schoolgirls in areas both urban and rural were required to don this uniform at all times while in school, despite any religious precepts disallowing them from baring their legs in public. Although in rural areas, girls from religious families were still allowed to wear their chadors over their mandated uniforms when school was in session, the same was not

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., 9.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid.

true for the more urbanized locales throughout the country. As happens, in cities like Tehran, religious schoolgirls were asked – and sometimes even forced – to take off their religious garb when entering school. This was done even if said schools had males employed as teachers, an occurrence that added further insult to injury.

Unsurprisingly, this directive was almost immediately met with resistance from those ill at ease with having to bare their legs in public. Though the popular media did not directly mention that the principal bone of contention concerning uniform mandate had to do with compulsory knee-length skirt, letters published in *Zan-e Ruz* during this period nonetheless implied the growing unease the uniform had caused among students. These letters revealed that, almost as soon as the mandate was issued, students throughout the country had begun campaigning to replace the mandated skirt with a more appropriate uniform comprising a tunic and trousers.⁵¹⁹

What was more was that resistance was not just limited to students. Teachers also challenged the state mandate. A report in the 23 January 1971 issue of *Zan-e Ruz* noted that, despite the compulsory uniforms, schoolteachers in rural areas had purposefully begun to attend class wearing the chador, warning students that “to be without the chador is to be unchaste.”⁵²⁰ Even a physical education teacher was reported to have taught her class in the chador, “crumpling clusters of her chador under her arm pits while whistling warm-up instructions to the class.”⁵²¹

These acts of resistance greatly angered those attending the fifth congress of the Iranian Women’s Organization in 1971, who used the abovementioned physical education example to justify why the chador was inappropriate because it hindered the modern woman’s functionality. “No one is claiming,” a member of the congress attested, “that women take off their veils and wear

⁵¹⁹ Ezzat Shahryāri, “Mā tunic shalvār nemikhāhim!,” *Zan-e Ruz*, September 12, 1970.

⁵²⁰ “Zan-e shahrestāni dar keshmakesh-e jahl va ta’asob,” *Zan-e Ruz*, January 23, 1971.

⁵²¹ “Zan-e shahrestāni dar keshmakesh-e jahl va ta’asob,” *Zan-e Ruz*, January 23, 1971.

a miniskirt.” Rather, she remarked, “the point is that in the twentieth century when women are expected to work on farms, factories, cultural institutions, laboratories, and offices... it is better for them to dress in a manner which upholds their morality, faith, and security, while also not impeding their work” as the chador does.⁵²²

It bears mention that this functionality argument with respect to the hijab vis-à-vis modern dress as it pertained to women entering modern occupations happened to be invalid. Despite the justification being a cornerstone of both popular media as well as state officials’ arguments against the hijab, it should be noted that even prior to unveiling, peasant women had regularly worked side by side with their men in farms so as to make a living, their dress never once proving an impediment. Yet, even despite the logical fallacy inherent in the congresswoman’s claims, the solution suggested by local schoolgirls concerning an alternative uniform comprising trousers instead of skirts could have nonetheless served this fabricated functionality argument just as well, while also relieving the pious’ worries over having to bear their legs in public. At the time, however, compromise on the skirt seemed non-negotiable.

All the same, the state’s insistence on having schoolgirls don skirts in public proved unsustainable. Arbitrarily, by 1973, a compromise in favor of the trouser was finally reached. This, however, came with a significant – even embarrassing – caveat. The skirt was to stay, but girls disinclined to show their legs were now allowed to wear trousers under the mandated skirt. Only then was the media also permitted to make mention of the fact that the skirt had been the point of contention all along. The narrative, however, persisted that no student chose to wear trousers on her own volition. Rather, as one *Zan-e Ruz* report argued, it was the “fathers and mothers of chadori children [that] preferred their children to wear trousers.”⁵²³ These parents, as the magazine

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ “Rupush-e madreseh,” *Zan-e Ruz*, October 6, 1973.

relentlessly made mention, were of the “*ommol*” ilk – the insinuation being that no young female adult in her right mind would ever choose to don anything other than a skirt to school.⁵²⁴

As the *Zan-e Ruz* article revealing the compromise over trousers noted, the choice to wear trousers under the skirt was said to be exclusive only to those in less affluent parts of Tehran. Moreover, the so-called compromise was explained away by a school principal interviewed as “a small way” in which those from the “laboring classes” could “offset” their worries concerning the skirt. Even so, this “small” compromise nonetheless raised an important question with respect to the cost-rationalization hypothesis to which Farrokhroo Parsa had previously attested. If the Minister of Education’s initial justification was that a skirt-based uniform was less expensive than one based around pants, how, then, was the introduction of trousers to be worn under skirts supposed financially relieve those from such “laboring classes?” In fact, rather than relieve their financial burden, this compromise was to triple their costs: now, families had to not only provide a chador for their daughter to wear on her way to school, but also a *sārāfon* for her to wear as mandated, as well as an extra pair of trousers so that their worries over the skirt could be allayed. As such, this “small” compromise seemed like a state-imposed a penalty for these families’ so-called “*ommolī*” beliefs. Indeed, the underlying assumption might have been that the financial burden – as well as the general discomfort for having to wear such attire – might eventually prove so great that these traditional families would let go of their alleged fanaticism so as to finally allow their children to do away with religious convictions and settle for the skirt once and for all.

Despite the state’s efforts, the chador nonetheless remained popular throughout the decade. As a *Zan-e Ruz* article on 9 April 1977 derisively reported, “in all these years in southern Tehran, not once have we witnessed a girl attend school without a chador.” Additionally, both in reaction

⁵²⁴ “Ārāyesh va lebās-e dokhtar-e dānesh āmuz,” *Zan-e Ruz*, September 18, 1971.

to the uniform mandate as well as the continued migration from townships to urban areas like Tehran, it was reported that the chador seemed to have even made a “comeback” during this period. Indeed, even the middle class areas of Tehran were reported to have experienced an increase in chador-wearing schoolgirls by the decade’s end.⁵²⁵

As opposed to its primary aim of socializing these religious classes out of their sartorial practices, the uniform mandate therefore seemed only to further intimate these classes with their religious precepts. As such, it also worked to further marginalize these classes from public life. Rather than do away with their religious attire, most traditional families chose to break themselves and their children away from public participation instead. Some families refused to send their children to high school, while others still allowed their children a secondary education, but proscribed any extra-curricular activities or a university education for fear of corrupting their children. A letter, published on 7 May 1977’s *Zan-e Ruz*, provided an accurate account of this predicament. A girl from Tehran wrote that in consequence of her family’s religious beliefs, she had been disallowed by her family from participating in any of her “high school’s social or sporting activities.” The same was true, she said, with her involvement in “any scientific fieldtrip” offered by her school. When she finally received her diploma, her father also forbade her from participating in Iran’s university entrance exams.⁵²⁶

It is worth noting that these cases were those that exclusively illustrated religious families actually willing to send their daughters to school. Some, in consequence of such discriminating sartorial practices, simply refused to allow their daughters a public education. After all, in Iran, only primary education had been made “compulsory” by the state.⁵²⁷ The pursuit of a secondary

⁵²⁵ “Chador,” *Zan-e Ruz*, April 9, 1977.

⁵²⁶ Pari Shobeyri, “Az tars-e pedaram chador mipusham,” *Zan-e Ruz*, May 7, 1977.

⁵²⁷ *The Europa Year Book: A World Survey*. (London: Europa, 1974), 670-671.

education, necessitating the abovementioned uniform for girls, was made a matter for families to decide. And a family matter it became.

Life Along the Margins: Upshots of Urban Ostracization

Even when such families continued to allow their children participation in social life, urban areas such as Tehran and Tabriz happened to be so rife with discriminatory attitudes toward chadoris that veiled young adults occasionally opted voluntarily to isolate in-doors than to face ostracization. In a letter sent in to the 4 November 1972 issue of *Zan-e Ruz*, a seventeen-year-old girl from Tabriz noted that owing to constant public ridicule pertaining to her attire, “I do everything in my power not to leave the house, imprisoning myself there at all times.” The letter then lamented as to why “a young girl, just on account of her veil, must be disqualified from simple and normal activities, and be met with condescension and contempt instead.”⁵²⁸

Often ostracized from urban participation, both urban migrant families and those individuals averse to conforming to contemporaneous modernist standards were hence left with no choice but to sequester themselves in their neighborhoods. These neighborhoods were usually made up of those with convictions similar to their own. Owing to their occupations, the men belonging to these traditional or lower class urban households were able to move freely between the household and the city. So, too, were the children whose contact with school and popular culture as scanned through print media or discussed with classmates exposed them to more modern models of behavior. Yet, while the men and children were exposed to “better perspectives for placing new information in the appropriate context,” including “new status models” in the society

⁵²⁸ Pari Shākeri, “Be khāter-e chador maskhareh-am mikonand,” *Zan-e Ruz*, November 4, 1972.

in which they lived, the women were oft relegated to their similarly segregated and illiterate community of housewives.⁵²⁹

Though men as well as children were able to stay “away from the home for longer periods during the day,” owing to either their jobs or schooling, adult women as well as young girls disallowed from pursuing their education were particularly affected by “the ideology of space” dictating the modern milieu.⁵³⁰ Both owing to the patriarchal standards within these families as well as the kinds of discrimination mentioned in the letter above, these women had to spend “most of their time” secluded “in the home or in the homes of other women.”⁵³¹ Unlike the rural areas where women also contributed to their family’s income through agricultural work, religious convictions concerning the eyes of strangers as well as the more industrialized urban jobs made available to migrant families made it unnecessary for the women to do anything beyond “domestic labor.”⁵³² Hence, these women were discouraged from “wider social participation, contact with men, travel, education, and work” in a modern urban milieu inhospitable to traditional lifestyles.⁵³³ They either chose – or were compelled by their similarly devout family or community – to “veil themselves, remain close to home, and not travel alone if at all possible.”⁵³⁴ And even if they opted to participate in these environs, the discrimination they faced in more affluent areas due to their dress could not but test their resolve.

Owing to such ideological convictions as well as the abovementioned characteristics of the urban milieu, “adult women in the migrant neighborhoods” often “had little chance to attend school

⁵²⁹ Janet Bauer, “Demographic Change, Women and the Family in a Migrant Neighborhood of Teheran,” in *Women and the Family in Iran*, ed. Asghar Fathi (Boston: Brill, 1985), 170.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, 165.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁵³² *Ibid.*, 165.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, 165.

or to gain skills from other sources.”⁵³⁵ Though literacy and sewing classes at the state-sponsored Women’s Centers were made available at this time, most women from these social classes either chose or were compelled not to participate in the activities provided, owing to the restrictions placed on their behavior by way of the expectations “transmitted through their relationships with neighbors and occasionally, extended kin,” and reinforced doubly “by their own households.”⁵³⁶ Consequently, Janet Bauer remarks that for these already-misplaced, now isolated, and certainly wearied women, the “most immediate access to new models and information” came “primarily from television.”⁵³⁷

Though television had existed in Iran since 1958, only following television’s nationalization in 1969 was the country provided extensive coverage. Added to that was the state directive to lower the manufacturing and retail cost of television sets, which, in turn, made it easier for households of all social classes to afford a television set.⁵³⁸ With the proliferation and accessibility of media such as television, information in the 1970s became a less a matter of geography and more a matter of exposure. Bauer’s research concerning a migrant neighborhood in south Tehran revealed that even though no house in the area “had bathing facilities or wall heating,” most families nonetheless owned “refrigerators and television sets.”⁵³⁹

As to why families resistant to the modern, consumerist lifestyle nonetheless opted to incorporate a television set into their household, there can be no definitive reasoning. Perhaps, it owed simply to appeal of a new technology, no different than the radio decades prior. Perhaps, it was regarded merely as a “popular means of entertainment even for poor migrant households,”

⁵³⁵ Ibid., 169.

⁵³⁶ Ibid., 166.

⁵³⁷ Ibid., 169.

⁵³⁸ Javad Mesbahee, “Television Broadcasting in Iran” (The Florida State University, 1973), 78.

⁵³⁹ Bauer, “Demographic Change,” 160.

just as films and magazines were during the time.⁵⁴⁰ Still and all, by 1978, exposure to television had become a commonality even among low-income households in cities such as Tehran. Crucially, television, like radio, did not necessitate literacy. Not only that, but it was also a visual medium, providing a glimpse into lives and “models”⁵⁴¹ from which these classes were distanced.

And yet, like the school system, television also had an ideological stance. It happened to be a totally state-run institution, afforded not even the fraction of independence enjoyed by print media such as the magazines surveyed in this and the previous chapter. As a result, televisual content romanticized the modern Iranian lifestyle over the traditional to an even greater extent. Accordingly, the “models encountered on the screen” represented “a life very different” from what these recently displaced individuals experienced in their day-to-day lives.⁵⁴² In turn, according to Parvin Paidar, “women in poor migrant neighborhoods were exposed to two conflicting role models in the 1970s.”⁵⁴³ On the screen, they would bear witness to “portrayals of unveiled, modern and sophisticated women of the entertainment world or members of the royal family,” all while life among their families and communities comprised only “religious gatherings of *rowzeh*, *sofreh* or visiting the sacred shrines,” where preachers often emphasized the vices inherent in the “un-Islamic appearance and behavior of women in the rich districts of north Tehran.”⁵⁴⁴

As shall see in the next chapter, it happens that foremost among the goals entrenched in National Iranian Television’s charter was the cultivation of those not yet convinced of modernity’s allure. Exposing the wary to the new lifestyles made available by way of modernity became part and parcel of the new medium’s intent. Television, therefore, was utilized so as to carry out the

⁵⁴⁰ Parvin Paidar, *Women and the Political Process in Twentieth-Century Iran* (Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 163.

⁵⁴¹ Bauer, “Demographic Change,” 170.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*, 170.

⁵⁴³ Paidar, *Women and the Political Process*, 88.

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

state's modernity project farther, visually venerating the modernized Iranian while continuing to denigrate the "backward" traditions and lifestyles that such a large segment of the population still observed, with dress and aesthetic taste once again standing in for these distinctions laden with value judgements.

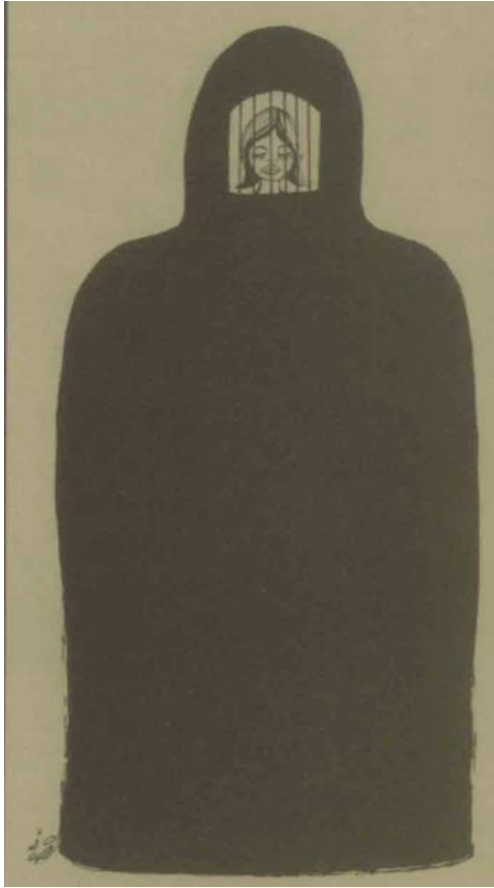


Figure 11: A representative caricature of how the official culture viewed the chador

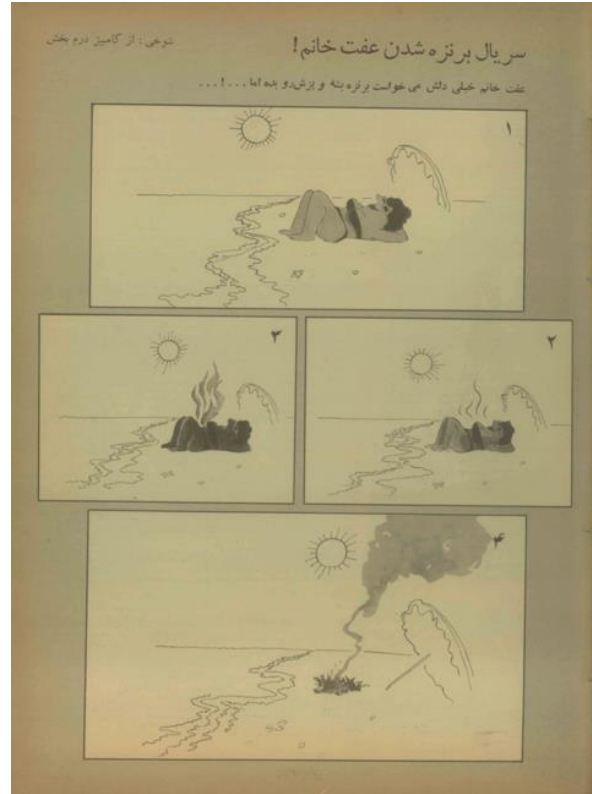


Figure 13: The ommol woman attempts to sunbathe, as per Derambakhsh's comic.

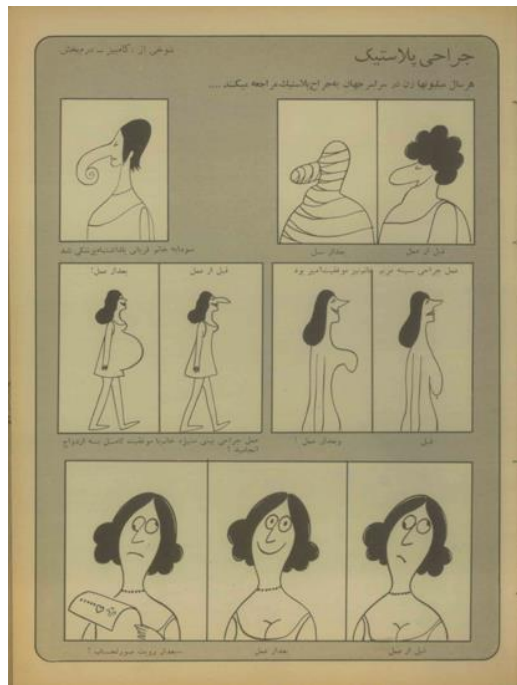


Figure 12: A Derambakhsh comic on the new national fixation for plastic surgery.



Figure 14: Tehran's silent majority.



Figure 15: From *Āqā-ye Hālu*; the streets of Tehran on the verge of celebrity culture.



Figure 16: The school uniform, from the private collection of Marjan Vahid.



Figure 17: The sārāfon as defined by its short skirts, from the private collection of Marjan Vahid.

The Ideology Shall be Televised: A New Medium, A Wider Reach

Introduction: The Advent of Television

Only four years following the White Revolution, the Pahlavi state's modernizing efforts were given a significant visual boost with the establishment of National Iranian Television (NITV). Unlike print media, which were state-affiliated but never formally publicized as state outlets, NITV was entirely state run. With the state patently embracing the fact that its national television service was to be used as a tool for public cultivation, NITV's programming did not shy from broadcasting the state's pedagogical ambitions. The content broadcast on NITV regularly incorporated blueprints for how a modern Iranian entering the 1970s should socially, culturally, and sartorially present themselves so as to befit "the Great Civilization."⁵⁴⁵ Making ample use of stereotypes, unsubtle plot devices, and various other "technical codes,"⁵⁴⁶ such models were thusly circulated and reproduced by way of the programming provided.

With this in mind, the present chapter shall first detail the history of television in Iran, before investigating the manners in which the content broadcast on NITV expressly sought to reinforce the modernistic standards wrought by the new era of consumerism by "teach[ing] new desires and new satisfactions"⁵⁴⁷ in line with the state modernity project. It shall correspondingly examine the most popular programming broadcast on NITV, identifying the manners in which these programs worked to further the television network's ideological ambitions. In these programs, Euro-American beauty standards were likewise regularly juxtaposed with the aesthetics of the traditional constituency to which the Great Civilization was ungracious. The politics of style, therefore, came to play a large role in NITV's programming.

⁵⁴⁵ Borzou Faramarzi, *Towards the Great Civilization* (Tehran: Ministry of Information, 1974), 1.

⁵⁴⁶ John Fiske, *Television Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010), 9.

⁵⁴⁷ Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (Macmillan Pub Co, 1958), 401.

Moreover, the advent of an extensive, national television service also strengthened the consumer culture that had developed throughout the 1960s and 1970s. This came not just in consequence of NITV's glowing portrayals of the westernized classes in its programming, but also by way of the advertisements flanking these programs. Televised adverts, independently produced by the growing number of advertising agencies in the country, regularly addressed only the upper classes, making ample use of sexual imagery to sell their wares. The imagery broadcast managed to further alienate the large segment of the public who shared neither the values nor the purchasing power available to the urban elite. These visual markers only further widened the gap between the westernized classes and the traditional constituencies, the latter of whom were increasingly finding themselves marginalized by the country's latest cultural developments.

The Chosen Medium: Television as the Carrier of Ideology

Prior to the 1970s, the medium of choice for the Iranian public was, undeniably, the radio. As Javad Mesbahee remarks, "in a land where only about half of the population [was] literate," the radio was not only a medium for entertainment, but also "a major source of information." For many villagers, it was regarded as "the only link between their side of the mountain and the world beyond."⁵⁴⁸ By the time television was introduced to Iran's urban centers as a private enterprise, a television set was still not only a high-priced piece of technology, but the medium also lacked the transmission capabilities to broadcast to the Iranian plateau "where rugged natural barriers crisscrossing the vast plateau [left] thousands of hamlets and villages remote and without rapid means of communication."⁵⁴⁹ In contrast, radio was not only inexpensive, but also portable, rendering the oral medium a primary means of communication for Iranians at the time. The advent

⁵⁴⁸ Javad Mesbahee, "Television Broadcasting in Iran." (Ph.D., United States -- Florida, The Florida State University, 1973), 13.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.

of transistor radios – cheap, simple and portable – further augmented this process. Battery-powered and portable radio transmitters could be carried around even on the fields, serving as both a source of news and entertainment. By 1973, it was estimated that over four million radio sets remained in use throughout Iran, constituting an “intimate part of the Iranian household.”⁵⁵⁰

By late 1973, however, television was gaining on radio’s long-held status as a mass media. Though the broadcast network only transmitted to half the country at the time, six million out of the country’s thirty million person population were nonetheless reported to have access to television sets in one way or another, be it by way of a coffeehouse equipped with a TV set or a neighbor’s set, or their own.⁵⁵¹ This increased access to television had come by way of the Pahlavi government’s Fifth Development Plan – also part of its White Revolution – which had called for the re-evaluation of “laws regarding the production and sale of television sets, effective supervision over manufacturing cost and retail prices, standardization of television sets, and provision of easy terms for television sales to low-income families.”⁵⁵² These top-down policies, alongside the competition sparked by rivalling television manufacturers inside the country, greatly reduced the price of television sets by 1973.⁵⁵³

In consequence, despite television having been regarded as a “glamour medium” and “status symbol” among the upper classes in the 1960s, its accessibility as well as the sets’ relative inexpensiveness made it a viable form of both information and popular entertainment in the new decade, even for the middle to lower class segments of the population.⁵⁵⁴ During this time, as Amin Banani notes, it was “not unusual for the poorest classes to purchase a set on the installment plan

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid., 14.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid., 78.

⁵⁵² Ibid., 78-79.

⁵⁵³ Ibid., 79.

⁵⁵⁴ Amin Banani, “The Role of Mass Media,” in *Iran Faces the Seventies*, ed. Yarshater, Ehsan (New York: Praeger Publishers Inc., U.S., 1971), 330.

and pay it off by charging a modest viewing fee to the neighborhood.” Television also became “a fixture” in the teahouses that urban migrants and workers often frequented, almost entirely replacing the traditional storyteller (*naqqāl*), whose occupation it was to entertain the patrons.⁵⁵⁵

Owing to its accessibility, television hence entered into “areas of immediate and contemporary public and, in some senses, private action more fully and more powerfully than any other technology.”⁵⁵⁶ That the televisual medium – like radio – did not demand literacy from its audience was especially fundamental, as even in 1976, when television’s popularity and accessibility reached its height in Iran, “over 50% of the population between the ages of 10 and 44” were “still classified as illiterate.”⁵⁵⁷ Conversely, while radio “lacked the visual stimulus of actually seeing inside a modern home to appreciate the new mood of a consumption-oriented environment,”⁵⁵⁸ television did not. This particular facet of television enabled it to visually thrust “the personal, private realm into the public arena”⁵⁵⁹ even as a “moving wallpaper” to the housebound routines of the every day.⁵⁶⁰

These images, suddenly received “in the privacy of... living rooms,”⁵⁶¹ resulted in information previously “monopolized by certain groups” becoming “freely available to everyone.”⁵⁶² Information, by way of this “one-way thoroughfare”⁵⁶³ was democratized, becoming

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁶ Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*, (London ; New York: Routledge, 2003), 71-72.

⁵⁵⁷ Keith Watson, “The Shah’s White Revolution-Education and Reform in Iran,” *Comparative Education* 12, no. 1 (1976): 26.

⁵⁵⁸ Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ali Mohammadi, *Small Media, Big Revolution: Communication, Culture, and the Iranian Revolution*, (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 1994), 63.

⁵⁵⁹ Joshua Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior: The Electronic Media on Social Behavior* (New York, NY.: Oxford University Press USA, 1985), 99-100.

⁵⁶⁰ Elihu Katz and George Wedell, *Broadcasting In The Third World* (London: Macmillan Education, 1978), 168.

⁵⁶¹ Todd Gitlin, “Prime Time Ideology: The Hegemonic Process in Television Entertainment,” *Social Problems* 26, no. 3 (1979): 255.

⁵⁶² Diana Crane, *The Production of Culture: Media and the Urban Arts*, (Newbury Park, Calif: SAGE Publications, Inc, 1992), 4.

⁵⁶³ Robert K. Logan, *Understanding New Media: Extending Marshall McLuhan*, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc, 2010), 53.

accessible to anybody in the mere proximity of a television screen. Owing to this, as Joshua Meyrowitz notes, “the social information available to the ghetto family” could “now more closely resemble the information available to the middle class family,” and the “information available to women” could “now more closely resemble information available to men.”⁵⁶⁴ In this way, distinct groups came to share similar visual information about one another and the society in which they live.⁵⁶⁵

Nonetheless, the “shared nature”⁵⁶⁶ of the televised environment also rendered the medium a potent tool with which to “relay, reproduce, process, and package and focus ideology.”⁵⁶⁷ As Diana Crane maintains, in “merging different segments of the population,” television could also be harnessed in order to fashion “a single audience, a cultural arena.”⁵⁶⁸ In so doing, as Arjun Appadurai further notes, it could thus provide wholesale “new resources and new disciplines for the construction of imagined selves and imagined worlds” as well as “scripts for possible lives to be imbricated with the glamour” of stars and televised plotlines.⁵⁶⁹

As Annabelle Sreberny and Ali Mohammadi argue, it was primarily owing to television’s capacity to “infiltrate” the private space of a home and a living room with “an illusion of being value-free” and inclusive that this new medium was rendered a potent “[carrier] of ideology”⁵⁷⁰ for the Pahlavi state. So it happens that when Iranian television became a state-wide monopoly in 1969, the dissemination of ideology came to the front and center of the Pahlavi state’s objectives with respect the new medium. As Kambiz Mahmudi, Deputy Director of the newly-instituted

⁵⁶⁴ Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place*, 131.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid., 86.

⁵⁶⁷ Gitlin, “Prime Time Ideology,” 253.

⁵⁶⁸ Crane, *Production of Culture*, 4.

⁵⁶⁹ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis, Minn: University Of Minnesota Press, 1996), 3.

⁵⁷⁰ Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi, *Small Media, Big Revolution*, 15.

National Iranian Radio and Television, told *Tamasha* in June 1971, among the primary goals of this establishment was “the cultivation of Iranian culture,” especially as it applied to “the villagers who had been freed from social and economic shackles thanks to the White Revolution, and now needed guidance with respect to their thinking and sociability.”⁵⁷¹ Education thus became the mission statement of this newly nationalized medium; so much so, in fact, that Mahmudi likened the cultural goals of National Iranian Television to a “prophetic mission” (*resālat*) that had to be actualized.⁵⁷²

Television of Iran: A Commercial Network, Unaltered

Before television became a nationalized enterprise in Iran, it had already been established as a private “American-model station”⁵⁷³ by business tycoon Habibollah Sabet in 1958. His son, Iraj Sabet, a graduate in business administration from Harvard University – whose thesis was written on the “possibility of adapting modern television broadcasting to [Iran’s] particular needs”⁵⁷⁴ – had initially introduced his father to the new technology by bringing to Iran with him “a small closed-circuit television kit.”⁵⁷⁵ Abbas Milani remarks that the elder Sabet, whose numerous business ventures had earned him a close relationship with the Pahlavi court, convinced the Pahlavi family of this new enterprise by arranging for a special showing of this new medium at the Queen Mother’s palace. With a camera up set in one room and a television set in the adjacent room, the event marked “the first simulated broadcast in the country,” leaving the guests “bewildered.” As happenstance would have it, the program broadcast “involved a child musical prodigy,” who would

⁵⁷¹ Nādali Hamedāni, “Yek televiziyon-e khāmush... (A turned-off television...)” *Tamasha*, June 10, 1971.

⁵⁷² Ibid.

⁵⁷³ Katz and Wedell, *Broadcasting In The Third World*, 94.

⁵⁷⁴ Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country* (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1961), 138.

⁵⁷⁵ Abbas Milani, *Eminent Persians: The Men and Women Who Made Modern Iran, 1941-1979*, vol. 1. (Syracuse, N.Y. : Syracuse University Press ; New York, N.Y. : Persian World Press, 2008), 684.

later become the foremost figure within the star system of the newly instituted medium: Googoosh.⁵⁷⁶

The younger Sabet was also a franchise owner for the sale of RCA television sets to Iran. His role as an RCA representative not only allowed him to sell the necessary television receivers for his new business venture, but also enabled him to hire RCA technical staff to set up Iran's first-ever television station.⁵⁷⁷ The Iranian parliament ratified the bill in June 1958, allowing for television broadcasting by a private enterprise.⁵⁷⁸ What resulted was *Televiziyon-e Iran* (Television of Iran), as managed by Vance Hallack, an American producer formerly in charge of color programming for NBC. Its regular broadcasting began on 3 October 1958, launched with a message from Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.⁵⁷⁹

From its first year onwards, Television of Iran (TV-I) aired six hours a day of programming for all seven days of the week. A “thoroughly Americanized operation,”⁵⁸⁰ TV-I's motives were purely financial: its purpose was to provide entertainment while also selling advertising slots to local entrepreneurs and advertising agencies. It was in no way “concerned with Iranian national identity or with projecting the Pahlavi state ideology.”⁵⁸¹ Because of Sabet's Bahā'i identity, it was also purely areligious and apolitical, avoiding any and all religious programming beyond going off air during Islamic holidays and days of mourning. Its programming chiefly constituted imported MGM films and NBC television series, just a few locally produced programs, alongside US Information Service newsreels. The American television programs broadcast were “imported

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷ Jeremy Tunstall, *The Media Are American: Anglo-American Media in the World*, Revised edition (London: Constable, 1994), 246.

⁵⁷⁸ National Iranian Radio and Television, *NIRT* (Tehran: NIRT Publication Department, 1974), 24.

⁵⁷⁹ Bigan Kimiachi, “History and Development of Broadcasting in Iran.” (Ph.D., United States -- Ohio, Bowling Green State University, 1978), 113.

⁵⁸⁰ Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema, Volume 2: The Industrializing Years, 1941–1978* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2011), 65.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid.

mainly by the advertising agencies” and were dubbed in Persian so as to maximize profits when the “Iranian-made advertisements” were inserted during the broadcasts.⁵⁸²

TV-I, therefore, was simply “a highly integrated money-making system” with “the ability to awaken consumer demand.”⁵⁸³ Its purpose was similar to commercial television in any other consumer society, based as it was on “selling viewers to advertisers.”⁵⁸⁴ To maximize entertainment value was to similarly maximize profit, because “the more viewers a program [drew], the more money advertisers [were] willing to pay to have their message aired.”⁵⁸⁵ With a profit-based incentive and a deliberate skirting of politics and ideology, TV-I hence operated in a manner similar to other commercial enterprises, showing “little interest in designing programs that [met] the specialized needs of small segments of the audience.” Instead, it focused purely on entertainment, with the highest watched programs of the time being *The Fugitive* (1963-1967), *Bonanza* (1959-1973), and *Gunsmoke* (1955-1973).⁵⁸⁶

Be that as it may, the reach and influence of TV-I was limited. With all television receivers imported by RCA, the price of a television set was not yet economical enough for any large number of Iranians to purchase them. The network’s reach was likewise limited to only Tehran, and only later Abadan in February 1960, where it was meant to primarily provide programs “to Western oil workers and their families.”⁵⁸⁷ Another station, also implemented in 1960 and limited solely to Tehran, was the United States Armed Forces Radio and Television (AFRTS), which provided programming only in English and, once again, did not target a wide Iranian demographic.

⁵⁸² Kimiachi, “History and Development of Broadcasting in Iran,” 119.

⁵⁸³ Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi, *Small Media, Big Revolution*, 62.

⁵⁸⁴ Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place*, 73.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁶ Kimiachi, “History and Development of Broadcasting in Iran,” 119.

⁵⁸⁷ Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema, Volume 2*, 65.

In the early 1960s, therefore, television was still largely seen as a luxury good, providing entertainment to only a small segment of Iran's population, and in no way accessible to the entire country. Naturally, radio – owned and operated by the state – remained the prime mover of information and entertainment during this period. Perhaps because of this, as Javad Mesbahee notes, despite its purely commercial incentives, TV-I continued to lose money into the 1960s. By March 1962, Sabet himself remarked that the network had lost 60,000,000 rials (equivalent to \$800,000) since its inception. Soon to further complicate matters was the White Revolution, launched on 26 January 1963, which brought along with it plans for a much larger television network; a state-run network no longer dependant on commercial interests and agencies, with a singular goal in mind: “the development of Iranian culture, dissemination of information, and education of the general public of Iran”⁵⁸⁸ – all in line with the modernist ideology of the Pahlavi state.

National Iranian Television: Cultivation from the Living Room

Only in May 1964 were the seeds planted for television to take on a role loftier than just a commercial enterprise. That month, the Iranian government contracted a French consulting firm to research the necessary requirements for the establishment of a state-run television station that could broadcast to the entire country.⁵⁸⁹ The plan for such a television network seemed to have come directly from the Shah himself, who was, in turn, consulted by members of his Plan Organization – a group set up in 1946 to “prepare a developmental plan for the country”⁵⁹⁰ in line with its White Revolution. Members of the Plan Organization, all of whom had been educated in

⁵⁸⁸ Kimiachi, “History and Development of Broadcasting in Iran, 111.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

the West and thus “exposed to modern developments, including television broadcasting,”⁵⁹¹ convinced the Shah of television’s sway in serving “to promote Iranian culture and preserve Iranian traditions” under “government operation.”⁵⁹² The wheels for a national television system were thus set in motion.

This endeavor came to fruition on 26 October 1966, when the newly-formed National Iranian Television (NITV) began broadcasting its trial programming.⁵⁹³ The date was synchronous with not only the Shah’s birthday, but his and the Queen’s coronation. The latter became the first program to be broadcast live from the network.⁵⁹⁴ That the first event broadcast was the royal coronation was a signal as to the implications carried by a state-run television network. The new network, as said by Jeremy Tunstall, was soon to symbolize “an extreme case of a chief executive (the Shah) trying to use television as a weapon to consolidate power, confer prestige, divide the bureaucracy, to project a single national culture – and generally to identify his personality and office with national plans and prestige.”⁵⁹⁵ Both the Shah and the Queen attended NITV’s official launch on 20 March 1967, as the new channel commenced its daily three to four hours broadcasts in direct competition with the more popular TV-I.⁵⁹⁶

In this early period, TV-I continued providing mostly imported, commercial entertainment, while NITV’s content leaned toward more cultural programming, as based “on a high-minded Paris-London model” of television production.⁵⁹⁷ Much of NITV’s programming was provided free of charge by France’s public television agency, Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision Française

⁵⁹¹ Ibid., 122.

⁵⁹² Ibid.

⁵⁹³ Ibid., 123.

⁵⁹⁴ “Noh sāl hamkāri,” *Tamasha*, October 25, 1975.

⁵⁹⁵ Tunstall, *The Media Are American*, 247.

⁵⁹⁶ “Markaz-e televiziyon-e melli eftetāh shod,” *Ettelaat*, March 25, 1967.

⁵⁹⁷ Tunstall, *The Media Are American*, 246.

(NRTF), spliced in with British and Japanese imports, and a few Iranian productions.⁵⁹⁸ For the three years it actually rivalled TV-I, the state-run network failed to trump the commercial enterprise's popularity. A University of Tehran survey in 1968 revealed that 70% of Iran's television viewership preferred TV-I's commercial programming to NITV's cultural content.⁵⁹⁹ It hence became evident that a nationalized television could not truly fulfill its potential so long as a commercial alternative, intent on entertainment, was still in existence.

As such, by 1969, NITV's main rival in TV-I was no more. TV-I was bought outright by the state; or, as Sabet himself recalled, he was "forced to sell his interests"⁶⁰⁰ after being told that nationalization was the state's preferred course of action. Despite Sabet trying to "convince them that competition would be good for all sides," the state strong-armed him into selling his interest for 170,000,000 rials (equivalent to \$2,500,000), "a fraction" of the investment's worth of his network.⁶⁰¹ As NITV Director and cousin to Queen Farah, Reza Qotbi later purported, competition would have been a "dangerous" path to take, especially with respect to the "cultural endeavours" that NITV had in mind. Qotbi explained further that competition would have pressured both networks to "compete for the highest number of viewers by pandering to the lowest common denominator of people's tastes." In consequence, "both systems would have been pushed to the brink of vulgarity."⁶⁰² Entertainment, after all, was not a concern for those at NITV. They had loftier goals in mind.

What came in consequence of the state's seizure of TV-I was that both television channels available to Iranians were to henceforth be not only managed by the state, but also utilized solely

⁵⁹⁸ Katz and Wedell, *Broadcasting In The Third World*, 94.

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁶⁰⁰ Milani, *Eminent Persians*, Vol. 1., 679.

⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰² "Noh sāl hamkāri," *Tamasha*, October 25, 1975.

in service of its socio-cultural ambitions. In that capacity, Program I, which was broadcast throughout the country, retained the entertainment programs previously featured on the former TV-I, while Program II – like the original NITV – became devoted mostly to “cultural, social, political, artistic, and scientific programs.”⁶⁰³ Despite entertainment programs still comprising much of Program I’s scheduling, the inclusion of these entertainment programs was regarded by NITV personnel as a mere means to attract the TV viewership, so as to, in turn, later “cultivate” them in line with the state’s ideological preferences. Indeed, in an oral history conducted by NITV’s very own *Tamasha* magazine 1971, Reza Qotbi admitted as much when recalling NITV’s period of competition with TV-I. He remarked that owing to the ten years wherein TV-I had remained the sole content provider for Iranian television, “the people had become habituated to unsophisticated programming – programming that did not require any insight or thought.”⁶⁰⁴ On this account, those in charge of NITV recognized that “in order to attract viewers, NITV had no choice but to also incorporate the kind of content applicable to the people’s tastes” – those tastes being the aforementioned “unsophisticated” kind to which he had explicitly referred. To “achieve our cultural goals,” Qotbi maintained, “we had to first broadcast the programs that people were attracted to, so that they would continue to watch television. Only then could we supply our cultural programming as well.”⁶⁰⁵ After all, Qotbi justified, “a turned-off television cannot provide any education to the people.”⁶⁰⁶

Moreover, Qotbi asserted that NITV’s goals was far from providing mere entertainment. Rather, NITV’s aim was to incite ample social “awareness” among its audience so that they could,

⁶⁰³ Mesbahee, “Television Broadcasting in Iran,” 62.

⁶⁰⁴ “Hadaf-hā-ye avvalliye-ye televiziya-e melli,” *Tamasha*, January 25, 1973.

⁶⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁶ “Hadaf-e barnāmeḥ-ye televiziya,” *Tamasha*, February 1, 1973.

in turn, learn how “to be more useful to society.”⁶⁰⁷ In another interview, he explicated this motive further: “If television is a cultural instrument, then it can propagate a particular culture as well.”⁶⁰⁸ In line with this, he claimed that NITV’s goal was to produce television programs “with a message harmonious to Iranian culture.”⁶⁰⁹ While much of the language Qotbi used contained ambivalent value judgements, it was nonetheless clear that the standards and the education to which Qotbi referred were those that could bring the tastes and inclinations of the viewership closer to the hegemonic ideals of the official culture. This was all but spelled out in the Parliament’s 1971 Act to merge NITV with the already nationalized radio industry to create National Iranian Radio and Television (NIRT), decisively ascertaining the state’s grip on all mass media in the country. The five goals set out for the new conglomerate, all similarly suffused with the ambiguous value-judgements also trumpeted by Qotbi, were: “(1) Helping to preserve, present, and promote the Persian culture; (2) Increasing the public's general knowledge; developing the artistic talents of the people; (3) Creating a favorable intellectual climate for accelerating the country's progress and the public's political growth; (4) Preparing and guiding the public intellectually toward national interests; (5) Providing safe, healthy entertainment.”⁶¹⁰

As was the norm in Pahlavi Iran, where “the western-educated and -oriented segment of the society was given disproportionate power and influence,”⁶¹¹ the decisions as to what the ambiguous, abovementioned makers of cultivation comprised once again lied in the hands of a select few with particularly western tastes and inclinations. Indeed, Kambiz Mahmudi’s 1971 interview with *Tamasha* further implied that the education of the Iranian viewer was entirely

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁸ “Noh sāl hamkāri,” *Tamasha*, October 25, 1975.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁶¹⁰ Mesbahee, “Television Broadcasting in Iran,” 114-115

⁶¹¹ Asghar Fathi, “Introduction,” in *Women and the Family in Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 5.

arbitrary, based as it was on the preferences of those producing the content. “Educational means that we adhere to a particular thought and opinion, which we wish to directly impart to the people as per our programming,” he maintained. Mahmudi went so far as to claim that even American serials like the widely popular *Peyton Place* (1964-1969) were similarly educational. Though he did not necessarily expound on what made the American soap opera instructive, he implied that whatever program that “can teach us about which immoral deeds not to carry out, or to inspire us to imitate whatever good deed is educational.”⁶¹²

After asserting television’s “responsibility to be educational” in the interview, Mahmudi then referred to NITV’s utilization of statistics and audience surveys in determining which shows had the potential to be “misinterpreted” by “some families.”⁶¹³ The shows posing such risks, he claimed, were effectively cancelled, so as not to offend the sensibilities of these segments of the population. A series mentioned as an example was *Kānun-e Garm-e Khānevādeh* (The Warm Hub of the Family), which underwent cancellation following the broadcast of only a few episodes. Despite the program being among the top-watched programs in 1970 in all the provinces to which Program I transmitted (Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, Rasht, Bandar Abbas, Rezaiyeh, and Khuzestan), Mahmudi argued that “certain classes in society happened to misinterpret it.” In consequence, NITV chose not to order additional episodes for the show.⁶¹⁴

Yet, what was evident even in the critical reviews of *Kānun-e Garm-e Khānevādeh* published at the time was that those offended by the series were not the uninformed families at which Mahmudi barbed, but those already situated within the official culture. Indeed, those ill at ease with the serial’s content happened to have been the westernized classes whose lives were

⁶¹² Nādali Hamedāni, “Yek televiziya-e khāmush...,” *Tamasha*, June 10, 1971.

⁶¹³ Ibid.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.

portrayed in a less than attractive manner during the show's few-episode run. Shedding light on this was a review of the serial, as published in *Zan-e Ruz* on 6 February 1971. The piece expounded on *Kānun-e Garm-e Khānevādeh*'s plot, revolving around a family beleaguered by marital troubles. These troubles stemmed from the husband, a writer named Mehdi, being too preoccupied by his writing projects to pay any significant attention to his family. Vexed by her deskbound husband, his wife Mehri has resolved to leave Mehdi by going "on a trip" – implying separation. To stop her from leaving, Mehdi comes up with a solution, wherein they could stay together but not encounter one another as regularly as they did previously. This way, Mehdi maintains, Mehri could have the space she needs to reconsider without having to make a move so drastic as separation. The plan is hence set in motion for Mehdi to remain "in the home's highest floor," writing, while Mehri can retain dominion over the rest of the home.⁶¹⁵

As signified by the two-story interior of their shared home, it is clear that Mehdi and Mehri's family are affluent. Indeed, the portrayal of the well-heeled being at odds with one another did not sit well with the *Zan-e Ruz* critic. "I must ask the writer," the critic declaimed, "in what Iranian family – be it aristocratic or poor – could such a ridiculous situation occur?" To the critic, even more ridiculous was that this was not just any family, but one recently returned from the West. "In what family recently returned from *farang*," the reviewer then asked, "could such an incident present itself?" The critic then forewarned that producers daring to touch on problems as thorny as marital strife on Iranian television must do so "cautiously," before barbing at the reckless nature with which *Kānun-e Garm-e Khānevādeh* had broadcast this issue. Society, he later remarked, "must first gradually familiarize Iranian men and women with such problems, before it

⁶¹⁵ "Kānun-e garm-e khānevādeh," *Zan-e Ruz*, February 6, 1971.

can spend time analyzing and broadcasting it.” According to the critic, this particular serial had not taken such gradual steps in familiarizing its audience.⁶¹⁶

In light of this, even though Mahmudi’s remark that “certain classes of society” did not approve of the show happened to ring true; his remarks – having followed his lofty proclamations about villagers wanting televisual guidance for cultivation – had implied that those who had “misinterpreted” the show and had thereby prompted the show’s cancellation were likewise the lower classes. This, however, proved not to be the case. What had precipitated the official culture’s distaste for *Kānun-e Garm-e Khānevādeh* – and its consequent cancellation – seemed to have been its supposed misrepresentation of the westernized, middle to upper class elite as imperfect and wrought with marital troubles. After all, the idyllic image of the upper class westernized family was not to be tampered with at that juncture.

Indeed, the cultivation that NITV had intended with its programming seemed to be exclusively in line with the tastes of the westernized elite and intellectuals. According to Iraj Gorgin, who served both as an anchor for NITV and as *Tamasha*’s first editor, this comprised a categorical aim of the television network. The staff and technicians at NITV had actively planned for the nationalized television station to stand in stark contrast to the “banal” and “lower-city” content of Sabet’s televisual programming.⁶¹⁷ According to Gorgin, NITV was meant to be “clean,” “chic,” and, in fact, “*farangi mo’āb*.”⁶¹⁸ While still including some of the supposedly “banal,” content of the former TV-I, the inclusion of such programs in the state-run station was, in Mahmudi’s words, justified only because “as a mass media, we have no other choice but to hold on to these vast numbers of people [via these programs] so that they could keep watching.” Only

⁶¹⁶ “Kānun-e garm-e khānevādeh,” *Zan-e Ruz*, February 6, 1971.

⁶¹⁷ Iraj Gorgin and Mahnaz Afkhami, *Interview with Gorgin, Iraj*, Foundation for Iranian Studies (Los Angeles, California, 1985).

⁶¹⁸ *Ibid*.

in such a way, Mahmudi remarked, could the producers at NITV “work to slowly and gradually raise the standards, expectations, and interests of the people, so that the same person who enjoyed a particular program three years ago might watch it today and find it vulgar.”⁶¹⁹

So as to shed light on the specific content toward which NITV was partial, we can refer to a feature found in *Tamasha*'s 6 May 1971 issue that examined an educational musical concert that had recently aired on NITV, as performed by the NITV Orchestra. The report mentioned that the orchestra had performed its selection of “pure music” (*musiqi-ye asil*) – it being a euphemism for western classical music – to an in-person audience at the studio. These selections, including classical pieces such as “concerto grosso” baroque music and suites, had been conducted by NITV's chief conductor, the Austrian composer Thomas Christian David. The magazine claimed that many audience members had never even heard of classical music before, but after the concert, “they have come to understand that classic musical – real music – is indeed congenial to the masses.”⁶²⁰ No mention was made of Iran's own musical traditions – that being, *musiqi-ye sonnati* (traditional music). Rather, the report insinuated that only western classical music could help “people finally understand what real music encompasses.” In the feature, an eighteen-year-old girl was quoted in speaking for all Iranians when she remarked, “You know, we are not yet able to digest good music. We do not have the patience for it, because we do not understand it. But if somebody actually gives us an explanation as to what these compositions are, we will finally be able to reach enlightenment with respect to art.” Another was quoted in hoping that like performances could be arranged with respect to ballet as well, “so that the people can become

⁶¹⁹ Nādali Hamedāni, “Yek televiziyon-e khāmush...,” *Tamasha*, June 10, 1971.

⁶²⁰ “Nedā-yi ke javāb-e khod rā gereft,” *Tamasha*, May 6, 1971.

familiarized with real art and discouraged from the vulgar, bazaar art” – suggesting, of course, the traditional Iranian *motrebs* (itinerant musicians) of the lower classes.⁶²¹

Hence, in true Bourdieusian fashion, real art was distinguished from vulgar art in NITV’s official magazine, with the former purportedly grasped only by those exposed to western classical music, and the latter palatable only to those yet unable to “digest good music.”⁶²² Indeed, as Bourdieu notes, “It is no accident that when [tastes] have to be justified, they are asserted purely negatively, by the refusal of other tastes.”⁶²³ From the perspective of NITV’s directors, in contrast to western classical music, traditional Iranian music could in no way be classified as “real art.” After all, “the most intolerable thing for those who regard themselves as the possessors of legitimate culture is the sacrilegious reuniting of tastes which taste dictates shall be separated.”⁶²⁴

Even in its formative years, much of NITV’s programming comprised this method of distinction as per the tastes and inclinations of the official culture. The tastes of the official culture exclusively comprised those of the station’s staff and producers, most of whom, as Gorgin noted, were devoted to the channel’s “clean,” “chic,” and western-oriented markers of taste.⁶²⁵ The path taken to educate and cultivate a viewership purportedly in need of guidance was likewise taken in the same vein. From its establishment, the chief mode of operation for NITV was nothing less than cultural cultivation by means of distinction; discriminating between what was in good taste and what was not. As evident in the NITV Orchestra’s broadcast concert, such acts of distinction were accordingly implemented by way of programming that could, in turn, instruct the viewership on the proper manners with which they too could refine themselves.

⁶²¹ “Nedā-yi ke javāb-e khod rā gereft,” *Tamasha*, May 6, 1971.

⁶²² *Ibid.*

⁶²³ Pierre Bourdieu, “The Titles of Cultural Nobility,” in *Distinction*, eBook (London: Routledge, 2010).

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶²⁵ Gorgin and Afkhami, *Interview*.

The cultural cultivation of those outside Tehran was especially central to NITV's goals. In September 1971, for instance, in preparation for what was to be the first color broadcast in NITV's history in celebration of what was officially called the "2,500th Year of the Foundation of the Imperial State of Iran," the state had installed six additional transmitters to the Iranian *shahrestān* (provinces), thus extending television transmission to the provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan, Kerman, Khorsasan, Mazandaran, Azarbayejan, Kordestan, Khuzestan, Fars, and Isfahan.

In a feature celebrating the advent of television to these provinces, the writer Ahmad Shokrnīyā extolled the capacity of the new medium to "transform the social immaturity and unnecessary behavior in rural areas, and likewise educate our smaller cities to live better and think better." The report then lamented the fact that in these smaller societies, "television has only become acceptable as a means of entertainment," only to then reiterate NITV's own assertion that "surrendering to the people's wish for entertainment can drive television astray from its principal goals." Shifting his focus to the television viewership of Tabriz, Shokrnīyā declared that mass media previous to television had failed to yet change the "social behaviors, customs, and traditions" of Tabriz for the better, having not yet "made the necessary infiltration in this city." Before television, Tabriz was described by Shokrnīyā as a city "still languishing in social isolation." Now, ever since the new medium began transmitting to Tabrizi homes, "this social isolation seems to have been dispensed with to a large degree."⁶²⁶

Decidedly, this link made between televisual exposure and cultivation had become so prevalent during this period that even students began equating unmodern behavior with the lack of televisual exposure. In a roundtable discussion conducted by *Zan-e Ruz* on 8 April 1972 with respect to the potential of mixed gender schooling in Iran, one student remarked on the

⁶²⁶ Ahmad Shokrnīyā, "Televiziya enzevā-ye ejtemā'i-ye mardom rā az miyān bardāshteh ast," *Tamasha*, September 23, 1371.

impossibility of such an endeavor by directly implicating rural families not yet in possession of a television set. “These families can in no way accept such a proposal,” the student proclaimed. After all, these were families “located in places where they have no television, no cinema, and no other tool in transforming convictions or drawing them to simple changes.” On this account, the student claimed, “these families still send their girls to primary school in chadors.”⁶²⁷ The presence of television, the statement implied, might one day discourage traditional families from veiling themselves and their children.

The conviction that television could educate and cultivate an individual into modernity was not just limited to the personnel of NITV, but the royal family as well. In October 1971, again in preparation for the royal festivities, Farah Pahlavi also spoke to Iraj Gorgin about the pedagogic potential of this new medium.⁶²⁸ Prefacing her remarks in mentioning that she long believed Iran’s most pressing issue to be education, she then claimed that “amidst the new tools for education” available in Iran, “television and cinema are the most significant.” The Queen asserted that these media were able to manifest a world similar to the human eye, allowing viewers to “see” and “likewise hear” the content “like a human being does.” She remarked that these media facilitated viewers with a better tool through which to retain information, thus rendering television a potent tool for education.⁶²⁹

As to who was best able to provide this education by way of these visual media, the Queen accorded this responsibility to the *rowshanfekrān* (the intellectuals). She agreed that music and painting, too, could help with this cultivation. But when asked about her favorite musicians, she referred once again to the “real music” with which NITV similarly wished to inculcate its audience.

⁶²⁷ “Mokhtalet shodan-e dabirestān-hā,” *Zan-e Ruz*, April 8, 1972.

⁶²⁸ Iraj Gorgin, “Olyāhazrat shahbānu,” *Tamasha*, October 14, 1971.

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*

Beethoven, Bach, Chopin, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, Mendelssohn, and Schubert were the Queen's points of reference for ideal music. As for more modern music, she only made mention of western avant-garde musicians featured at the Shiraz Music Festival, often curated by herself. When asked about Iranian music, however, the Queen was unable to provide any names as she did with the previous questions; rather, she merely referred to her enjoyment of Iranian music "with old instruments." All points of reference as to what exactly constituted culture and education thus remained chiefly exclusive to western realm of taste, even from a Queen whose cultural activism in line with Iranian interests was oft touted by the media.⁶³⁰

Televisual Determinism: The Lerner Doctrine

As disclosed by Kambiz Mahmudi in an oral history, NITV's overarching belief in visual media's capacity to cultivate an audience towards modernity happened to be directly informed by the work of one of the United States' leading modernization theorists, Daniel Lerner.⁶³¹ As cursorily also mentioned in the Introduction, Lerner – a researcher for the CIA-funded Bureau of Applied Research at Columbia University – was among the first public figures to suggest a "vital but unclear connection between urbanization, media development and 'development' generally."⁶³² In 1958, he published *the Passing of Traditional Society*, a study based on surveys in Iran, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Turkey, laying out the ways in which mass communication could accelerate the process of modernization in Middle Eastern countries. So as to best contextualize the principles toward which NITV personnel were adhering when managing the state-run television network, I shall give a more exhaustive examination of Lerner's theories in this section.

⁶³⁰ Iraj Gorgin, "Olyāhazrat shahbānu," *Tamasha*, October 14, 1971.

⁶³¹ Behruz Nikzat and Kambiz Mahmudi, *Interview with Mahmudi, Kambiz* (Washington, D.C., 1982).

⁶³² Tunstall, *The Media Are American*, 207.

From among the influential modernization theorists of the 1950s and 1960s, it was primarily Daniel Lerner who posited there to be a direct relationship between “being modern” and “exposure to the broadcast media.”⁶³³ Throughout his work, Lerner long maintained that although “a balanced growth of urbanism” and “a program of industrialization,” were all vital in creating the societal “conditions in which new styles of life can be rewarding for people willing to try them,” equally essential was “education in the skills required for modern urban industrial living.”⁶³⁴ This education, Lerner argued, could be primarily provided by way of media exposure. By providing “clues as to what the better things of life might be,” Lerner said that the media could, in turn, teach “new desires and new satisfactions”⁶³⁵ to the “isolated and illiterate peasants and tribesmen who [composed] the bulk of the area’s population.”⁶³⁶ Such exposure was to come by the media’s depiction of “situations in which the good things of life – of which most Middle Easterners never dreamed before – are taken for granted.”⁶³⁷ In this way, these people would finally come to “acquire a taste for a better style of life,” and accordingly, to “now seek ways to achieve it.”⁶³⁸

In addition, Lerner expected such media content to “originally” derive “from the West.”⁶³⁹ It was only by being exposed to “the lifeways evolved in other societies,” he argued, that these purportedly unsophisticated individuals could finally become familiarized “with a range of opinions among which they can choose.”⁶⁴⁰ And only on account of such an exposure might the tribesman or peasant begin “to imagine himself as a proprietor of a bigger grocery store in a city,

⁶³³ Katz and Wedell, *Broadcasting In The Third World*, 20.

⁶³⁴ Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (Macmillan Pub Co, 1958), 410.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*, 400.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, 411.

⁶³⁷ *Ibid.*, 400.

⁶³⁸ *Ibid.*, 402.

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 411-412.

to wear nice clothes and live in a nice house, to be interested in what is going on in the world, and to get out of his hole.”⁶⁴¹ As such, the “key to the Middle Eastern future” lied in its peoples’ exposure to these “image of a more satisfactory society.”⁶⁴²

The appropriation of western-oriented cultural and social attitudes on the part of so-called “isolated and illiterate peasants and tribesmen” of Iran thus came to comprise the large bulk of the modernization and development Lerner had in mind. His work professed that the only path toward development for ordinary Iranians was media exposure with respect to what constituted modernity in the western world; that being the consumerist world rife with “better things.” This exposure, in turn, was assumed to inevitably drive these people to hanker for such “better things” as well, gradually incentivizing their entire society to a more developed state, rife with economic consumption and a hankering for social and cultural mobility.⁶⁴³

Correspondingly, Lerner’s theories with respect to the pedagogical capacity of television sheds further light on the cancellation of a show like *Kānun-e Garm-e Khānevādeh* owing to its less than idyllic portrayal of the affluent classes. As per Lerner, if NITV was indeed responsible for exposing the Iranian to the “better things of life” in order to consequently encourage them to hanker for nicer clothes, nicer houses, and better living, then those representing that better life on screen were not to appear flawed in any way. A program like *Kānun-e Garm-e Khānevādeh*, revolving around the imperfections of that supposedly ideal class of society, happened to stand contrary to such a task.

Lerner’s applied theories also elucidates the reason as to why Mahmudi considered a soap opera like *Peyton Place* to be educational. After all, *Peyton Place* depicted an entirely modernized

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

⁶⁴² Ibid., 402.

⁶⁴³ Ibid., 411-412.

society, already demarcated by the official culture as the hub for “real art,” and likewise suffused by the aesthetic and beauty standards similarly buoyed by local media. Correspondingly, as none involved in the soap opera were Iranian, the flaws of such characters in that disparate society depicted could also be disregarded. As per Lerner, after all, audiences could be expected to distinguish between the American way of life and the Iranian ideal, precisely applying the same selective process that he referred to: separating the good from the bad in the western society to which the audience was now exposed.

All the same, it bears mentioning that the abundance of American television programs, such as *Peyton Place*, *McMillan & Wife* (1971-1977), *The Virginian* (1963-1971), and *Cannon* (1971-1976), in NITV’s daily scheduling was not necessarily incentivized by ideology alone. NITV’s timeslots were not suffused with American programming for the sole reason of exposing the Iranian viewership to western lifestyles. Rather, an equally significant reason for so much American programming pervading NITV’s timeslots was economic. As pointed out by NIRT’s Head of the Family and Children’s Programming, Mohammad Nafisi, imported television shows happened to be sold by American networks to foreign stations at an extraordinarily cheap price.⁶⁴⁴ In what were called “country prices,” American broadcasters and film studios often sold their content at a relatively low-cost so as to expand their local markets. For instance, while an American-produced program like *Ironside* or *Hawaii Five-O* could have cost \$200,000 dollars to produce domestically, such shows would be sold to Iran “for less than the least expensive of their home productions.”⁶⁴⁵

⁶⁴⁴ Mohammad Nafisi and Hamid Naficy, *Interview with Nafisi, Mohammad*, Foundation for Iranian Studies (Los Angeles, California, 1983).

⁶⁴⁵ Katz and Wedell, *Broadcasting In The Third World*, 163.

While the export of media content to countries like Iran could have indeed been ideologically motivated on account of the Cold War having also spurred a media-based propaganda warfare between the United States and the Soviet Union at the time – which happened to have directly led to Lerner’s employment as a media researcher for the Bureau of Applied Research – Katz and Wedell nonetheless attest that their importation to Iran was merely due to their low price as well as the “popularity of the programs themselves.”⁶⁴⁶ All the same, as NITV continued to grow, so did domestic production. Indeed, by 11 October 1975, nearing the tenth anniversary of NITV, locally produced Iranian shows comprised 65% of the extended Program I’s programming.⁶⁴⁷ Those domestic productions, however, happened to be more deliberately suffused with ideological leanings, as we shall demonstrate in the next section.

A Gallery of (Stereo)Types: The Case of Qamar Khānom

Broadcast by NITV at the same time as *Kānun-e Garm-e Khānevādeh* was the widely popular *Khāneh-ye Qamar Khānom* (Mrs. Qamar’s House) (1968-1970). Unlike *Kanun-e Garm* that depicted the lives of modern and westernized upper classes, *Qamar Khānom* was a comedic show premised on the tradition-oriented, lower classes of the country. Together with *Sarkār Ostovār* (Command Sergeant Major) (1967-1970), *Pahlevānān* (Champions) (1969-1971), and *Dash Pālaki* (The Palanquin Brother) (1970), *Qamar Khānom* was one of the most popular shows amongst the non-affluent segments of Iranian society.

Indeed, throughout NITV’s early years, locally produced shows depicting the tradition-oriented lower classes proved especially popular among those classes now seeing themselves depicted on television. By way of illustration, when *Tamasha* visited the home of Ali Asghar

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁷ “Barnāmeḥ-hā-ye jadid-e televiziyon,” *Tamasha*, October 11, 1975.

Amirāni, founder of the equally high culture *Khāndani-hā* magazine, in 1971, among the interviewed was the home's servant, Ebrahim. When asked about his favorite shows, Ebrahim not only cited the religious programming broadcast during religious holidays, but emphasized *Sarkār Ostovār* and *Qamar Khānom* as his favorites.⁶⁴⁸ A visit to the religious city of Shah Abdol-Azim in *Tamasha's* next issue also reported back similar programming preferences.⁶⁴⁹ The same tastes were also reflected among the teahouse denizens interviewed in Shiraz⁶⁵⁰ as well as the families in the more religious city of Isfahan in later issues.⁶⁵¹ Shows like *Qamar Khānom* and *Sarkār Ostovār* were so popular among the less westernized classes that even when *Tamasha* visited the notorious Qasr Prison in 1971 (with television sets having been installed there in 1963), most prisoners likewise listed the two shows, alongside *Pahlevānān*, as favorites.⁶⁵²

While *Sarkār Ostovār* was merely a diverting police procedural set in rural Iran, and both *Pahlevānān* and *Dash Pālaki* historical dramas set in Qajar times, *Khāneh-ye Qamar Khānom's* focus was exclusively on those contemporaneous classes of society for whom the luxuries available to northern Tehran were both alien and unthinkable. Slotted between CBS's *The Millionaire* (1955-1960) and *Hawaii-Five O* in prime-time hours – determined by NITV's audience research department as being set between 7:15-9:30 PM⁶⁵³ – on Saturday night, *Qamar Khānom* was premised around a cantankerous and old veiled widow who had inherited her husband's large house. The show also comprised a cast of down-on-their-luck characters living unhappily under the woman's rule. Unlike the upper classes that dined on dinner tables, *Qamar Khānom's* tenants ate collectively on the floor. Also, they were illiterate, and their only source of

⁶⁴⁸ “Matbu’āti-hā va televiziyon,” *Tamasha*, March 18, 1971.

⁶⁴⁹ “Tamasha-ye televiziyon gonāh nadarad,” *Tamasha*, April 1, 1971.

⁶⁵⁰ Nādali Hamedāni, “Dar ghahveh khāneh-hā-ye shiraz,” *Tamasha*, August 5, 1971.

⁶⁵¹ Ahmad Allāhyāri, “Sā’ati dar...,” *Tamasha*, August 26, 1971.

⁶⁵² Parviz Rafi’i, “Televiziyon-e zendāni-hā-ye bigonāh-e zendān-e qasr,” *Tamasha*, September 2, 1971.

⁶⁵³ Kimiachi, “History and Development of Broadcasting in Iran,” 149.

information and entertainment came from the radio and not the television set that they could not afford. Sartorially, the older women in this household were only seen veiled or at least covered, while their daughters – signifying the producers’ notions of the younger generation – were literate, unveiled, and explicitly, more inclined toward miniskirts. From these predicaments – be they the generational conflicts within these families or dismay over Qamar Khānom’s despotism – hijinks often ensued in each stand-alone, thirty-minute episode.

Despite the popularity of *Qamar Khānom*, high culture magazines, regularly echoing the opinions of the official culture, predictably derided the show for being “one-dimensional” and “useless,” as did one particular *Zan-e Ruz* critic in 1971.⁶⁵⁴ Similarly, they continually reminded readers that the popularity of shows like *Qamar Khānom* had merely stemmed from the traditional and illiterate viewership’s lack of proper education, as did *Tamasha* in the same year.⁶⁵⁵ Yet, for all the criticism cast against *Qamar Khānom* by purveyors of the official culture, the show’s portrayals and corresponding deployment of stereotypes arguably worked to reinforce the hegemonic ideals of NITV and the state. Though the abovementioned *Zan-e Ruz* critic was not necessarily incorrect in disparaging the one-dimensional nature of *Qamar Khānom*’s characters, he overlooked the fact that the show – framed as a comedic portrayal of Tehran’s down-and-out – had made particular use of stereotypes so as to establish a point of reference for the attitudes of the uncultivated vis-à-vis the sophisticated.

Indeed, as John Fiske argues, characters on television serve “not just representations of individual people,” but as “encodings of ideology.”⁶⁵⁶ The markers used to depict such characters are accordingly those that can determine the differences between “types who embody the dominant

⁶⁵⁴ “Khāneh qamar Khānom...,” *Zan-e Ruz*, December 13, 1970.

⁶⁵⁵ Ahmad Allāhyāri, “Sā’ati dar... (an hour with...),” *Tamasha*, August 26, 1971.

⁶⁵⁶ Fiske, *Television Culture*, 9.

ideology” and those on the outskirts of said ideology.⁶⁵⁷ Most essential to this ideological process is the implementation of stereotypes within these programs. As Patricia A. Cunningham and Susan Voso Lab explain, stereotypes “are simplified conventions or formulae” which are developed and then repeated “as a message in communication.” These conventions, often relying on visual information, are rendered into short-hands in describing “what or who [a] person or object is.” They are meant to “quickly” communicate to a wide audience “a wide range of ideas in a manner that words cannot.”⁶⁵⁸

Particularly, stereotypes utilize dress to convey this information, especially since “the meanings generated by clothing symbols relate directly to the function of clothing in a culture.”⁶⁵⁹ As Joanne Finkelstein maintains, articles of dress hence become “the standardized insignia” with which to interpret said stereotypes in both visual media and real life.⁶⁶⁰ By way of such stereotypes, for instance, “a woman in neat, pale clothing” can come to represent “a mother,” and “a man in a suit, white shirt and knotted tie” could signify “a police-man or doctor,” and “a man in a dark shirt and bowtie” might become “suspect” in the eyes of a viewer.⁶⁶¹

As George Gerbner argues, hegemonic standards of beauty are also utilized in these processes of stereotyping. Gerbner’s work examines the ways in which heroes and villains in visual media are often distinguished by way of their attractiveness. Though contingent on a society’s own standards of beauty, attractiveness is nonetheless regularly identified as the principal trait of the successful televisual hero, while unattractiveness immediately identifies an antagonist.⁶⁶² Equally

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁸ Patricia A. Cunningham and Susan Voso Lab, “Understanding Dress and Popular Culture,” in *Dress and Popular Culture* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Popular Press 1, 1991), 7.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁰ Joanne Finkelstein, *The Art of Self Invention: Image and Identity in Popular Visual Culture* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2007), 7.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶⁶² George Gerbner, “Cultural Indicators: The Case of Violence in Television Drama,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 388 (1970): 77.

significant to the fashioning of stereotypes are the politics of taste as laid out for each respective type. Both “aesthetic sense” and “good taste” are typically utilized to form visual stereotypes, especially in portrayals of “class differences.”⁶⁶³ While heroes are often recognized for their good taste, villains are often wont to “show their debased taste, their aesthetic insensitivity.”⁶⁶⁴

To argue these points with respect to *Khāneh-ye Qamar Khānom*, we shall now examine the very episode so derided by the aforementioned *Zan-e Ruz* critic. The episode begins with Qamar Khānom asking her daughter, Akram, to read her a letter. Although a simple scene, featuring a similarly simple request, this particular segment of the episode happened to be rife with the stereotypical underpinnings that pervaded the show. As typified by her chadori comportment, Qamar is not only depicted as unmodern, but consequently, also illiterate. Standing in contrast to her in this scene is her daughter, Akram. She is also covered, but being of a different generation, she has clearly undergone her mandatory primary education, and can thereby read. As she stutters over more complicated words, it is also implied that her education did not surpass its primary stages, thereby pitting her as an embodiment of those schoolgirls refused an education owing to their families’ religious precepts. Most conspicuous, however, is that this opening letter-reading segment is presented satirically, poking fun at mother and daughter’s respective illiteracy and semi-literacy, thereby suggesting the outlandish and laughable nature of the illiterate.

The letter reveals that Parviz Khān, a tenant of Qamar Khānom’s, has been summoned to court. Akram then shares the letter with Qamar’s second-in-command, Āqā Gholām, styled in a black-rimmed hat and mustache so as to typify the traditional Iranian *luti*. At this juncture, Gholām decides to hide the letter. As both Parviz and Gholām are in love with the same woman also living under Qamar Khānom’s roof, Gholām’s plan is for Parviz Khān to miss his court date and become

⁶⁶³ Fiske, *Television Culture*, 12.

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

incarcerated, thus eliminating him from the love triangle. Such particular ploys on the part of Āqā Gholām are not exclusive to just one episode. Like all characters in the show, Āqā Gholām’s characterization in each episode remains consistent: He is cruel and sycophantic, willing to do absolutely anything to get his way.

That Āqā Gholām’s actions often go against the *luti* trait of “chivalry,” is not without significance. Indeed, throughout *Qamar Khānom*, types exalted by the traditional culture are reframed according to the manners in which the official culture viewed them. With Āqā Gholām, for instance, the *luti* – long exalted for his neighborhood leadership and protective personality – is now devaluated as a rogue in pursuit of sexual self-interest, going so far as send another man to prison. Despite being dressed in visual markers of the *luti* with his velvet hat, therefore, Āqā Gholām’s actions go against the “Robin Hood function”⁶⁶⁵ of the *luti*. Here, the *luti* is a mere crook. The official culture’s less than idyllic view of a traditional type like the *luti* was thus broadcast week after week to the largely traditional audience of *Qamar Khānom*. The same was true for the official culture’s low regard for the chadori. Established as the antagonist around whom the show revolves, the chadori woman, as typified by Qamar Khānom, is presented as an unshakable villain, relishing her dominion over her tenants, and doing anything to disabuse them of their rights. Her chador is presented merely as an exterior under which she hides her cruelty.

By way of illustration, the episode in question sees Qamar Khanum help Gholām with the plan to incarcerate Parviz Khān. As such, she burns the letter in the fireplace before Parviz Khān can make note of the time and date he is to appear in court. The cruelty of this act was not lost on the *Zan-e Ruz* critic, though perhaps, its implication was. “The act of burning such a letter,” the critic noted, “is both unprincipled and illogical.” After all, “for all her villainy, even Qamar

⁶⁶⁵ Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema*, Volume 2, 267.

Khānom cannot be so cruel,” the critic maintained.⁶⁶⁶ Yet, Qamar’s uncomplimentary characterization was part and parcel of the manners in which high culture often denigrated the chadori woman. Though the *Zan-e Ruz* critic had asked how any viewer could possibly accept the woman’s “horrible villainy,”⁶⁶⁷ the dark-haired, large-nosed, villainous, illiterate, and overweight chador-clad woman had been an especially familiar sight in the pages of *Zan-e Ruz* within the same time period.

Another point of contention for the *Zan-e Ruz* critic was the manner in which the tenants all haplessly endured Qamar Khānom’s cruelty. In this particular episode, after Qamar burns the letter in the fireplace, not one of tradition-oriented tenants stands up to her. Even Parviz Khān and his father fail to become angered by the action. “How in the world,” the critic asked, “are Qamar Khānom’s tenants always so frightened, pusillanimous, panic-ridden, and butterfingers?”⁶⁶⁸ The answer to this question, however, comes later in the episode when only two types from among Qamar Khānom’s tenants conjure a solution to Parviz Khān’s predicament – types embodying more modern tastes and comportments.

The first such type is represented by Mr. Mohājēri, an older man always in a suit and tie and donning the Chaplin-mustache of old nobility. Throughout the show’s run, Mohājēri is portrayed as the most sober and logical individual within the household, condemned to Qamar Khānom’s household only by way of some tragic circumstance befalling his noble family – and not, like all the others, due to his social aberrations. Here, too, he manages to rescue the charred letter from the fireplace, and being literate (as also signified by his well-groomed appearance), he makes out some significant information from the bits he recovers.

⁶⁶⁶ “Khāneh qamar Khānom...,” *Zan-e Ruz*, December 13, 1970.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid.

The second salvation to Parviz Khān's plight comes in the form of a younger man in the household, Āqā Kamāl. Reliably clean-shaven and dressed neatly in a blouse, Kamāl is studying to be a medical practitioner. He also happens to be in love with Mohājēri's daughter, Mahin, whose thin nose, slender figure, and embrace of clothes like the miniskirt also happen to connote her sophistication. By way of Kamāl's deportment, he is also framed as an upstanding individual in the show. As happens, in this episode, he comes by a newspaper article that can both help with Parviz Khān's predicament and the Mohājēri family's fall from grace.

Indeed, while Kamāl, Mohājēri, and Mahin are likewise portrayed according to types – theirs being that of the modernized Iranian – their depiction is saturated with the sober respect lacking in the depictions of the other characters. These three are never cast as the butts of the joke. Rather, they are regularly portrayed as the redeemers to the predicaments befalling all the others in the comedy of errors that is *Qamar Khānom*. While the unmodern tenants in Qamar Khānom's household encounter their predicaments with pusillanimity, passivity and cowardice, the three modern individuals in the series face these troubles head-on. Once more, like the official culture's demarcation of pre-Pahlavi and Pahlavi Iran, the non-modern are characterized in the show as passive recipients to terror, while the more modernized individuals are treated as rational and proactive champions.

As such, each character type within *Qamar Khānom* managed to reflect the ideological values accorded to that type by the official culture. The codes and stereotypes at play in *Qamar Khānom* conspicuously associated each class of character with particular traits – traits so conspicuous that even the aforementioned art critic brought them to attention in his review. Yet, these “one-dimensional” portrayals seem not to have been employed owing to a lack of creativity as the critic had implied. Rather, judging simply by the episodic consistency in depicting these

characters as they were, the simplistic portrayal of these characters appeared more to have been a deliberate creative decision. Villainy and corruption were attributed to the chador-clad Qamar Khānom or the self-serving *luti* Āqā Gholām, while fearfulness and docility were correspondingly attributed to the household's tradition-oriented tenants. The traits shared by both the villainous and docile characters likewise happened to be illiteracy, piety, and steadfastly traditional ways of life in a modernizing world, such as having their clothes washed in the household pond or dining on carpet floors in rooms featuring framed paintings of Shi'a Imams.

That *Khāneh-ye Qamar Khānom* utilized stereotypes was not lost on its showrunners. Neither was the fact each "type" was supposedly representative of a specific segment of the population. As *Tamasha* itself remarked in 1971, "the tenants in the households were each illustrative of the different types found in society, and each were archetypes for particular groups of people."⁶⁶⁹ Furthermore, in explaining the show's reliance on stereotypes to *Tamasha*, the show's writer Mohammad San'ati, laid the blame solely on the viewer's habituation to such types by way of other programs. "The audience" he said, "seems to have become habituated to the fact that if Qamar Khānom shouts in one episode, she should shout in others as well." He went on to say that viewers did not want to see these stereotypes show any humanity beyond the stereotypes ascribed to them. "The viewer," he said, "does not want to see Qamar show vulnerability... They want the type, not the character."⁶⁷⁰ And types were indeed provided, so much so that the term "*Qamar Khānom*" became a short-hand for loud cantankerous women who also feigned piety, and the term "*Khāneh-ye Qamar Khānom*" became a euphemism for the overcrowded homes of downtrodden ruled over by unjust landladies.

⁶⁶⁹ "Qamar Khānom khāneh kharāb shod," *Tamasha*, October 7, 1971.

⁶⁷⁰ Nādali Hamedāni, "Khāneh-ye qamar Khānom (Mrs. Qamar's House)," *Tamasha*, May 20, 1971.

Still and all, as John Fiske argues, “the social code of appearance” is only one in many ways that a program is embedded with “ideological codes.”⁶⁷¹ Another manner of coding lies in “the technical codes” of a visual program, utilized by way of “camera work, lighting, setting,” as well as casting.⁶⁷² This utilization of technical codes alongside pre-existing social codes can likewise be observed within *Qamar Khānom*’s reliably recurrent presentation of its characters and premises. To give an example of this, we shall point to the film adaptation of the program, which also happened to be produced by NITV. Serving also as a series finale to the show, the film, directed by Bahman Farmanara and produced by NITV, was premised similarly to the weekly show’s usual plot points, focused this time on the tenants’ plan to send Qamar Khānom to a sanatorium and take over the house once and for all. The film opens to the entire home being suffused in noise, chaos, and bickering, with no quiet corner existing anywhere in the household. Following this is a shot focused on three of the older women in Qamar Khānom’s complex, shrouded in chadors and gossiping among themselves while washing their clothes in the *howz* (pond). They happen to be causing the ruckus. This disorderly environment is then immediately juxtaposed with a wide-angle shot of the unruffled and quiet alleyway outside the household, as two pairs of miniskirted legs walk past. The abovementioned technical codes hence come into a play from the film’s opening moments, with each respective shot establishing the difference between the tradition-stifled, chaotic, and allegedly unattractive interior of Qamar’s house, and life outside – with all its attractive freedoms and recreations.⁶⁷³

The only recreation that the down-and-out of the household are looking forward to is the wedding party that Qamar Khānom’s has arranged for her daughter, Akram. Indeed, this wedding

⁶⁷¹ Fiske, *Television Culture*, 9.

⁶⁷² *Ibid.*

⁶⁷³ *Khāneh-ye qamar khanum*, Comedy (Panorama Cinematic Organization, Tamasha Cultural Institute, 1972).

scene includes the most conspicuous instance of ideological coding in the film. At one point during the wedding, the guests are invited to dance; when they do, they happen to do so in front of a wall emblazoned with the Pahlavi symbol of crown and flag. The *luti* Āqā Gholām dances. So do both the veiled and unveiled younger women in the household, with the perspective directly taking into account the Pahlavi symbol as these residents continue to dance freely. Freedom to dance, to enjoy oneself is therefore equated with the monarchy and its alleged promises of recreation. Intercut with the dancing are shots of the guests that have remained seated, cast outside the symbol's gaze. So unmodern and unsophisticated are these seated guests, the film connotes not long after, that one even faints at the sight of a camera's flash; in later scenes, the character in question is even depicted as being near death, all owing to the literal flash of modernity to which she had been subjected at the wedding.⁶⁷⁴

Another significant piece of technical encoding comes at the film's conclusion. At this juncture, by way of some complex scheme, the tenants have managed to not only secure the deed to Qamar's house, but have also convinced a doctor to stop over and pick up Qamar in order to impound her at the sanitorium. Yet, when finally faced with this predicament at her home's *hashti* (an open-air, enclosed space inside the home), Qamar suddenly begins to laugh. As her laughter takes over, the camera cuts to all but two other tenants, showing that they too are laughing as maniacally as their villainous proprietor. Even when the doctor and his staff take Qamar away, freeing the tenants from her terror, the laughter continues. All the while, the camera takes on a lower angle, spinning and encircling the howling tenants as they continue to laugh frenziedly.⁶⁷⁵

This directorial choice, beginning with Qamar laughing alongside the tenants and ending with the tenants laughing maniacally even without Qamar's presence, suggests the absolute

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid.

madness that has overtaken the home with or without Qamar Khānom. Even with the alleged lunatic in an actual asylum, the madness carries on. The tenants are now the lunatics, running an asylum of their own. It is thus suggested that, even without Qamar Khānom, nothing will change with respect to the fate of these downtrodden tenants. They, too, seem as mad as their former proprietor.⁶⁷⁶

As for the two individuals absent from the hooting, those two happen to be the more modern Kamāl and Mahin, now engaged to be married, and shown in the scene preceding the lunacy to be walking together in the streets of Tehran, shot in a selfsame manner as the earlier scene featuring the bare legs of a miniskirted woman. Mahin is dressed in a skirt, holding hands with Kamal, who is clean-shaven and attired in a suit. Though both have decided to stay close to the members of Qamar’s household, they have decided to nonetheless live at a safe distance from them. The modern youth are thus portrayed as reasonable enough to know that while keeping faithful to old traditions is spiritually important, they must go their own way regardless – in the streets of a modernizing city as opposed to the claustrophobic and loud enclosure of a traditional home. Attractive, modern, and well-dressed, Mahin and Kamāl are, therefore, cast as the show’s only upstanding heroes, while all the stereotypes are left to bicker in a sanitarium of their own making.⁶⁷⁷

Samad as the Holy Fool: The Rustic as Comedic Foil

Another show that proved exceptionally popular as *Qamar Khānom* was ending its run was *Mājarā-hā-ye Samad* (The Adventures of Samad) (1970-1975). It, too, was a comedy, and like *Qamar Khānom*, this comedy also exclusively relied on heightening a “single but overriding

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid.

personal trait or habit” of its characters so as to render them rife for stereotypical portrayals.⁶⁷⁸ By way of its popularity, “Samad” – the name of its protagonist – correspondingly became short-hand for the type he represented. Yet, also like *Qamar Khānom*, the only characters whose traits happened to be heightened throughout the show were the traditional roles now extensively broadcast as laughable.

Samad Āqā, the titular character in *Mājarā-hā-ye Samad*, was based around the stereotype of the country bumpkin, a social type that happened to have comprised another of the state’s supposedly backward undesirables. While the show was described by *Tamasha* as “a sweet tale about the lives of the rustic,”⁶⁷⁹ its creator and portrayer, Parviz Sayyad, framed it as a story about “a villager” who happened to be “so naïve” that he “consistently got himself into trouble.”⁶⁸⁰ In other words, Samad typified an unsophisticated and disorderly villager.

The Samad character first appeared in *Sarkār Ostovār*, only for his popularity to soon warrant him his own spin-off serial and films. The basis for the character, Sayyad mentioned, sprung from a character well-known in the comic *ruhowzi* performances of old. This character, called *shali* (cripple) or *siyāh* (black), was often cast as the servant in the traditional Iranian farce. Speaking “with an uneducated accent,” limping here and there, and confusing “messages he is to deliver,” the *shali* was oft responsible for the “thoroughly risible” chains of misunderstandings characterizing *ruhowzi* performances.⁶⁸¹ Samad, too, functioned as a Holy Fool, and like *shali*, who was based around contemporaneous racist misconceptions about the black race, Samad’s character was similarly entrenched within prejudiced notions of another underprivileged class in

⁶⁷⁸ Cyrus Henry Hoy, “Comedy,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

⁶⁷⁹ “Dar televiziyon,” *Tamasha*, May 13, 1971.

⁶⁸⁰ “Goft-o gu-yi bā parviz-e sayyād,” *Tamasha*, January 17, 1976.

⁶⁸¹ Peter Chelkowski, “Popular Entertainment, Media, and Social Change in Twentieth Century Iran,” in *The Cambridge History of Iran: Volume 7*, ed. P. Avery, G. R. G. Hambly, and C. Melville, Reissue edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 779

late twentieth century Iran. This pertained to the urban opinion that the Iranian villager was backward and uncultivated. In turn, the comedy that ensued was regularly a consequence of Samad's own clumsiness, his lack of cultivation, his inability to comprehend matters that the viewers – no matter their education – could have effortlessly comprehended. However, unlike the *shali* character, who managed to exploit his surrounding cast of characters as the butts of his jokes, in the *Samad* saga there was only one joke: that being Samad himself.

Accordingly, each episode saw Samad Āqā be put into positions wherein his clumsy, rustic presence could permeate the scenarios with the humor intended. In one episode, Samad disastrously sets out to propose;⁶⁸² in another, he gets exiled from his township;⁶⁸³ and in one particularly telling episode, he goes to school. Airing on Program I on 13 October 1971, the latter episode saw this stereotype presented in its most ideological form. Therein, Samad is compelled to attend primary school alongside many of his other adult country dwellers. Yet, when he enters school and stands in line for the morning briefing, neither he nor the older man similarly attired beside him can help but cause a ruckus. Matters become even more chaotic when the villagers are given the simple task to sit at their desks. Instead of sitting in an orderly manner, they begin fighting, shouting, and beating one another with their schoolbooks so as to procure their preferred seats. Like the familiar scenes of *Qamar Khānom*, this scene, featuring an assortment of villagers, is also especially loud in volume, once more harkening to the technical codes used to distinguish between the lives of the cultivated and uncultivated. One group is quiet and reserved, while the other is constantly loud, and living in chaos.

At the opposite end of the equation are the principal and vice-principal of this school, transferred only recently from the city. No matter how hard they try, they cannot seem to tame

⁶⁸² Iraj Amir Sardāri, “Barnāmeḥ-hā-ye khub-o bad,” *Zan-e Ruz*, May 24, 1970.

⁶⁸³ “Barnāmeḥ televiziyon-e melli-ye irān,” *Tamasha*, October 14, 1971.

these villagers. Samad interrupts them at every turn with his hijinks, with his fellow villagers reliably following suit. All throughout, the ever-patient and neatly dressed superintendents, standing over them in a suit and tie, never lose their composure.⁶⁸⁴ Designated straight-men of this episode, the principal and vice-principal of the school are thus the markers through which a viewer could compare the lives of the educated urbane with those of the villager. Their efforts to educate, however, are often met with ridicule by the ungrateful villagers. None of them are even trying to learn, doing their all instead to bully these refined men. The distinguishing markers thus become apparent. While one group is well-dressed, quiet, educated, principled, and conscientious enough to leave behind their luxurious lives in the city to teach the uneducated, those in which they are bound to teach represent the exact opposite.

Another scene further extends this stereotypical depiction of the villager, this time with respect to their supposed lack of sexual cultivation. When a female teacher, dressed also according to Euro-American beauty markers, joins the school to teach these adult men, Samad and his fellow villagers seem only interested in her legs. Because she is wearing a skirt, all the students – with Samad at the fore – crouch under their desks to gawk at her legs. The scene is drawn out for comedic effect, the supposedly inherent humor in it being the fact that these middle aged male villagers cannot help but become frenzied by a pair of stockings.⁶⁸⁵ Hauntingly, the scene also evokes the real-life incident described in Chapter 1, involving the skirted woman assaulted by a laborer in Tehran years previous. Though that incident was similarly lampooned at the time, it involved only one guilty party. Conversely, the behavior of Samad and his fellow classmates implies that all villagers behave similarly; that none can control themselves. More significantly,

⁶⁸⁴ *Samad be madreseh miravad* (Gorooh-e Azad-e Film, 1971).

⁶⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

what is suggested throughout the episode is that these vest-wearing and felt hat-donned bumpkins all seem beyond hope to have an education. The best they can be is a punchline.

As costume is meant to “quickly and efficiently”⁶⁸⁶ communicate a character to an audience, Samad and his fellow villagers’ appearance as short, rotund men with traditional brimless felt hats (*kolāh namadi*, the word itself also a pejorative used to describe a rustic individual) and an analogously rustic vest managed to sartorially emphasize the stereotype of an uncultivated country dweller. Samad’s sartorial comportment was not just a subtle indicator of his alleged backwardness. Often, it was used deliberately to point to the fact that he was uncultivated beyond hope.

This was best demonstrated in a multi-part arc broadcast by NITV in 1975. A spoof of the widely popular *Mission: Impossible* (1966-1973) series –Persianized as *Bālātar az Khatar* (*Beyond Danger*) – this arc, titled *Samad Āqā Dar Bālātar az Khatar*, sees Samad kidnapped from his village and taken to Tehran. Unlike Dariush Mehrjui’s independently produced *Āqā-ye Hālu*, which treated its rustic urban migrant with sympathy, Samad Āqā’s entry to the city is solely played for laughs.⁶⁸⁷

In one telling instance, the city-slicker criminals – dressed in leather jackets and donning mustaches harkening to the *jāhel* (ignorant) gangster type also established in Iran’s visual media history – take Samad to a tailor so as to better hide his comportment as a villager in the city setting. No matter whatever urban jacket they try to dress him in, however, something goes wrong. One of the jackets tears when Samad tries it on. And when they offer him a chequered jacket to try on, Samad refuses, protesting ridiculously that the shapes do not contain as many angles as he prefers.

⁶⁸⁶ Joanne B. Eicher and Sandra Lee Evenson, *The Visible Self: Global Perspectives on Dress, Culture and Society* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 353-354.

⁶⁸⁷ *Samad dar bālā-tar az khatar* (Tehran: National Iranian Radio and Television, 1975).

Ultimately, the gangsters give up, contending that “there is no use; whatever clothing you put on him cries on his body. Even from far away, they scream that he is a *dehāti*” (pejorative for “villager”). To hide in plain sight, the gangsters come up with only one compromise: to surrender their own leather jackets for clothing identical to Samad’s. When all three gangsters are seen in the next shot, dressed despondently in the felt hats and jackets representative of villagers, Samad looks at them approvingly and delivers the skit’s punchline. “Finally,” he tells them, “You have decided to look like respected individuals.”⁶⁸⁸

What passes as humor in this segment is the notion that a villager cannot be made to look sophisticated overnight. The first attempt to dress Samad in a jacket sees it tearing, signifying a villager’s innate incapacity to even put on the dress of the urbane. This is especially significant considering that Samad’s more rotund shape is also at odds with the urban gangsters’ slimmer frames, thus also indicating the differing body standards found in villages as compared to the city. The second attempt sees Samad himself refuse an article of clothing because its design does not match his own outlandish conception of style. This, in turn, signifies another troubling notion that even when the villager is presented with the opportunity to look – and thus become – cultivated, he might still stubbornly refuse the chance on account of some non-existent, fantastical misconception. In Samad’s case, this misconception is established as his obstinate conviction that a jacket’s designs should comprise hexagonal shapes as opposed to the rectangular. Yet, it could just as well stand for a villager’s allegedly dogged convictions to other outmoded tenants of which the official culture did not approve.⁶⁸⁹

Later instances in the serial likewise accentuated the idea that the villager could not so easily become cultivated. Notable is a scene where Samad enters a middle class living room,

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid.

furnished according to contemporary “blueprints” as to what a modern Iranian domicile should comprise, featuring “upholstered sofas, coffee tables, armchairs, and such.”⁶⁹⁰ Here, Samad cannot quite understand how to set himself on a sofa, habituated as he had been until then to sit on floors, as custom in rural and traditional households. After fidgeting on the sofa for a long amount of time, he eventually resolves to sit on the sofa as he would on the floor, pulling his legs underneath his bottom and sitting, finally, cross-legged. Once again, the scene is played for laughs.⁶⁹¹

As the derisory portrayals of Samad’s dress indicate, NITV’s programming regularly afforded “intensive and selective exposure to some proposed fashions” over others.⁶⁹² With costuming usually utilized by visual media to “carry enough information about characters so that the audience could tell something about them,” ethnic costume, like that worn by Samad Āqā, was often implemented by NITV producers to connote the supposedly backward and laughable traits of the rustic Iranian.⁶⁹³ In contrast, so-called “new fashions” were only donned by more respectable and modern characters, like the school principals. They, in turn, were depicted as possessing “the prestige to be legitimators.”⁶⁹⁴ It was unlikely to see the loud, chaotic, and raucous rustic-type dressed in a suit, unless a punchline was to follow. It was even unlikely to see him seated properly on a sofa, as that too seemed reserved only for the modern. After all, the villager was fused to his ethnic attire in the same manner as the urbanite was to his clean-shaven face, her uncovered head, or their modern dress. The villager’s comportment, together with their dress, was to serve as a cautionary tale, an indicator of who not to be, and how not to be perceived as laughable in the

⁶⁹⁰ Pamela Karimi, *Domesticity and Consumer Culture in Iran: Interior Revolutions of the Modern Era* (London ; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 92.

⁶⁹¹ *Samad dar bālā-tar az khatar* (Tehran: National Iranian Radio and Television, 1975).

⁶⁹² Yuniya Kawamura, *Fashion-ology: An Introduction to Fashion Studies, Dress, Body, Culture* (Oxford ; New York: Berg, 2005), 64.

⁶⁹³ Jane Gaines, “On Wearing the Film,” in *Fashion Cultures: Theories, Explorations and Analysis*, ed. Stella Bruzzi and Pamela Church Gibson (Routledge, 2013), 188.

⁶⁹⁴ Kawamura, *Fashion-ology*, 64.

public eye. As opposed to their urban counterparts, the rustic – together with their sartorial preferences – served only as de-legitimizers. Not only were they represented exclusively in comedic programs, but the comedy they engendered prompted audiences to laugh at them, especially for their lack of sophistication – and not laugh with them.

As Stanley Cohen remarks, “the mass communication of stereotypes,” is contingent on stripping away “any previously neutral” context from words or images, and proffering them, instead, with “wholly negative meanings.”⁶⁹⁵ By harnessing the “symbolic power of words and images,”⁶⁹⁶ the stereotype, in turn, makes for the creation of “folk devils” – those being the undesirables of any particular society. Since the term *dehāti* was constantly utilized as a pejorative against Samad, and since his personality was regularly juxtaposed with more modern personages throughout the serial as a laughing matter, the Samad character plainly came to stand as the embodiment of a rustic “folk devil” towards which the official culture was uncongenial.

Indeed, Cohen outlines the three-pronged process through which such stereotyping of folk devils occurs. First, a word “becomes symbolic of a certain status.” In Samad’s case, we can see that the term *dehāti* is rendered a symbol for the raucous, ignorant individual unwilling to become educated. Then, as Cohen figures, “objects” are redefined so as to “symbolize the word.” This can be seen in the way the brimless felt hat and the vest is integrated into the Samad character, almost as though the clothes are also part of Samad’s personality. Finally, “the objects themselves become symbolic of the status” as well as “the emotions attached to the status.”⁶⁹⁷ This is the juncture at which anybody attired in a like manner as Samad is rendered into a *dehāti*, thereby connoting that such a type is unruly, uncultivated, and ignorant. In such a way, Cohen maintains, “the primary

⁶⁹⁵ Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, 2011), 37.

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁶⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 37.

label” – this case being Samad Āqā the *dehāti* – comes to evoke “secondary images, some of which are purely descriptive, some of which contain explicit moral judgements, and some of which contain prescriptions about how to handle the behavior.”⁶⁹⁸

As Cohen argues, identification owing to “the process of symbolization” as demarcated by stereotypes can also lead to “harassment,” with the appearance of particular individuals becoming “grounds for regarding [them] as a legitimate target for social control.”⁶⁹⁹ Accordingly, the Samad Āqā character similarly exacerbated the harassment experienced by Iranian villagers in urban areas. By way of illustration, a rural female reader wrote to *Zan-e Ruz* as far late into the Pahlavi era as 22 October 1977 to lament about how the stereotype propagated by Samad was vocally attributed to her and her family in Tehran. During a summer visit to the capital from Kerman, she wrote that she and her sister were initially harassed with the term “*dehāti*” when visiting the city’s more affluent areas, before the mockery took a turn for the worse. In the days that followed, she and her family were serenaded with an equally disparaging chant that attributed their rustic comportment with the Samad Āqā character. This occurred when a group of “jean-wearing” loiters began singing, “Look who has come, it is Samad Āqā who has come, from up in his village he has come!” every time the family passed. It was not an isolated incident either, as she recalled an additional occasion when her mother was similarly harassed with a song also inspired by *Samad*, this time with respect to the Samad character’s mother, satirically named Naneh Āqā (Momma Lady). “Look who has come,” the chanting went, “It is Naneh Āqā who has come, from up in her village she has come!” Once more, like the harassment experienced by the chadoris mentioned in

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid., 76-77.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., 100.

the previous chapter, the agitation proved so effective that the writer and her family “swore off ever returning to the capital.”⁷⁰⁰

The propagation of such stereotypes provides a clear explanation as to why villagers, like those Keyvān Khosrovāni referred to in the previous chapter, refused to wear their ethnic dress in urban environments. Owing to the stereotypes promulgated by such coded programming techniques, not only was ethnic dress de-legitimized as the attire of the retrograde, but so was the comportment of the villager as a whole. To borrow from Cohen, by way of the Samad Āqā character, the *dehāti* was entered into the official culture’s “gallery of types,” intended to “show its members which roles should be avoided and which should be emulated.” The stereotypes characterizing folk devils like the *dehāti* or the chadori thus came to serve as “visible reminders of what [the public] should not be.”⁷⁰¹

The Working Class Hero: Morād Barqī and the Virtues in Upward Mobility

Despite scripted NITV programming’s regular reliance on stereotypes in depicting non-modern life, programs featuring representations of the working classes nonetheless remained widely popular. During the period in which they had aired, both *Khāneh-ye Qamar Khānom* and *Samad Āqā* were regularly cited by viewers in surveys conducted by *Tamasha* and *Zan-e Ruz* as public favorites. All the same, the most popular comedy of the period was arguably Parviz Kardan’s *Khāneh be Dush* (Wanderer) (1971-1974).⁷⁰²

Although the show similarly portrayed its protagonist – an electrician colloquially known as Morād Barqī (Morād the Electrician) – as a devious nuisance in accordance with the *dehāti* stereotypes outlined previously, this particular portrayal offered a social salvation of sorts to its

⁷⁰⁰ Tāhereh M., “Tehrāni budan va shahrestāni budan,” *Zan-e Ruz*, October 22, 1977.

⁷⁰¹ Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, 2.

⁷⁰² Nīlufār, “Parviz Kardan va bāzīgārān-e khāneh be dush,” *Tamasha*, June 21, 1973.

wayward and allegedly backward character. It did so by infusing him with social aspirations and a willingness to integrate into modern society. In such a way, Morād Barqi came to stand as the single exception to NITV's portrayal of the working classes as foils in its comedies, rendered thus into a hero as opposed to a punchline.

In an interview with *Tamasha* in November 1972, only months after the series debuted, creator Parviz Kardan characterized the protagonist as a realistic embodiment of an unsophisticated but “sneaky and exacting” individual, willing “exploit any tool at his disposal so as to profit personally,” especially as it pertained to the accumulation of “wealth or social status.” Kardan went to explain that to come by such status, the working class Morād Barqi travels from city to city peddling his electric wares, presenting himself to bystanders as “a merchant and an expert” despite his evident lack of skill. Signifying Morād Barqi's desire to harmonize his values with those of westernized elites, Kardan also mentions that among the protagonist's proudest moments are the trips he has taken to East Germany and Kuwait in the past; something that he ridiculously “brings up at every turn, telling everyone that he too has also “been to *farang*,”” often following his boasts with “a few *farangi* words sprinkled here and there.”⁷⁰³

Made conspicuous from Kardan's descriptions alone is the singular trait that differentiates Morād Barqi from other working class comedic types. Unlike Samad or Qamar Khānom, Morād Barqi happens to be in active pursuit of the “wealth” and “social status” afforded to the modern era. Though not an expert in the products he peddles, he nonetheless opts to sell electronic equipment befitting a modern world. Similarly, on account of his use of *farangi* words as well as his boasts about having ventured westward, he yearns to be seen as equally sophisticated as the allegedly modern. Even though he does not have any expertise in electronics, and even though

⁷⁰³ “Morād barqi,” *Tamasha*, November 9, 1972.

East Germany or Kuwait do not necessarily comprise popular conceptions of “the West,” Morād Barqi nevertheless applies himself to the ideals of westernized modernity, no matter how clumsily.

Within the ideological coding of NITV programming, therefore, such characteristics rendered Morād Barqi into a working class hero; one in active pursuit to upgrade his life, and doing so, principally, by conforming to the preferred tenets of the dominant culture.⁷⁰⁴ This was true even sartorially for Morād Barqi. Unlike Samad or Qamar Khānom, who both obstinately kept to their nonfashion, Morād Barqi’s first appearance on screen sees him dressed neatly in a shirt and tie.⁷⁰⁵ His face is completely shaved. On his head sits a white brimmed hat, and holding up his formal trousers are a pair of suspenders. Despite his tie being quite too short for him, his attire, as a whole, represents an individual determined to integrate into modern society.

As John Fiske notes, “looking makes meanings,” and as such, appearing well-dressed becomes “a means of entering social relations, of inserting oneself into the social order in general, and of controlling one’s immediate social relations in particular.”⁷⁰⁶ It is telling, therefore, that when the pilot went to series in October 1971, the first scene introducing Morād Barqi sees him pushing his adorned Citroën Dyane in the direction opposite to a mob of seven veiled girl marching, chaperoned, to another location. By happenstance, Morād Barqi catches a glimpse of one of the young girls’ faces, and becomes smitten with her beauty. Unlike the stereotypical religious woman, the girl is not only made-up in cosmetics with her chador almost dangling from the back of her head, but she also makes direct eye contact with him. Nonetheless, Morād Barqi moves on, away from these traditional, chador-clad women. His comportment and dress alone

⁷⁰⁴ “Morād barqi,” *Tamasha*, November 9, 1972.

⁷⁰⁵ “Nowruz-e 1350,” *Tamasha*, March 18, 1971.

⁷⁰⁶ John Fiske, *Reading the Popular* (Routledge, 2017), 34.

indicate that the social relations he wishes to keep are far and away from the traditional segments of society.

Only moments later, however, these seven chador-wearing women reappear in *Khāneh Be Dush*'s debut episode, coming to comprise the central arc of Morād Barqi's story throughout the program. As it happens, they are daughters of a wealthy merchant named Ja'far Āqā, whose low-down attitude, "needless shouting and screaming at his daughters,"⁷⁰⁷ together with his refusal to wear the tie under his open suit as well as his consistent carrying of prayer beads, implies that he is a *bazaari* of the merchant classes. Indeed, Ja'far Āqā's occupation as a bazaar merchant, the verbal abuse he handed down on his daughters, as well as the visual consistency in his constant toting of prayer beads are likewise intended to explain why his daughters were initially seen wearing the chador in public. Such characterizations, therefore, not only echoed the modernist credo that young girls only wore the chador by force of fanatical parents, but also worked to devalue the *bazaari* as the latest configuration of a folk devil.

Indeed, though well-heeled and industrious, the *bazaari* was similarly looked down upon by the official culture. The merchant class was regarded as the tradition-set, old-guard of industry. Despite wielding influence in traditional communities, possessing wealth, and "producing and distributing mostly for the domestic market," the *bazaari* was regularly viewed by the state as an impediment to its modernization program. So much so that in his 1980 memoir, *Answer to History*, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi characterized the *bazaari* community as "a fanatic lot, highly resistant to change because their locations afford a lucrative monopoly." The Shah remarked further that "moving against" them was imperative to his personal "drive for modernization."⁷⁰⁸ The monarch had regarded the *bazaari*'s "time [as] past." The occupation was regarded by the official culture

⁷⁰⁷ "Cherā āsheq shodam man?" *Zan-e Ruz*, June 24, 1973.

⁷⁰⁸ Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, *Answer to History* (Irwin Pub, 1980), 156.

as one bygone, with their locale for business fated to be superseded by “supermarkets” as befitting a “modern country.”⁷⁰⁹

And since the *bazaari* was a fanatical type in the official culture’s view, one whose time was long past, and one who might compel his daughters – like others in the traditional mindset – to wear the chador, the serial accentuates that the seven chador-clad sisters do not share their folk devil father’s worldview. After Morād Barqi is coincidentally called on to the house to fix a nagging electrical issue, he glimpses at all these sisters now enjoying themselves in their mansion’s patio, enjoying both the aesthetic and material boons of modern life. They are listening to music, dancing, clapping, with the chador nowhere to be seen on their heads. Instead, the camera shows one of these girls conspicuously dressed in a miniskirt with her chador now sensually draped over one knee. When she spots Morād Barqi, it turns out to be the same girl that he had seen on the streets before. Raising her chador to her head to meet him, the camera remains fixed on her bare legs, emphasizing her sexual allure despite the chador, and in turn, underlining the daughter’s own disregard of her covering. Catching sight of her chador wafting in the air, supported only by her head, exposing her miniskirt and long legs, Morād Barqi becomes enamored to this modern girl of an unmodern father. Her glances at him imply that she feels the same for him, dressed as he is in semi-formal wear. On account of this encounter, Morād Barqi resolves to do anything in his power to gain her hand in marriage.⁷¹⁰

For Morād Barqi, who lacks any means but the mere ambition to entrench himself within the modern milieu, his new found love for Mahbubeh means that he must abide by the father’s strict, religious principles to reify both his romantic and social ambitions. Among the father’s moral codes is the serial’s principal plot contrivance: that he is resolved to marry his daughters by

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁷¹⁰ *Khāneh be dush* (National Iranian Radio and Television, 1971 - 1974).

the order of their age. Mahbubeh is the youngest of Ja'far Āqā's daughters. Morād Barqi therefore concocts a plan to marry each girl off to a potential suitor so that he can finally win Mahbubeh's hand. This is where the protagonist's previously mentioned "sneaky and exacting" characteristics come into play.⁷¹¹ Morād Barqi uses his wiles to attain the objects of his affection, finding potential grooms for Ja'far Āqā's older daughters by whatever devious means at his disposal. Ultimately, by *Khāneh be Dush*'s conclusion in April 1974, he has not only married off all six sisters, but, with the help of the newly-married brides, has convinced Ja'far Āqā to begrudgingly accept him as a son-in-law.⁷¹²

Thus, despite Morād Barqi's own lack of status or resources, his street smarts as well as his determination prove sufficient in providing him the romantic object of his desires. And with love conquered, Morād Barqi is correspondingly conferred status as part of the new generation of modern and well-heeled urban elite. Wholly dissimilar to Samad Āqā, who remains stuck in his ways in every episode and refuses to even try on a modern jacket offered him, and similarly distinct from Qamar Khānom and her tenants who refuse to alter their world-worn behavior, Morād Barqi has come by this success mainly on account of his having embraced the modern world he has come across, making a valiant effort to become part of it.⁷¹³ It could be thus argued that encoded in Morād Barqi's successful courtship are the blueprints as to how the rustic Iranian might finally march in step with the Great Civilization.⁷¹⁴

This less derogatory portrayal of a working class character was perhaps the reason that *Khāneh Be Dush* was ranked as NITV's most watched television show in 1973.⁷¹⁵ According to

⁷¹¹ "Morād barqi," *Tamasha*, November 9, 1972.

⁷¹² "Namāyesh dar televiziyon," *Tamasha*, March 17, 1975.

⁷¹³ "Cherā āsheq shodam man?" *Zan-e Ruz*, June 24, 1973.

⁷¹⁴ *Khāneh be dush* (National Iranian Radio and Television, 1971).

⁷¹⁵ "Morād barqi," *Zan-e Ruz*, January 18, 1974.

Kardan's own independently-run surveys, it was as equally popular "among coffeehouse denizens" as it was among "high-rank intellectuals."⁷¹⁶ To give credence to Kardan's remark, in a *Tamasha* interview that was conducted as far late into the Pahlavi monarchy as 19 March 1978, even philosopher Ahmad Fardid – who was by then a staunch supporter of Ayatollah Khomeini –⁷¹⁷ recalled his fondness for *Khāneh be Dush*.⁷¹⁸ While Sreberny and Mohammadi note that the show's popularity owed to the fact that viewers of all walks "could identify with" the programming's content, as it "reflected Iranian culture and identity,"⁷¹⁹ it could be equally argued that *Khāneh be Dush*'s success came in consequence of the show finally managing to incorporate the state's hegemonic ideals without having to resort to either stereotypes or the "fetishization, objectification and negative figuration"⁷²⁰ of the lower classes.

The Trappings of Genre: Drama vis-à-vis Comedy on NITV

As evidenced throughout, a principal trait shared by all NITV shows portraying the lower classes was that these programs were invariably offered up as comedies. Likely echoing Parviz Kardan's account as to why it was imperative for *Khāneh be Dush* to be presented as an upbeat comedy, this genre-based pigeonholing was justified on account of producers fearing that audiences might quickly "bore of bland and useless characters that constantly just sighed and whined."⁷²¹ Such a statement also connoted the NITV producers' implicit biases vis-à-vis the generalized temperament of the working classes. The underlying belief was that these classes could not possibly possess lives that did not exclusively comprise sighs and whines.

⁷¹⁶ Nilufar, "Parviz Kardan va bāzigarān-e khāneh be dush," *Tamasha*, June 21, 1973.

⁷¹⁷ Ali Mirsepassi, *Transnationalism in Iranian Political Thought: The Life and Times of Ahmad Fardid* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 217

⁷¹⁸ "Televiziyon: bakhshi az zendegi-ye hame-ye mā," *Tamasha*, March 18, 1978.

⁷¹⁹ Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi, *Small Media, Big Revolution*, 68.

⁷²⁰ Stuart Hall, "New Ethnicities," in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (Routledge, 1996), 442

⁷²¹ "Morād barqi be jā-ye sarkār ostovār," *Zan-e Ruz*, December 9, 1972.

Also significant was that rendering working class personages as being content with their old-fashioned lives, and dealing instead with problems not necessarily associated with their ideologically disagreeable lifestyles, went against NITV's incentive to culturally drive its audience toward modernization. For NITV's modernity-inclined programming to be effectual, those turned away from Pahlavi-style modernity could have only been cast in either a negative or parodic light. After all, they were to stand as the counterpoints to the more preferable modern lives that both state and media relentlessly encouraged.

With NITV's comedies often rendering tradition-oriented characters into types for parodic purposes, state television's dramatic productions seemed, instead, singularly concerned with the modern classes. While the scripted lives of the lower classes amounted to no more than laughter, those of the modern classes were to be treated, instead, with the sober introspection reserved for the dramatic genre. Though the plots of these dramas regularly revolved around either the romantic or occupational troubles of these classes, characters representing the well-heeled elite were nonetheless typified as infallible. The drama that ensued within their lives came only on account of the backward elements of society still pervading the urban environment, thereby hindering their comforts.

As such, the non-modern characters featured in these dramas were bound again to negative stereotypes. The tradition-oriented villains of the NITV drama served only as comparative devices through which viewers could root against them, and in turn, more eagerly sympathize with the worldlier, urbane characters at the center of the drama. No longer relegated as mere comedic foils, these old-world folk devils were now portrayed as stern antagonists, unswervingly working to the detriment of the livelihoods of the dramatic hero.

Appropriately, these more ferocious portrayals of the official culture's folk devils on NITV happened to have occurred concurrent to the distinctive historical period wherein the Pahlavi monarchy began betraying an "increasingly fascist style of rule."⁷²² Not just on television, but within the overarching society, this period saw the state's contempt toward particular segments of society laid bare in much less subtle manners than before. Indeed, the mid-1970s marked a new epoch in the Pahlavi state, bookmarked "by a large number of other regime decrees, announcements, and activities," with each new decree seeming "more grandiose"⁷²³ and "even more egregious."⁷²⁴ As Homa Katouzian notes, the oil boom that the country experienced in 1973 had "greatly enhanced" the state's "sense of self-confidence and led to greater repression and a more arrogant attitude and behavior towards the public."⁷²⁵

This era, as explained by Marvin Zonis, was one where "the Shah was firmly entrenched in power,"⁷²⁶ and as such, the power he had accrued had "led to a host of imperial policies deeply offensive to the Iranian people."⁷²⁷ These policies, enacted as a gesture of "narcissistic grandiosity,"⁷²⁸ grew draconic to the point that in March 1975, "with no forewarning,"⁷²⁹ the Shah decreed the dissolution of all political parties, enacting a one-party political system, the Rastākhiz (Resurgence) Party in their stead, going against his word from years earlier when he had derided one-party systems as befitting dictators like Adolf Hitler and leaders of "Communist countries."⁷³⁰ It reached yet another zenith when just a year later, the country's Solar Hijri calendar was also

⁷²² Nimah Mazaheri, "State Repression in the Iranian Bazaar, 1975–1977: The Anti-Profiteering Campaign and an Impending Revolution," *Iranian Studies* 39, no. 3 (September 2006): 404.

⁷²³ Marvin Zonis, *Majestic Failure: The Fall of the Shah* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1991), 79.

⁷²⁴ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁷²⁵ Homa Katouzian, *The Persians: Ancient, Mediaeval and Modern Iran* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 310.

⁷²⁶ Zonis, *Majestic Failure*, 62.

⁷²⁷ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁷²⁸ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁷²⁹ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁷³⁰ Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country*, 173.

dissolved, switching from one founded on the Islamic prophet's migration from Mecca to Medina to a new, supposedly national calendar, based on the alleged establishment of Iran's first empire.⁷³¹ This new *Shahanshāhi* (Imperial) calendar was to further demonstrate the monarchy's breaking off with Islam on its drive toward "The Great Civilization."⁷³² As happens, even that term was coined in 1973 when the Shah's arbitrary powers were increasing ever more.

As we shall see in the next section, the rise in NITV's dramatic programming occurred concurrent with these developments, with state media also utilizing less subtle approaches in portraying the social elements it deemed undesirable on screen. No longer relegated to the stuff of comedy, folk devils of old as well as the new folk devils the state was soon to fashion now became fodder for NITV's dramatic productions, characterized accordingly as being greedy, fanatical, and especially detrimental to society.

The Generational Pulpit: Talkh-o Shirin as Template to the Modern Comportment

Owing to the period in which it was published, *Tamasha* did little discursive tiptoeing in in its 4 January 1975 when introducing *Khāneh be Dush*-writer Ahmad Behbahāni's *Talkh-o Shirin* (Bitter and Sweet) (1975-1976) as a drama specifically "directed at one particular segment of people in our time." That segment, it followed, "are those people that, despite the realities of industrial life as well as the deep societal and cultural changes in our society, still adhere to their past's customs and traditions."⁷³³ Another synopsis, issued in *Tamasha*'s 17 March 1975 edition, made the show's motivations even clearer. According to the magazine, the serial portrayed "the lives and mindsets of three different generations" – those three being "the romantic youth that are preparing themselves for the future; those recently-wed that fret over rent and savings and installment plans;"

⁷³¹ Zonis, *Majestic Failure*, 81.

⁷³² Faramarzi, *the Great Civilization*, 1.

⁷³³ "Talkh-o Shirin," *Tamasha*, January 4, 1975.

and finally, “the older generation who are drowned in wealth as well as their old-fashioned and petrified thinking.”⁷³⁴

While the two former generations were described with little value judgements, the same could not be said about the “older generation;” those who were allegedly “drowned” in wealth and similarly “petrified” thinking.⁷³⁵ These descriptions intimated that *Talkh-o Shirin* status was a perceptibly ideological program, purposed to unequivocally educate a particular constituency by visualizing for them the ills of their ways. Characterizing the older generation in *Talkh-o Shirin* were two particular archetypes; one representing the old guard unwilling to modernize, and the other the ideal urban migrant that begrudgingly acclimatizes to the modern world, eventually reaping the benefits of the new order.

Embodying the ideal urban migrant is Hassan Ali Khān, an elderly man who has lost his fortune in a provincial town and has come to Tehran with his wife and daughters to begin anew.⁷³⁶ Having no other place to go, he and his family resolve to stay at their already-urbanized daughter Maryam’s house. Recently wed to a well-to-do officeholder named Khosrow, Maryam constitutes the second generation to which the *Tamasha* article referred. While Hassan Ali Khān and his wife, Farangis, attempt to navigate their lives in the modern world – ranging from Hassan Ali Khān’s difficulties when it comes to his neighbor’s constant rotation of Motown music, or his own reluctance to buy boxed fruits as opposed to freshly picked ones from the bazaar, or his disbelief in having to have a suit tailored for him at a boutique as opposed buying a ready-to-wear article from the bazaar – Maryam and Khosrow happen to have problems of their own. These problems stem from the fact that Khosrow, a self-made man, is constantly busy with work, paying little

⁷³⁴ “Namāyesh dar televiziyon,” *Tamasha*, March 17, 1975.

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁶ *Talkh-o Shirin* (National Iranian Radio and Television, 1975 - 1976).

attention to his wife at home. As for the third generation mentioned, these comprise another daughter, Farzāneh, stuck between two similarly modern suitors; and the family's youngest daughter, Parvāneh, who has married a young man named Dāryush that teaches English and remains estranged from his *bazaarī* father. They, too, are struggling, as Dāryush's father's financial hoarding has rendered his son and bride's life more difficult, especially with respect to rent.

Despite the distress regarding his own adjustment to the city, Hassan Ali Khān nonetheless exerts himself to be a positive influence on his wife and daughters, helping allay their troubles. In contrast to this affable patriarch stands Dāryush's father, Ali Mardān Khān, a rich but fanatical miser whose sexist views cannot tolerate the fact that his daughter-in-law has not fully renounced her own family to become part of his. Further suggesting Ali Mardān Khān's backwardness is his choice in dress as well as the set design pertaining to his home. Unlike Hassan Ali Khān, who, despite his rustic background, nonetheless dresses in a formal suit and tie both in-doors and out, and lives alongside his family in a modern apartment home, equipped with a television and a dining table, Ali Mardān Khān, like all *bazaarī* types on NITV's programming, refuses to wear the tie outright and is seen only fiddling with his prayer beads. His house, too, is stubbornly deprived of any modern equipment. It bears no television set, nor any sofas or dining tables. He and his guests sit on the ground, with the radio – itself a symbol of those who have yet to welcome the more novel television in their homes – strategically placed beside the cushions on the floor.

Indeed, these two patriarchal personages in *Talkh-o Shirin* invite the viewer to differentiate between the two archetypes: those being a fanatical man so stubborn as to refuse even his son financial support, and a rustic man who accepts his new reality by embracing the new, all so that he could facilitate his family's happiness. The *bazaarī* seems to comprise the *talkh* (bitter) side of

the programming's title, while Hasan Ali Khān comprises its *shirin* (sweet) side, furthering the serial's invitation to compare these two personages.

Though the *bazaari* stereotype was already ubiquitous in NITV programming, *Talkh-o Shirin*'s rather overt aversion to the *bazaari*, as specified by the outright villainy of Ali Mardān Khān, was entirely dissimilar from *Khāneh be Dush*'s mere parody of the same personage. While Ja'far Āqā had been portrayed as being similarly unsympathetic, he was not characterized with the same contempt as Ali Mardān Khān. *Khāneh be Dush*'s *bazaari* was not an antagonist so much as an addition to the laughable cast of characters Morād Barqi came across. Ali Mardān Khān's depiction in *Talkh-o Shirin*, however, explicitly casts him as injurious to his family's well-being. This depiction, as it turned out, greatly echoed the ways in which the Pahlavi state had come to view the *bazaari* classes at the time.

It so happened that *Talkh-o Shirin* had been produced during a period of "rapidly rising inflation"⁷³⁷ in Pahlavi Iran. Even though the inflation had stemmed largely from the underdevelopment of agricultural production in the wake of land reform, the consequent "massive urbanization,"⁷³⁸ and "overheating of the economy" on account of the "oil billions... poured into ambitious development projects,"⁷³⁹ the Pahlavi state nonetheless accredited most of the blame on the merchant classes. Accordingly, the inflation instigated a state-imposed crackdown on the bazaar and the merchant classes on the part of the state, following Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's televised decree in August 1975, announcing the state's imminent crackdown on the bazaar. Promising to bring down inflation to "hopefully zero"⁷⁴⁰ by the following year, the state thus

⁷³⁷ Nimah Mazaheri, "State Repression in the Iranian Bazaar, 1975–1977: The Anti-Profiteering Campaign and an Impending Revolution," *Iranian Studies* 39, no. 3 (September 2006): 401.

⁷³⁸ *Ibid.*, 406.

⁷³⁹ Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), 497.

⁷⁴⁰ Jahangir Amuzegar, *The Dynamics of the Iranian Revolution: The Pahlavis' Triumph and Tragedy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 246.

introduced its a “Price Stabilization and Campaign against Profiteering” crusade. This campaign resulted in “20,000 Rastākhiz Party members [infiltrating] the bazaar to inspect retail prices and, if necessary, [ransacking] those shops that were found to be overcharging.”⁷⁴¹

The *bazaari* was hence cast as a public enemy by the state. Correspondingly, the *bazaari* type was likewise rendered as such on state media. Since the types and characters portrayed on NITV often mirrored the official culture’s view of each respective type, Ali Mardān Khān, the *bazaari*, was thus demarcated as *Talkh-o Shirin*’s primary antagonist. Wreaking havoc on the life of his son and daughter-in-law as a result of his fanatical and miserly character, Ali Mardān Khān and his treatment of his family came to stand as a metaphor for how the *bazaari* was allegedly treating his fellow countrymen. As George Gerbner and Nancy Signorielli note, even in commercial televisual productions, character portrayals are regularly tied into “a system of broadcasting and of story-telling with deep historical, cultural, and commercial roots” with “few degrees of freedom.”⁷⁴² As such, ideological concerns can indeed underpin character portrayals – be it on commercial television or a state-run network like NITV. So too was the case with *Talkh-o Shirin*.

All the same, like the characters in Behbahāni’s previous show, *Talkh-o Shirin* even provided its fanatical, traditional stereotypes an ultimate reprieve. Again like Ja’far Āqā, Ali Mardān Khān is eventually forced to come to terms with his son’s differing values. This occurs only in the wake of a particular incident that befalls him, rendering him dependent on his son’s support. The two finally reconcile. Now reunited with his son, Ali Mardān Khān soon comes to share Dāryush’s values. His exposure to the new, more modern generation on account of his revived relationship with his son hence frees him from his *ommol* shackles; so much so that he

⁷⁴¹ Mazaheri, “State Repression in the Iranian Bazaar,” 407.

⁷⁴² George Gerbner and Nancy Signorielli, “Women and Minorities in Television Drama, 1969-1978,” 1979, 4.

eventually agrees to financially support both Parvāneh and Dāryush's prospective emigration to the United States so that his son can continue his education there. In stark contrast to the viewer's introduction to him, by the show's denouement, Ali Mardān Khān is seen seated on a chair, dressed in a finely tailored suit with an ostentatious tie around his collar, sporting a cane instead of prayer beads. In a far cry from his previous wish to sequester Parvāneh from her family, he is now at her family's house to celebrate Farzāneh's wedding to her beau, thus symbolizing that he has been fully integrated into the modern household that is Hassan Ali Khān's family. His final scenes see him, perched as he is on his chair, now waxing lyrical about the virtues of a western education.⁷⁴³

By the show's conclusion, each of *Talkh-o Shirin* characters is offered salvation in a like manner. Yet, this salvation has come exclusively at the price of each family member buying into the "right kind of life" – the kind harmonious with the contemporaneous standards of the official culture. The finale's wedding sees the affable Hassan Ali Khān now wearing the boutique-tailored suit he was reluctant to try on. At another corner, the previously miserly Ali Mardān Khān, bearing a modern comportment, is speaking of education of all things. The long-suffering Maryam, whose husband paid little attention to her, is now seen possessing the spousal attention she long desired on account of her newly bleached blonde hair, so much so that her husband is preparing a trip abroad for the both of them. Farzāneh, of course, has married her beau, and Dāryush is conspicuous by his absence, fulfilled in faraway America. As Wendy Chapkis notes, therefore, "the image becomes an end in itself," having provided the ideal blueprint in how any Iranian can achieve the modern dream.⁷⁴⁴

⁷⁴³ *Talkh-o Shirin* (National Iranian Radio and Television, 1975 - 1976).

⁷⁴⁴ Wendy Chapkis, *Beauty Secrets: Women and the Politics of Appearance* (London : Women's Press, 1988), 81.

An Equal Playing Field: Talāq and Balanced Representation

By the time Mas'ud Assadollāhi's *Talāq* (Divorce) made it to air on 10 December 1977 for its nine-episode run, derogatory portrayals of traditional classes happened to have lessened to a great extent. Surveyed by *Tamasha* as one of 1978's most watched programs, *Talāq*'s overarching plot centred on a *Keyhan* journalist, whose vocation frequently led him to the capital's Family Protection Court, prompting him to come across the city's forlorn from all walks of life.⁷⁴⁵ The show's focus, however, remained largely on the lives of its divorcees, all of whom happened to come from contrasting social classes. In *Talāq*'s singular case, each class of character was provided interior lives that did not necessarily abide by the cultural tropes thus far accorded them on NITV.

In *Talāq*, the traditional Iranian was consistently portrayed against the type previously depicting them as the undesirable, backward element of a forward-moving society. Correspondingly, the westernized and well-heeled were no longer characterized as the vanguard; rather, they too were portrayed as flawed. Though dress once again served to visualize the sociocultural backgrounds from which these characters came, it became only an indicator of class, not culture, and thus freeing costume from any of the connoted value-judgements hitherto accorded to it on television. All the same, even though, *Talāq*'s content did not seem reflective of the official culture's contemporary values at first glance, even its subversiveness happened to mirror the ever-changing socio-political climate of the late Pahlavi era.

As early as its debut episode, the show set its sight on critiquing the previously extolled upper classes. The episode, titled "*Talāq-o Tanhā'ī*" (Divorce and Loneliness), was focused solely on the tribulations faced by an exclusively upper class family, now at the brink of their third divorce from one another. Perhaps for the first time on national television, the couple's simple tale

⁷⁴⁵ "Bahs-o barresi-e pirāmun-e natāyej-e majmu'e-ye talāq," *Tamasha*, April 22, 1978.

of woe implied that the wealthy, educated, and leisurely upper classes were also inadequate, unable to cope with their troubles despite the lifestyles afforded them.⁷⁴⁶ Yet, it was another episode, titled “*Fāseleh*” (Distance), that treated the analogous subject matter of an upper class separation with a particularly subversive bent. Juxtaposing the problematic love experienced by the westernized and urban classes with the simpler, purer love as experienced by the non-modern, “*Fāseleh*” not only provided a rather grim view of the lifestyles up-to-then encouraged, but also espoused values pervasive among those classes hitherto deemed backward as its moral center. The episode chronicled a romance turned bitter between a successful office executive and his secretary-turned-wife.

Consonant with contemporaneous real-life stories about women secretaries being expected look modern in the office attire, we first meet the dark-haired Maryam, the episode’s secretary-turned-paramour, as she is turning up for her first day at the office, dressed according to western aesthetic markers. Her attire accentuating the sensuous aspects of her body, she comes to work donning a flower-patterned skirt and a sleeveless, low-cut black shirt. Her superior, Mohsen, immediately takes to her, proposing marriage just days subsequent to their mutual flirtation.⁷⁴⁷ The show’s more subversive elements betray themselves after the two are wed and are now living together in Mohsen’s large mansion. Contrary to previous depictions of the elite classes, Maryam finds herself imbued in an upper class world that she finds utterly hollow and unromantic. Subverting the NITV trope that paired western dress with a zeal for all things modern, Maryam, despite her appearance, is not necessarily eager in conforming to modern values. Heedless to her husband’s prodding that she take part in activities befitting the consumerist life – such as attending parties, going out with friends, visiting the cinema and the theatre – she expresses, time and again,

⁷⁴⁶ “*Talāq-o Tanhā’i*,” *Talāq* (National Iranian Radio and Television, 1977 - 1978).

⁷⁴⁷ “*Fāseleh*,” *Talāq* (National Iranian Radio and Television, 1977 - 1978).

her apathy toward such pursuits. She pines for her husband's love, not his fortune. Still, Mohsen remains blind to her needs. Since his happiness derives only from the boons of modern life, he expects her to take similar satisfaction from luxuries he has provided her.⁷⁴⁸

Rather than take to the genteel life, Maryam comes to despise it. In fact, she comes to feel more congenial to the tradition-oriented servants of the house than she does to the urban rich. The episode's climax occurs in a scene featuring the two sitting coldly at the dinner table to eat, when she shares with her ever-distant husband details about their servants' love lives, mentioning with a smile that their maid had been gifted a chador from her husband. Immediately, Mohsen scoffs at the story, mocking the traditional couple in saying "What tolerance these old wretches have for such trifling things!" When, abruptly, Maryam also asks for a chador, Mohsen derides her again, shocked even at the insinuation that his wife would want to wear a chador. But Maryam is actually not aching for a chador per se. Since she longs for a love story comparable to the romance shared between her servants, the chador merely symbolizes for her a purer, more passionate love. All the same, when met with her husband's disapproval, she quickly switches her request for a chador to something more modern; asking for nail-polish or even a hair pin – any culturally appropriate gift that might possibly liken their ever-distant relationship with the love shared between the traditional old-world couple that live under their dominion. No matter, he remains too aloof to offer anything from the heart. He sees no reason for his bride to want anything other than the wealth and lifestyle he has worked so hard to acquire.⁷⁴⁹

And yet, unlike her namesake in *Talkh-o Shirin*, this other Maryam still refuses to conform to the busy and cold characteristics of a well-heeled, urban life. The camera continues to accentuate her long, dark hair in every scene. That it stays black and does not get dyed into bleach blonde also

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid.

becomes an indicator as to how antipathetic Maryam is to this lifestyle. She will not do as other women do, beautifying herself in a western way, just to capture a distant husband's attention. Instead, she resolves to leave him, hoping that the distance would bring Mohsen to his senses. And, indeed, in stark contrast to the controversy caused years earlier with *Kānun-e Garm-e Khānevādeh*, separation does the trick. In the concluding moments, a deferent Mohsen goes to meet Maryam at the place in which they had their first date, and for the first time in NITV programming, it is the modern man who submits to a woman that has spurned the stuff of modernity. In consequence, Maryam is proven justified in her romantic needs; needs inspired by the chador-clad servant of the household. As such, both she and Mohsen attempt to adjust their ideals for romance according to an old-world relationship rooted in the love, as opposed to one merely founded on wealth.⁷⁵⁰

Subverting the stereotype of the allegedly lowly non-modern classes to an even greater extent was another episode, "*Zendāni*" (Prisoner). Opening to a shot of a woman sleeping on the floor with her chador serving as a blanket, as the title "Prisoner" suddenly materializes on the screen, the episode immediately recalls the familiar televisual codes typifying the lower classes – dressed in chadors, sleeping and dining on floors, with lives subsumed by old-world fanaticism. These codes are evoked furthermore when the woman's husband, dressed in stereotypical working class attire, walks in to confess that he has escaped from prison to see his family. The viewer is hence directed, once more, toward stereotypes depicting this segment of society as regressive and harmful to the public cause. Yet, as it turns out, these technical codes are only utilized so as to be immediately subverted. As the sixty-minute episode is to reveal, the characters around which this story revolves happen to be the protagonists.⁷⁵¹

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁵¹ "Zendāni," *Talāq* (National Iranian Radio and Television, 1977 - 1978).

As it turned out, the simple plot of “*Zendāni*” went against every trope that had up to then been accorded to the tradition-oriented classes. As opposed to previous iterations of such types and despite their dress, neither husband nor wife are depicted as fanatical individuals unwilling to abide by contemporary conventions. In this case, the contemporary custom referred to is divorce. Soon to be re-apprehended by the police, the husband, Ali, had previously instigated a vehicular accident that had taken lives. Back in prison, he decides that the most honorable course of action he could take would be to divorce his wife so that she and their family can start anew. When she later visits him in prison, he tells her that divorce is the only way that she will be free to live her life; otherwise, she will have to wait for him for five years until he is released, and he does not believe that she deserves to be alone for so long. While men from traditional backgrounds had consistently been depicted by both print and television as being both possessive and disrespectful of women, forcing them in situations that limit their freedom, Ali is depicted as the opposite. He wants to grant his wife a divorce so that she can be free. He gives her a choice. And he does all this without having to embrace the modern lifestyle like the Morād Barqis and Ali Mardān Khāns of television. Rather, Ali is depicted as being inherently just. And rewarding his justness is his wife’s ultimate decision: she decides to stay with him, and see him through.⁷⁵²

In such a way did the characters depicted throughout *Talāq* signify a turn away from both the previously derogatory depictions of the lower class and the all-pervasive glowing portrayals of the urban elite. In stark contrast to just years previous, when a show like *Kānun-e Garm-e Khānevādeh* was cancelled because it had implied that an intellectual and modern family can experience strife, *Talāq* was a show principally founded on marital unhappiness among the upper classes. Not only did it emphasize that the modern and the wealthy were likewise culpable to make

⁷⁵² Ibid.

mistakes and cause unhappiness, but it also managed to frequently panegyricize the virtues of the traditional classes, depicting them as selfless, romantic, and rational. All stood in direct opposition to previous depictions solely focused on their alleged raucousness, indecency, and fanaticism.

Yet, as Sreberny and Mohammadi remind us, the media nonetheless persisted throughout the Pahlavi period as "central institutions in the project of Pahlavi development."⁷⁵³ Television in the Pahlavi era, after all, was first and foremost an ideological tool. It was therefore unlikely that *Talāq*'s more equitable portrayals of the traditional and upper classes occurred in a manner uncorrelated with state's ideology. So happens that this turning point had likewise transpired at a pivotal period during Pahlavi rule.

By the mid-1970s, much owing to the growing fanaticism of the monarchy as well as the inflation it had inadvertently wrought, the myth of the contented urban middle class had all but dissipated. This was a time when, right alongside the denigrated *bazaari*, countless among the middle classes were also blamed by the state for being equally responsible for the country's inflation. Consequently, daily newspapers in the country, together with semi-official publications like *Zan-e Ruz* and official ones like *Tamasha*, begun concurrently censuring these newly well-heeled classes for their "excessive spending," which had, in their words, exposed them as "ignorant to the culture of money and wealth, making them behave like *nouveaux riches*"⁷⁵⁴ In *Zan-e Ruz* editor Majid Davāmi's own words, they came to comprise those individuals "who want to make millions in the span of two years; who wish to import their shoes and socks from London or Italy; who can only speak of land prospects as though we have suddenly become real estate peddlers."⁷⁵⁵

⁷⁵³ Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi, *Small Media, Big Revolution*, xxii.

⁷⁵⁴ Majid Davāmi, "Nowkiseh-hā," *Zan-e Ruz*, October 18, 1975.

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

A new term was been coined for these newly affluent classes: the *nowkiseh*, literally meaning “the newly-pursed.”⁷⁵⁶

Prior to the inflation, this new category of folk devil, constituting arbitrarily selected members of the newly-westernized classes, happened to be the same class that the state had encouraged its public to emulate prior to the inflation. Yet, now, they saw themselves targeted by media as no more than mere “parasites,” with “pockets and purses deprived of sanctity.”⁷⁵⁷ The newly affluent class’s sudden fall from grace, therefore, shed light as to why the upper classes were also rendered into disparaged types on state-television.

Another equally significant turning point, however, came as a consequence of the leftist movements and ideas, long prevalent in the country, that had become especially galvanised during this period. As Katouzian notes, the international revolutionary movements that had occurred in both the western and eastern continents happened to have had “a significant impact” on contemporary Iranians, “not just in spreading hopes and aspirations for political change but also in hardening attitudes and influencing their forms and intensity.”⁷⁵⁸ These ideas became even more vociferous after the Shah conceded to laxer censorship laws in 1977, following the publication of a February 1976 article on torture in Iran in London’s *Index on Censorship*, and newly inaugurated United States President Jimmy Carter’s consequent campaign promise to end torture in Iran.

Following this, “although censorship of the press [remained] still very strong, it became possible to publish on certain subjects.”⁷⁵⁹ What ensued were public outcries concerning the lack of “basic rights” in Iran, increasing public proclamations against the state and its treatment of the

⁷⁵⁶ “Mosāhebeh bā yek irāni,” *Tamasha*, December 25, 1976.

⁷⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁸ Katouzian, *The Persians*, 304.

⁷⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 313.

public in both “extent and frequency.”⁷⁶⁰ Soon, the Pahlavi media also became “the targets of political and cultural concern as [the] opposition movement [unfolded] in the late 1970s.”⁷⁶¹

While NITV remained a closely guarded ideological institution through to the revolution, the newly wealthy’s fall from grace, together with the state’s more concerted efforts to quell the resistance movement, nonetheless instigated a more equal playing field within the world of NITV production at this time. As Stuart Hall notes, popular culture is tied into “the double movement of containment and resistance,” meaning that official cultures often attempt to suppress the resistance by implementing it into their own domain.⁷⁶² As such, since *Talāq* debuted in the midst of the leftist fervor overwhelming the late Pahlavi period, its more charitable portrayals of the lower classes could also be seen as NITV’s attempt to co-opt left-leaning opposition within the dominant hegemony. All the same, while NITV’s sudden decision to hold back from broadcasting such portrayals could have certainly been rooted in the state’s attempts in quelling the opposition, it is equally possible that the leftist, intellectual tide had similarly inspired the writers and personnel involved with NITV to sever ties with NITV’s past portrayals of the lower and upper classes, and propagate, in turn, more even-handed representations of the public at large.

Yet, as we shall see in the next section, while NITV programming might have been beholden to the changing tides of ideology in the country, the realm of advertising saw little need to cater to non-elites when producing its televisual content. Despite the aforesaid unequitable portrayals ceasing operation on NITV programming, the advertising industry continued to woo only the upper classes. Moreover, it did so by similarly using stereotypes and broadcasting images objectionable even to those working within the broadcasting system.

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁶¹ Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi, *Small Media, Big Revolution*, xxii.

⁷⁶² Stuart Hall, “Notes on Deconstructing the Popular,” in *People’s History and Socialist Theory*, ed. Raphael Samuel (Routledge, 2018), 228.

Buying into Modernity: Advertisement in the Age of Television

Even following television's outright nationalization in 1969, NITV continued to sell broadcast time to Iranian advertising agencies. As Elihu Katz and George Wedell remark, state-controlled broadcasting systems like NITV were not necessarily "dependent on advertising as a source of revenue, lest such dependence reduce the effective control that government exercises over the broadcasting organization."⁷⁶³ Nevertheless, they welcomed advertising as it was seen "as part of the process of economic modernization and the enlargement of the traditional concept of the market."⁷⁶⁴ Beyond just a few cursory rules it had set "concerning advertising ethics," NITV left the production of televised adverts to the advertising industry at large.⁷⁶⁵ Although NITV retained the option to remove ads that were deemed "in bad taste, offensive, unethical, or contrary to government interest or policies,"⁷⁶⁶ advertising agencies were still unencumbered by the state run organization's mission for wholesale cultural cultivation. In consequence, they were free to ascertain precisely which product to sell to what segment of the population, and how.

Indeed, by the 1970s, Iran's advertising industry had come a long way; so much so that by 1971, one-hundred advertising agencies were in operation in Tehran alone.⁷⁶⁷ While the advertising industry's fledgling years saw them relegated to billboards, neon lights, and even "walls in cities and villages, or rocks and cliffs in desert lands," from 1946 onward, advertising moved past just cityscapes and magazine pages and toward new mediums. The first was cinema, by way of which agencies could now promote their products by utilizing water-colored slides with an accompanying voice-over before feature films. The arrival of television in 1958 managed to

⁷⁶³ Katz and Wedell, *Broadcasting In The Third World*, 52.

⁷⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁷⁶⁵ Kimiachi, "History and Development of Broadcasting in Iran, 146.

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁷⁶⁷ Zhāleh Rafi'zādeh, "Hamishe, hamejā..." *Tamasha*, May 27, 1971.

revitalize the industry to an even greater degree. It was television's "juxtaposition of commercials and entertainment" that soon rendered the advertisement into an extension of the television program preceding or following it.⁷⁶⁸ Now utilizing familiar jingles, sex appeal, short-form stories, and offering potential prizes contingent on the purchase of its promoted products, these commercials came to constitute "mini-dramas" of their own, thus infiltrating the world of popular culture.⁷⁶⁹

All the same, as Gillian Dyer remarks, advertising's "ideological function" lies solely in its "economic function,"⁷⁷⁰ its sole incentive being to project "the goals and values... consistent with and conducive to the consumer economy."⁷⁷¹ With the understanding that "it is of no use to advertise to [those]... who cannot, or who are unlikely to, buy their goods,"⁷⁷² Iran's advertising agencies thus exclusively targeted the middle and upper classes. They were, after all, the sole demographic that enjoyed the necessary purchasing power to procure their clients' products.⁷⁷³

Having also correlated "degrees of consumption" with "levels of open-mindedness," these agencies accordingly produced advertisements appealing to those "who advocated the more 'civilized' Western way of life."⁷⁷⁴ As this demographic was certain to adhere to Euro-American beauty markers, the advertisements produced commonly utilized "the image of an attractive woman"⁷⁷⁵ so as to woo the potential buyer to procure the product in question. Since the taboo in modelling had greatly diminished at the time as well, these television commercials often saw

⁷⁶⁸ Charles Eckert, "The Carole Lombard in Macy's Window," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* 3, no. 1 (January 1978): 20.

⁷⁶⁹ Guy Cook, *The Discourse of Advertising* (Routledge, 2001), 37.

⁷⁷⁰ Gillian Dyer, *Advertising as Communication* (London: Routledge, 1982), 1.

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁷⁷² *Ibid.*, 56.

⁷⁷³ Karimi, *Domesticity and Consumer Culture in Iran*, 99.

⁷⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁵ Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), 68.

“sensuous”⁷⁷⁶ Iranian women – connoting “sexuality, sexual desire, sexual lust, and even intimations of sexual intercourse”⁷⁷⁷ – pitted as the embodiment of modern living. Be it in the name of chewing gum, ice cream or batteries, the sensuality of the female figure was reliably juxtaposed with the product advertised on NITV so as to add to its allure.

Yet, in a country already experiencing myriad class and cultural discrepancies, the sexualized portrayals of Iranian women happened to incite deep insecurities within society at large. After all, vast numbers of NITV’s audience came from religious or traditional backgrounds, averse even to the thought of their daughters donning a skirt at school or being met with a stranger’s eye. Though sexualized portrayals Iranian women had nonetheless been prevalent up to then, such images had largely been ensconced within the cinema, cabaret, or magazine pages, all of which gave individuals the option to opt in or out of its content. Television, however, happened to be a more “intrusive” medium, positioned in one’s own home or one’s frequented coffee-house.⁷⁷⁸

Despite its evident ideological leanings, television in Iran was also a relatively inclusive medium, boasting programs both palatable and unpalatable from which viewers were allowed to cherry-pick. If the viewing public could choose to turn off a television show they deemed improper, they could not necessarily do the same with the random televised advertisements sprung on them before or after their preferred programs. These advertisements happened to infiltrate their homes, cafes, and public spaces with all the improprieties of the urban milieu that they had hitherto decidedly avoided.

⁷⁷⁶ Hamid Mowlana, “Technology versus Tradition: Communication in the Iranian Revolution,” *Journal of Communication* 29, no. 3 (September 1, 1979): 108.

⁷⁷⁷ Arthur Berger Asa, *Ads, Fads, and Consumer Culture*, Sixth edition (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020), 107-108.

⁷⁷⁸ Elsa Simões Lucas Freitas, *Taboo in Advertising* (Amsterdam ; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2008), 11.

One of the first advertisements to have precipitated such unease was a late 1968 commercial for *Khorus Neshān* (Cockerel Emblazoned) gum.⁷⁷⁹ The sixty-second ad featured a sultry female figure dancing for a bride, groom, and attendant guests, and teasing each one while singing a jingle called “All I Want is *Khorus Neshān*” to the melody of a popular song named “*Bābā Karam*.” Despite the bride having second thoughts about going through with the marriage, she ultimately loses all reserve and agrees to be wed when the dancer ambles toward her and sensually places a piece of gum in her mouth.

Even though the advertisement was quite tame compared to those that were to come, its portrayal of a female dancing suggestively while slowly inserting gum into people’s mouths nonetheless caused enough uproar that many viewers wrote in to *Tamasha*, *Javanan*, and *Zan-e Ruz* to express their outrage. One writer claimed that advertising agencies had “exploited the beautiful, respect time-honored custom that is the Iranian wedding” by producing such a commercial.⁷⁸⁰ Another, which happened to be poet Ardalān Sarafrāz, voiced his distaste in remarking that an advert which “maintains that a woman can be tamed with a singular piece of gum” not only “demeans women,” but also imparts such sexist attitudes to children who might be watching television the moment such an ad is broadcast, thus “negatively affecting their behavior [with respect to women] in the future.”⁷⁸¹ Even *Javanan*, which had by then slowly morphed into a tabloid magazine, went so far as to issue a declaration 18 November 1968 to reprimand the ad for being “inappropriate.”⁷⁸²

⁷⁷⁹ “Khorus Neshān,” *Private Commercial Advertising Collection* (National Iranian Radio and Television, 1970 – 1979)

⁷⁸⁰ “Az miyān-e nāmeḥ-hā-ye sardabir,” *Tamasha*, July 8, 1971.

⁷⁸¹ “Matbu’āti-hā va televiziyon,” *Tamasha*, March 18, 1971.

⁷⁸² “Agahi-hā-ye tablighāti televiziyon yā khorus-e bimahal,” *Javanan*, November 18, 1968.

In light of this, by the mid-1970s, even advertisements for objects as nonsexual as water heaters did not spare viewers from images of the sexualized female body. The aforementioned ad, promoting a heater manufactured by Universal manufacturers, opens to images of a long-haired husband unable properly shave his beard without hot water, with children too cold while bathing, and a wife distressed by the dishes she has to wash with cold water. When the Universal water-heater is finally installed, however, the ad's concluding frames see the formerly matronly mother, having only appeared thus far while washing dishes or bathing children, strip naked, with her bare back made visible to the audience, walking into the bathtub. It then closes to the nude woman rubbing herself under the water, and staring back at the audience with a coy smile, almost implying an invitation to the viewer to also enter into the bathtub.⁷⁸³

By 1978, when the broadcasting switch had finally been made to air all Program I programming in color, almost all commercial advertisements availed themselves of the female figure in some form or another. A colored advert promoting Tehran's ice-skating rink, *Qasr-e Yakh* (The Palace of Ice) happened to fixate solely on miniskirted legs on ice, intercutting those shots with erratic zooms that zipped directly into the dancing women's pelvic areas, all while Led Zeppelin's "Whole Lotta' Love" continued to score the commercial. Those advertising shoes by *Kafsh-e Melli* (National Shoes) predictably also focused on skirted legs in equally alluring cityscapes, once more scored to western pop music – in this case David Bowie's "1984." An ad promoting a Shahāb-Hitachi color television set employed images of a bleach-blonde woman dancing non-stop around the television set and then inside it, with the camera incessantly zooming in and out of her chest; all perhaps suggesting that even more women of her ilk could be ogled at so long as one bought the advertised product. One for the chocolate bar Choco-Mars almost

⁷⁸³ "Universal Water Heater," *Private Commercial Advertising Collection* (National Iranian Radio and Television, 1970-1979).

exclusively highlighted its similarly blonde-haired actress pushing the cylindrical bar into her mouth while staring at the camera, thereby suggesting fellatio. And finally, an ad for Rayovac batteries, scored to a distinctive jingle sung between its ceaselessly dancing male and female actors, featured a woman flirting with a bare-chested male bodybuilder, who in turn, offers her the battery so that she can play with numerous battery-powered toys in sultry poses; a segment once more taut with sexual tension and innuendo.⁷⁸⁴

Despite protests from both the viewing audience as well as even those inside NITV, commercials of this kind nonetheless continued to air. Even when NITV's own anchor, Sa'id Qā'em Maqāmi, called into *Tamasha* offices as early as in June 1971 to express his dismay over the "public inappropriateness" of some ads broadcast – claiming problematically that "the masses do not yet possess the capacity to properly think about or understand" the adverts televised – his protests fell on deaf ears.⁷⁸⁵ So too did the protests of an aghast viewing audience. As the abovementioned illustrations evidenced, in spite of it all, portrayals of women in sexualized manners not only continued, but intensified.

In keeping with its apathy toward the traditional classes, the advertising industry also produced few advertisements addressing these classes. Those that did address the traditional Iranian classes were solely centered on financial services, such as banking or the national lottery. Even still, just as the ads targeting the affluent classes spared little in depicting the allegedly liberated Pahlavi woman as an object of desire, those advertisements addressing the working class did little to refrain from portraying them as *dehāti* stereotypes.

As a 1978 advertisement for Pārs Bank evinces, such ads regularly utilized the *dehāti* stereotype so as to demonstrate how modern commodities could benefit the uncultivated dimwit

⁷⁸⁴ *Private Commercial Advertising Collection* (National Iranian Radio and Television, 1970 - 1979).

⁷⁸⁵ Sa'id Qā'em Maqāmi, "Ākharesh ham hichi be hichi," *Tamasha*, June 10, 1971.

desperate for better means. This commercial in particular opens to a veiled woman sitting on the steps at a rural township, sewing a wad of cash into a dress. A voiceover narration then tells the viewer to “pay notice to the methods that our friend, Mr. Zāre’ (Mr. Farmer) uses to deposit his money.” The next scene sees Mr. Farmer himself, dressed in a *namadi* hat and agrarian clothing, standing on his piece of land with a shovel. After a hard day’s work, he hurries to a local shop-owner and asks him to keep safe his money. The shop-owner refuses, pushing him away. Now, we see Mr. Farmer digging a hole on his porch, and hiding his money under a stack of tiles. “This, too, is a method,” the voiceover smugly tells. The next scene sees Mr. Farmer return from another hard day’s work, shovel in hand, only to get his foot stuck into the hole he had dug, causing him to fall to the floor. “How was that method again?” the voiceover asks. The commercial is likewise scored to madcap jazz music, reminiscent of the Benny Hill theme song, stressing the farmer’s ridiculous solutions to his financial problems. This time, shovel in hand, dressed in the same way, Mr. Farmer decides to dig a hole in his plot instead. When he returns to retrieve the cash, he cannot remember its whereabouts on the large, barren plot. “Maybe this is your method too,” the narrator mocks, before finally providing an alternative. The next scene sees Mr. Farmer at a Pārs Bank branch, bowing deferentially to the formally-dressed bank teller. The teller has deposited his money, and the commercial ends with the farmer, dressed identically to Samad Āqā, smiling naively at his invoice, with the voiceover reminding the viewer that “*Bank-e Pārs* is always at your service.”⁷⁸⁶

Because an ideal advertisement must “communicate swiftly, unambiguously and economically,”⁷⁸⁷ the utilization of stereotypes in selling commodities was no doubt on par with advertising methods anywhere else in the world. What was peculiar about NITV’s commercial

⁷⁸⁶ “Pārs Bānk,” *Private Commercial Advertising Collection* (National Iranian Radio and Television, 1970 - 1979).

⁷⁸⁷ Dyer, *Advertising as Communication*, 77.

programming, however, was that it had applied the *dehāti* stereotype much in the same manner that it had the image of the sexualized woman in selling commodities to “status-conscious housewives.”⁷⁸⁸ That Pārs Bank commercial had employed the *dehāti* stereotype to actually speak to the traditional communities implied that advertisers believed that tradition-minded viewers would relate to the derogatory stereotype, and, in turn, become emboldened to buy into the modern conveniences advertised. This rare occasion in which an advertisement happened to address the lower income segments of the public, therefore, saw it adopting a supercilious tone in its address, denigrating its target audience for their supposedly retrograde ways. Considering that NITV retained control over which advertisements were fit for broadcast and which were not, that the Pārs Bank commercial was not deemed “in bad taste, offensive, unethical, or contrary to government interest or policies,”⁷⁸⁹ and was instead aired pointed also to NITV’s implicit approval of such sneering addresses to the rustic and lower classes.

Resistance from Below: Television Construed as Cultural Invasion

As we have seen, despite NITV’s programming largely catering to “the larger, and richer centers of population,”⁷⁹⁰ working class and rural Iranians nonetheless took eagerly to television. As Sreberny and Mohammadi remark, between the years 1975 and 1976 when NITV’s transmission capabilities provided seventy percent of the Iranian population with televisual reception, the television set itself proved so necessary to households that “people in villages without electricity, who had survived with oil lamps and iceboxes, bought generators in order to be able to run television.”⁷⁹¹ Television had proved so popular during this period that a statistical survey carried

⁷⁸⁸ Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi, *Small Media, Big Revolution*, 63.

⁷⁸⁹ Kimiachi, “History and Development of Broadcasting in Iran,” 150.

⁷⁹⁰ Katz and Wedell, *Broadcasting in the Third World*, 150.

⁷⁹¹ Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi, *Small Media, Big Revolution*, 66.

out in just the year prior indicated that Iranians averaged six hours of television viewing a day, with seven viewers watching per set.⁷⁹² These numbers were especially substantial considering that, in 1974, the more extensive Program I broadcast approximately eight hours of content per day (between 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM, and then again from 5:00 PM to 11:00 PM), and Program II – limited only to large cities such as Tehran, Isfahan, Abadan, and Shiraz – broadcast only four hours of content on a daily basis (from 7:30 PM to 10:45 PM).⁷⁹³ In the same hours that Program I programming was also available. The statistical research therefore revealed that Iranian households either watched or left the television on for seventy percent of NITV's hours on air.

Indeed, as Meyrowitz maintains, television's essential trait as a medium was that it dissolved the lines between "the private sphere" and the "public sphere."⁷⁹⁴ Television, therefore, "brought the world into Iranian homes."⁷⁹⁵ Yet, this was not any common world. It was, rather, "the strange, skewed world represented in imported Western television programs,"⁷⁹⁶ together with the locally produced programming lampooning the lower classes or the advertisements that catered only to the affluent. The televisual medium, therefore, provided even those physically removed from the consumerist tendencies of a society like 1970s Iran an "easy and uninvolved intimacy" with their ever-changing society.⁷⁹⁷

As per NITV's pronounced intent, Janet Bauer's contemporaneous fieldwork revealed that the televisual medium did, in fact, happen to augment the lower classes' "lust for new experiences."⁷⁹⁸ This was especially true for the "working class women" that had done "without

⁷⁹² Ibid., 67.

⁷⁹³ "Dar rādiyo va televiziyo," *Tamasha*, December 21, 1974.

⁷⁹⁴ Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place*, 223.

⁷⁹⁵ Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi, *Small Media, Big Revolution*, 15.

⁷⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁷ Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place*, 223.

⁷⁹⁸ Janet Bauer, "Ma'ssoum's Tale: The Personal and Political Transformations of a Young Iranian 'Feminist' and Her Ethnographer," *Feminist Studies* 19, no. 3 (1993): 527.

enough schooling or resources” in their segregated societies.⁷⁹⁹ The cultural wanderlust purveyed by televisual programming led to some women among the more traditional classes to exhibit subtle modes of defiance in their more traditional-minded households. Correspondents even intimated to Bauer that their subtle forms of resistance came by way of “wearing colored socks and letting their hair show beneath the chador.”⁸⁰⁰ To some extent, therefore, NITV’s intent to sway viewers into surrendering some traditions in favor of more modern attitudes had been realized on account of the programming broadcast, though surely these behavioral changes should not be solely ascribed to televisual exposure.

Many still among the religious and working classes, however, remained deeply antagonistic toward television. Much of this happened to have stemmed from the medium’s early years under Habibollah Sabet’s supervision. That Sabet – also the Iranian franchise owner for Pepsi Cola – happened to be of the Bahā’i faith did not sit well with the Iranian clerisy. After the clerisy began spreading allegations that Sabet was sending part of his income to Israel, the leading Shi’a *marja’* (source of emulation) of the time, Grand Ayatollah Hossein Borujerdi, first issued a fatwa declaring the beverage haram, and later, upon the establishment of TV-I, issued a like decree with respect to television. Borujerdi went so far as to prohibit any Qom resident from installing television antennae on their rooftops.⁸⁰¹

Also among the most vociferous critics of television was Ruhollah Khomeini. Prior to himself ascending to the rank of *marja’* (source of emulation), Khomeini had also begun warning against the use of television in his correspondences. In one letter in November 1962, just two months prior to the enactment of the White Revolution, he referred to TV-I as a “foothold for

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid., 534.

⁸⁰¹ Fātemeh Torkāshvand, “Az hormat tā ejrā,” *Jām-e Jam*, April 17, 2021.

Jewish espionage,” proclaiming that the medium had put “Islam and the Holy Quran at the brink of danger.”⁸⁰² In another speech the same year, he referred to television as being in the hands of “an abominable minority,” who in turn were using the medium to “exhibit women of the past and compare them to the women of today” in order to “excite the nerves” of the viewing audience.⁸⁰³

After the White Revolution was enacted on 26 January 1963, with Khomeini finally coming “to public notice for the first time”⁸⁰⁴ as the most vociferous critic of the reforms, he shed further light on his antipathy for the medium, regarding it as a deterministic tool that could “weaken the nerves” of any individual that might otherwise “stand against colonization” and “save the country.”⁸⁰⁵ No different than the nation’s glossy magazines and newspapers, he claimed that television was “at the mercy of colonization.” This cultural colonization, he remarked, was precisely “that which poisons the minds of our youth.” In referring to Sabet television’s reliance on western-imported programming, he proclaimed that “it is this form of colonization that gives way to the radio and television programming that deteriorates the spirit of our people, that provokes them to lose their strength.”⁸⁰⁶ Indeed, on numerous occasions following this address, Khomeini continued to declaim television and radio under Pahlavi rule as no more than “centers of vice. Both, according to him, were “subservient to immoral purposes.”⁸⁰⁷ Their purpose, accordingly, was to “corrupt our youth,” to transform men “into pleasure-seekers” and women “as a mere object, a possession.”⁸⁰⁸

⁸⁰² “Nāmeḥ dar pāsokh-e estefā’-e asnāf-e qom,” in *Sahif-e-ye Emām* (Tehran: Institute for the Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini’s Works, 1962).

⁸⁰³ Ruhollah Khomeini, “Bayānāt barāyeh ro’asā-ye shahrbāni va sāvāk-e qom,” in *Sahif-e-ye Emām* (Tehran: Institute for the Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini’s Works, 1962).

⁸⁰⁴ Katouzian, *The Persians*, 261.

⁸⁰⁵ Ruhollah Khomeini, “Sokhanrāni dar jam’-e aqshār-e mokhtalef-e mardom,” in *Sahif-e-ye Emām* (Tehran: Institute for the Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini’s Works, 1964).

⁸⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰⁷ Ruhollah Khomeini, “Address at Bihisht-i Zahra,” in *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, trans. Hamid Algar (Berkeley, Calif.: Mizan Press, 1981), 257-258.

⁸⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 258.

Decades following these pronouncements and two years following the establishment of the Islamic Republic, Khomeini's perspective on television as a significant behavioral device remained unaltered. In a speech addressed to the committee charged with the Islamic Republic's Cultural Revolution (1980-1983), he remarked that "radio and television are significant devices that could be utilized to cultivate individuals either toward corruption or toward correctness."⁸⁰⁹ No different than the avowals of NITV personnel during Pahlavi rule, he claimed further that "radio and television are the most important apparatuses in society; they are behavioral apparatuses, and as such, all classes of society must be trained by way of these apparatuses; they are public universities."⁸¹⁰

The above evinces that no different from those at the helm of NITV, Khomeini and others within the clerisy also presumed television to comprise a cultivating compartment. The technological determinism to which both flanks subscribed assumed that "new technologies" could themselves "create new societies or new human conditions" simply on account of some inherent characteristics they possessed.⁸¹¹ For the religious flank, the very fact that television was operated by a Bahā'i individual and comprised western-imported programs provided the medium with a "colonial" bent that could "poison" the Iranian mind. As we demonstrated in this chapter, those in the nationalized broadcast system that eventually supplanted Sabet's station followed a similarly deterministic attitude, following Daniel Lerner's presumption that television exposure could, in turn, transform an agrarian society into a developed one. Indeed, while television exposure was

⁸⁰⁹Ruhollah Khomeini, "Sokhanrāni dar jam'e a'zā-ye setād-e enqelāb-e farhangi," in *Sahif-e-ye Emām* (Tehran: Institute for the Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works, 1980).

⁸¹⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹¹ Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*, 3rd edition (London ; New York: Routledge, 2003), 6.

likely to expose or attract viewers to various lifestyles, it could in no way fundamentally lead a society to either modernity as the monarchists believed, or degeneracy as the religious did.

Nonetheless, even after the Pahlavi state supplanted Sabet's television broadcast system with their own nationalized network, the religious constituency's distrust for television remained. When on 15 April 1971, *Tamasha* published results of an audience research survey undertaken by NITV that same year, it revealed that familial religious convictions did, in fact, have a direct correlation with televisual viewership. A child from a religious family was quoted in the survey in saying that "Our father does not want us to watch television, because he says that we are a family that prays, and God has not decreed that we can watch television."⁸¹²

For the traditional and especially religious classes, the most conspicuous bone of contention with respect to television was that it facilitated the presence of *nāmahram* individuals (non-familial members of the opposite sex) on screen.⁸¹³ Such unease with respect to television was briefly touched on by *Sarkār Ostovār* actor Elāheh Elāhi in her 3 June 1971 *Tamasha* interview. There, she talked about opposition she faced by her grandparents when she begun working on television. As she mentioned, her grandparents would turn off the set any time she would appear.⁸¹⁴ Despite the fact that they were family, the thought that their granddaughter's body would be broadcast to *nāmahram* men throughout the country had dismayed these older members to the extent that they, too, refused to look at her when broadcast.

Viewing the *nāmahram* on television became so urgent a matter for religious leaders that myriad Shi'a sources of emulation, including Ayatollah Khomeini, soon deemed it *harām*.⁸¹⁵ This

⁸¹² Zhāleh Rafi'zādeh, "Bozorgtar-hā dar entekhāb-e barnameh-hā....," *Tamasha*, April 15, 1971.

⁸¹³ Ruhollah Khomeini, *Tozih ol-Masā'el* (Institute for the Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works, 2012).

⁸¹⁴ "Elāheh elāhi," *Tamasha*, June 3, 1971.

⁸¹⁵ Khomeini, *Tozih ol-Masā'el*.

was so pronounced an issue that on 17 June 1971, even a state outlet like *Tamasha* happened to spoof it in its cartoon section. The cartoon, which comprised three panels, first depicted an unveiled older lady watching a woman anchor on her television set. The second panel then pictured a man appearing on the television screen, prompting the older lady to run away from the set while hiding her bare head in her palms. The third panel saw her sitting in front of the set again, contentedly watching the male anchor, safe because she was now fully covered by her chador.⁸¹⁶

Though Elāhi's 1971 interview did reveal that her grandparents had since reconciled with her as well as her image being broadcast on television, this was not necessarily the case for many among the traditional classes of Iranians. Indeed, a letter sent to *Javanan*, far later into the decade on 2 May 1977, revealed that countless families had yet to become habituated to the sight of *nāmahrām* individuals on a television screen. The letter in particular, as written by a girl named Afsāneh from the northern town of Lahijān, recounted her father's fury after happening upon her daughter and her friends watching the male pop star, Sattar, on television. Not knowing that her father was present, she placed a kiss on the screen while Sattar was performing. "My father saw this from the other room," she then recounted, "and, using some sharp object he had at hand, he pummeled the television screen incessantly until the screen broke, and the image dissolved." The father, who was also mentioned to have prohibited Afsāneh from going to high school following her compulsory primary education, then scolded his daughter in front of her friends to the extent that she had since absconded from her familial home, staying at a hotel at the time of her letter.⁸¹⁷

As Bauer's fieldwork further revealed, such attitudes were especially prevalent among religious or working class viewers, with male patriarchs in these families often disapproving of

⁸¹⁶ "Cārton," *Tamasha*, June 17, 1971.

⁸¹⁷ "Man sattār ra ru-ye safhe televiziyon busidam," *Javanan*, May 2, 1977.

“films of women and men on television.”⁸¹⁸ Yet, such disapproving perspectives on televisual programming were not necessarily exclusive to the men. Mary Hegland’s fieldwork in the town of Aliabad on the outskirts of Shiraz also betrayed similar views shared among the religious women of the neighborhood at the time. Parallel to their religious leaders’ perspectives on television, these women often spoke against television consumption in their religious circles, especially as it pertained to the western-imported shows airing on NITV. One, for instance, was quoted in having warned against her fellow women viewing *Little House on the Prairie* (1974-1983), claiming that these shows were purposefully meant to “entertain people and keep them from becoming involved in politics.”⁸¹⁹

For these women, state-sponsored media like NITV or even magazines like *Zan-e Ruz* were anathema to the intellectual and spiritual development of their fellow woman; a view that was similarly shared by religious leaders such as Khomeini as well as religious intellectuals like Ali Shariati. As Anne Betteridge remarks, many women directly implicated the Pahlavi state in the broadcast and publication of such televisual programming and magazine content, maintaining that the state was “actively promoting the image of woman as a painted plaything.” In their view, this was done not only “to distract women from the serious business of politics and religion and keep their thought at a low, frivolous level,” but also “to encourage dependence on such western products as make-up and fashions, thus binding Iran to Western markets.”⁸²⁰

In most cases, Iranians non-conforming to the Pahlavi’s westernizing projects often subscribed to the “hypodermic theory” of media consumption, supposing that the mere “exposure

⁸¹⁸ Bauer, “Ma’ssoum’s Tale,” 534.

⁸¹⁹ Mary E. Hegland, “Aliabad Women: Revolution as Religious Activity,” in *Women And Revolution In Iran* (Routledge, 1983), 180.

⁸²⁰ Anne H. Betteridge, “To Veil or Not to Veil: A Matter of Protest or Policy,” in *Women And Revolution In Iran* (Routledge, 1983), 115.

to dominant ideology” would, in turn, render “autonomous and ethical individuals into dependent, corrupt subjects of that ideology.”⁸²¹ As we have seen, however, this technologically determinist attitude was also shared by top television officials, all of whom had publicly trumpeted television as a significant instrument for the cultivation of both the non-modern and modern segments of society.

That both the state and the resistance held on to these determinist conceptions sowed the seeds for the traditional constituency to further distrust televisual programming, especially as the state’s powers continued to expand throughout the decade. The state’s relentless trumpeting of television as an educational device did not help ease this distrust. Owing to this, those holding views opposing the Pahlavi state could not but construe any programming aired on NITV or published in semi-official magazines as ideological. To the opposition, nothing produced under the Pahlavi state was mere entertainment.

As we shall see in the next chapter, these suspicions also rang true for the star system that happened to emanate from television’s growing popularity. If the *dehāti*, the *chadori*, the *bazaari*, and *nowkiseh* constituted the official culture’s diverse categories of folk devil, then the NITV star came to comprise a primary element within the opposition’s cast of folk devils. The purportedly weststruck “*motrebs*” and “oiled-up dolls” of NITV came to personify all that the opposition found disagreeable with Pahlavi rule.

⁸²¹ Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema, Volume 3: The Islamicate Period, 1978–1984* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2012), 5.



Figure 18: Mohammad Reza Shah pays a visit to TV-I, standing alongside Habib Sabet.



Figure 21: On the right, Morād Barqi as portrayed by Parviz Kardan.



Figure 19: Qamar Khānom, as portrayed by Parvin Malakuti.



Figure 22: The Talkh-o Shirin Family.

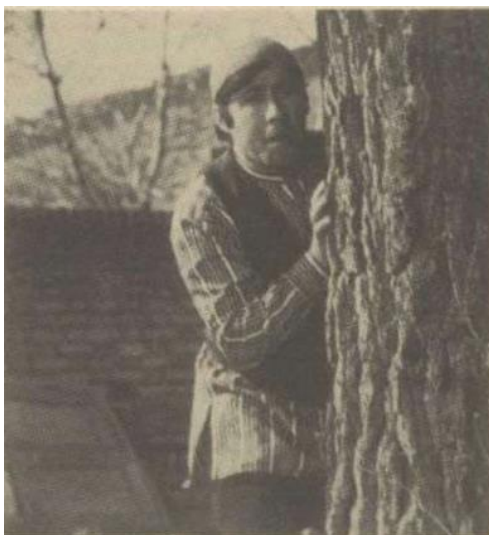


Figure 20: Samad Āqā, as portrayed by Parviz Sayyād.

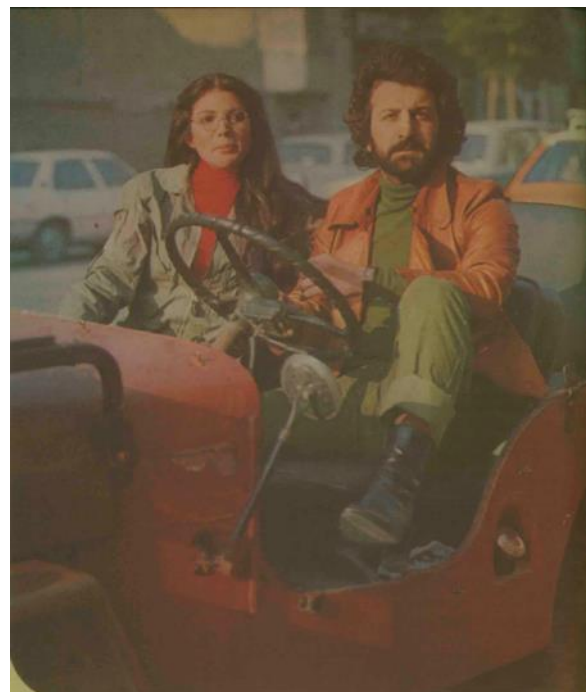


Figure 23: The protagonists of Talāq.



Figure 24: A woman de-robes for a Schaub Lorenz television set advertisement on NITV.



Figure 25: A deodorant advertisement, featuring the ever-recurring presence of a semi-nude model.

The Turn: A Fall of Idols

Introduction: Reversal of Fortunes

It was following a 7 January 1978 *Ettelaat* article disparaging the opposition's religious leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, that legions of furious demonstrators, clad in monochrome colors, finally took to the streets. Soon, they sparked off a wave of protests that would culminate in revolution.⁸²² Emanating from places such as Tabriz, Tehran, Qom, Qazvin, and Isfahan, the demonstrations that soon enveloped the country saw protestors regularly deface, attack, and set fire to local cinemas, banks, universities, government buildings, and even clothing boutiques. From the perspective of the opposition, establishments like these stood as "corrupt" and "decadent" symbols of the Pahlavi state, thereby being deemed deserving of destruction.⁸²³ By November 1978, when a military government was declared by the state, even the up-to-then ideology-laden television network of the country yielded to the tide of revolution, with NIRT officials urging "Iranians to turn off their radio and television receivers and not to listen to the voice of the military."⁸²⁴

Just one year prior, these same cinemas – now ablaze – had been home to the hitherto highest grossing film in Iranian history, a romantic drama starring the country's most famous star, Googoosh.⁸²⁵ That same year, some of the same boutiques – now looted with their windows shattered – had only recently begun exporting their in-house designs to France as per the request of Pierre Cardin himself.⁸²⁶ The previous year had also seen the country's television network enjoying its first year of nation-wide color broadcasting, with NITV's own selection of contracted

⁸²² Ahmad Rashidi Motlaq, "Irān va este'mār-e sorkh-o siyāh," *Ettelaat*, January 7, 1978, 15506 edition.

⁸²³ Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema, Volume 3: The Islamicate Period, 1978–1984* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2012), 2.

⁸²⁴ Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ali Mohammadi, *Small Media, Big Revolution: Communication, Culture, and the Iranian Revolution* (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 1994), 153.

⁸²⁵ "Googoosh," *Zan-e Ruz*, April 8, 1978.

⁸²⁶ "Kot-o shalvār-e dukht-e irān be farānseh sāder mishavad," *Ettelaat*, June 7, 1977, 15330 edition.

pop stars taking center stage. Now, on the verge of revolution, the same media that once promoted the elegance of these stars now denigrated them as the “brainless, pet-like dolls” and “oiled-up *motrebs*” of a “strip-tease cultivating government.”⁸²⁷

Of course, resentment had long been simmering in the Pahlavi era – socially, culturally, politically, and economically. Among these myriad antipathies happened to also be those incited by the era’s popular culture; by then entwined with the country’s celebrity culture. Perceived by the opposition as having been part and parcel of the state’s attempts at westernization, celebrity culture had come to elicit deep unease among the leftist and religious flanks of society. It had also come to incite similar insecurities among elites, consequently prompting numerous attempts on their parts to differentiate themselves from the unpedigreed, newly rich classes for whom the stars had become emblematic.

At first, those within the dominant culture sought to distinguish themselves sartorially from the new classes similarly adorned as them. While just years previous, the royal family’s gusto for European couture – such as Givenchy, Dior and Valentino – had been habitually celebrated by media outlets both foreign⁸²⁸ and local,⁸²⁹ the press now seemed eager to stress the court’s particular choice of Iranian dress, worn in contrast to the western styles donned by the newly rich. When the opposition’s discourse with respect to the stars purportedly encouraging new generations of Iranians to amount to no more than “Western dolls”⁸³⁰ grew more vociferous, however, the official culture took on an even more forceful approach to distance themselves from the stars and the newly rich. Indeed, just as the term *gharbzadegi* further grew into a pejorative among those

⁸²⁷ Zhāleh Rāzi, “Chador mohem ast ya bahs-e enqelab?,” *Zan-e Ruz*, February 10, 1979.

⁸²⁸ Gloria Emerson, “Dior Fashions for Coronation in Iran,” *The New York Times*, October 20, 1967.

⁸²⁹ “Malekeh-ye takht-e tāvus,” *Zan-e Ruz*, April 3, 1965.

⁸³⁰ Parvin Paidar, *Women and the Political Process in Twentieth-Century Iran* (Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 180.

disdainful of westernized Iranians, official mass media co-opted the term to scapegoat both the stars as well as the newly affluent classes that it had itself spawned. Newspapers, magazines, television programming, as well as official proclamations all began lambasting the newly rich and their westernized tastes. Emblematic of such objectionable tastes were the stars, the emulation of whom the media now consistently admonished.

Soon stepping up the pressure even further was the state, with the Queen soon coming at the forefront of a campaign encouraging all Iranians to take on more locally-inspired attire, implicitly enjoining citizens to distinguish themselves even sartorially from the country's *nouveaux riches* garbed in western clothing. All despite the decades-long disdain it had publicly expressed toward ethnic dress, the same state that had previously encouraged western attire was thus suddenly extoling the virtues of Iranian handicraft. This about-face was all the more inexplicable because it had also come at an inopportune time, as the state's overreliance on imports had already devastated the handicraft sector, as it similarly had the agrarian culture on which handicrafts relied.

By the end of the 1970s, it therefore seemed as though the state had become ambivalent toward the society it had itself brought into being. Like its campaign in favor of ethnic dress, this confusion was especially manifest by the state's myriad turnarounds with respect to what did and did not constitute the appropriate modes of modernity. Such irony was not lost on the opposition either. In consolidating each of the state's newly designated folk devils under its wing, the crowds long resentful of the Pahlavi project of modernity only continued to grow and gain momentum, en route to revolution.

Fit to View: The Nationalization of the Iranian Star

As mentioned in the first chapter, prior to television's popularity, outlets such as *Zan-e Ruz* remained committed to casting Mohammad Reza and Farah Pahlavi as the singular role models for modernizing Iranians. They did so whilst completely overlooking the popular Iranian singers and *filmfarsi* stars of the contemporaneous period. Those stars, after all, did not necessarily adhere to the social and aesthetic standards of a modern Iran, regardless of the fact that they had come by their popularity on the strength of their performative talents as well as their more natural connection to the public. Though, eventually, youth-centered outlets like *Javanan* sought to bridge the gap between celebrity culture and high culture, it was the wholesale nationalization of Iran's three biggest media – television, radio, and cinema – in 1971 that finally paved the way for celebrities to enter the national limelight under the banner of the official culture.⁸³¹

Just as the television industry had become nationalized in 1969, June 1970 also saw the state consolidate Iran's previously denigrated film industry as part of its official culture, when the Ministry of Culture and Arts, together with Queen Farah, inaugurated the annual Iranian Film Festival. Its jury comprising state figures, such as Iranian senator Mohsen Foroughi as well as Prime Minister Amir Abbas Hoveyda's brother, Fereydoon Hoveyda, the festival, in the Queen's words, was purposed to stand as a "rebirth of Iranian cinema after twenty-six years." In charge of the festival's opening speech was the Shah's brother-in-law and Iran's Minister of Culture and Arts, Mehrdad Pahlbod, who emphasized that this born-again cinema was indeed purposed with illuminating "the grand, social revolution" of the country. Shedding further light on the association of this new cinema with the White Revolution, Pahlbod declared, rather deterministically, that "the art of cinema is one of the most effective and significant tools in communicating the spiritual

⁸³¹ "Finālist-hā-ye honarmand," *Zan-e Ruz*, May 26, 1973.

values of the Revolution of the Shah and the People, and in remedying the social maladies that the Shah himself has outlined.”⁸³² The social maladies to which the minister referred were those pertaining to the supposedly backward traditions held onto by a significant number of Iranians in an ever-modernizing country. Within the context of the film festival itself, the remark was also a barb at the reviled *filmfarsi* genre that the state and its official culture had long warned against.

Indeed, the Iranian Film Festival marked a precise starting point wherein the state finally resolved to bring into being an official cinema meant to bear up against the *filmfarsi*. As such, the films screened at this festival were no longer to be called *filmfarsi*; rather, a new term had been coined for them: *film-e melli* (the national film). And although the films that won prizes at the inaugural festival, including *Qeysar*, *Gāv* (Cow), and *Shohar-e Āhu Khānom* (Miss Ahu’s Husband), were both popular and justifiably well-made, the festival nonetheless signaled the state’s attempts at monopolizing the cinema industry in the same manner that they had both television and radio. With prizes proffered to the winners by the Queen herself, the first Iranian Film Festival marked a significant turning point wherein cinema also became aligned with the official culture, in turn legitimatizing a select number of filmmakers and actors with the dominant culture’s stamp of approval.⁸³³

These proceedings thereby helped lay the groundwork for a thoroughly nationalized entertainment industry in Iran. Particularly, the contemporaneous consolidation of cinema, television, and radio into state-regulated enterprises revealed the extent to which the Pahlavi state strived to restructure the country’s entertainment industry so as to bring it in step with the values of the official culture. All media content was thereby brought under the banner of the official culture, and thus made to comply to its hegemonical standards. This set the stage for not only a

⁸³² “Ba’d az 26 sāl...,” *Zan-e Ruz*, June 6, 1970.

⁸³³ *Ibid.*

star system similarly saturated with the official culture's tastes, but also a publicity machine that was to relentlessly reflect it.

Alongside the wholesale nationalization of the entertainment industry thus emerged a similarly nationalized star system, suffused with values complementary to the official culture's tastes so as to reflect the abovementioned "spiritual values" of the White Revolution. From then on, semi-official magazines like *Keyhan's Zan-e Ruz* and *Ettelaat's Banovan* (Ladies) began dedicating extensive features to the stars, probing not only their personal lives, but also their tastes, sartorial choices, as well as their various other aesthetic refinements. Previously limited to only pictorial depictions of royalty, Teen Princess contestants, or Euro-American models to help bolster their idyllic aesthetic markers, these popular magazines now began utilizing the official culture's newly minted stars as pin-up models, with each new issue featuring the latest professionally photographed spread of one such star adorned in the latest Euro-American fashion. That the model photographed was not just any one Iranian, but those well-known and much beloved by the public was an especially advantageous optic. It thus designated the Iranian star as the visual embodiment of the contemporary Iranian amenable to the values of the White Revolution.

Previous to the emergence of the star system, as Gay Breyley notes, the Shah and his court had maintained an exclusive position as "Iran's imposed celebrities."⁸³⁴ Much like the stars that were to come, the court's comportment was regularly publicized by the media as the markers by which all contemporary Iranians were encouraged to adhere – be it their values, tastes, or their aesthetic standards. Yet, because these personages happened to hold "institutional positions of power"⁸³⁵ while living lives completely disparate from the common Iranian, their status as role

⁸³⁴ G. J. Breyley and Sasan Fatemi, "Before the Revolution: Television, 'the West' and 'Modernity' (1965–79)," in *Iranian Music and Popular Entertainment* (Routledge, 2015), 125.

⁸³⁵ Hamid Reza Sadr, *Iranian Cinema: A Political History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 84.

models was fraught with either apathy or antipathy. Media stars, however, “had no access to real political power.”⁸³⁶ As such, they could “not create resentment in the public” like the aforementioned elites.⁸³⁷ Even more unlike such powerful elites was the way in which the media presented these stars “both as stars and as ordinary people: as very special beings, and as beings just like the readers.”⁸³⁸ Their publicized lives, fraught with “rags-to-riches motifs and romances”⁸³⁹ expressed hardships with which the viewership could relate, and their regular appearances on television or in magazines rendered them into a familiar – sometimes even familial – presences in the people’s homes.

The “false impression of proximity suggested by television shows”⁸⁴⁰ as well as the regular publicity afforded to their lives by print media, gave stars an air of “typicality” and “representativeness” that state elites could not conceivably invoke.⁸⁴¹ The illusion that stardom propagated was to render the star as being one with the public, as “members of the community”⁸⁴² that could be dissected, adored, or criticized as equally as a neighbor, a friend, or any other member of a said community. Being frequently featured on television, on the cinema screen, or having their lives publicized in tabloids such as *Javanan*, these stars were presented to the public as individuals that belonged to the same “extended community” as the general population, rendering them into “an object of interest, identification and collective evaluation.”⁸⁴³ As Hamid Reza Sadr remarks,

⁸³⁶ Francesco Alberoni, “The Powerless ‘Elite’: Theory and Sociological Research on the Phenomenon of the Stars,” in *Stardom and Celebrity: A Reader*, ed. Su Holmes and Sean Redmond (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2007), 65.

⁸³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸³⁸ John Ellis, “Stars as a Cinematic Phenomenon,” in *Stardom and Celebrity: A Reader*, ed. Su Holmes and Sean Redmond (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2007), 91.

⁸³⁹ Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: Continuum-3PL, 1998), 47.

⁸⁴⁰ Alberoni, “The Powerless ‘Elite’”, 69.

⁸⁴¹ Dyer, *Stars*, 47.

⁸⁴² Alberoni, “The Powerless ‘Elite’”, 70.

⁸⁴³ *Ibid.*, 75.

even the simple choice of picking one's favorite star from a wide range of stars provided Iranians with the illusion of choice within a society where no such choice existed.⁸⁴⁴

The media star's relatability with the public was further amplified in view of the fact that each star also happened to possess an individual persona congruent with a particular societal "type of man or woman."⁸⁴⁵ Just as how Greta Garba's persona typified the "inaccessible and haughty woman" or Clark Gable's persona embodied "the virile complicitous, and impudent man" within the western star system, each Iranian star also represented a distinctive societal type.⁸⁴⁶ Googoosh's star persona, for instance, revolved around her quixotic youthfulness, marked as much by her love-sick songs as by her ability to keep pace with changing fashions. Her male counterpart, Behruz Vosuqi was, in turn, the virile everyman. The singer Ramesh represented the amalgamation of old-world styles with new-world styles; distinct for never being quite in-step with the fashion world while remaining nonetheless contemporary. And male singers like Sattar and Ebi similarly came to embody this fusion between old and new, but in a masculine fashion: their long-hair, somewhat unkempt appearances, and deeply sensitive lyrics pointed to the modern man of the 1970s, all while their voice and on-stage presence harkened to the virility of the old-world patriarch.

The relatability that the star system exuded, however, also rendered the stars into ideal "agents of a modern lifestyle."⁸⁴⁷ As such, they also emerged as the "idols" and "role models"⁸⁴⁸ within a media milieu insistent on its "emphasis on youth, leisure, pleasure, and consumption."⁸⁴⁹

⁸⁴⁴ Sadr, *Iranian Cinema*, 84.

⁸⁴⁵ Gilles Lipovetsky and Richard Sennett, *The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy*, trans. Catherine Porter (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1994), 183

⁸⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁷ Liora Hendelman-Baavur, *Creating the Modern Iranian Woman: Popular Culture between Two Revolutions* (Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 162.

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid., 161.

⁸⁴⁹ Ibid., 162.

Because their regular media presence also brought along with them their styles, these stars soon also came serve as “the barometers of changing fashion.”⁸⁵⁰ With tastes no less congruent with western beauty markers than those shared by the country’s previously imposed celebrities, these stars became the prime movers of “popular taste in fashion, hairstyle and lifestyle.”⁸⁵¹

Stars and Styles: The Euro-American Made Iranian

Much in the same way that the Iranian star system proved “a most appealing substitute for the royal family as celebrity of choice,”⁸⁵² it also happened to help “dethrone” the class-based pretensions of high fashion by providing ascent to the more relatable star as a fashion leader.⁸⁵³ Following the advent of the star system, fashion no longer exclusively reflected one’s class or social status. It could just as well connote access to a favorite star image. No longer contingent on the dictums of high fashion, an individual now only required mediated access to a star to engage with fashion. Television facilitated this access, and due to the abundance of musical variety shows on NITV, the most influential of these stars happened to be musical artists. The intimate space fashioned by television also happened to put equal emphasis on the styles donned by the stars as it did their musical performances. This exposure thus helped fashion these stars – already “revered for their status, their beauty, and sometimes their talent” – into “a relatively new group of opinion leaders” when it came to “changes in style, value, and attitude, which they then passed along to the subordinate parties who imitate them.”⁸⁵⁴

⁸⁵⁰ Dyer, *Stars*, 6.

⁸⁵¹ Hendelman-Baavur, *Creating the Modern Iranian Woman*, 162.

⁸⁵² Breyley and Fatemi, “Before the Revolution,” 126.

⁸⁵³ Lipovetsky, *The Empire of Fashion*, 182.

⁸⁵⁴ Grant McCracken, “Culture and Consumption: A Theoretical Account of the Structure and Movement of the Cultural Meaning of Consumer Goods,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 13, no. 1 (June 1, 1986): 75.

By dint of their appearance on television, NITV's pop stars were often "the first public figures that a large segment of the public [saw] wearing a new style."⁸⁵⁵ Their perpetual rotation of diverse styles on NITV's multitudinous music programs rendered them into national fashion leaders as well. Each appearing on television with their own distinctive style befitting their persona, stars hence became "inextricably linked to consumption,"⁸⁵⁶ as "key signifiers of glamour and desirability which were perceived as defining femininity" or masculinity.⁸⁵⁷

The star system's reliance on aesthetics was, of course, inextricably linked to the medium that had helped propagated stardom: television. During the period, programs featuring these pop stars were innumerable. The vast number of musical shows on television, in turn, necessitated stars to appear on the televisual stage multiple times per week. So as to keep afresh their public personas, these pop stars ornamented each appearance with new wardrobes, novel make-up configurations, or new hair-dos. Indeed, as *Zan-e Ruz* explained in its 27 April 1974 feature on the changing styles of national pop stars, the stardom proffered to television stars happened to be a heavier burden than the celebrity enjoyed by film stars. As they appeared on television on a "daily basis," pop singers were thereby "bound to change their styles often, lest their looks become monotonous" to the viewing audience. In contrast, cinema stars came into the public's view only a few times per year, never risking over-exposition.⁸⁵⁸ On this account, whatever happened to be the day's vogue, the stars were bound to appear in them; and the more well-liked the star, the more likely it was that the viewing public might take to their style as well.

⁸⁵⁵ Albert LeBlanc, "All Part of the Act: A Hundred Years of Costume in Anglo-American Popular Music," in *Dress and Popular Culture*, ed. Patricia A. Cunningham and Susan Voso Lab, 1st edition (Bowling Green, Ohio: Popular Press 1, 1991), 61.

⁸⁵⁶ Jackie Stacey, *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship* (London: Routledge, 2013), 361.

⁸⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 210.

⁸⁵⁸ "Record-e nowsāzi-ye chehreh," *Zan-e Ruz*, April 27, 1974.

By way of illustration, in July 1972, Googoosh's pixie haircut upon her return from Italy proved a national sensation almost as soon as the pop singer debuted the new look on *Cheshmak* (Wink) (1971-1974).⁸⁵⁹ *Cheshmak* was one among many musical programs pervading NITV's daily timeslot. Yet what had made *Cheshmak* especially popular was that it was also hosted by Googoosh herself. No sooner did Googoosh debut her "breakaway" pixie haircut – itself an emulation of the hairstyle popularized by Mia Farrow in a 1966 episode of *Peyton Place* – than the style was locally appropriated as the "Googooshi haircut." As suggested by *Zan-e Ruz*'s 21 October 1972 feature on the style, the Googooshi haircut proved sensational in both urban centers and the provinces. Students, nurses, office workers in Rasht, Isfahan, Shiraz, and Ahvaz were all reported to have cut their hair to match Googoosh's newly debuted style. The magazine even quoted a hairstylist in saying that even chadori women had embraced the haircut, thus insinuating the star system's capacity to even minimize the conspicuous divide between the modern and nonmodern Iranian.⁸⁶⁰ The popularity of the Googooshi hairstyle became so entrenched in the Iranian vernacular of style in 1972 that later in the year, in another episode of *Cheshmak*, when asked by a guest about why she had cut her hair, Googoosh joked that she had cut it so because everyone else in Iran had done so as well.⁸⁶¹

The widely popular pixie cut happened to have been suggested to Googoosh during her eight-month sojourn in Italy by a photographer under the Radio Corporation of America's (RCA) employ.⁸⁶² Having travelled to Europe to gauge whether or not she could achieve international fame, Googoosh had ultimately signed with RCA following a lengthy, six-month professional courtship. With stardom being "organized around the themes of consumption, success and

⁸⁵⁹ "Googoosh," *Zan-e Ruz*, July 29, 1972.

⁸⁶⁰ "Model-e Googooshi," *Zan-e Ruz*, October 21, 1972.

⁸⁶¹ *Cheshmak* (Tehran: National Iranian Radio and Television, 1972).

⁸⁶² "Googoosh," *Zan-e Ruz*, July 29, 1972.

ordinariness”⁸⁶³ as much as it was about sheer talent, the record company’s publicity machine had thereby also styled Googoosh upon signing her to a contract. In terms of what it connoted, however, the pixie cut donned by Googoosh in the 1970 was poles apart from the same cut donned by Farrow in the 1960s. Although in 1966, the pixie cut introduced by Farrow had been hailed by *Vogue* magazine as a “breakaway” style that typified a woman who shunned “the Establishment” and its markers for beauty, that same cut in the 1970s was a far cry from its anti-establishment roots, having already been appropriated by the dominant culture.⁸⁶⁴

While Farrow’s cut was considered subversive, the same cut as worn by Googoosh happened to be in mere compliance with contemporary vogues. This, however, did not prevent the Googooshi cut from being perceived as entirely novel when the singer returned to Iran donning a fashionable hair-do as stipulated by an American record company. It also did not prevent the hairstyle from being considered a distinctly Iranian fashion, donned as it was by the country’s most popular singer. After all, despite *Peyton Place* having also aired on NITV, the pixie cut did not become so popular until Googoosh appeared wearing it on *Cheshmak*. That an Iranian had appeared on television donning this style proved the deciding factor in the pixie cut’s consequent adoption in Iran. That this Iranian happened to be Googoosh, the country’s most popular style at the time, only deepened the style’s influence.

Iranian stars thus came to function in a manner similar to the star system in other consumer societies, such that they became “models of consumption for everyone in a consumer society.”⁸⁶⁵ In Christopher Breward’s words, “Everything from the social opinions through to the decorating choices and clothing preferences” of the stars “were used to advertise the desirability of the

⁸⁶³ Dyer, *Stars*, 35.

⁸⁶⁴ “Vogue’s Eye View: Who’s a Breakaway?,” *Vogue* (New York: Condé Nast, April 15, 1966), 897853033, Periodicals Index Online; The Vogue Archive.

⁸⁶⁵ Dyer, *Stars*, 39.

fashionable life to a broader market for whom the mass-produced trappings of metropolitan civilization were increasingly within reach.”⁸⁶⁶ On this account, the star’s every move was publicized as representative of the modern comportment. Contingent on their mass appeal, their fashions were “to be copied, their fads followed, their sports pursued, their hobbies taken up.”⁸⁶⁷ As such, both female and male television celebrities came to be “identified with particular commodities”⁸⁶⁸ that helped make their personas shine brighter.

The star system thus injected “personality into mass consumption and [allowed] consumers to form what are sometimes deep emotional attachments.”⁸⁶⁹ In turn, print media regularly associated the Iranian stars of the 1970s with the commodities they owned, and the styles they took up. Yet, as the case of Googooshi hairstyle demonstrates, these publicized styles were invariably entrenched in Euro-American beauty standards. So much so that even when such styles proved particularly unflattering to a star, print media nonetheless persisted in its praises so long as the styles donned kept to the Euro-American aesthetic.

This was best illustrated when, in its 27 March 1971 issue, *Zan-e Ruz* unveiled a new feature meant to highlight the stars and their wardrobes, with accompanying photographs of the stars dressed in their preferred styles. The star highlighted in the inaugural feature was film star Fariba Khatami. In line with its encouragement of slimmer figures, the magazine introduced Khatami by lauding her successful endeavor to “lose weight” so as to “begin anew her cinematic activities,” while also extolling her as “one of the most stylish stars working in cinema today.” The interview itself largely comprised fashion tips as communicated by the fashionable star to readers,

⁸⁶⁶ Christopher Breward, *Fashion* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 104.

⁸⁶⁷ Dyer, *Stars*, 39.

⁸⁶⁸ Stacey, *Star Gazing*, 304.

⁸⁶⁹ Yuniya Kawamura, *Fashion-ology: An Introduction to Fashion Studies*, Dress, Body, Culture (Oxford ; New York: Berg, 2005), 66.

outlining manners in which they too could become as fashionable as her. Much of the advice revolved around Khatami cautioning against “blindly following fashion,” and rather, dressing appropriate to one’s own figure.⁸⁷⁰ Yet, despite the magazine’s praise of Khatami as a fashion leader as well as the star’s own self-assurance with respect to her stylishness, the nine photographs taken of Khatami in her wardrobe displayed the star in a hodgepodge of brash outfits that fully contradicted Khatami’s cautions against blindly aping western fads. One such photograph saw her in heels and a pink cowboy hat and a similarly pink turtleneck knee-length dress, with a belt resembling a holster supporting the black hotpants she also had on underneath. Another saw her toting a hunting rifle while wearing heeled boots, leather hotpants, and a crimson turtleneck. Next to these photos was *Zan-e Ruz*’s sub-headline, suggesting these to be Khatami’s choice outfits for the spring, all despite these outfits being better fits for the set of a western like *Rio Bravo* than Tehran’s streets.⁸⁷¹

In much the same manner, *Zan-e Ruz* and magazines of its ilk continued to praise the stars so long as they appeared in similarly modern outfits, or kept with contemporaneous beauty standards like the maintenance of a slim figure or the possession of a petite nose. Googooosh stood as the paragon for such modernity. Her style happened to definitively correspond to the official culture’s beauty standards for women. As Setareh Sabety remarks, even the singer’s body “represented a new ideal for women.” She was “svelte, with fewer curves than most Iranian woman,” and thus, “her figure was considered chicer because it fit better in French designer clothes.” Her face was even spared the allegedly appalling large nose of other Iranians; it was

⁸⁷⁰ “Mod-e Faribā,” *Zan-e Ruz*, March 27, 1971.

⁸⁷¹ Ibid.

small, “like that of a *farangi*.”⁸⁷² As such, she was afforded the most publicity out of any of her contemporaries.

This criterion was not just exclusive to *Zan-e Ruz*. It also rang true for *Javanan* magazine’s annual list for the best and worst dressed Iranian celebrities, a list that the magazine first introduced in its 22 December 1972 issue.⁸⁷³ The magazine’s best-dressed honors were exclusively proffered to national film and television stars, and sometimes even politicians, who seemed to follow to a tee the Euro-American standards for beauty. In its inaugural list, for instance, *Javanan* praised the ever-modern Googoosh as “undoubtedly the most well-dressed Iranian singer” owing to the fact that “even ordinary people consider her chic.” The magazine also gave praise to the appearances of those traditional musicians that had finally switched genres and entered into the pop domain, including singers like Mahasti and Puran. The praise accorded to the Puran came on account of her having begun to “spend much money on the day’s vogues,” and the praise for Mahasti came on account of her “vast collection of clothing.”⁸⁷⁴

In contrast, musicians that had not yet embraced the modern pop milieu were regularly criticized for being “unchic and without taste.” This included the previous decade’s ever-popular Delkash, who *Javanan* derided for having been “unchic from the very beginning.” Actors that had also spurned modern beauty standards were likewise censured in this list. Actress Shahnaz Tehrani, for instance, was criticized for her weight, which, according to the article, had made it impossible for her to appear in “shapely clothing” on screen. Also criticized was popular *filmfarsi* actress Puri Bana’i, whose refusal to comply with western aesthetic markers had long been reported in both *Javanan* and *Zan-e Ruz*.⁸⁷⁵

⁸⁷² Setareh Sabety, “Googoosh, the Myth,” *The Iranian*, May 17, 2001.

⁸⁷³ “Khosh lebās va bad lebās-tarin,” *Javanan*, January 15, 1973.

⁸⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

Suspect was the fact that like the musicians listed by *Javanan* – all of whom emanated from the traditional music genre – these allegedly badly dressed actors were mostly associated with the hegemonically disapproved *filmfarsi* genre. Appraisals of their taste, therefore, seemed equally contingent on whether or not the genres in which they worked were deemed tasteful by the official culture. As it happened, from 1975 onward, those artists that continued to dabble in traditional genres were altogether removed from contention in lists like those published by *Javanan*.⁸⁷⁶ By then, the star system had generated enough thoroughly modern stars that any publicity accorded to traditional artists – be it positive or negative – could now be done away with entirely. Despite their popularity, these stars retained neither the figure nor the sartorial style to be publicized as role models on either television or print media. Except for the similarly heavy-set Hayedeh who was projected into stardom by dint of her generational talent, artists that did not comply with concomitant aesthetic standards happened not to be accorded the same publicity as more progressivist artists such as Googoosh, Ramesh, Neli, and Leila Forouhar. As exemplified by Googoosh, such stardom was reserved only for those artists that signified “the broader shift from an imagined East to an imagined West.”⁸⁷⁷

Shedding light as to why traditional artists were not given equal publicity to NITV’s more aesthetically refined performers was a piece in *Zan-e Ruz*’s 15 April 1972 issue. Indeed, the article explained that the lack of publicity accorded to these artists was on account of them not being quite in tune with the changing tastes of “Iranian society.” According to the magazine, Iranians had become “peculiarly inclined to and worshipful of modernity” in recent years, as evidenced by their inclination toward “fashion, arts, and even song.” As such, despite traditional Iranian musicians

⁸⁷⁶ “Dah nafar shikpush-tarin va bad lebās-tarin,” *Javanan*, February 17, 1975.

⁸⁷⁷ Gay Breyley, “Hope, Fear and Dance Dance Dance: Popular Music in 1960s Iran,” *Musicology Australia* 32, no. 2 (December 2010): 214.

being “representatives of authentic music,” singers like Delkash and Marziyeh were no longer favored by the new generation of Iranian, as the youth “cannot tolerate” these traditional singers’ “two hours of trilling and warbling” that left no room for dancing. These traditional artists’ lack of publicity, the article further explained, came not just on account of the old-world songs they performed, but also their sartorial comportments.⁸⁷⁸ As a counterpoint, the piece then made mention of Puran, who, despite having recently verged on becoming a “relic,” had since reinvented herself and revitalized her career entirely “by appearing on screen with the clothes, shoes, and make-up of teenagers.” The opposite, the article maintained, had befallen her contemporary Parvaneh, much owing to the fact that she “regularly appears on television dressed in the clothes of old nobility... with those golden embroidered dresses adorned with beads.” In other words, Parvaneh had remained an *ommol*, while Puran had revitalized her career by keeping up with the times.⁸⁷⁹

In its profile of Puran some months previous, *Zan-e Ruz* had happened to have examined the star’s career renaissance in full. Praising Puran for having “re-invented her looks” in 1971, the piece stressed that this reinvention came on account of her not only changing her tailor and hairdresser so as to diversify her looks with a sometimes East Asian, sometimes European, sometimes Iranian aesthetic, but also because she had begun dieting in search of a slimmer figure. This diet predictably comprised Puran limiting herself from consuming Iranian food like *āsh reshteh* (Iranian noodle soup) and *chelow kabāb* (kebab with rice).⁸⁸⁰

Publicity, therefore, was guaranteed so long as stars kept to concomitant aesthetic standards. If they refused to opt into the modern fashion system, they – like Marziyeh, Delkash,

⁸⁷⁸ “Ki mahbub tar ast?,” *Zan-e Ruz*, April 15, 1972.

⁸⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁸⁰ “Puran,” *Zan-e Ruz*, October 9, 1971.

and even Puri Bana'i – were correspondingly divested of any such praise or attention. Since these magazines did, in fact, boast large readerships among urban Iranians already compliant with consumer culture, their influence vis-à-vis these arbitrary stipulations on style was not insignificant. Hayedeh's younger sister, Mahasti, who was another traditional singer that had reinvented herself so as to aesthetically adapt to the modern milieu, went so far as to credit *Zan-e Ruz* for her sudden transformation congenial to modernity. In a 1973 interview, she told the magazine that it was, in fact, on account of the magazine's previous derision of her old-world style that she had decided to change up her looks. "Your magazine," she told the reporter, "showed me my many shortcomings, informing me that I must change myself." In consequence, she too began dieting, growing her hair longer, and altering her make-up methods. Most important, however, was that she decided to no longer purchase any article of clothing from Iran. "All my clothes," she told the magazine, "now come from Paris' *Maison Marie Martin*." She then implored the magazine to refrain from calling her "unchic" from now on, to which the magazine reporter responded: "From now on, I will write that Mahasti has suddenly upgraded herself four classes, and now, both in terms of taste and morals, she is a twenty out of twenty."⁸⁸¹ Mahasti's shift toward a more Euro-American aesthetic, therefore, guaranteed her more positive publicity on the part of these influential magazines.

Anti-Star, Anti-Fashion: The Case of Ramesh

Indeed, the case of another of the era's most popular musical stars, Ramesh, was suggestive of just how elemental each of the aforementioned criteria were with respect to fashioning influence and hegemonical recognition. While still keeping to a modern comportment, Ramesh did not meet the dominant culture's criteria for fashionability as satisfactorily as Googoosh did. Ramesh's star

⁸⁸¹ "Mahasti," *Zan-e Ruz*, July 21, 1973.

image was a regular subject of scrutiny for popular media, with the singer's supposed shortcoming ceaselessly gauged against contemporaneous standards. Her figure, her wavy hair, as well as her less feminine clothing preferences all comprised points of contention for these media. Also a detriment was Ramesh's ambiguous sexuality, which furthered the media and the public's struggle with her star image.

Ramesh's supposed physical shortcomings managed to constitute a particular sticking point for popular magazines. A January 1975 *Zan-e Ruz* feature, comprising a conversation between Ramesh and popular male singer Aref, for instance, consisted mostly of Aref criticizing Ramesh's appearance. Her hair, weight, as well as her penchant for wearing less sexualized clothing all happened to be points of contention for the male singer – pictured as he was in the piece donning a white shirt, vest, and formal trousers, thereby representing the upstanding model of the modern man, fit to criticize another individual for their less than modern comportment. “One thing that has especially been the bane of Ramesh's existence,” Aref remarked in the interview, “has been her frizzy hair. Whatever she does to fix it, it cannot be helped.” He went on to say that Ramesh's other “flaw” was her weight: “You,” he told her directly, “are a bit fat, and on top of that, you do not dress that well either – with all that velvet clothing of yours.” He advised her to take dancing lessons so to slim her figure, while also recommending that she dress in more modern, more appropriate clothing like him. Such modern dress, he suggested, might even “trick” passersby into thinking her thinner than she was. “I am also a bit overweight,” he admitted, “but when I wear my dark suit and pants, others cannot help but mention how slim I am.”⁸⁸²

Outward appearance was not all, however. As mentioned, an equally significant matter was sexuality. With rumors about her sexuality pervasive among the public, print media made a habit

⁸⁸² “Aref miguyad: Ramesh bāyad raqs yād begirad!,” *Zan-e Ruz*, February 9, 1974.

of euphemistically pointing to Ramesh's alleged lack of femininity. For instance, Ramesh was regularly criticized by *Zan-e Ruz* for her *luti* comportment, and with the term *luti* having been recast as a stereotype during this period, the label was not meant to be complementary. It signified that Ramesh was not only unsophisticated – in line with the period's reevaluated *luti* type – but also and more importantly, aberrant to female norms. The ambivalence in Ramesh's personal life – namely her sexual preferences – was a subject *Zan-e Ruz* even brought up to the singer herself in its 9 February 1974 feature. Prefacing the interview by remarking that “many rumors pervade Ramesh's personal life; she is a young girl, always appearing alone, and dressed in strange and alien outfits,” the magazine then mentioned that even Ramesh's “gait is different... as she is often seen walking around in a thuggish (*lāti*) fashion.” Throughout the interview, the interviewer continued to pressure Ramesh to reveal her relationship status, and with each vacillating answer, the interviewer nonetheless pressed on, going so far as to ask the twenty-five-year-old star whether or not she considered herself “a spinster.” After initially rejoining each question with diplomatic answers, such as claiming that she did not have the “patience for a romantic life,” Ramesh then boldly asserted: “I have always tried to be like a man; to keep myself independent of others.” She concluded these incessant interrogations in remarking: “If I wished to, I could have any male partner I wanted.”⁸⁸³ That she chose not to, however, continued to vex the magazine.

Like her supposed gait, sexual ambivalence happened to also be reflected in Ramesh's clothing as it continued to evolve further into the decade. Though at the onset of her popularity, her televisual performances saw her donning forward-looking, glamorous outfits like those worn by Googoosh, by the mid-1970s, she seemed more at ease with wearing less fashionable – albeit western – clothing that might prompt others to perceive her as less feminine than her peers. Though

⁸⁸³ “Ramesh: dokhtari bigāneh bā Ramesh,” *Zan-e Ruz*, February 2, 1973.

by no means did she dress outside Euro-American sartorial standards like her peers within the more traditional musical genres of Iran, Ramesh's star persona nonetheless seemed dismissive of the notion that one need constantly abide by the changing tides of fashion.

Popular culture, however, remained evermore quizzical about the singer's progressively unfashionable choices of dress. A *Zan-e Ruz* feature focused on the star's sartorial choices even disdainfully cast Ramesh's style as being "*ommoli*." In the feature, Ramesh explained away her "*ommoli*" clothing in maintaining that her new style was merely based on the vintage fashions of the West, where the "lady-like or grandmotherly style has now come into fashion." Going on to invite the youth to similarly adopt this *ommoli*-style, she remarked that "the time has come for youth to try on these old clothing and try to be like the chic people of thirty years ago; the style of those who are now grandmothers." Visually accentuating her staunch support for what many might have considered unfashionable, the accompanying photograph of the piece saw her standing atop an old Mercedes Benz, dressed in a white gown covering her entire body and adorned with a pearl necklace and the bouffant hairdo of old.⁸⁸⁴

Though not a drastic digression from modern beauty standards, Ramesh's steady stylization as a performer dismissive of fashion-forward norms was nonetheless noticeable. Despite also admitting that much of wardrobe came from abroad, her style was still dissimilar to stars of her ilk, who often appeared on stage dressed in the latest western fashions. This, in turn, encouraged observers to point to Ramesh's style being radically unfeminine. The quintessence of such "unfeminine" styles happened to be Ramesh's insistence of wearing trousers in her televised appearances. So supposedly unfeminine was this preference that *Zan-e Ruz* once boldly surmised that Ramesh must possess "such ugly legs" that she simply "does not dare to perform in the short

⁸⁸⁴ "Ramesh va mod-e ahd-e buq," *Zan-e Ruz*, June 28, 1975.

dresses” characteristics to so many other television stars.⁸⁸⁵ Even the weekly readers of *Zan-e Ruz* seemed to notice Ramesh’s more conservative fashion choices. A reader once even wrote to the magazine to gripe about Ramesh’s appearance, claiming that the star “does not even try to express femininity or delicacy in her clothes.” The reader especially pointed to Ramesh’s “deliberate and fanatical” insistence on “wearing trousers in every single television appearance. In so doing, the reader claimed, Ramesh “thus deprives herself of the beauty and grace she is supposed to possess.” She then reprimanded Ramesh’s appearances for being “monotonous, crude, and exhausting.”⁸⁸⁶

While Ramesh gradually embraced the androgyny of her persona, her adamant refusal to look “feminine” as per contemporary female beauty standards continued to pester both the media and audiences. Trousers, after all, were perceived as too masculine. They symbolized a de-sexualization of the female figure, or as the author Richard Curle had proclaimed in 1949, they embodied the dress of the “soured type of spinster.”⁸⁸⁷ This, as we have seen, was an accusation similarly attributed to Ramesh in 1973. Trousers were perceived as a rejection of “traditional forms of femininity.”⁸⁸⁸ As such, the attire remained an outlier from contemporary beauty standards. Though Googoosh had also appeared on television donning trousers in the form of denim jeans, she had merely worn them when it was still perceived to be in fashion. In contrast, Ramesh had not worn trousers – be it jeans or otherwise – as a matter of fashion, but as one of preference.

The distinction between these two stars’ approach to style was best exemplified in *Zan-e Ruz*’s 25 October 1975 feature on the new Iranian fad for jeans. When interviewed by the magazine, Googoosh immediately distanced herself from the attire, despite having appeared in it

⁸⁸⁵ “Ramesh,” *Zan-e Ruz*, December 27, 1975.

⁸⁸⁶ “Leyla Foruhar,” *Zan-e Ruz*, November 27, 1976.

⁸⁸⁷ Richard Curle, *Women: An Analytical Study* (Watts and Co., London, 1947), 102.

⁸⁸⁸ Zoi Arvanitidou and Maria Gasouka, “Construction of Gender through Fashion and Dressing,” *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 4 (October 1, 2013), 113.

just months prior. “In truth, the jean is a coarse fabric,” she told the magazine; “in other words, it is too masculine.” Because of its purportedly masculine qualities, Googoosh remarked that jeans could “damage female delicacy.” Added to that, she claimed, was that “the fashion for jeans has been done away with in favor of more romantic vintage designs to revitalize delicacy in a woman.” According to Googoosh, since the western fashion system seemed to have moved on from jeans, there was no reason for women to risk their “female delicacy” in wearing them. In contrast stood Ramesh’s attitude toward the attire. Immediately following Googoosh’s remarks, Ramesh tacitly decried her peer’s purely fashion-centric opining. After reaffirming her appreciation for jeans, Ramesh commented that fashion leaders were “intent to declaim something as out of fashion and another piece of clothing as in fashion so as to further sales.” Jean, she proclaimed, were instead so ageless that they could provide “shelter” to people from the temperamentality of supposed fashion leaders. She classified jeans as “anti-fashion” (*zed-e mod*), asserting that jeans “freed common people from having to subsist as the mere playthings for fashion-producers.”⁸⁸⁹

As it turned out, Ramesh’s beliefs that jeans provided “shelter” from the fashion system were not unfounded. As Valeria Manzano remarks, jeans possessed a distinct ideological ambivalence in contrast to other sartorial articles. Some could wear it “to construct their senses of desirable femininity,” while others could likewise don it as “anti-fashion item par excellence.”⁸⁹⁰ Unlike sartorial items within the fashion system, jeans did not allow for the social categorization of its wearers. It was a nonfashion, and as such, it transcended “gender, class, race, age, nation, religion, [and] education.”⁸⁹¹ On account of its “semiotic richness,”⁸⁹² the denim jean also allowed

⁸⁸⁹ “Hamleh-ye jin be komod-e lebās-hā,” *Zan-e Ruz*, October 25, 1375.

⁸⁹⁰ Valeria Manzano, “The Blue Jean Generation: Youth, Gender, and Sexuality in Buenos Aires, 1958–1975,” *Journal of Social History* 42, no. 3 (March 1, 2009): 669.

⁸⁹¹ John Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2010), 1.

⁸⁹² *Ibid.*, 5.

its wearer to “hide oneself”⁸⁹³ in public. As such, jeans proved an especially appropriate attire for those disinclined toward Iranian modernity.

Though star culture had already helped popularize jeans in the western world, the blue jean’s popularity in Iran only soared in late 1975 after singers like Ramesh, Googoosh, Neli, and Giti began donning denim-based outfits in their televisual appearances.⁸⁹⁴ Yet, while many of the stars soon disavowed the trousers in the name of the latest western fashion, Ramesh kept to the style. This, in turn, helped to further establish the attire as casual clothing, as something to be worn outside the fashion system, and accordingly, as an appropriate article of urban nonfashion. As it happened, the jean as nonfashion caused a particular sensation among the younger segments of the population thus far reserved from complying with the western aesthetic markers touted by the official culture. So much so that jeans were soon taken up by traditionally-inclined schoolgirls as a way to shrewdly protest concomitant uniforms.

As *Zan-e Ruz* reported in its 25 October 1975 issue, that year saw schoolgirls ill at ease with the state mandated school uniform wear jeans to school on a daily basis as a means through which “to free themselves from the bondage of the school uniform.” After all, if the purpose of the uniform mandate was to inculcate unwilling students to embrace modernity, then jeans presented themselves as thoroughly modern articles of fashion, despite also being nonfashion. This perhaps explained precisely why school officials ultimately yielded to their female students’ pervasive choice of dress, acquiescing to the jeans as the *de facto* uniform from then onward. The appropriation of jeans among schoolgirls thus came to mark, in *Zan-e Ruz*’s words, “the defeat of the standard school uniform.” As the magazine also hinted, religious segments of the population

⁸⁹³ Ibid., 14.

⁸⁹⁴ “Hamleh-ye jin be komod-e lebās-hā,” *Zan-e Ruz*, October 25, 1375.

seemed especially happy with the adoption of the jean among their daughters.⁸⁹⁵ The popularity of this nonfashion among both modern and traditional segments allowed their daughters to finally attend classes without having to bare their legs, or having to face the humiliation of wearing trousers under their mandated skirts.

Ironically, even the so-called “jeaning”⁸⁹⁶ of Iran had also happened to have come by way of the western fashion system. Initially popularized by bohemian and beatnik subcultures as anti-establishment attire, only to be later subsumed by the Hollywood system and absorbed into the fashion system,⁸⁹⁷ the jean was no more Iranian than the pixie haircut popularized by Googoosh. Nevertheless, its appropriation in Iran occurred in a manner – and within a community – quite divergent from that which saw the Googooshi haircut adopted. As it happened, only a star whose persona also revolved around non-normativity and nonfashion could have helped popularize such a style among such a distinctive segment of the population.

Indeed, though Ramesh also appropriated western styles throughout her career, hers nonetheless diverged from the styles donned by her peers. Her outfits were less sexualized, less disposed to the changing tide of fashion. That she did not comply with the fashion-forward tendencies of her peers allowed her styles to stand out from those adopted by others within the Iranian star system. Despite still being entrenched in modernity, Ramesh’s star persona, centered as it was on non-normativity, allowed her to wander away from the aesthetic expectations accorded to other female stars on her level. Just as well, the ambivalence surrounding her sexual orientation happened to safeguard her from expectations concerning the “delicate” female figure or the

⁸⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁶ Beverly Gordon, “American Denim: Blue Jeans and Their Multiple Layers of Meaning,” in *Dress and Popular Culture*, ed. Patricia A. Cunningham and Susan Voso Lab, 1st edition (Bowling Green, Ohio: Popular Press 1, 1991), 34.

⁸⁹⁷ Ibid., 34.

correspondingly “delicate” female dress. This, in turn, allowed Ramesh’s star to remain at ease with her more conservative – albeit western – sartorial choices. This luxury, in turn, gave way to her helping popularize a nonfashion taken up as evenly by the modern segments of society as the more traditional constituencies. As influential as Googoosh had been in popularizing western fashions among her fandom, therefore, the anti-fashion Ramesh proved equally influential in popularizing nonfashion among the public.

Undressing the Normative: The Case of Fereydoun Farrokhzad

In stark contrast to Ramesh stood Fereydoun Farrokhzad, an artist that happened to incite hostility from both the official culture as well as the contemporaneous oppositional culture. Much of the hostility felt toward Farrokhzad came on account of the greater taboo accorded to the “non-normative males,” of which Farrokhzad’s comportment also mirrored.⁸⁹⁸ Indeed, Farrokhzad’s case illustrated the rare instance wherein both the traditional and modernist cultures in Iran came to share like insecurities on account of a star’s non-normativity.

As Afsaneh Najmabadi examines, neither the more traditional classes nor the emerging urban middle class were receptive to a character like Fereydoun Farrokhzad’s, one whose flamboyance and ostentatious styles came front and center in his performances.⁸⁹⁹ Ever the provocateur, Farrokhzad refused to comply with either the official or the traditional culture’s normative standard for male behavior during his televised performances. This was especially conspicuous with respect to his physicality on stage. Unlike contemporaneous male performers, Farrokhzad went against the male performative standard, which, at the time, stipulated male performers to stand erect while simply singing elegiacally to a camera, without any complementary

⁸⁹⁸ Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Professing Selves: Transsexuality and Same-Sex Desire in Contemporary Iran* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2013),133.

⁸⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

modes of expression. Farrokhzad, instead, danced and motioned expressively with his arms throughout his televised performance. He even dared kiss *nāmahram* female singers on the cheek on national television, challenging taboos even further by also kissing male singers on the cheek in a similar manner. Even his dress, adorned as it sometimes was by shiny sequin suits, deviated from the standard of the modern, male uniform.

At the time, “modern manhood” was still “represented by the short haired, clean shaven, strong-jawed figures” of the urban milieu, an aesthetic marker meant to distinguish modern Iranians from the “full beards customary among the older generation and the Shi’ite ulama.”⁹⁰⁰ That template had made few inroads since its standardization. Despite the youth movement in Iran beginning to style their hairs and beards longer and unbuttoning their collars further in emulation of the counter-culture movements in the West, those styles were still perceived as outliers deviating from the norm. Farrokhzad, however, paid little attention to the aesthetic standards of modern manhood. His was an idiosyncratic style, which happened to spoof every other strict marker for masculinity. His aforementioned sequin suits, for instance, mocked “the male suit”⁹⁰¹ in both form and function. While the male suit’s symbolic function was to exert “considerable force over the bodies of men in a wide range of occupational setting”⁹⁰² by distancing the male body “from connotations of the body and eroticism,”⁹⁰³ Farrokhzad’s comportment on stage, especially while performing, defied those said limitations – constantly on the move, constantly expressing affect, and thereby continually defying the suit’s purpose of “erasing the sexed specificity of the individual male body.”⁹⁰⁴

⁹⁰⁰ Hendelman-Baavur, *Creating the Modern Iranian Woman*, 198.

⁹⁰¹ Joanne Entwistle, “The Dressed Body,” in *Body Dressing*, by Joanne Entwistle and Elizabeth Wilson, *Dress, Body, Culture* (Oxford ; New York: Berg, 2001), 40.

⁹⁰² *Ibid.*

⁹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

The same could be said for his photographed demeanor off-stage, such as the publicity photographs of him recording songs in studio or at public gatherings. In these, his shirt was often seen unbuttoned, large swathes of chest hair protruding from a shirt meant to conceal it. His characteristic, well-groomed mustache even added to this defiance, making him stand out as being neither so entirely in tune with the official culture's ultra-modernity to have it shaved, nor the opposition's anti-modernity to let it grow. Even Farrokhzad's well-managed sartorial style, therefore, symbolized an explicit defiance against the binary of traditional and modern.

But more controversial was his performative style, especially when coupled with rumors surrounding his sexual orientation. Apart from their aesthetic demarcations, what the modernized, upper classes shared with the traditional classes was their retention of heteronormativity as the normative standard for masculinity – at least in public. While traditional classes did, in fact, allow for feminized male expressiveness like Farrokhzad's kind of dancing in private gatherings such as weddings, they did not maintain the same acceptance when this was expressed in a space as public as the television screen. As for the upper classes, their public notion of masculinity was also equated with masculine restraint. Suited, modern masculinity necessitated inhibition and the curbing of impulses. Nothing that Farrokhzad did on stage, however, was restrained.

As such, Farrokhzad's flaunting of private modes of expression rendered him the epitome of the effeminized *gharbzadeh* male to the traditional classes, all while the upper classes came to perceive him "as a modernist's nightmare of the repulsions and seductions of a repressed past." He was what these latter classes "had hoped to have buried in the past and in lower classes – that style of male dancing [and] entertaining that was deeply marked by gender and sexual inappropriateness and transgression."⁹⁰⁵ These fears were further intensified by the fact that many

⁹⁰⁵ Najmabadi, *Professing Selves*, 141.

among the modern elite also harbored “nonmasculine” tendencies, but in private. A public figure like Farrokhzad, performing as he did on a national stage, therefore threatened their explicit publicization of masculine modernity as the ideal.

As such, Farrokhzad brought to national television “the world of nonnormative males” that by then was only conspicuous in the “café entertainment scene and some of the more gritty nightclubs”⁹⁰⁶ frequented by the traditional classes, or the private “elite parties” of “high society.”⁹⁰⁷ What was more was that he did so deliberately, declaring that it was his “duty” as a talk show host on national television to bring to light discrepancies within the culture.⁹⁰⁸ Much like his aesthetic comportment, his persona also seemed to revolve around challenging the double standards of modern Iranian society – as for example when he boldly appeared on the cover of the 22 November 1972 issue of *Zan-e Ruz* naked from the waist up, with his dog’s paws encircled around his waist, all while he smirked at the camera.⁹⁰⁹ When the said cover prompted the expected uproar from readers, he went on to justify the pictorial by claiming that he wished merely to expose a double standard: “Why is it acceptable for magazines to feature nude women on their covers,” he challenged, “and not the male body?” Further challenging his audience, he went on to remark that “those protesting” his cover photograph “likely possess sexual complexes.” As far as he believed, he said, he had done nothing wrong; “it is [the protesting readers’] minds that are unnatural.” As for his *raison d’etre*: “I want to amend those minds,” he said.⁹¹⁰

The non-normativity of Farrokhzad’s persona was deliberate. It was a means to challenge contemporary society, to expose its double standards, and idealistically, to help reform it. When

⁹⁰⁶ Ibid., 128.

⁹⁰⁷ Ibid., 133.

⁹⁰⁸ “Farrokhzad, to cheqadr lusi!,” *Zan-e Ruz*, December 9, 1972.

⁹⁰⁹ “Man, man, man!,” *Zan-e Ruz*, December 2, 1972.

⁹¹⁰ “Farrokhzad, to mard hasti?,” *Zan-e Ruz*, December 16, 1972.

Zan-e Ruz alluded to the public's belief that Farrokhzad's "movements and gestures are seen as unmanly and feminine," he similarly called the public into question. "We are no longer living in a society split between the male and female domain; this is not the era of Rostam and Sohrab anymore," he said, before going on to say that "men in this era do not necessarily have to be wrestlers or warriors... I do not want to merely act manly with fake masculine gestures." Furthering his challenge to the public, he then alluded to the traditional segments in society that also danced in similar ways on private occasions, but did not dare admit so in public. "I live in a country," he continued, "where even its most fanatical manly men dance the most vulgar kinds of female dances during festivities in their private circles." If this did not detract from their manliness, he asked, why then should it detract from his?⁹¹¹

When his buttoned-down outfits off-stage were similarly criticized by *Zan-e Ruz* readers as being "rude and unruly," he first defended himself in saying that buttoning down one's shirt was not a matter of exhibitionism but comfort, before once again taking exception to the accusation in saying, "I look at what is above the buttons; I look at the mind!" – thereby suggesting protesting readers to do the same. In an interview conducted by *Tamasha*, he shed further light on the persona he wished to project. Mentioning his education in Germany as a political scientist, he remarked that he did not want to be perceived as a mere entertainer, but as an intellectual on the televisual stage. "If I can help guide my audience toward cultivating themselves," he said, "then I would not consider anything I have done a mistake."⁹¹²

Farrokhzad's pedagogy, however, did him no favors. His non-normative method of cultivating his audience happened to also conflict with NITV's own pursuit of cultivation; that being NITV's intent to bring the Iranian television demographic's tastes into proximity with that

⁹¹¹ Ibid.

⁹¹² "Fereydu-e Farrokhzad," *Tamasha*, July 12, 1973.

of Euro-American high culture. Although Farrokhzad continued to harness a large following – much on account of his having originated the musical variety show format on Iranian television – he was also the subject of constant mockery and revulsion not just by the official media and the public, but also his peers. The singer Aref – whose style and demeanor complied categorically with the criteria for the restrained modern man of a modern Iran – once told *Zan-e Ruz* outright that he “vehemently despises Fereydoun Farrokhzad.”⁹¹³

The media was similarly unkind, mocking Farrokhzad constantly “for his self-presentation” as well as his rumored sexuality. The kind of rumor-fueled, derogatory publicity that had accompanied Farrokhzad since he first appeared on television was best exemplified by the caricatures the satirical magazine *Towfiq* continually published, lampooning Farrokhzad’s “womanly” characteristics. One such instance featured a caricature of a *luti* arguing with the singer Susan, while Farrokhzad stood villainously behind her. In the comic, the *luti* asks Susan why she allows Farrokhzad to kiss her and not him, only for Susan to respond: “Because he is one of us!”⁹¹⁴ Another lampooned Farrokhzad by drawing him as a male dancer, with the accompanying caption simply noting that he is “available.”⁹¹⁵

Irrespective of the constant mockery accorded to him by both public and media, Farrokhzad’s variety shows nonetheless proved immensely successful each time they were allowed to air. The shows were admittedly more original than others also featured on NITV, not just featuring Farrokhzad’s idiosyncratically biting humor, but also reliably introducing new and young stars to the public on a regular basis – with each *nowsetāreh* (new star) handpicked by Farrokhzad himself. The spectacle of Farrokhzad ably performing alongside the stars was also an added boon.

⁹¹³ “Az ki yā chi delkhorin?,” *Zan-e Ruz*, August 26, 1972.

⁹¹⁴ “Susan, khānandeh...,” *Towfiq*, 1970.

⁹¹⁵ Najmabadi, *Professing Selves*, 141.

These programs were regularly “watched by millions”⁹¹⁶ and among the numerous *nowsetārehs* introduced to the viewing audience were Shohreh, Neli, and Nooshafarin, Morteza, and Faramarz Aslani.

In spite of this success, the expansion of television nonetheless coincided with NITV producing fewer and fewer shows featuring Farrokhzad as host. To be sure, through to the end of the decade, Farrokhzad’s appearances on television became less and less regular. His weekly shows were gradually rescheduled into monthly shows, and later, into sporadic special events. What doubtless fueled NITV’s decision to feature him less frequently was not just his non-standard comportment on television, but also the never-ending rumors about his sexual preferences following his second divorce in 1974. Following his first of many televisual dismissals and subsequent rehiring, Farrokhzad himself revealed to *Zan-e Ruz* in 1972 that criticisms about his allegedly “dancing like a woman” and kissing both male and female guests comprised parts of the reason his shows were cancelled as often as they were.⁹¹⁷

Considering the technological determinist viewpoints held by NIRT officials at the time, it can be construed that Farrokhzad’s capacity to utilize the televisual medium “to reveal areas of group activity that might otherwise be private” seemed to have been regarded as a determinant that might “undermine [the] slow, staggered socialization processes”⁹¹⁸ toward which NITV endeavored. It was the televisual Farrokhzad that seemed to have been the problem. After all, NIRT continued to utilize Farrokhzad’s talents on a weekly basis when it came to radio. Yet, Farrokhzad’s screen persona – impetuous and provocative, exposing the private attitudes of both

⁹¹⁶ Breyley, “Hope, Fear and Dance Dance Dance,” 221.

⁹¹⁷ “Man hamisheh dar tanhāyi...,” *Zan-e Ruz*, July 1, 1972.

⁹¹⁸ Joshua Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior: The Electronic Media on Social Behavior* (New York, NY.: Oxford University Press USA, 1985), 60.

modern and non-modern elites to the nation at large – was deemed inappropriate to the televisual medium.

Perceived as threat to the image of the modern upper classes, and remaining a source of shock to the traditional classes who opted to watch his programs despite their misgivings, Farrokhzad's appearances on television were thereby curbed. Further facilitating this was that the expansion of television had brought along new, more normative stars that could be featured in Farrokhzad's stead. One such host was Parviz Qarib-Afshar, a variety show host more in tune with its heteronormative standards, and one similarly educated in the West like Farrokhzad. Qarib-Afshar happened to not only be similarly well-dressed, but he also happened to compose himself both on and off television with the expected masculine restraint. The same was true for NITV's rising crop of stars. Among the rising stars of the decade were male performers that performed the pop-oriented songs Farrokhzad was known for, while seeming more compliant with the heteronormativity expected of them.

Although these new male stars – Ebi, Dariush, and Sattar among them – deviated slightly from those previously-set standards for masculinity, they did not deviate as radically as Farrokhzad for their stylistic readjustments to prompt much uproar. Ebi, Sattar, and Dariush, for instance, managed to ease the dominant culture into accepting longer hair and beards as part and parcel with 1970s masculinity, but they did so by fitting in to other heteronormative parameters standardized for males.

Sattar, well-noted for his “weighty” sartorial style when appearing on television, never once traded in his male uniform of the formal suit and trousers for gaudy outfits inappropriate to male heteronormativity.⁹¹⁹ His performance style was likewise weighty, often seeing him shut his

⁹¹⁹ “Sattār,” *Zan-e Ruz*, January 17, 1976.

eyes when performing his downcast songs.⁹²⁰ Owing to his popularity, even Sattar's facial hair was adopted as a distinctive style for Iranian males soon after. This was the *rish-e sattāri* (the Sattari Beard), characterized by a thin strip of hair extending from each side of the hairline to the jaw, with an equally thin mustache adjoining each side, marked even more by a sharp line dividing the beard from the rest of the face.

The equally popular Ebi and Dariush performed in similar fashions as well, their performative restraint mirroring their sartorial styles, and conveying a normatively masculine affect as opposed to a radically divergent kind. Their popularity also prompted emulation amidst the television-viewing demographic, which, in turn, attested to both their star and influence. One reader from Bojnurd, Khorasan, for instance, wrote to *Zan-e Ruz* in April 1977 so as to note that boys in her city “had done all in their power to emulate Sattar, Ebi, and Morteza, overtaking the streets with their hirsute head and faces, and standing at every intersection.”⁹²¹

By the time Shahram Shabpareh also attained full-scale, national stardom in mid-1976, the stars of Ebi, Dariush, and Sattar had somewhat alleviated the taboos surrounding longer hair and beards. Sporting a similar hairstyle to his male peers, the style that made Shabpareh stand out seemed to comprise the same elements that had made Farrokhzad stand out so negatively. As opposed to his predecessor, however, Shabpareh's open-collared shirts and more expressive modes of dance were not met with the same outcry as Farrokhzad's trademark style had. Some of this owed to his close collaborations with Leila Forouhar, which had, in turn, incited rumors about the two's relationship with one another, thus alleviating any public misgivings about Shabpareh also veering from heteronormative standards.⁹²² Another significant factor contributing to Shabpareh's

⁹²⁰ Susan Ardakāni, “Az honarparasti tā botparasti,” *Zan-e Ruz*, July 2, 1977.

⁹²¹ “Geleh-ye dokhtarān-e bojnurdi,” *Zan-e Ruz*, May 7, 1977.

⁹²² “Leyla Forouhar,” *Zan-e Ruz*, March 4, 1978.

imperviousness to rumor culture pertaining to his sexuality, however, came on account of the evolving standards for the masculine figure in the late decade. By then, Shabpareh's performative style was not regarded as deviant like Farrokhzad's had at the height of his stardom. After all, Farrokhzad had introduced the public to his persona at the end of the 1960s, making him stand out in an ever-normative milieu. Farrokhzad had also been a brasher performer, inviting controversy at every turn. Shabpareh, instead, simply kept to his vocation as a popular singer of upbeat songs, and in contrast to the outspoken Farrokhzad, kept his distance from public discourse.

Pop-prop: The Star and Pahlavi Propaganda

Public discourse, however, happened to be written into the NIRT contracts signed by the stars. In the ever-increasingly state-controlled artistic milieu of the 1970s, NIRT had also come to serve as a record label upon its establishment, ensuring both publicity and radio-televisual exposure to those stars that opted to sign with them. Since stardom could not be cultivated without such exposure, most stars were thereby compelled to sign with NIRT's record label. The previous decade's stars like Aref, Mahasti, Giti, Ramesh, Homeyra, Puran, and even Googoosh – following her commitment to host *Cheshmak* in December 1972 – were the first to come under the NIRT banner. As the star system continued to grow, new stars like Akram Bana'i (sister to Puri Bana'i), Martik, Sattar, Ebi, Daryush, Shahram Shabpareh, Leila Forouhar, Neli, and Shohreh also joined their ranks. In turn, they came to form what was billed by *Tamasha* as “the National Radio and Television Singers” troupe.⁹²³

Although these stars already embodied the modern styles also encouraged by the Pahlavi state, the star system's association with the state's ideological apparatus became even more closely bound when, upon signing their NIRT contracts, these stars happened also to be put to the service

⁹²³ “Tarāneh-hā-ye irāni,” *Tamasha*, December 21, 1972.

of trumpeting the Pahlavi state's political agendas. Primarily popular on account of the day-to-day exposure facilitated to them by the NIRT's extensive media control, the stars' supplementary occupation became the amassment of popular support for the Pahlavi state and its causes. Trotted out to perform in urban centers, rural townships, and neighboring countries for makeshift commemorative events, the stars were to buttress the state's messages with glamour and entertainment.

One such occasion was the White Revolution's ten-year anniversary. In a 11 January 1973 report, published in *Tamasha*, it was reported that NIRT artists had been "dispatched" to various areas in the country "to participate in the happiness and joy experienced by the country's people on this auspicious event."⁹²⁴ The report likewise implied that these artists were not participating on their own volition, but were rather encouraged to do so by "officials within the NIRT." Indeed, *Tamasha's* caption under a picture depicting the meeting between NIRT officials and the organization's troupe of musicians was telling: "At the lunching table, Mr. Mahmud Ja'fariyan, the deputy director for the National Radio and Television organization," the caption read, "speaks to its artists about their *obligation* to participate in the Revolution's commemorative festivities." In consequence, twelve different groupings of stars were dispatched to twelve divergent routes throughout the country. These groups comprised both traditional musicians and modern pop stars, ranging from Mohammad Reza Shajarian to Googoosh, with a tour spanning eight days and constituting both urban and rural areas throughout the country.

Even makeshift events merely fabricated by the Pahlavi state obliged the stars to participate. One such event was the state's celebration of the 1953 Iranian coup d'état that had ousted popular leader Mohammad Mosaddeq, dubbed since as "the National Uprising of August

⁹²⁴ "Sherkat-e fa'alāneh-ye honarmandān-e rādiyo televiziyon dar bozorgdāsht-e daheh-ye enqelāb," *Tamasha*, January 11, 1973.

19th.” As it had done with the White Revolution celebrations, the state again obliged stars to tour the country to further legitimate its concocted holiday. Stars both old and new were thus dispatched, from Marziyeh to Marjan and Mahasti to pop star Shahbal Shabpareh.⁹²⁵ Googoosh’s absence on the list did not come as a surprise either. As it happened, she had just returned after having been shipped the week before to provide entertainment at another pseudo-diplomatic event; that being the seventieth birthday of Tunisian president Habib Bourguiba. To avoid any presumptions that Googoosh had attended this event on her own volition, *Tamasha* once more reminded readers that the NIRT had “dispatched” the star to Tunisia, a gift for which the Tunisian president “expressed satisfaction.”⁹²⁶

Indeed, the dispatchment of the “the National Radio and Television Singers” troupe to allied countries became part and parcel with Pahlavi diplomacy in this era. Following the Shah’s agreement in late 1972 to aid the United States’ war effort in Vietnam, stars like Puran were even dispatched to war-torn Vietnam to “provide entertainment to the troops,” akin to Bob Hope’s like efforts for American servicemen.⁹²⁷ The last such occasion of pop cultural state diplomacy saw a select group of NIRT stars – comprising Sattar, Simin Ghanem, and Ramesh – dispatched to Afghanistan in commemoration of Afghan independence in July 1977.⁹²⁸ Just months later, both countries were to experience upheavals that dissipated even the idea of a star system.

Such was the Faustian bargain entailing stardom in Pahlavi Iran. With stardom being unattainable without television and radio exposure, and with both radio and television being state-controlled, exposure was thus only possible for these performers by contracting themselves with

⁹²⁵ “Sherkat-e fa’ālāneh-ye honarmandān-e rādiyo televiziyon dar bozorgdāsht-e khātereh-ye derakhshān-e qiyām-e melli-ye 28 mordād,” *Tamasha*, August 16, 1973.

⁹²⁶ “Googoosh medāl-e darejeh yek-e farhang-e tunes nāyel shod,” *Tamasha*, August 16, 1973.

⁹²⁷ Homa Katouzian, Conversation with Homa Katouzian, December 2021.

⁹²⁸ “Hamsāyeh irāni,” *Zan-e Ruz*, July 23, 1977.

the state. Though doing so ensured exposure, it also obligated the stars to be at the state's behest. So as to continue to receive radio and televisual exposure, they were thus required to communicate the state's messages to their respective communities of admirers.

It was hence no surprise that, by the time sociopolitical uproar reached a fever pitch, the Iranian star system was also implicated as part of the Pahlavi system. No longer perceived as mere entertainers, they were also considered carriers of ideology. Even their western styles were conspiratorially perceived to be part of the Pahlavi media system's intent to whitewash all that was left of a less modern, more traditionally-inclined Iran. The stars, their styles, as well as their direct associations with the state rendered them ideal embodiments of the so-called "corruptions" of the Pahlavi state.

Faults in Our Stars: The Modern Woman as a Painted Doll

As we have thus far surveyed, the Pahlavi state maintained total control over Iran's modern media throughout its rule. Television and radio had both been coalesced into an entirely state-run operations following their merger in 1971, with cinema having also come under the banner of the official culture a year before. Similarly, the press's independence from the state was independence only in name. Subject to consistent regulation and censorship, the press could only function as a hammerer of state sentiment. As such, ideology and media were intimately bound together in Pahlavi Iran. Similarly bound to these two was the official popular culture that the state helped propagate on account of its control over both print and television, as well as its declared aim to utilize the latter media in "cultivating" the Iranian public. That which was unofficial could thus only subsist outside the demarcations of modern media, and outside the state's purview.

All while the Pahlavi state maintained its "hold over the Western-style media," such as "radio, television, and the press," it happened to overlook "the tremendous power of traditional

media,” through which those opposing Pahlavi modernity were disseminating their discontent.⁹²⁹ These traditional media were principally reliant on orality to get their message through, with word of mouth and “rumor” culture constituting their most essential components.⁹³⁰ The cassette-tape, which was a media object unimpeded by “the central hegemonic control of mass media”⁹³¹ was likewise rendered into an ideal and low-cost vessel with which to disseminate these oral messages quickly and to a large network of malcontent listeners.

In stark contrast to the media’s top-down control of “big media” – that being the press, radio, and television – the cassette-tapes and the photocopied communiques, which later fueled the Iranian Revolution in 1979, constituted what Annabelle Sreberny and Ali Mohammadi term “small media.”⁹³² On account of being decentralized as well as them not requiring expert technological *savoir-faire*, such small media were accessible to all. With their content powered by “charismatic leaders,” these “orally-oriented” media were made available to the discontented through “popular social, religious, and educational institutions,” and duly funded by the “traditional economic and professional formations” similarly uneasy with the ever-tightening grip of the Pahlavi state.⁹³³ As most of the written content were read out loud and communicated orally, the content of such small media was rendered into atemporal lectures of sorts, fraught with discontent toward the Pahlavi state and its “suffocation of indigenous Iranian culture.”⁹³⁴ Correspondingly, as Hamid Naficy notes, their rhetoric was principally based around “the narrative structure of Iranian oral and folk

⁹²⁹ Amir Taheri, *The Spirit of Allah: Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution* (Bethesda, Md: Adler & Adler Pub, 1986), 195.

⁹³⁰ Ibid.

⁹³¹ Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema, Volume 2: The Industrializing Years, 1941–1978* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2011), 415.

⁹³² Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi, *Small Media, Big Revolution*, xviii.

⁹³³ Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema, Volume 2*, 415.

⁹³⁴ Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi, *Small Media, Big Revolution*, 96.

traditions and the rhetorical, symbolic, and performative patterns of religious sermons, recitation, and mourning rituals – familiar to Iranians, literate or not.”⁹³⁵

Even though the opposition’s principal qualms did not pertain exclusively to the westernized styles encouraged by Pahlavi modernity, Islamic scholar Ali Shariati’s derision of the period’s “*gharbzadeh* woman” nonetheless happened to capture both the “popular as well as intellectual imagination” of the opposition.⁹³⁶ The demarcation and denigration of the westernized Iranian woman came to serve as a metonym for the opposition’s overarching critique concerning the Pahlavi state’s “excesses of modernization.”⁹³⁷ As Afsaneh Najmabadi remarks, “the *gharbzadeh* woman came to embody all at once all social ills: she was a super-consumer of imperialist/ dependent-capitalist/foreign goods; she was a propagator of the corrupt culture of the West; she was undermining the moral fabric of society; she was a parasite, beyond any type of redemption.”⁹³⁸

The term Shariati had actually coined for these women in his seminal 1970 lecture, *Fātemeh Fātemeh Ast* (Fateme is Fateme), which had by the mid-decade been disseminated and re-popularized by way of cassettes, was “*arusak-hā-ye farangi*” (western dolls). Such a woman, according to Shariati, comprised the “empty, made-up, and embellished” westernized Iranian woman that was made to look like “a chalk mannequin behind a shop window.”⁹³⁹ Having been given in the early years of television’s popularity, the content of Shariati’s lecture resounded even more forcefully in the late 1970s now that the allegedly “*gharbzadeh* women” of the resistance discourse was regularly publicized on television by virtue of the similarly attired Iranian stars.

⁹³⁵ Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema, Volume 2*, 418.

⁹³⁶ Afsaneh Najmabadi, “Hazards of Modernity and Morality: Women, State and Ideology in Contemporary Iran,” in *Women, Islam and the State*, ed. Deniz Kandiyoti (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1991), 65.

⁹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁹³⁹ Ali Shariati, *Fātemeh Fātemeh Ast* (1970), 47.

Even though *Fātemeh Fātemeh Ast*'s content was framed by Shi'ite imagery, Shariati's lecture did not constitute mere nativism. The lecture did not call for a return to an Islamic past; nor did it endeavor to pull western modernity to pieces. The polemic's bone of contention happened to point both to the Islamic clerisy's "rigidity" as well as the Pahlavi state's construal of modernity.⁹⁴⁰ Shariati's central argument was that women need not imitate the imagined western women, nor must they return to conservative, Islamic ideations of womanhood; that, rather, there was a third way. That third way, in Shariati's rhetoric, was the way of Fātemeh, granddaughter of the Prophet Muhammad and the daughter of the third Shi'ite Imam, Hoseyn. For Shariati, Fātemeh represented the liberated and independent-minded woman that all Iranian women had the potential to realize within themselves.

In the lecture, Shariati pointed to the fact that "the European woman we Iranians are familiar with today does not exist in Europe." Rather, that imagined European woman was one that "exists only in Iran." He further expounded on this notion by drawing attention to the Iran's "streets and alleys" as well as its "television, radio, and women's magazines" before reminding auditors that "the image that we identify as that of the European woman is one fabricated in Iran." The western woman as construed in Iran, he mentioned, was no more than "a national montage;" with the term "national" (*melli*) also subtly implying the top-down manner in which the image of the Europeanized woman had been especially pieced together by state media. Referring to *Zan-e Ruz* magazine directly, the French-educated Shariati declared that "the women seen on the covers of *Zan-e Ruz* do, in fact, exist in Europe," only with the caveat that "they are only recognized as 'women of the night,' and even that, only in specific places."⁹⁴¹ While that characterization could

⁹⁴⁰ Marcia K. Hermansen, "Fatimeh as a Role Model in the Works of Ali Shari'ati," in *Women And Revolution In Iran* (Routledge, 1983), 88.

⁹⁴¹ Shariati, *Fātemeh Fātemeh Ast*, 43.

most readily be construed as Shariati implying that the kind of woman appearing on western magazine covers was no more than a mere prostitute, the “woman of the night” label could have also been cast so as to characterize the likes of such women as entertainers that performed in night clubs and cabarets. Admittedly, the traditional mindset often equated the latter’s occupation with the former’s, but the distinction is nonetheless significant.

It is significant, because Shariati's polemic endeavored to remind Iranians that there were other kinds of European women worthy of emulation. “It seems,” he remarked, “like we are only allowed to identify with one particular strain of European woman; that being the sexualized kind we see in films, magazines, and on television.”⁹⁴² There were others, he mentioned, going on to praise the likes of a “sixteen-year-old European girl” who “opts to spend her entire life in the wilderness” to study wildlife as a scientific pursuit, and who, in turn, inspires a new generation to take up science as a vocation. He made mention of more personages, like the French mystic Madame Guyon and chemist Marie Curie, to emphasize that western women had indeed played much greater roles in society; that the contemporary female figure stood for more than what “the Faramarzis and Mas’udis” of Iran” – respectively, the editor of *Keyhan* and owner of *Ettelaat*, both of whom also enjoyed stints as members of parliament – “present to us: that image of a doll, existing solely as a plaything for Casanovas, and slaves to money, beautification, and jewelry.”⁹⁴³

The star system, Shariati mentioned, happened to typify and normalize this kind of woman. Though he did not mention any within the still-fledgling Iranian star system, he made certain to name the likes of international model Twiggy, Brigitte Bardot, Grace Kelly, as well as the Bond Girls of the James Bond Franchise, branding each as the “sacrificial lambs of the European culture industry.” Stars, he remarked, were no more than “the playthings and wind-up dolls of capitalism,”

⁹⁴² Ibid., 44.

⁹⁴³ Ibid., 45.

utilized only to devalue a woman's worth. This consumerist image of the woman, he claimed, was publicized by capitalist systems so as "to encourage consumption, to make people more dependent and thus to increase production," thereby rendering "the woman as a consumer."⁹⁴⁴ Their function was thereby to "whittle down human value to just clothing choices and bodily figures."⁹⁴⁵

All the same, despite a star system persisting in the western world, fueled as it was by consumerism and the reconfiguration of the woman as consumer, Shariati reminded listeners that also extant in these societies were other meritorious systems from which alternative sources of emulation for women could arise. As Shariati pointed out, however, this happened not to be the case in Iran. He intimated that he had "never once seen" these Iranian media "publish photos of female scholars from Cambridge, the Sorbonne, or Harvard" so as to elucidate to the Iranian audience precisely how scholarly women also made their living; how they went about their research, how they leaned over a desk "from day to night without movement" for the sake of a scholarly purpose.⁹⁴⁶ Iranian media did not highlight such a woman, he insisted, nor did they accentuate the fact that this scholarly woman was "the epitome of the contemporary woman" that this kind of woman was, in fact, "*shayesteh*."⁹⁴⁷ Though the term "*shāyesteh*" literally meant "praiseworthy," it was, more significantly, the Persian term used by *Zan-e Ruz* for its annual Teen Princess pageant. Shariati's purposeful placement of the word in quotation marks, therefore, further emphasized that the Iranian media's idea of a contemporary girl was tantamount to the contestants in *Zan-e Ruz*'s Teen Princess pageant.

⁹⁴⁴ Paidar, *Women and the Political Process*, 180.

⁹⁴⁵ Shariati, *Fātemeh Fātemeh Ast* (1970), 45.

⁹⁴⁶ Ali Shariati, *Fātemeh Fātemeh Ast*, 46.

⁹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Although Shariati blamed this warped view of contemporary womanhood on “neo-colonialism,”⁹⁴⁸ his concurrent criticisms pertaining to Iranian media seemed to signify that this new colonialism stemmed from within the country and not without. After all, Shariati’s rhetoric did not blame any imagined western power for publicizing the embellished, contemporary, so-called European women as figures to be emulated. Rather, he had laid culpability on media monopolists such as Abdolrahman Faramarzi and Abbas Mas’udi. figures who retained not only control over the press, but correspondingly maintained political ties with the state. The “colonists” that had sought to incentivize the modern Iranian women to imagine herself “a doll,” therefore, was not a westerner in Shariati’s polemic. Rather, the term “colonist” seemed to have served as a mere euphemism utilized by the author to point the blame inward. Those responsible for the creation of the so-called wind-up doll of an Iranian woman within Shariati’s polemic were not European colonialists, but Pahlavi modernists, whose “inferiority complex towards modern European and American culture” according to Homa Katouzian, had set the stage for its rapid modernization project, and correspondingly, the growing discontent of an ever-increasing number of the population.⁹⁴⁹

Most significantly, Shariati’s 1970 lecture with respect to how the modernized woman was viewed by the hegemonic system happened to be valid. As those within the opposition believed, “women’s emancipation” in Pahlavi Iran amount to “mere cosmetic changes.”⁹⁵⁰ While the formal rights of women had indeed been codified, especially following the White Revolution, the social value placed on women seemed not to have changed. While the adult women in migrant neighborhoods “had little chance to attend school or to gain skills from the past” due to the world-

⁹⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁹ Homa Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran: Despotism and Pseudo-Modernism, 1926-79* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1981), 337.

⁹⁵⁰ Paidar, *Women and the Political Process*, 213.

worn patriarchal traditions of their households, it is worth noting that such patriarchal – in fact, sexist – perspectives on women happened to also be shared by the modernists of the official culture as well.

Case in point was a running *Zan-e Ruz* feature in late 1972, seeking to gauge the male perspective on socially-ambitious women. Interviewing the leading intellectuals of the period, the principal question posed by the magazine was whether or not men found the socially-ambitious woman attractive. The series had been instigated by a letter to *Zan-e Ruz*, wherein the letter-writer had remarked that her husband had cheated on her with his secretary on account of his wife’s careerism. The feature therefore endeavored to see if the writer had been wrong to “neglect her womanliness” by following through with her career.⁹⁵¹ One in a long line of interlocuters was poet Ahmad Shamlou. The poet’s jarring answer to the query was symptomatic of the view shared by many within the high culture of 1970s Iran. Shamlou opined that a woman’s main preoccupation should be maintaining her “womanliness” – that is, she must work hard to “become more beautiful, more sensitive, and become better.” Shamlou remarked that “women who attempt to prove their value by acting like men are more like men than women,” and as such, they are of little use to men. A woman, Shamlou maintained, must remember that femininity takes “precedence over her choice to be a scientist or laborer.” He went on to say that it was a woman’s “beauty, delicacy, and pride” that defined her, and not her mental capacities. In turn, he concluded by declaring that “a woman must remain within the definition of femininity, not humanity.”⁹⁵²

Shamlou was not the only male intellectual that held such views regarding the modern woman. Other interlocuters went even further with their derision. Poet Nader Naderpour likened the Iranian woman to a see-saw, claiming that “as a woman’s knowledge improves, her beauty

⁹⁵¹ Farideh Golbu, “Shamlou: toro khodā faqat zan bāshid!,” *Zan-e Ruz*, October 28, 1972.

⁹⁵² *Ibid.*

degenerates.”⁹⁵³ Another feature saw the writer and NIRT radio-producer, Mehdi Soheyli, sermonize that “the woman who opts for education does not have the capacity for the spiritual aspects of life, but only the material.”⁹⁵⁴ The scientific woman, he later said, “merely wants to satisfy her material needs as opposed to her spiritual needs.” For him, science was only appropriate for women “if such a science is to stimulate their feminine spirits.” A kiss from a female scientist, he derided, “even tastes like physics and chemistry and history and biology and other sciences of stuff!” A woman who pursued knowledge, he concluded, could not help but “turn arrogant, unkind, and intolerable.” What Soheyli preferred was for women “to be the creators of a chic life” instead. So as to purvey this so-called chic life, he claimed, a woman must only be beautiful as opposed to knowledgeable. The following issue’s interview with a plastic surgeon predictably echoed a similar sentiment.⁹⁵⁵

Zan-e Ruz itself, which by dint of its very name sought to represent the contemporary Iranian women, regularly published like material that prioritized beauty over societal participation. While these features were often framed as interviews, the fact that alternative features contradicting such sexist viewpoints never saw publication further established that the emancipated woman of the late Pahlavi era was continually bogged down by such prejudicial perceptions. Both the men and women interviewed in *Zan-e Ruz* emphasized that the liberated woman’s concern should be first and foremost her beauty. As one feature hinted, disregard of one’s beauty could bring about infidelity from one’s husband; or, if said woman was still single, then she might never find a suitable match. If a woman had to choose between marriage and a career, these features correspondingly advised her that the former must remain the priority.⁹⁵⁶

⁹⁵³ Farideh Golbu, “Ku mard-e lavand?,” *Zan-e Ruz*, November 4, 1972.

⁹⁵⁴ Farideh Golbu, “Hattā buseh-hā-ye zan-e dāneshmand...,” *Zan-e Ruz*, December 2, 1972.

⁹⁵⁵ Farideh Golbu, “Zan-o elm-o lavandi,” *Zan-e Ruz*, December 9, 1972.

⁹⁵⁶ “Post-e goli,” *Zan-e Ruz*, March 21, 1970.

Interviews with contemporary stars also revealed that despite their westernized compartments, even these supposedly modern males expected their women to choose beauty and the home over their careers. Behruz Vosuqi, for instance, was quoted in October 1972 expressing disapproval for his potential wife working outside the home. “If I had perhaps been born in England,” he had said, “I might have easily accepted my wife working outside the home, or in the cinema as an actress, but I am an Iranian and that is that.”⁹⁵⁷ When director Ali Hatami was also interviewed, he too echoed similar sentiments, boasting that he had already forbidden his wife Zari Khoshkam from carrying on with her acting career.⁹⁵⁸

Such expectations for women were so widespread that even a social survey conducted by NIRT representative Ali Assadi also produced the same results. When asked “whether they would permit their wives to work outside the home,” both traditional and modernistic Iranians answered “a resounding no” to the question. As Assadi noted, “barely one-fifth of the men would sanction such behavior.”⁹⁵⁹ No feature, survey, or interview, however, cast as clear a light on the question of female participation within Iranian high society as did Mohammad Reza Shah’s interview with Oriana Fallaci in October 1973.

Despite having enacted the emancipation policies of the White Revolution and having likewise crowned his wife Farah as Empress, the Shah spared little with respect to his dismissal of the female sex. Prefacing his remark by proclaiming that women had “profited more than anyone else from my White Revolution” on account of the “equal rights and responsibilities” granted to them, he then claimed that “Nobody can influence me, nobody. Still less a woman.” Then, echoing the statements we have thus far read from the abovementioned *Zan-e Ruz* features, the Shah

⁹⁵⁷ “Sinemā va man,” *Zan-e Ruz*, October 21, 1972.

⁹⁵⁸ “Zari khoshkām,” *Zan-e Ruz*, October 21, 1972.

⁹⁵⁹ Ali Assadi and Marcello L. Vidale, “Survey of Social Attitudes in Iran,” *International Review of Modern Sociology* 10, no. 1 (1980): 80.

pronounced that “women are important in a man’s life only if they are beautiful and charming and keep their femininity.”⁹⁶⁰ No woman, he then remarked, “produced a Michelangelo or a Bach.” Not only that, but no one among the female sex “even produced a great chef.”⁹⁶¹

The same personage who had granted equal rights to women following the White Revolution concluded his remarks in saying that women had “produced nothing great, nothing!” He also suggested that no “woman capable of governing” could be found anywhere in the world. When Fallaci alluded to Golda Meir and Indira Gandhi as two particular persons that were governing their respective countries, the Shah brushed her off in saying “All I can say is that women, when they govern, are much harsher than men. Much crueler. Much more bloodthirsty. I am citing facts, not opinions. You are heartless when you have power... You are schemers, you are evil. All of you.”⁹⁶²

As evinced by the above instances, dominant social values in Iran still preferred to view – and indeed encourage – women to maintain their status as beautified objects as opposed to socially valued individuals. The allure of female stars on television likewise reinforced the association between glamour and social value. The disapproval of male stars and intellectuals likewise established that even high culture disapproved a working woman. Emancipation consequently became equated with the choice to ornament oneself, limited to the “hairstyles, clothes, and makeup” that “were combined to create different looks for different types of women and various feminine roles.” As Hendelman-Baavur notes, these ornamental choices were meant to elicit “a sense that women in Iran were part of an inclusive, universal female space,” wherein they could fashion their social identity “by taking several relatively simple steps to acquire a new style.”⁹⁶³

⁹⁶⁰ “The Shah of Iran: An Interview with Mohammad Reza Pahlevi,” *The New Republic*, December 1, 1973.

⁹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶² *Ibid.*

⁹⁶³ Hendelman-Baavur, *Creating the Modern Iranian Woman*, 291.

The paradox that Hendelman-Baavur looks past, however, lied in the fact that these new rights did not go beyond the freedom to self-decorate. After all, what value was there in voting rights if “elections were viewed as rigged?” And what value was there in the more liberal divorce laws provided if men still “finds ways to get around the newly liberalized laws governing family relationships?”⁹⁶⁴

Hence, despite the emancipated woman of this period being “presented with numerous often conflicting possibilities” with respect to her status in society, the concomitant values of her society nonetheless encouraged her to take the route toward beautification as opposed to professionalism.⁹⁶⁵ As per the media’s affirmations, the careerist route was indeed possible, but it happened to come with the caveat that such a woman might never find a suitable partner. If she were to follow “the path indicated in the mass media,” however – that is, to become “beautiful objects, fashionably dressed and made up” – not only would she heighten her chances of experiencing material happiness, but equally, such a choice would guarantee her ease with respect to having conformed to societal expectations.⁹⁶⁶

As Anne H. Betteridge noted in her ethnographic fieldwork, many of her interlocuters had “felt that the government was actively involved in encouraging” women to concern themselves solely with their physical appearances, thus bolstering “the image of the mindless woman.”⁹⁶⁷ When even those occupying the highest positions in the country did not shy from remarking that women – however emancipated – were no more than mere ornaments, it was no surprise that

⁹⁶⁴ Anne H. Betteridge, “To Veil or Not to Veil: A Matter of Protest or Policy,” in *Women And Revolution In Iran* (Routledge, 1983), 114.

⁹⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁷ Ibid.

Betteridge's interlocuters also believed that this was a role that the state actively "wished to foster."⁹⁶⁸

A lecture like Shariati's, pointing precisely to the paradoxical position into which the dominant culture had thrust the Iranian woman, thus happened to strike a nerve with the public. "The doll," the term used by Shariati, was soon used as a short-hand for all those displeased with the binary of choices presented to contemporary women. The objectification of women likewise became a rallying cry for even those without the discursive savvy of Shariati. The "leftists and nationalist groups" in the country also began to publicize parallel impressions, "parroting the notion of urban women as mindless followers of rampant western consumerism."⁹⁶⁹ So too did religious leaders. Directly influenced by Shariati, local clerics also began declaiming media like films, television, and magazines as being "responsible for the degradation of Iranian women as sex objects." These media, they claimed, habituated an individual to become "interested only in what a film star, or a dancer, or a singer ate for breakfast, what she wore, or who her husbands had been."⁹⁷⁰

This discourse even suffused the declarations of more noteworthy clerics like Ayatollah Khomeini and Ayatollah Shariatmadari. In making direct mention to the Shah's interview with Fallaci, Khomeini remarked that a country possessing a leader that thought in such terms was what precisely led women "to prostitution," reducing them to "the status of sexual objects."⁹⁷¹ Even the regularly less contentious Shariatmadari drafted a communique that alluded directly to the Iranian star system for "causing cultural degeneration and western deviance" by way of its "male clowns

⁹⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁹ Hendelman-Baavur, *Creating the Modern Iranian Woman*, 294.

⁹⁷⁰ Mary Elaine Hegland, "'The Village Women of Aliabad and the Iranian Revolution.' The Review of Iranian Political Economy & History 4, No. 1 (Fall 1980): 45.

⁹⁷¹ Betteridge, "To Veil or Not to Veil," 115.

and female harlots.”⁹⁷² As such, the “doll” as short-hand was appropriated almost immediately by the opposition movement. Soon, as we shall see in the next section, even state-media began appropriating the term, attempting to co-opt the resistance discourse by offering up the *nowkiseh* (nouveau riche) classes as its scapegoat.

Classicide/Filicide: Reappropriating the Resistance

As Todd Gitlin notes, “hegemonic ideology” is regularly maintained “by domesticating opposition, absorbing it into forms compatible with the core ideological structure.”⁹⁷³ Indeed, as per Stuart Hall’s description of hegemonical structures, in an effort to contain the resistance and furnish it with meanings in accordance with the official culture, resistance discourses gradually become enveloped within the dominant culture’s “field of meanings.”⁹⁷⁴ In so doing, the dominant culture manages to “reappropriate” and “redefine” the cultures of resistance conflicting with its overarching ideology.⁹⁷⁵ Indeed, following the spread of resistance discourses pitting the contemporary Iranian women as “dolls” and others within its culture as *gharbzadeh*, such discourses – alongside their distinctive terminology – were soon also co-opted into the dominant culture’s parlance. The official culture, however, could only co-opt these terms when an appropriate “folk devil” had, in fact, been designated for contemporary society; one to whom such labels could be affixed. As happened, a distinctive socio-economical problem soon provided fertile ground for such folk devils to be constructed. By the mid-1970s, the country’s increase in oil income, together with the state’s rising dependence on imports, as well as the country’s already-

⁹⁷² “Ayatollāh tāleqāni: āsār-e farhang-e este’māri rā bezodā’im,” *Javanan*, January 22, 1979.

⁹⁷³ Todd Gitlin, “Prime Time Ideology: The Hegemonic Process in Television Entertainment,” *Social Problems* 26, no. 3 (1979): 263.

⁹⁷⁴ Stuart Hall, “Culture, Media, and the ‘Ideological Effect,’” in *Mass Communication and Society*, ed. James Curran, Michael Gurevitch, and Janet Woollacott (London: Edward Arnold in association with the Open University Press, 1977), 343.

⁹⁷⁵ Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, (London ; New York: Routledge, 1979), 85.

stagnated agricultural industry steered Iran toward massive inflation. This “combination of inflation, shortages, and large and evident income-distribution inequities” likewise happened to further inflame the growing discontent within the country.⁹⁷⁶ The state, in turn, accepted no culpability with respect to the inflation crisis. Rather, in an attempt to steer blame away from the state, it begun blaming the high inflation on both “the speculative practices [of] ordinary traders and shopkeepers”⁹⁷⁷ as well as the newly-heeled “affluent societies”⁹⁷⁸ of the country – all despite the fact these affluent societies happened to have emerged precisely by dint of the state’s own modernization project.

Previously celebrated by the official culture for their modern occupations, modern lifestyles, and modern perspectives, this newly affluent class were now suddenly singled out as being largely responsible for inflation in the country. Soon not only was the term *nowkiseh* affixed to them, but also the terms hitherto utilized by the opposition toward the state. As mentioned previously, following the Shah’s announcement of a state-wide fight against inflation in August 1975, a new folk devil was thus fashioned from the *nowkiseh*. As the official culture soon made clear, it was these affluent classes that also happened to constitute the “painted dolls” and the “*gharbzadeh*” similarly reviled by the opposition. Side-by-side with its advertisements for western dresses, popular media like *Zan-e Ruz* suddenly began dedicating weekly editorials in lambasting the newly rich for their lifestyles. The lifestyles of the *nouveau riche*, the magazine explicated, did “not harmonize with the traditions and methods of Iranian society,” before also warning common readers that this “excessive class” might soon also “infiltrate the middle and even the lower

⁹⁷⁶ Nikki R. Keddie and Yann Richard, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 164.

⁹⁷⁷ Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 334.

⁹⁷⁸ William Shawcross, *The Shah’s Last Ride* (New York: Touchstone, 1989), 173.

classes,” exposing these classes to their excesses of “London or Italy-imported shoes and shocks” and habits for “land prospecting.”⁹⁷⁹

A few months after *Zan-e Ruz*’s warning, *Ettelaat* also ran a piece inciting an identical “moral panic.”⁹⁸⁰ The term, “moral panic” coined by Stanley Cohen was a concept used to describe the arbitrary instigation of fear, concern, and exaggerated reaction to a perceived threat or deviant behavior in a society. In turn, moral panics occur when a specific group is identified as a threat to societal values and interests. This identification is oft purveyed by the media, which plays a significant role in publicizing the perceived threat, sensationalizing the issue and presenting it in a manner that might generate public fear and anxiety. In regard to the abovementioned *Ettelaat* article, the paper thus co-opted the term “*farangi mo ’āb*” so as to point to the newly rich as the newly designated “folk devil” of society. The 20 February 1976 edition of the state-regulated newspaper published a piece warning those located in downtown Tehran that the *farangi mo ’āb* was attempting to invade lower Tehran’s spaces as well. Now that “they have exhausted their patience on their own expensive restaurants in northern Tehran,” the article claimed, “the *farangi mo ’āb* have begun to make their way to the cafes and old coffeeshouses of south Tehran.” These westernized northern Tehranis, the article mentioned, did not even know how to eat a kebab properly, but there they nonetheless were, now attempting to blight “traditional” lower Tehran with their excesses.⁹⁸¹ Through to the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the derogatory characterization of the *nowkiseh* did not let up, intensifying to the degree that even a tabloid like *Javanan* joined in on the public calumny, going so far as insinuating that the *nowkiseh* classes were

⁹⁷⁹Majid Davāmi, “Nowkiseh-hā (the newly rich),” *Zan-e Ruz*, October 18, 1975.

⁹⁸⁰ Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, 2011), 178.

⁹⁸¹ “Bazak, bimāri-ye jadid-e Javanan,” *Ettelaat*, February 23, 1976.

unpatriotic.⁹⁸² As Ali Mirsepassi and Mehdi Faraji note with respect to the state's sudden about-face with respect to its own modernization discourse, this proved to be a "highly ironic" turn, as it occurred precisely at the same time as when "Iranian oppositional groups – particularly those with Islamic leanings – were mobilizing the Iranian masses by way of a very similar 'spiritual' rhetoric."⁹⁸³ Co-option of the oppositional discourse had thus begun in earnest.

Just as soon as the newly-rich became typified as *farangi mo 'āb*, the "doll" also became repurposed in relation to them. On 23 February 1976, *Ettelaat* ran another piece, this time castigating the make-up of the contemporary woman. The reckless modern woman, the piece remarked, "no longer looks toward simplicity in her beauty;" rather, "by using over seven-hundred cosmetic appliances, she renders her face into something baseless and doll-like." In another twist, the piece then praised "the cosmetics of yesterday's woman," whose make-up was never "overdone." The old-world woman's beauty, the article claimed, was limited to "long, braided hair, eye-liner, lipstick, and sometimes kohl and burnt coconut," favoring simplicity over vulgarity. In contrast, today's women were reported to spend "over ten hours in hairstylists' waiting rooms so that an effeminate man with long hair could style their hair." Despite all their efforts to beauty themselves, however, the article asserted that these women amounted to no more "than an anxious woman with a doll-like face." Under a sub-heading titled "Doll-Like Woman," the piece then interviewed men who were now suddenly and coincidentally also against women who did "not keep to their natural beauty." No woman, one correspondent claimed, should apply so much make-up so as to "look like an oiled-up doll."⁹⁸⁴

⁹⁸² "Dar madreseh az vatan beguyid," *Javanan*, October 3, 1977.

⁹⁸³ Mirsepassi and Faraji, "De-Politicizing Westoxification," 2.

⁹⁸⁴ "Bazak, bimāri-ye jadid-e Javanan," *Ettelaat*, February 23, 1976.

All this seemed a far cry from the Euro-American beauty standards on which all contemporary print media unanimously agreed just months prior. Suddenly, only three years following entirely opposite remarks being echoed by popular media with respect to female beautification, the beauty standards seemed to have wholly altered. Now, “yesterday’s woman” was praised as opposed to the modern one. Now, the *farangi mo’āb*, the *nowkiseh*, and the doll-like woman were pitted as folk devils, with “symbols such as clothing, hair-style... and other stylistic attributes” being utilized to facilitate the “identification” of such folk devils within society.⁹⁸⁵ They no longer represented the aesthetics of a modern Iran. As happened, they were now deep in the process of being othered by the dominant culture that had fashioned them.

As Mansoureh Pirnia likewise portrayed them in her 2 October 1976 feature for *Zan-e Ruz*, these classes were now no more than mere negative by-products of the White Revolution. They constituted the “superficially modern” Iranians that had consequently incited an “epidemic” of “doll-like women” by dint of their “greed, beauty-worship, and excessive compulsions.” These people, as Pirnia made clear, were no more than slaves “to shopping malls both inside and outside the country,” naively assuming that they could “make up for their lack of spiritual qualities by buying tens of blouses and skirts and bags and shoes and enveloping themselves in these superficial coverings.”⁹⁸⁶

As magazines and newspapers alike regurgitated like articles on the “doll-like woman” being representative of the *nouveau riche*, boutiques and clothing establishments throughout the country continued to be raided and closed down on charges of price inflation. This was no coincidence. Far from it, the state-wide crackdown on establishments regularly frequented and owned by the affluent classes made clear that articles like those above were not being published

⁹⁸⁵ Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, 178.

⁹⁸⁶ Mansoureh Pirnia, “Hers-e kharidan,” *Zan-e Ruz*, October 2, 1978.

on account of mere journalistic intent. Rather, they happened to be a part of a state-wide campaign that sought to cast blame on the newly rich for the rising socio-economic discontent within the country.

As William Shawcross remarks, this period saw any Iranian that did not constitute “the Thousand Families” – the namesake for the country’s old-world rich and powerful, many of whom were related through intermarriage – suddenly brandished as a *nowkiseh*.⁹⁸⁷ Accordingly, both the inflation crisis as well as the social discontent emanating from the state’s myriad unpopular policies were now being blamed on this one group, despite this class not possessing a fraction of the power to prompt such turmoil within the country. Every one of state’s own oversights were instead blamed on mere civilians that had simply bought into its modernity project. This campaign thereby also managed to reconfigure the Iranian class system, distinguishing as it did between the newly affluent Iranian and the supposedly actual elites.

These shifts in ideology translated themselves into NITV’s televisual programming as well. The continued devaluation of the *nowkiseh* happened to also bring new stereotypes to NITV’s locally produced programming with characters that seemed to typify the *nowkiseh* attitude. These characters were far from the sober, non-romanticized upper classes personified by shows like *Talāq* and *Talkh-o Shirin*. After all, the *nowkiseh* was no longer upper class. They now merely comprised the supposedly morally and culturally corrupt *nouveaux riches*. The *nowkiseh* stereotypes brought to the television screen happened to precisely mirror the characterizations contemporaneously allotted to them by print media. They were not only imprudent, but they led preposterous lifestyles. So much so that they were abjectly derisible.

⁹⁸⁷ Shawcross, *The Shah’s Last Ride*, 193.

The first of such characters was Hassan Khayatbashi's Mohandes Billy (Mr. Engineer Billy) in *Shabakeh-ye Sefr* (Channel Zero) (1977-1978). Even the character's anglicized name was a parody of Iranian men that had gone westward and embraced its way of life, shortening their name in consequence. An inverse Samad Āqā, the *gharbzadeh* Mohandes Billy was also likeable, but also like Samad Āqā, his likeability came only on account of the sheer foolhardiness of his lifestyle and comportment. Both his lifestyle and comportment, however, were disparate from the rustic style in which viewers had thus far been attuned to find humor. Rather, *Shabakeh-ye Sefr* marked the first time that the lifestyles of the westernized urban classes were picked out as subjects of ridicule. So *gharbzadeh* was this Mohandes Billy that he could only speak his native Persian with an occidentalized accent, incessantly peppering his speech with English words. In one skit, his westernism prompts him to miscall *Pol-e Seyyed Khandān* (the Seyyed Khandān Bridge), the Pol-e Numan, thus misidentifying the always-smiling local (*seyyed-e khandān*) for whom the bridge was named with the Hollywood star, Paul Newman. Likewise mirroring the *nowkiseh*, Mohandes Billy was depicted as being worshipful of the stars, so much so that his character manages to hire Googoosh to serve as the secretary to his fictitious television studio. This itself served not only as a spoof of the *nowkiseh* and their preference for western-looking secretaries, but also their immense spending power, wherein they could afford stars as impactful as Googoosh to aid in their wasteful vanity projects.⁹⁸⁸

Another such recharacterization of the urban classes came in the form of *Itāliyā Itāliyā* (*Italy Italy*), broadcast in color in the spring of 1978. Much like the *Shabakeh-ye Sefr*, the show – created and starred in by Nowzar Azadi – was much higher in entertainment value than its NITV predecessors. Yet like its predecessors, the show managed to shrewdly reproduce the state's

⁹⁸⁸ “*Shabakeh-ye Sefr* (Tehran: National Iranian Radio and Television, 1977-1979).

reconfigured ideology vis-à-vis its latest folk devil. All the publicly denigrated elements contemporaneously associated with the *nowkiseh* were satirized in *Itāliyā Itāliyā*: from effeminate hairdressers to fashion- and celebrity- obsessed housewives, to the class's worship of anything and anyone retaining a western name. The show's principal pretense revolved around a down-on-his-luck, lower class conman named Qātebeh, who has somehow been mistaken for an Italian man named Salvatore Salvatore, who happens to be his doppelganger. As it turns out, Salvatore Salvatore is to be betrothed to a rich Iranian spinster, Anvar. Now, Qātebeh seeks to take advantage of his resemblance to Salvatore so as to acquire Anvar's wealth by way of marriage. Through the ensuing hijinks, each facet of the much-maligned *nowkiseh* classes thus came under fire. Depicted as talentless dolls willing to perform anywhere and anytime for a price, even NITV's own pop stars were insinuated as being representative of the *nowkiseh*. In one segment, when an aspiring student by the name of Morād approaches Qātebeh, looking to scheme his way into a foreign university, Qātebeh guides him toward the entertainment world instead. No talent is required to be a star, he tells Morad. A beard, some hair on the chest, a western suit, and some decorations around the neck are all a man needs to claim stardom in this day and age.⁹⁸⁹

As *Itāliyā Itāliyā*'s characterizations implied, the negative light now shed on the *nowkiseh* classes had positioned the star in an especially awkward social predicament. Their lifestyles, wardrobe choices, as well as their comportment matched readily those of the *nowkisegān*, whose spending habits and western tastes were now decried by the media wholesale. These stars, after all, seemed to embody the materially-oriented individual characteristic to the *nowkiseh*. The same especially applied to female stars that fit exactly the official media's reappropriated characterizations of a doll-like woman. Yet, these stars happened to also be the prime movers of

⁹⁸⁹ *Itāliyā Itāliya* (Tehran: National Iranian Radio and Television, 1979).

the dominant culture's values, bringing in the highest numbers of viewers on television, and holding even the peculiar distinction of being state representatives, providing entertainment for both domestic and international state-sponsored ceremonies.

None of this, however, managed to impede the official culture from weaponizing oppositional terminologies against the stars. Utilized as scapegoats much like the *nowkiseh*, these stars were thus also rendered into folk devils following the state's co-option of discourses pertaining to *gharbzadeh* and doll-like women. As such, immediately after the state's repurposing of the *nowkiseh* as folk devil, the press also began cautioning readers against making "idols" of these stars.⁹⁹⁰ Though only months previous, the same media had publicized the very same stars as appropriate role-models for the modern young man and woman, no sooner had the Shah disavowed "the affluent societies" than media like *Zan-e Ruz* began backtracking from their previous adulation of stars, offering up, instead, less flattering portraits of them and their lifestyles.

The first such piece, published on 2 October 1976, focused on problems of addiction among the "artist's class," a topic heretofore untouched by the popular press. Mentioning that stars were "subjects of admiration and imitation among the people," the article then reminded readers that addiction happened to be "especially prevalent" among these classes. Following this statement, readers were cautioned to remain alert to the fact that "a negative example can, in turn, drive others astray and toward corruption." Fans of these stars must understand, the magazine remarked, "that in our current world, the blind imitation and hero-worship of stars is far from realistic."⁹⁹¹

This feature served as an introduction to a new weekly piece as published by *Zan-e Ruz*, which was meant to "resemble a public court, where famous artistic figures sit in the defendant's

⁹⁹⁰ "25 honardmand-e mashhur..." *Zan-e Ruz*, October 2, 1978.

⁹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

chair, and answer to the prosecutions cast at them.”⁹⁹² Not only the timing of this feature, but also the stark contrast between *Zan-e Ruz*’s glamorization of the stars’ western styles just months previous and now, suddenly, this concomitant dismantlement of the star system in 1977, evinced that such a feature was published in direct relation to the state’s devaluation of the *nowkiseh*. Though these were indeed accusations cast by fans, the letters that *Zan-e Ruz* chose to publish nonetheless happened to be complementary to the magazine’s ethos. This happened to be a regular discursive strategy used by *Zan-e Ruz* so as to validate its own editorial opinions by publishing letters also in agreement with its premises. Those editorial opinions, in turn, were informed by the state and official culture’s viewpoints with respect to a particular subject.

Framed as a “public survey,” this new feature saw famous stars defend themselves against fan queries as it pertained to their alleged *gharbzadegi* or doll-like demeanors. Singer Nasrin, for instance, was censured for her “money-worshipping” ways in one feature.⁹⁹³ In another, Giti was reprimanded for her *gharbzadeh* comportment. One letter even vociferously censured Giti for “besmirching our proud homeland with her malformed *gharbzadeh* attitude.”⁹⁹⁴ Another week saw Mahasti – the same star who had previously thanked *Zan-e Ruz* for shaming her in into embracing the western wardrobe – condemned for her “money- and beauty-worshipping ways.” In that particular feature, the writer claimed that she had grown “irate by reports claiming that Miss Mahasti has purchased this piece of clothing from that western maison for such and such an amount.” Was there nobody, she continued, “to tell this woman that you can find appropriate clothing for yourself within our own Iran?”⁹⁹⁵ No mention was made, of course, of the fact that

⁹⁹² Ibid.

⁹⁹³ Rahmat Qāderi, “Nasrin: khānandeh-ye pulaki?,” *Zan-e Ruz*, October 23, 1976..

⁹⁹⁴ Human, “Giti,” *Zan-e Ruz*, December 25, 1976.

⁹⁹⁵ Human, “Khānandegān-e javān,” *Zan-e Ruz*, December 30, 1976.

magazines like *Zan-e Ruz* were often at the vanguard of encouraging the western wardrobe over anything resembling Iranian dress.

From then on, even more stars came under fire for their lifestyles. So too did the similarly *gharbzadeh* fandom that emulated these stars. One piece on 2 July 1977 described the admiration of stars as “idol worship.”⁹⁹⁶ Another piece insisted that Nasrin justify her reasoning for getting a nose-job – an operation previously encouraged by the magazine – while concurrently entreating the viewership not to imitate stars like her. Nasrin was even made to explain that stars like herself were compelled “on account of our profession to change our appearances so as to prevent monotony.” It was not, she affirmed, “something that should be imitated by others.” Stars like herself, she reiterated, “have to dress in eye-catching clothing and unusual make-ups as necessity of the profession.” She therefore beseeched readers not to emulate the stars: “We are in no way good role-models for the public,” she said, “especially not for the young girl and women.”⁹⁹⁷ Indeed, nothing about Nasrin’s pronouncements could have been construed as peculiar if not for the peculiar period that such declarations were made.

Distinction: Iranian Handicrafts as the Pahlavi Alternative

Considering that a decade earlier, the Pahlavis had been publicized and much praised for adorning themselves in the same visual markers that now epitomized the mid-1970s’ folk devil, it is worth asking how the court avoided similar accusations being directed at them. Even though popular media had made strides in the previous decades to venerate the royal family’s affinity for western haute couture – be it the Empress’ fondness for Parisian fashion or the Shah’s custom-designed

⁹⁹⁶ Susan Ardakāni, “Az honarparasti tā botparasti,” *Zan-e Ruz*, July 2, 1977.

⁹⁹⁷ “Nasrin,” *Zan-e Ruz*, October 8, 1977.

suits from Britain⁹⁹⁸ – the court’s sartorial choices happened to experience a precipitous shift in the new decade, all concurrent with the emergence of these newly rich classes.

It was in the weeks preceding October 1971’s 2,500-anniversary celebrations that the media began making note of the royalty’s change in attire – namely Farah Pahlavi’s adoption of Iranian handicrafts as her official dress. Among the first instances in which this shift was recorded was the Empress’ interview with Iraj Gorgin for *Tamasha* about the upcoming festivities. Pictured in a long, light green, embroidered dress, with a delicate iron necklace wrapped around her neck, the article stressed that the Queen’s costume was made up entirely of Iranian handicrafts.⁹⁹⁹ Just days later, in a more comprehensive interview with Mansoureh Pirnia for *Zan-e Ruz*, Queen Farah spoke further about her sartorial choices for the upcoming festivities. She told the magazine that her ceremonial dresses for the festival were to solely incorporate Iranian handicrafts, including *kalāqi* fabrics from Osku (named *kalāqi*, because these traditional, black Qajar-era fabrics made ample use of crow feathers), as well as Baluchi textiles with Isfahani *qalamkāri* designs (stamp-printing technique exclusive to Isfahan). In the interview, she also revealed a new state effort to fashion a uniform based around Iranian handicrafts for public officials. The first to be presented such uniforms, she mentioned, were the country’s female ministers, members of parliament, and university professors. A similarly Iranian uniform was also being designed for the national Iranian airliner’s hostesses.¹⁰⁰⁰

Although this occasion was not the first ceremony to see *Shahbanu* adorned in Iranian handicrafts, the 2,500-year anniversary celebrations nonetheless happened to be the first event to have invited so much media attention with respect to the Queen’s distinctly Iranian style. Indeed,

⁹⁹⁸ Keyvan Khosrovani, Keyvan Khosrovani Interview with Morad Moazami, December 2019.

⁹⁹⁹ Iraj Gorgin, “Olyāhazrat Shahbanu,” *Tamasha*, October 14, 1971.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Mansoureh Pirnia, “Cherā in jashn rā bargozār mikonim?,” *Zan-e Ruz*, October 9, 1971.

the press surrounding the 2,500-year anniversary celebrations took special care in mentioning the Queen's affinity for locally-produced Iranian clothing. Much of this was on account of the sheer spectacle as well as the large viewership anticipated for the televised broadcast. Owing to this, Iranian handicrafts were accentuated as a principal component of Pahlavi style in the publicity preceding and succeeding the 2,500-Year celebrations. Accentuating indigenous styles helped embed the Pahlavi dynasty's aesthetics as one harmonious with the myth which the celebrations sought to propagate: that Iranian history's supposedly uninterrupted dynastic tradition had effortlessly flowed over to Pahlavi rule – spiritually, ideologically, and aesthetically. It was not, in other words, an appropriate setting in which to parade Swiss watches or Van Cleefs. An added boon was that this world-wide telecast could also help with the promotion of indigenous handicraft traditions, introducing these styles to the world at large; in turn, publicizing handicrafts as an Iranian alternative to haute couture – an endeavor that we shall discuss in length further into our examination.

From that juncture onward, Farah Pahlavi's public image became associated with the Iranian handicraft. After presiding over the 2,500-year celebration's televised broadcast in six distinctly Iranian dresses, the Empress' wardrobe was lauded by Mansoureh Pirnia for having been “a master stroke of advertising in resuscitating Iran's forgotten art forms.”¹⁰⁰¹ The piece also featured the rare instance where those at helm of her new style were, in fact, credited. This exclusive team in charge of what came to be termed “royal haute couture”¹⁰⁰² comprised Keyvan Khosrovani as principal dress designer, Pari Zolfaqāri as seamstress, Mehr Monir “Nini” Jahānbāni as the project's overseer for Baluchi needlework, and designer Mohammad Narāqi as fabric designer. The detailed feature then pronounced that the Pahlavi Queen now sought to

¹⁰⁰¹ Mansoureh Pirnia, “Shesh dast lebās,” *Zan-e Ruz*, October 16, 1971.

¹⁰⁰² Keyvan Khosrovani, “Royal Haute Couture,” *KeyvanKhosrovani.com*

“pioneer the promotion and cultivation” of the Iranian handicraft, so that, in turn, it could be recognized as “Iranian *mod*” and become a vital facet to Iran’s economy.¹⁰⁰³

Therein, however, lied discrepancy. In actual fact, the push toward devising an “Iranian *mod*” had begun in earnest in 1969 when the state had established *Maison de l'Iran* (House of Iran) in Paris. Established by Mehdi Bushehri – husband to Ashraf Pahlavi – and purposed with “introducing Iranian culture and civilization”¹⁰⁰⁴ to the European world, handicrafts comprised an essential component in the organization's showcase. Mohammad Narāqi – who had recently returned to Iran from England to establish the Center for Iranian Handicrafts with backing from the Ministry of Finance – had also been recruited by Bushehri to provide select handicrafts to *Maison de l'Iran*. Not long after his return to Iran, Narāqi had actively endeavored to popularize Iranian handicrafts as accessible sartorial alternatives for urban Iranians.¹⁰⁰⁵ His Center for Iranian Handicrafts had even recruited Swedish handweaving expert Malin Selander for a year-long excursion to Iran so as to research the viability of such a project. On one particular occasion, Selander was even interviewed by *Zan-e Ruz*, and though the magazine’s prerogative seemed mostly concerned with inquiring a western mind on the Iranian figure and the maxi- and mini-fashions of the West, Selander nonetheless made a point in criticizing the Iranian consumer’s proclivity to spend “tens of thousands of rials on Parisian fashion houses and London-based fabrics.” She then told the outlet that Iranian handicrafts were matchless in terms of their “authenticity, value, and resplendence,” and that Iranian designs had the potential “to take over the international market, and serve as a boon to Iran’s national economy.”¹⁰⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰³ Mansoureh Pirnia, “Shesh dast lebās,” *Zan-e Ruz*, October 16, 1971.

¹⁰⁰⁴ “Khāneh-ye irān dar pāris,” *Tamasha*, December 23, 1971.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Keyvan Khosrovani Interview with Morad Moazami, December 2019.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Giti Simāntowb, “Cherā shikpushān-e irān az pārcheh-hā-ye dastbāf ghāfelānd?,” *Zan-e Ruz*, January 9, 1971.

As Narāqi soon realized, however, *Maison de l'Iran* did not intend to popularize Iranian handicrafts internationally so much as it intended to stratify handicrafts as haute couture. As evidenced by the high prices affixed to the affordable items Narāqi had provided to the establishment, it became evident that *Maison de l'Iran* had only wished to capitalize on the new international vogue for “ethnic” and “Orientalist”¹⁰⁰⁷ fashions by publicizing the handicraft as a high-priced high fashion accessible only to the affluent. More so, Narāqi discovered that the state was providing disproportionate compensation to the indigenous seamsters, weavers, and textile producers actually responsible for the items now being sold at exorbitant prices at the Champs Elysees-located establishment.

All this led to Narāqi stepping down from his post at the Center for Iranian Handicrafts, and refusing further collaborations with the state. Instead, he made his intentions known to establish independent artisanal salons in both Tehran and Paris so as to actually popularize the Iranian handicraft, while also guaranteeing apposite recompense to the handicraft artisans. This establishment, named *Khorshid Khānom* (Miss Sunshine), finally opened in June 1972. Concurrently, it declared its intention to not only help organize local co-operatives throughout Iran’s rural areas, but to also focalize handicrafts as the country’s prime export – all at an affordable price and accessible to all.¹⁰⁰⁸ Only months after *Khorshid Khānom* was established, however, Narāqi was found murdered on a streetside on 11 November 1972. Though his obituary in *Ettelaat* provided a grim and fantastical depiction of his death, recounting Narāqi being followed by a truck at 4:00 AM, stopping the truck, getting beaten up by the truck-driver and his passenger, only to get up and leap into the truck to then be thrown fatally to the wayside,¹⁰⁰⁹ those close to Narāqi

¹⁰⁰⁷ Valerie Steele, “Anti-Fashion: The 1970s,” *Fashion Theory* 1, no. 3 (August 1, 1997): 281.

¹⁰⁰⁸ “Sanāye’-e dasti,” *Ettelaat*, June 13, 1972, 13821 edition.

¹⁰⁰⁹ “Javāni rā dar khiyābān-e takht-e tāvus koshtand,” *Ettelaat*, November 11, 1972, 13947 edition.

remained convinced that the designer's death came at the hands of the Shah's secret police, SAVAK.¹⁰¹⁰

Incidentally, Narāqi's *Ettelaat* obituary made no mention of the deceased's contributions to royal haute couture. As a matter of fact, subsequent to Pirnia's report on the 2,500-Year Celebrations, no single person at the helm of Farah Pahlavi's handicraft clothing was named again. If the purpose was to popularize and standardize Iranian handicrafts, then it would not be so fantastical to have expected the personages invested in the endeavor to be made identifiable. After all, two such personalities were even accessible to the public at large, as Keyvan Khosrovani continued to operate Number One, while Pari Zolfaqāri remained in charge of its female equivalent, Miss Number One, across the street.

In another instance of the state's complete control over mass media, it soon turned out that this lack of accreditation was not a matter of mere journalistic negligence. Rather, it had come by royal decree. Communicated by the Empress herself, the media was prohibited from naming Farah Pahlavi's designers. Upon discovering this, Khosrovani happened to confront the Queen with respect to this diktat, expressing his confusion as to whether or not the monarchy actually intended to popularize Iranian handicrafts. "I told her," Khosrovani recalled, "that if you want handicrafts to be recognized and accepted by the public, you should be making public idols out of your designers, to publicize the personalities behind these clothes, and tell the world who your designers are so that they can become recognizable by the public, and help build a brand in the name of Iranian handicrafts."¹⁰¹¹ But the Queen seemed disinterested in the prospect. She retorted that if her designers were to be named, she would risk becoming associated with fashion worship in a like manner to Imelda Marcos, First Lady of the Philippines. Even after Khosrovani reminded her

¹⁰¹⁰ Keyvan Khosrovani Interview with Morad Moazami, December 2019.

¹⁰¹¹ Ibid.

that Marcos was infamous for her affinity for Italian shoes and not, in fact, local handicrafts, the decree nonetheless remained in place.¹⁰¹² Especially ironic about the Queen's objections to Khosrovani's request was the fact that, by then, Farah Pahlavi had already courted publicity for her wearing Iranian handicrafts by both local and international media. It seemed, hence, that the court seemed averse to this mode of sartorial distinction trickling down to the public.

These examples evince that despite its official pronouncement to cultivate Iranian handicrafts, the state seemed to have little actual interest in the common public's adoption of distinctly Iranian styles. It seemed more as though the handicraft's exclusive adoption by the royalty, state representatives, and high cultural international elites was a means to utilize the handicraft as an item of distinction against "the ambitious bourgeoisie" that had hitherto emerged in the country.¹⁰¹³ As Fred Davis remarks, "the class structure of society requires the appropriation of symbolic devices by which social classes can distinguish themselves from each other."¹⁰¹⁴ These styles, however, are inevitably emulated by the non-elite classes over time. This, in turn, compels the elites to reconfigure their styles so as to attest "symbolically to the legitimacy of the patterns of deference inherent in a class system."¹⁰¹⁵ And with the concurrent emergence of a bourgeois class, the elites thus strive to maintain their "prestige value" by distancing themselves from any conduct that suggests their association with "anything bourgeois."¹⁰¹⁶ It therefore becomes a "necessity to distinguish themselves"¹⁰¹⁷ from the "rising bourgeois strata,"¹⁰¹⁸ and "maintain themselves as a distinct formation, a social counterweight to the bourgeoisie."¹⁰¹⁹ Since the

¹⁰¹² Ibid.

¹⁰¹³ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Oxford ; Malden, Mass: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000), 424.

¹⁰¹⁴ Fred Davis, *Fashion, Culture, and Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 111.

¹⁰¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰¹⁶ Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 440.

¹⁰¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰¹⁸ Ibid., 424.

¹⁰¹⁹ Ibid.

emergent classes have managed to establish themselves by adopting the tastes, styles, and codes of conduct typifying elite society, the elites are thus compelled to “abandon it for a newer mode.”¹⁰²⁰ Their previous modes of distinction, after all, have “become useless.”¹⁰²¹

As such, according to Agnes Rocamora, haute couture often came to serve as a fitting sartorial device through which the elite classes aimed to distinguish themselves from those whom they perceived as lower.¹⁰²² After all, these items were the most visually immediate markers through which “those ‘above’ [could] by the quality and ‘fashionableness’ of their clothing signify their class superiority over those ‘below.’”¹⁰²³ In the Iran of the 1960s, haute couture was still distinctly western, and thus served as the stylistic means through which the Pahlavi court as well as the country’s old nobility distinguished themselves from ordinary, everyday Iranians. In the case of 1970s Iran, however, western haute couture was no longer as exclusive a luxury item as it had been the decade previous. Increased purchasing power and everchanging consumer tastes had made haute couture available to the emergent affluent classes as well. This was visualized most conspicuously by the Iranian pop stars that appeared dressed in such clothing multiple times per week on television, in turn inspiring like emulation by their viewership.

A new mode of haute couture was thus required to distinguish the high culture elites from these new and well-heeled social class on the rise. This happened to be an Iranian haute couture, available only to the elite classes, and exclusively publicized as such. For that reason, it can be argued that the elite’s adoption of – and monopoly over – handicrafts as a distinct style in the 1970s came as a sartorial reaction to the emergence of a newly affluent, urban class in the decade.

¹⁰²⁰ Georg Simmel, “Fashion,” *American Journal of Sociology* 62, no. 6 (May 1957): 541.

¹⁰²¹ Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 424.

¹⁰²² Agnès Rocamora, “Fields of Fashion: Critical Insights into Bourdieu’s Sociology of Culture,” *Journal of Consumer Culture* 2, no. 3 (November 2002): 362.

¹⁰²³ Davis, *Fashion, Culture, and Identity*, 111.

The latter class had indeed emerged by emulating these elite classes in dress and conduct, notably so in their appropriation of Euro-American aesthetic markers as well as the modern standards of masculine and feminine conduct. As it happened, these classes were made even more visible by way of a star system that likewise mirrored the appropriated styles and tastes of the new urban classes.

Now that those western fashions had trickled into a fledging urban class, with stars also serving as prime movers of style among those classes, sartorial distinctions were necessitated. In attributing Iranian handicrafts to a select class, Iranian society elites – be it the royalty, Pahlavi state representatives, or those constituting the Thousand Families – were thus guaranteed distinction from the stars and the rising urban classes that happened to be donning those same western fashions with which high culture had distinguished itself the decade previous. This exclusive, locally-inspired dress now separated the court from the stars and the urban classes. It also enabled the elite classes to present themselves as the societally conscious class “authentic” enough to costume itself in handicraft garments, at the opposite end of the “*mod-parast*” (fashion worshipping) stars that embodied the expensive styles trickling down to not-yet-reviled urban middle classes.

Distinction, however, could only last so long. As we shall see in the next section, 1975’s inflation crisis soon forced the state’s hand in taking up both Narāqi and Khosrovani suggestions to publicize the handicraft as a sartorial alternative for the public. Ostensibly implemented so as to revitalize the Iranian economy, it proved an effort doomed from the very start.

Desperation: Iranian Handicrafts as the Public Alternative

Previous to the vilification of the *nowkiseh* as folk devil was the vilification of the *bazaari* and the commonplace retailer. Indeed, on 7 August 1975, *Ettelaat* announced that a new struggle had been

added to the “Revolution of the Shah and the People.” The White Revolution was now to comprise also a thirteenth and fourteenth tenet, both intent on a so-called revolution “against industrial feudalism and profiteering.” This initiative was announced as a means to combat the all-time high inflation experienced in Iran that year, while making clear that the state accepted no culpability with respect to inflation. Rather, the declaration cast all blame on “shop-owners” that were purported to have impeded all prospects for “a healthy economy” due to what the Shah claimed was “the exploitation of men by men” – it being a euphemism for price gouging.¹⁰²⁴

From then onward, *Ettelaat* came into the habit of regularly featuring a list of names accused of price gouging on its front page, with their mugshots also published for good measure. The lists featured occupations as varied as butcher, baker, retailer, restaurateur, and cabaret owner – with their names, locations, and biographies all laid out by the newspaper to further the humiliation.¹⁰²⁵ As Katouzian notes, the campaign amounted to no more than mere “harassment and persecution,” with young men “regularly sent round to ordinary retail shops for ‘inspections.’”¹⁰²⁶ These arbitrary inspections also saw shop-owners arrested and shops closed down for similarly arbitrary and make-shift reasons. Khosrovani’s boutique, Number One, for instance, was closed down for its English name – despite it never having been a problem until then.¹⁰²⁷

The mid-decade vilification of the ordinary retailer happened to also coincide with the popular media’s sudden encouragement for the public to adopt handicrafts as an alternative dress. This shift was marked by the inauguration of an annual Handicrafts Festival on 10 June 1975, unveiled by the Empress herself. Visually representing this shift, the *Ettelaat* feature recapping the

¹⁰²⁴ “Barā-ye mobārezeh ba gerāni...,” *Ettelaat*, July 13, 1975, 14757 edition.

¹⁰²⁵ “Sāhebān-e mayāmi...,” *Ettelaat*, August 24, 1975, 14791 edition.

¹⁰²⁶ Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 334.

¹⁰²⁷ Keyvan Khosrovani Interview with Morad Moazami, December 2019.

occasion also pictured two women dressed in handicraft designs.¹⁰²⁸ The day after, *Ettelaat* further shed light on this new initiative by summarizing *Shahbanu*'s dialogues throughout yesterday's event. Precisely echoing the sentiments previously shared by Khosrovani and Narāqi – which she had unequivocally spurned years prior – the Queen now expressed her intentions to henceforward render Iranian handicrafts into accessible fashion items. The Queen claimed that this endeavor “needs to utilize the young designers who are in sync with contemporary fashion trends, and who can, in turn, synchronize Iranian handicrafts with present-day vogues and increase sales both locally and internationally.” Additionally, in yet another direct echo of the deceased Narāqi's unrealized intentions, she announced a new state initiative to financially support local handicraft weavers and laborers.¹⁰²⁹ *Zan-e Ruz*'s additional recap of the event also quoted the Queen for having encouraged women in rural areas to likewise return to their ethnic dresses, before making mention of her suggestion to the Center for Iranian Handicrafts, now under new management, to begin “promoting” the use of handicrafts for daily life in the city.¹⁰³⁰

As the socio-economic climate of the period evinced, however, this sudden democratization of the Iranian handicraft as dress happened to come at an opportune time for the state. It was a means to wrest financial power further away from the retailers now accused of price gouging, and to converge it, instead, with a state-regulated industry such as the Iranian handicrafts industry. Echoing state incentives as usual, *Zan-e Ruz* likewise began encouraging its readership to adopt Iranian handicrafts, going so far as to enlist the Center for Iranian Handicrafts to design the uniforms for its annual Teen Princess Pageant. When 1975's Teen Princess, Shohreh Nikpur, was dispatched to Aruba to compete in the international pageant, Iranian handicrafts happened to

¹⁰²⁸ Safā'i, “Behtarin āsār-e bumi dar muzeh-ye sanāye'-e dasti,” *Ettelaat*, June 10, 1975, 14729 edition.

¹⁰²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰³⁰ “Honari ke bā hemāyat-e Shahbanu zendeh mishavad,” *Zan-e Ruz*, June 21, 1975.

go with her: She won the contest dressed in an outfit designed by Keyvan Khosrovani. Once again, however, Khosrovani was not named, and the local dress was credited to the Center for Iranian Handicrafts, with which the designer had no affiliation.¹⁰³¹ As the style of the annual Teen Princess often symbolized, the Iranian handicraft was thus determined as the “new look” for the Iranian women representing this new stage of the White Revolution. As Nikpur herself told *Zan-e Ruz* upon her victory, the “European and American fashion-leaders seem to have run out of ideas,” and this era marked that of the “national” Iranian dress. She then called for more Iranians to dress in their local dresses, asking “Why are our streets and alleyways deprived of such clothes?”¹⁰³²

There was good reason as to why. Notwithstanding the palpable reality that, up until this sudden push for handicrafts in 1975, urban migrants were often shamed for not conforming to modern beauty standards, another, more imperative reason that handicrafts were an unviable alternative for the public was economic. By the mid-1970s, local agriculture had all been decimated in the wake of the land reform program, the urban migration that it had prompted, as well as the state’s increasing reliance on imports. Indeed, prior to the state’s abrupt emphasis on local Iranian industries in 1975, “governmental strategy toward the economy” up to then had relied on “import substitution industries,” especially with respect to agriculture.¹⁰³³ Since agrarian societies were perceived by the state as “the worst evidence of backwardness,” they had been replaced with the more modern-seeming prospect of importation. The country had since become a huge market for agricultural imports, including Australian and Argentinian meats, American grains, and even American cattle and poultry.¹⁰³⁴ Since the state seemed to have little need for its local agrarian due to its receipt of the oil bonanza in dollars, agriculturists were correspondingly

¹⁰³¹ “Shohreh nikpur,” *Zan-e Ruz*, September 6, 1975.

¹⁰³² Firuzeh Hā’eri, “Cherā shohreh dar donyā aval shod?,” *Zan-e Ruz*, September 27, 1975.

¹⁰³³ Keddie and Richard, *Modern Iran*, 157.

¹⁰³⁴ *Ibid.*, 160.

encouraged to find jobs instead in urban factories. Arable lands were abandoned, and accordingly, livestock living off that land were left to die. Even goat's wool, commonly used to furnish handicrafts such as carpets or even the cleric's *abā* (robe), had been rendered into a rare and costly commodity.¹⁰³⁵ Thus, ironically, by the time that the Pahlavis decided to democratize Iranian handicrafts as sartorial alternatives for the public, happenstance had already refashioned the Iranian handicraft as a luxury item.

Hand-in-hand with the press' endeavor to encourage the adoption of handicrafts came a concentrated effort from within NITV to also regulate the costumes worn by the stars on stage. In fact, it was only following the popular media's attempts to coalesce the image of the star with that of the *gharbzadeh* doll that NITV finally commissioned a costume designer to fashion more culturally appropriate dresses for the stars of its musical programs. Previous to the 1977 hiring of Fereyduṅ Qahremānpur, the skilled fashion designer that began styling the Iranian stars in indigenous and culturally-specific dresses, the onus had been on the stars themselves to provide their choice clothing items to NITV studios. As such, they often appeared on television (and in films) clad in their own particular sartorial tastes, which, as happened, often mirrored the fashions extant in the West.¹⁰³⁶ Though he was never publicized by either *Tamasha* or any other media outlet, it was only following Qahremānpur's employment at NITV – at the recommendation of Sohrab Mahvi, a cousin to the Shah – that Iranian stars began appearing on television with more culturally sensitive and less conspicuously western dresses. Rather than take inspiration from western vogues, Qahremānpur's designed dresses were distinctly inspired by indigenous Kurdish, Azerbaijani, and Baluchi designs. Incorporating Iranian fabrics for dresses adorned with Iranian embroidering traditions and styled by Iranian hand-painting and blocking-printing techniques,

¹⁰³⁵ Keyvan Khosrovani Interview with Morad Moazami, December 2019.

¹⁰³⁶ Ibid.

each of Qahremānpur's dresses were also harmonized to complement the respective star persona of performers.¹⁰³⁷ While Googoosh, the model pop star, was often dressed in more dazzling outfits that accentuated her star power, more understated performers like Hayedeh and Mahasti were instead fitted with more traditional and stately dresses, their costumes working to accentuate their more reserved personae.

Arguably, the variety show *Rangārang*'s (1977-1978) massive popularity came not only on account of it being a color broadcast featuring familiar stars, but also the innovative dresses in which Qahremānpur adorned the stars. While up until then, stars had only been seen dressed in the latest western fashion, from 1977 onward they suddenly appeared in dresses that harkened to well-established sartorial traditions that spanned diverse areas of the country. Those dresses made a concentrated effort to dispel the “doll” label now trailing behind the star, working to instead highlight the fact that these stars were Iranian, and dressed indeed in consonance with the customary, indigenous designs of their native country. All the same, it was already far too late to reverse the characterizations affixed to Iran's stars. Much owing to the popular media's own efforts to fasten the “doll” label to its stars so as to fashion a strawman out of the resistance discourse it was reappropriating, however Iranian the stars were made to look at so late a juncture suddenly made little difference.

Had Narāqi's request to support local handicraft industries been granted in 1969, Iranian handicrafts might not have faced such a predicament. Now, six years later and long after the industry had already become impaired by the seemingly never-ending consequences of land reform, the state had suddenly pledged its financial support to Iranian handicraft workers. That after decades' long neglect – if not contempt – for the agrarian societies that provided handicrafts'

¹⁰³⁷ Firuzeh Qahremānpur, Firuzeh Qahremānpur Interview with Morad Moazami, January 2020.

requisite materials, the state had suddenly decided in 1975 to revitalize the Iranian handicraft as an alternative to import retail was confounding. It was tantamount to a fruitless attempt at resurrecting the dead. Also, perplexing was its encouragement for the public to adopt these now rarefied handicrafts as dress during an unprecedented inflation crisis. The latter, in fact, was equivalent to advising a starving populace to eat cake.

Small Media, Seasoned Styles: A Wholesale Rejection

Previous to the state's draconian response to the inflation crisis, the socio-political oppositional elements that were to foment the Iranian Revolution had not yet surfaced as forcefully as they did after. As already demonstrated, social discontent was already prevalent among the religious and traditional societies as well as the urban migrants forced to leave their lands. Added to that were the leftist organizations campaigning against the Shah, as well as the influential landowners from whom land was usurped following the land reform program.¹⁰³⁸ But the campaign against inflation signaled just how expeditiously the state was willing to turn on its benefactors – and in the case of its newly affluent classes, its own creations – so as to escape culpability. In direct reaction to the profiteering campaign set up by the Shah, numerous entrepreneurs and retailers within the business community left the country with their wealth, “precipitating a huge flight of capital out of the country and revealing the instability of even this class because it was, like everyone else, dependent on the whims of one man.”¹⁰³⁹ Conversely, the more traditional merchants and shopkeepers, who had also been singled out as principal causes of inflation, “began to pour money into the coffers

¹⁰³⁸ Michel Foucault, “The Shah Is a Hundred Years Behind the Times,” in *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism*, by Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 196.

¹⁰³⁹ Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi, *Small Media, Big Revolution*, 82.

of its traditional leadership, the clergy” instead.¹⁰⁴⁰ These coffers helped fund and facilitate the distribution of the small media used to oppose the state.

In the succeeding years, sermons against “the Shah, the Americans, and the West and its materialism” became more and more prevalent in both rural and urban areas. They also proved increasingly popular, so much so that when “the mosques became too small for the crowd, loudspeakers were put in the streets,” and later, the recorded audio tapes of the sermons were “circulated throughout Iran.”¹⁰⁴¹ Just as the state had maneuvered television in bringing a westernized image of Iran to local homes, the opposition was now utilizing these small media to bring the voices of both low and high ranking religious leaders – as the well as that of the deceased Shariati – into Iranian homes. Unanimously, these mediated voices all cited state corruption, Pahlavi absolutism, and westernization as their three bedrocks of discontent.¹⁰⁴²

Religion was offered as “an alternative” to the westernized “behavior advocated by the Shah.”¹⁰⁴³ As such, religious dress was also advocated for women as a means to combat “the Western floozy” and the western doll. In the many sermons addressed to women, modest dress was promoted as a means to not only signify “piety and the fear of God,”¹⁰⁴⁴ but to also turn away from “the West both culturally and materially.”¹⁰⁴⁵ As Betteridge noted with respect to one particular sermon given in Shiraz in January 1976, even religious women that left the house only covered in thin chadors were reprimanded for not dressing modestly enough. In the particular event, the thick black veil was held up as the only appropriate religious, oppositional uniform, one

¹⁰⁴⁰ Ibid., 76.

¹⁰⁴¹ Michel Foucault, “Tehran: Faith against the Shah,” in *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism*, by Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 200–201.

¹⁰⁴² Foucault, “The Shah is a Hundred Years Behind the Times,” 195.

¹⁰⁴³ Betteridge, “To Veil or Not to Veil,” 116.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Ibid., 113.

that stood in stark contrast to the “make-up” and “alluring clothes” of the so-called dolls who were already perceived as being “beyond help.”¹⁰⁴⁶

Owing to their staunchly anti-consumerist ideology, both religious and areligious leftist factions also advocated modesty in dress. Yet, as with the religious opposition, women were policed on dress more stringently than men, with the justification that women had “been exploited as sex objects” more commonly than men had. The hijab in the form of either chador or *rusari* (headscarf) was stipulated as a means to desexualize the woman, and in turn “restore the health of the society.”¹⁰⁴⁷ Some leftist organizations even proscribed their members from wearing colorful clothing.¹⁰⁴⁸ Much in the same vein, similar choices came to inform the sartorial comportment of the oppositional Iranian man as well. He styled himself in plain clothing, a five-o-clock shadow, beard “or at least a mustache,” and did away with the necktie entirely.¹⁰⁴⁹

Thus, as the opposition movements continued to gain momentum, the symbology behind articles of dress like the hijab or the open shirt also experienced a transformation. Even for the modern but discontented, these dress forms no longer signified “lack of access and inhibition for women” or unsophistication for men. Rather, they were “being conceived of as enabling and empowering.”¹⁰⁵⁰ These “static”¹⁰⁵¹ forms dress embodied anti-fashion, and as such, they represented a rejection of fashion, and in turn, of Westernization. The clothing long denigrated by state media had now purposefully been appropriated to serve as “a symbolic rejection of the superiority of American culture and influence.” Anti-fashion as dress was thus employed as “a

¹⁰⁴⁶ Ibid., 116.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Eliz Sanasarian, “An Analysis of Fida’i and Mujahidin Positions on Women’s Rights,” in *Women And Revolution In Iran* (Routledge, 1983), 102.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Janet Bauer, “Ma’ssoum’s Tale: The Personal and Political Transformations of a Young Iranian ‘Feminist’ and Her Ethnographer,” *Feminist Studies* 19, no. 3 (1993): 535.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Taheri, *The Spirit of Allah*, 254.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Paidar, *Women and the Political Process*, 215.

¹⁰⁵¹ Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 257-258.

means of expression on a mass scale of solidarity and group identity.”¹⁰⁵² Just as Pahlavi modernity had been inaugurated with sartorial reforms for both men and women, this symbolic return to ascetic dress was used as a means to foment its end.

And yet, fashion was not all that symbolized Pahlavi westernism. So did cinemas, liquor stores, discotheques, boutiques, Westernized restaurants, as well as the NIRT and its glamorous star system.¹⁰⁵³ While religious leaders remained taciturn with respect to the destruction of such establishments, leftist organizations such as the *Mojāhedīn-e Khalq* (the People’s Jihadists) and the *Fadā’iyān-e Khalq* (The People’s Devotees) did not, issuing leaflets either urging obliteration or reporting “such actions in glowing and approving terms.”¹⁰⁵⁴ By then, the mass demonstrations auguring the Revolution had begun, and alongside it came the destruction of any symbol considered representative of Pahlavi rule. Banks, state buildings, shops, liquor stores, and cinemas throughout the country served as the most sought-out targets for such acts of destruction.

Instances pertaining to the destruction of such establishments were innumerable. March 1978 saw demonstrators in Kashan throwing a canister of gasoline at a local cinema, prompting a fire.¹⁰⁵⁵ In May, a bomb went off in the front row seats of Tabriz’s Crystal Cinema.¹⁰⁵⁶ During that same month the Pepsi-Cola facility in Qom, which the clerisy had long falsely implicated for harnessing Israeli ties owing to Habibollah Sabet’s Baha’i faith, was also set alight.¹⁰⁵⁷ In early August, numerous cinemas in Isfahan were similarly struck.¹⁰⁵⁸ And the most catastrophic of these acts of arson occurred on 19 August, when Abadan’s Rex Cinema was set fire to, killing 377

¹⁰⁵² Ibid., 178.

¹⁰⁵³ Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema, Volume 3*, 4.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵⁵ “Dar qazvin, kāshān va esfēhān kharābkāri-hā-ye moshābehi anjām shod,” *Ettelaat*, March 29, 1978, 15571 edition.

¹⁰⁵⁶ “Tazāhorat...,” *Ettelaat*, May 16, 1978, 15611 edition.

¹⁰⁵⁷ “Āshub va balvau-ye khunin dar qom, tabriz, va shirāz,” *Ettelaat*, May 10, 1978, 15606 edition.

¹⁰⁵⁸ “Balvā-ye khunin-o hokumat-e nezāmi dar esfēhan,” *Ettelaat*, August 12, 1978, 15684 edition.

moviegoers as they unsuspectingly watched Masoud Kimiai's *Gavazn-hā* (The Deer).¹⁰⁵⁹ Even so, the Cinema Rex tragedy did not deter demonstrators from carrying out further such acts. Even a branch of Bella Shoes in Tehran was not safe from arson, burnt to a crisp a month later, on 4 September 1978, its flames epitomizing the antipathy felt by discontented demonstrators for the western fashions that they believed were thrust onto them.¹⁰⁶⁰

Big Media, Refashioned: Ideology's Rhyming Reversals

To prevent further destruction, concessions were granted to the demonstrators. Prime Minister Jafar Sharif-Emami banned casinos and cabarets so as to placate the ever-furious crowds on 28 August 1978.¹⁰⁶¹ More concessions followed. One such concession comprised the state's termination of Reza Qotbi as NIRT director. And henceforward, the NIRT was to be directed by the Ministry of Information, which itself designated a board of directors to carry out new plans for broadcasting. The board proscribed the production or broadcast of variety shows or scripted programming following an institution-wide memorandum in late September 1978.¹⁰⁶² Television programming was to be limited to the news, traditional Iranian music (a genre to which the official culture had been hitherto apathetic), and western television serials like *Kojak* and *the Waltons*. When, on accident, a previously produced episode of the musical show *Zanguleh-hā* (The Bells) made it to air on 16 October 1978, *Javanan* reported an institution-wide terror to have happened upon the corridors, with singer and producer Manouchehr Sakhaei singled out as the "eight million tuman man" (amounting to 1,134,705 dollars) for having used up so much money in producing the "ostentatious" program.¹⁰⁶³

¹⁰⁵⁹ "Joz'iyāt-e qatl-e ām-e sad-hā nafari dar ābādān," *Ettelaat*, August 20, 1978, 15691 edition.

¹⁰⁶⁰ "Rāh peymā'i-ye 3 milyun nafari dar sarāsar-e keshvar," *Ettelaat*, September 5, 1978, 15703 edition.

¹⁰⁶¹ "Dastur-e tāzeh-ye dowlāt," *Ettelaat*, August 28, 1978, 15697 edition.

¹⁰⁶² "Dar posht-e pardeh-ye shabakeh-hā-ye rādiyo televiziya-e keshvar," *Javanan*, October 9, 1978.

¹⁰⁶³ "Manouchehr-e sakhā'i," *Javanan*, October 23, 1978.

As Hamid Naficy relates, “the purification of the press and broadcast media” thus began well before the Revolution occurred. This purification, which had clearly also comprised the elimination of the star system following the institution-wide ban on musical shows, also sought to ouster “all women and minorities” from radio and television as well. Such individuals were not patently fired from their jobs; rather, they were so discriminated against that they soon left the NIRT on their own volition – an eerie echo back to the manner in which the traditional societies were previously humiliated into avoiding certain locales and occupations.¹⁰⁶⁴

The ideological erasure of icons perceived as Pahlavi-era creations had thus already begun. In entertainment districts like Lalehzār, the pop star’s face and figure no longer burnished the posters peddled on streetcorners. All, instead, seemed to have been replaced by wholly new kinds of celebrities as fashioned by the revolution: that being the role-model as opposed to the star. These posters now exclusively pictured “the noteworthy clerics” and the “picturesque likenesses of the grand pioneers of Islam,” or pictures of Mohammad Mosaddeq and Ali Shariati. Cassette tapes featuring the pop songs sung by NIRT stars were also replaced with the revolutionary voices of the Ayatollahs Khomeini and Taleghani as well as Ahmad Shamlou.¹⁰⁶⁵ Musical cassettes were likewise limited to either traditional music or revolutionary songs.¹⁰⁶⁶ As for the stars themselves: many had absconded the country already, and more were soon to join.¹⁰⁶⁷

All but guaranteeing the success of the Revolution, the last of the state’s concessions came after a seven-week-long media strike that began on October 11. All state censorship was lifted, and the ongoing revolution was finally recorded by the public press. So too were the iconological reversals that the demonstrations had already put into motion. From that moment on, revolutionary

¹⁰⁶⁴ Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema, Volume 3*, 14.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Minu, “Payām-e āzādi...,” *Zan-e Ruz*, February 3, 1979.

¹⁰⁶⁶ “Yāddāsht-hā va khabar-hā-ye parakandeh (Miscellaneous news and notes),” *Javanan*, November 6, 1978.

¹⁰⁶⁷ “Kar-o bār-e musik va khānandegān va daftar-hā-ye honari az sekkeh oftādeh ast,” *Javanan*, November 6, 1978.

zeal took over the presses, and though some Pahlavi-era bylines remained the same, those same writers previously trumpeting the Pahlavi's modernist initiatives seemed now to be pronouncing revolutionary credos.

The covers of magazines like *Javanan* and *Zan-e Ruz* no longer comprised the likeness of models or celebrities foreign or local, but the revolution-made role-models that were set to be the stars of this new era. While its previous issue had seen Googoosh on its cover, *Javanan*'s post-censorship covers were burnished instead with images of Ayatollah Khomeini,¹⁰⁶⁸ Mosaddeq,¹⁰⁶⁹ Ayatollah Shariatmadari,¹⁰⁷⁰ and the *Fadā'iyān-e Khalq*.¹⁰⁷¹ As for *Zan-e Ruz*, many of its covers seemed to celebrate the *zan-e mojāhed* (the veiled warrior woman, though the use of *mojāhed* also implied editorial board's left-leaning passions).¹⁰⁷² In the women's magazines, the same pages devoted to instructing women on chicness were now revised to instruct them to dress "modestly."¹⁰⁷³ The fiction sections had been replaced with the transcribed sermons of Ali Shariati's discourse on the western doll.¹⁰⁷⁴ And those sections devoted to the stars were used to now declaim them, going so far as to imply that some of them had been SAVAK agents.¹⁰⁷⁵

One such piece in *Zan-e Ruz* labored through the name of every celebrity that had since left the country: Neli, the "nowkiseh," had opened a hairdresser's shop in Laguna Beach; the Bana'i sisters were exploiting their third sister's rich husband to start a building company in the United States; the areligious Aqhasi was performing to similarly heretical Los Angeles crowds during the holy month of Ramadan; Jamileh was dancing in the nude at the Club Sahara; and Ebi was beating

¹⁰⁶⁸ "Āyatollāh khomeini," *Javanan*, January 22, 1979.

¹⁰⁶⁹ "Doctor mosaddeq," *Javanan*, January 15, 1979.

¹⁰⁷⁰ "Naqsh-e mohem-e āyatollāh ol-ozmā' shari'atmadari dar asr-e enqelab," *Javanan*, March 12, 1979.

¹⁰⁷¹ "Khāterat-e cherik-hāf," *Javanan*, February 19, 1979.

¹⁰⁷² "Dorud bar khāhar-e mojāhed!," *Zan-e Ruz*, January 13, 1979.

¹⁰⁷³ "Nagozārim dastgāh-hā-ye modsāz bar mā ghalabeh konad," *Bānovan*, January 31, 1979.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Ali Shariati, "Zan dar nezām-e masrafi," *Bānovan*, February 21, 1979.

¹⁰⁷⁵ "Behruz-e vosuqi," *Javanan*, February 5, 1979.

women left and right in his new Los Angeles home. If you liked these stars, the editor then implied, it was best for you to leave the country too.¹⁰⁷⁶

The presses also invited demonstrators to write articles as well. In no different a manner than their wonts prior to the Revolution, however, the opinions expressed in such published pieces were almost always harmonious with the press' own viewpoints, published as such only to offer up public endorsement of their own ethos. In this same spirit, following the week previous' feature report on stars in California, *Zan-e Ruz*'s subsequent issue featured an essay written by an Iranian teacher who minced no words with respect to her animosity for the *nowkiseh* that had remained inside the country.

These "empty-headed and hollow-hearted" people, the essay remarked, "have managed to undervalue this liberating revolution that has since outstripped our country's borders shining its light across the world." They had done so because they still yearned to "remain hostage to the yolk of subordination and captivity." They were too empty-headed to recognize that the freedom granted them – freedom to "be reckless and unrestrained, to wear jewelry and possess luxuries, and make themselves up with the nauseous cosmetics gifted to us by the West" – was no freedom at all. Such women did not belong to the revolution, she implied, making mention of a *nowkiseh* woman and her daughter, who upon being "advised to wear the veil" by chadori demonstrators, had told the women that she and her daughters were not part of the demonstrations. Such women, the essay claimed, were traitorous, willing to "sacrifice the social purposes of this revolution to their own whims and fancies." When demonstrators had been shot down by the police throughout these myriad demonstrations, the writer then wondered where these women happened to be: likely "still nestled in front of your dressing tables, petrified that you might lose your so-called

¹⁰⁷⁶ Hāmun, "Kashk mikhāhi? Boro āmrīka!," *Zan-e Ruz*, November 2, 1978.

freedoms.” She went on to remark that these women were the very same “doll-like women, the playthings of capitalism and western imperialism” from which the revolution wished to purge itself. In stark contrast to them, the writer then offered the image of those women “who hold on to their faith and hijab as though weapons to fight against despotism.” Yes, the writer proclaimed, “most of these women have indeed clad themselves in the chador.” They had done so out of “respect for this grand Islamic movement.” They had done so to “demonstrate to these executioners that they refuse the freedoms given them; they want to be free for real.”¹⁰⁷⁷

Another article in the same issue similarly disparaged the *nowkiseh* women ill at ease with the chador’s status as an informally necessary accessory in these demonstrations. The piece blamed the star system, in particular, for normalizing the now anti-revolutionary attitudes of *nowkiseh* women. These stars, the article suggested, served as representatives for such women, after all. Hence, it was no surprise that such women now felt as though the chador was inharmonious with their freedoms. After all, “over the past few years, they had had as their representatives the empty-headed dolls and oiled-up amateur entertainers of the striptease-cultivating state – the Googooshes, the Aki Bana’i-s, the Shurangiz-es, the Hayedeh-s and the Mahasti-s.” The writer concluded by encouraging the nation to finally let go of these idols, to let them fall, and make way instead for “the new representatives of Iranian women: the chador-clad warrior women whose purposes are indeed so grand and holy that they have come to furnish the new covers of *Zan-e Ruz* as well.”¹⁰⁷⁸

As these instances evince, the commentary stemming from the newly liberated press seemed as lacking in objectivity as it did during Pahlavi control. Now, the pendulum had merely swung to the other side, with zeal for one ideology merely swapped for another. The most

¹⁰⁷⁷ M Hāshemi, “Āzādi? Kodām āzādi?,” *Zan-e Ruz*, February 10, 1979.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Zhāleh Rāzi, “Chador mohem ast ya bahs-e enqelab?,” *Zan-e Ruz*, February 10, 1979.

foreboding instance of such uncritical fervour came just as the revolution was reaching its climax, when the reports of discrimination against demonstrators unclad in *de facto* revolutionary dress became more and more widespread. During that period, unveiled but similarly discontented women that also sought to demonstrate against the government began writing to the press to assert how their presence was often met with the obscenities or the physical violence cast by veiled demonstrators.¹⁰⁷⁹ Unveiled protestors in central Tehran, for instance, reported having had rocks thrown at them. Those in lower Tehran were threatened by chadori protesters that they would have acid spilled on their faces if they did not comply.¹⁰⁸⁰ Even outside the purview of demonstrations, some shop owners had decided to refuse services to women not dressed in the hijab.¹⁰⁸¹

All while reports of such behavior continued to be published, revolutionary fervor as well as the idealism pervading the revolutionary media related these incidents with the same discursive strategies it had previously used to validate the Pahlavi era's intolerances. Some among these discursive strategies even implied that, perhaps, the discrimination cast on unveiled women country-wide was deserved. One such instance came when *Zan-e Ruz* published a student's response to the complaints cast by unveiled women: "Did the unveiled not denigrate the veiled for an entire lifetime?" the letter-writer asked. "Now it's time for them to reap what they sowed. You struck us; now we strike you."¹⁰⁸²

And thus, the tide began turning toward resentment.¹⁰⁸³ Those previously discriminated by the culture cultivated by the Pahlavi state now began taking out their resentments and hostilities on segments of the society that they had identified as causes to their long-seething frustrations.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Shāhandeh, "Shanbeh tā shanbeh: begu, begu, begu!," *Zan-e Ruz*, January 27, 1979.

¹⁰⁸⁰ "Rāsti mikhāhand asid bepāshand?," *Zan-e Ruz*, February 3, 1979.

¹⁰⁸¹ "Shāh rafteh, bacheh-am shir nakhordeh...," *Zan-e Ruz*, February 10, 1979.

¹⁰⁸² Jamileh F., "Tahqir nakonid!," *Zan-e Ruz*, February 3, 1979.

¹⁰⁸³ Ian Buchanan, "Ressentiment," in *A Dictionary of Critical Theory* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

The state's previous cooption of the oppositional discourse had not helped matters either. Many of the state's designated folk devils remained folk devils following the Revolution. The blame that the Pahlavi state had cast on them was in no way reevaluated. As such, they too were seen as principal causes to the frustrations that had been long fomenting.

In consequence, even after the Shah left Iran on 16 January 1979, heralding the return of Ayatollah Khomeini on 1 February 1979 and the dissolution of the Pahlavi monarchy on 11 February of the same year, enmities toward the *nowkiseh*, the stars, and myriad Iranian businessmen nonetheless remained prevalent. Many of these individuals opted to stay inside the country following the Revolution. Marked as Pahlavi-era personifications deserving of revolutionary retaliation, however, many of these individuals soon paid for it with their lives. History was soon to repeat itself, only under the banner of a different ideology.

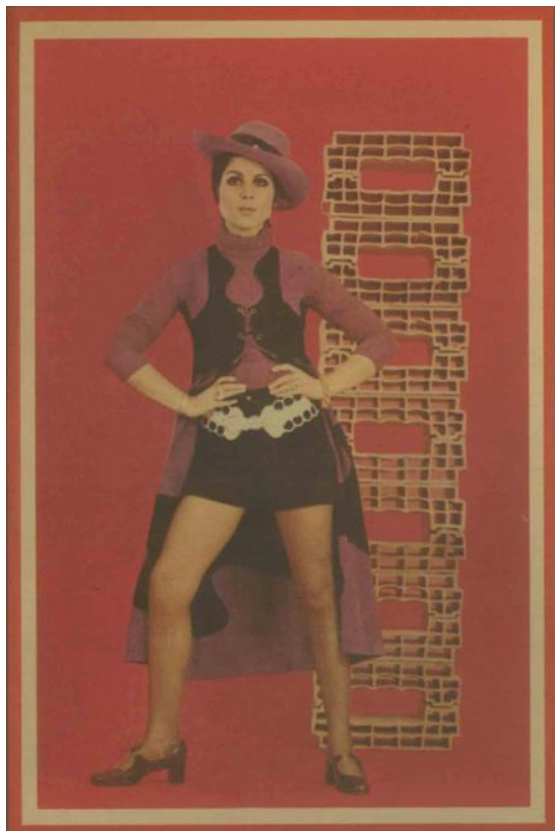


Figure 26: Among Fariba Khatami's recommended dresses for the spring.



Figure 27: The Googooshi haircut.



Figure 28: Googoosh, Mahasti, and Ramesh.



Figure 29: Ramesh and Aref.



Figure 30: Sattar.

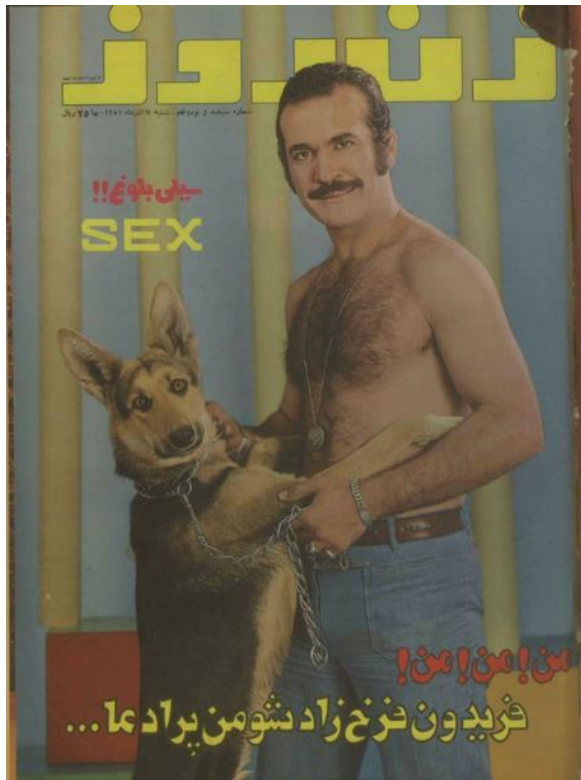


Figure 31: Fereydoun Farrokhzad's controversial Zan-e Ruz cover.



Figure 33: Shohreh Nikpur, Iran's Teen Princess, also bedecked in Keyvan Khosrovani's handicraft designs.



Figure 32: Queen Farah bedecked in Keyvan Khosrovani's designs.



Figure 34: The Queen in Khosrovani's designs.



Figure 35: Revolutionary dress, characterized by the hijab, as photographed by Marjan Vahid.



Figure 36: Women clad in the chador as a revolutionary act, as photographed by Marjan Vahid.



Figure 37: Male revolutionary dress, as photographed by Marjan Vahid.

Conclusion: The Tides that Turn

In this dissertation, I sought to demonstrate the manners in which ideology, popular culture, and style remained interlinked throughout Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's rule following the White Revolution. While a particular style was not imposed as it had been during Reza Shah's rule, style nonetheless continued to be utilized as a means to distinguish between the supposedly cultivated Iranian of the modern era, and those Iranians deemed "backward." As this was also a period marked by more sophisticated media, media such as magazines and television were regularly harnessed so as to encourage Iranians to take up styles befitting the so-called "Great Civilization."

While it would be a mistake to overstate the influence of popular media in actually reshaping Iranian society during this period, the content of magazines like *Javanan* and *Zan-e Ruz* nevertheless echoed the White Revolution's dictum to "transfer the culture whole."¹⁰⁸⁴ In consequence, both sought to reinforce the Pahlavi state's modernizing policies. While in many ways, they complied no different than other magazines of their ilk, these weeklies happened to be the two enjoying the highest circulations in the country. The manners in which they undertook their endeavors to represent the cultural dictums of White Revolution, therefore, happened to leave a more lasting influence on contemporaneous popular culture.

Initially, *Zan-e Ruz* sought to encourage styles in accordance with modern tastes by depicting Queen Farah as the archetype of the modern Iranian woman. In its intent bring into being new, younger celebrities that readers might also emulate, it also embarked on its much-publicized Teen Princess beauty contests, offering a wide array of prizes to any young female that might abide by the "techniques of the body" expected of a Teen Princess.¹⁰⁸⁵ In a search for like models for a

¹⁰⁸⁴ E'temādi, "Farhang bāyad ziroru shavad," *Javanan* 1, September 26, 1966.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Marcel Mauss, "Techniques of the Body *," *Economy and Society* 2, no. 1 (February 1973): 73.

modern style, *Javanan*, instead, sought to accord high cultural prestige to the already popular film and music stars of 1960s Iran. By providing equal publicity to them as they did with western stars, *Javanan* strove to emphasize the similarly modern values and aesthetic standards of the Iranian celebrity, thus coalescing the image of the Iranian star with the modernity toward which the White Revolution aspired.

During the same period, the modern aesthetics encouraged by both state and contemporary media also began manifesting in Iran's urban centers. Coupled with a fledgling consumer culture, this period saw Iranian beauty standards inch closer to western demarcations of beauty and dress, especially with respect to the standardization of a slimmer figure, a smaller nose, and lighter hair. These new standards also led to the proliferation beauty institutes and shopping establishments throughout the country. Though much of these transformations came on account of the rise of consumerism in the period, as well as the westernized tastes of recently returned students from the West, the state also happened to spur the standardization of such western sartorial markers further. The state's endorsement of sartorial reforms in favor of western dress became especially conspicuous following the Ministry of Education's sudden enforcement of a school uniform policy in 1969, which made it compulsory for all female students to wear a skirt to school. Decrees like this dissuaded many religious families from sending their daughters to secondary school, in turn depriving many young women of their education as well further potential interactions with the largely westernized urban environment.

All the same, the contemporary print media depicted these developments as welcome heralds of modernity, all disregarding those negatively affected by these changes. Those especially alienated by these aesthetic transformations were the less affluent and more religious segments of the population, as well as urban migrants displaced on account of 1963's land reform program.

Their values were not only inharmonious to those of the state, but had, in turn, made them a target of discrimination within these urban milieus. Because this new consumerist order was especially unkind to those unwilling or unable to share in the spoils brought about by modernity, the low wage-earning urban migrants as well those from more religious segments of society thus opted to isolate themselves rather than face discrimination for their less than modern comportments. Even so, the state seemed intent on “cultivating” these elements of society.

Following television’s nationalization in 1969, the state became equipped with a broadcasting system now able to transmit its values into the homes of everyday Iranians. “Cultivation” in line with state ideology also happened to be entrenched in National Iranian Television’s (NITV) constitution.¹⁰⁸⁶ As such, this new medium was soon harnessed by the state in further endorsing the virtues of the modernity promised by its Great Civilization. Even though classes ill at ease with the state’s modernity project had welcomed television into their homes only by virtue of the news and entertainment it promised to provide these mostly illiterate classes, the programming supposedly representative of these classes happened also to be compliant the state’s hegemonic values.

The content of representative working class shows like *Khāneh-ye Qamar Khānum*, *Khāneh be Dush*, and *Mājarā-ha-ye Samad* often pitted the squalor of the traditional Iranian against the plunder of the modern, making ample use of stereotypes in further dichotomizing the model Iranian against the supposedly retrograde Iranian. Even when represented, therefore, these classes were merely rendered into subjects of ridicule on the television screen. The styles attributed to these stereotypes also came to strengthen the distinctions between the sophisticated Iranian and

¹⁰⁸⁶ Nādali Hamedāni, “Yek televiziyon-e khāmush... (A turned-off television...)” *Tamasha*, June 10, 1971.

the non-sophisticated desperate for cultivation, laying the ground for greater discriminations being accorded to the religious or migrant classes on account of their dresses and comportments.

None of NITV's locally produced programs, however, elicited the ire of those opposed to the state's modernity project quite like the programs featuring the home-grown musical stars of the era. Equipped with only their songs and the fashions that they donned, these stars were taken up as the prime signifiers for the "culture of idolatry"¹⁰⁸⁷ that the Pahlavi period had brought into being. Female stars like Gogoosh, Ramesh, Nasrin, and Mahasti were branded by the opposition as paragons of "the *gharbzadeh* woman."¹⁰⁸⁸ Male stars, like Fereydoun Farrokhzad, Sattar, and Shahram Shabpareh, having each popularized male styles and demeanors of their own, were in turn also branded as gaudy, womanly, or profane. All this further fed into the opposition's beliefs that these stars were a westernizing menace. So much so that they were perceived to have been dispatched by the Pahlavi state so as to render Iranian women into "dolls."

These stars also happened to be emblematic of the *nowkiseh* class that were soon vilified by the state following the country's inflation crisis in 1975. The *nowkiseh*, who had begun emerging as a newly rich urban class since the beginning of the new decade, seemed also to abide by the visual markers heretofore exclusively adorned by the state elites. As such, as this new class gradually came into being, the state sought to distinguish itself from the westernized styles characteristic of these classes. It did so by designating Iranian handicraft as the exclusive attire of the court, state officials, as well as Iran's old-world elites. As inflation continued to soar, however, the state doubled back on such attempts at sartorial distinction, embarking instead on a campaign encouraging all Iranians to adopt of handicrafts as means through which to bolster the local

¹⁰⁸⁷ Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema, Volume 3: The Islamicate Period, 1978–1984* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2012), 6.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Hazards of Modernity and Morality: Women, State and Ideology in Contemporary Iran," in *Women, Islam and the State*, ed. Deniz Kandiyoti (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1991), 65.

economy. By then, however, the state's land reform program had all but devastated the country's agrarian culture, in turn making it impossible for handicrafts to serve as anything but a luxury good.

As social, political, cultural, and economic resentment continued to swell, those opposed to the Pahlavi state began communicating their resistance even in their choice of dress. Fueled by oppositional terminologies that served to distinguish the modest man or woman from the consumerist "clown" and "doll," the sartorial markers long denigrated by the state were thereby adopted by the opposition as way through which to visually express its rejection of the Pahlavi era's western aesthetic markers. Characterized by an embrace of what the official culture had long denigrated, the *de facto* revolutionary uniform, constituting a hijab for women and a beard and open shirt for men, served also as a rejoinder on the part of the opposition to the decades-long disdain that the state and its official media had expressed toward the styles of the supposedly less modern segments of the population.

As demonstrations swelled and as further symbols of Pahlavi westernism continued to be destroyed, the state finally yielded to the revolutionary fervour – first in granting concessions to the demonstrators, and finally, by surrendering to an absolute transition of power. That zeal, however, happened to obscure the antipathies and prejudices that had already become apparent during the demonstrations. Although those women that had opted against donning the hijab in protest experienced attacks both verbal and physical from zealous men and veiled protestors, the now-free but frenzied media, remaining as uncritical as they were under the previous rule, seemed to downplay these incidents. After all, these pieces seemed to ask, were these women now harassed not those same women that had harassed the veiled during Pahlavi rule?

Owing to the fervour with which the revolution was welcomed, such incidents were not seen as omens of what was to come. Rather, they were justified as just reactions to decades-long resentments: of forced veiling, of popular media continually devaluing the chador as backward, of religious families being compelled to send their daughters to school in a skirt, of “No Chador” signs brandishing certain public establishments, of contented lives in villages devastated in the name of industrialization, of cat-calls and harassment on account of dress and televised stereotypes like “Samad Āqā” or “Qamar Khānum,” of an overall, fifteen-year-long forbearance in the face of a state that consistently pronounced its wish to be rid of them.

Indeed, one might assume that all this became inverted following the Iranian Revolution of 1979, with old resentments coming to rule over a newly resentful, and the ideology that demonstrators had struggled against being merely replaced with an ideology that Iranians were to struggle against once again. One might argue that one ideology merely came in place of another, with old folk devils likewise exchanged for newer sprights, and the same rhymes of history ringing true for the media, put to use once again as a potent tool for cultural cultivation, all while a new sartorial standard became enforced as a means for nation-building. Yet, as this thesis has attempted to demonstrate throughout, the manners through which dominant cultures reflect and reinforce their hegemonic standards and disseminate their ideology by way of their media structures happen to follow deeply complex and distinctive processes, each entangled with similarly intricate historical, economic, and societal contingents. Even a matter so deceptively superficial as style is not exempted from such distinctive, hegemonical machinations. Encoded in style, after all, are the aesthetic standards by which a hegemony expects its constituents to abide. And no hegemony is inherently the same.

As to how a given hegemony disseminates these standards, there is no one template for such a process either. Every such case is deserving of extensive investigation, with each case also revealing all the more intricacies with respect to the inherent impositions, contradictions, and changing cultural standards of a given era. This thesis, by way of its examination of ideology, popular culture, popular media, and style during the period following Mohammad Reza Shah's White Revolution – an era rife with consumerism and aspirations for an imaginary modernity based upon the West – simply hopes to have paved the way for more studies of such ilk to emerge. Be they in direct objection to the content of the current thesis, or with respect to similarly intricate historical periods such as what followed the 1979 Iranian Revolution. What shall be certain in each distinctive case, however, is that although a hegemony's conception of style might differ, the politics of style shall nonetheless remain ever-present.

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