Article by **Hassan Kamshad, Nahid Mozaffari**

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JAMALZADEH, MOHAMMAD-ALI II. WORK

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ii. Work

Jamalzadeh holds a place of singular distinction in the history of modern Persian literature and letters. An innovator of the modern literary language, he was the first to introduce the techniques of European short-story writing in Persian literature. He was only twelve when he left his country—he produced the entire bulk of his work abroad—yet the impression left upon him by his childhood training and environment proved indelible, and in his compositions one senses the life, spirit, and atmosphere of Iran. The oratorical talent and modernist outlook of his father Sayyed Jamāl-al-Din Wāʿeẓ Eṣfahāni, the Catholic school education in Lebanon that introduced him to western fiction, the process of his politicization that began with the Iranian Constitutional Revolution, the murder of his father by the forces of despotism, his political and intellectual associations with Taqizadeh and Mo-ḥammad Qazvini—all led to a life-long and conscious attempt to bring about progressive change in the polity and culture of his homeland through language and discourse. Along with many intellectuals of his generation he feared that with the adoption of western science and education, the imitation of western words would follow, leading to the decline of the Persian language, the loss of its unique character and beauty, and the subsequent loss of Iranian identity (Jamalzadeh, 1941, p.

5). Thus, the modernization of language while preserving its unique character and idioms was one of Jamalzadeh's main goals (Sprachman in Jamalzadeh, 1985, p. 17, Qazvini in Jamalzadeh, 1985, pp. 27-29).

This feat was all the more remarkable considering he left Iran at a young age, before he could gain a good command of the Persian language. With much self-discipline and dedicated study of the classical texts, he gradually gained an impressive command of the language while he lived abroad (Jamalzadeh, 1999, pp. 53-56).

Jamalzadeh's writing has been categorized into works of fiction, and other works which include essays on history, socio-political and cultural studies, literary criticism, translations and biographies/memoirs.

WORKS OF FICTION

Yeki bud yeki nabud. Jamalzadeh's career as a storyteller began with the publication of "*Fārsi šekar ast*" (Persian is Sweet), the first modern Persian short story. This, together with five other stories which were written between 1915 and 1920, appeared later in the celebrated collection, *Yeki bud yeki nabud* in 1921. This book laid the foundation of modern prose, set the direction for the first generation of fiction writers in Iran and established Jamalzadeh's reputation as a literary figure. The first story of *Yeki bud yeki nabud*, "*Fārsi šekar ast*" (Persian is Sweet), is about the encounter in a prison between an ordinary provincial Iranian and two stylized types of his countrymen—one a religious-minded, pompous cleric or *āḵund*, the other a Western-educated modernist just back from Europe—who confuse the simple man by the jargon they fling at him as Persian. The high-flown Arabic-Persian phrases of the cleric, then the strange foreign terms used by the francophone youth, flabbergast and bewilder the poor simple man who has been put in jail for no reason and is seeking an explanation from these eminent characters. It is a clever and extremely funny story with exquisite parodies of the Eurocentric and the religious establishment's modes of speaking Persian. Its linguistic subtleties render translation very difficult, nonetheless this feat has been accomplished in whole or in parts into Russian, French, and English (Zakhoder 1936; Corbin and Lotfi, 1959; Moayyad and Sprachman, 1985).

"*Dusti-e ḵāle ḵerse*" (With Friends Like That) is the tragic story of a kind-hearted, cheerful, and gallant cafe waiter who, despite the advice of traveling companions, saves the life of a Russian Cossack laying wounded in the snow on the road to Kermānšāh (the incident takes place during the First World War). The wounded soldier learns that his rescuer is carrying a small sum of money with him, and when he is conveyed to safety he incites a group of drunken Russian troops to arrest the waiter and have him shot by a firing squad. Except for some inessential details, the movement and pathos of this story achieve the standard of some of the best short stories of European literature.

In another story, "*Dard-e del-e Mollā Qorbān-ʿAli*" (Mulla Qurban-Ali's Complaint), an infatuated *mullah* tells us about his reckless love for the daughter of a neighboring merchant. The girl dies and the unfortunate Qorbān-ʿAli, of whose love the girl's family knows nothing, is invited to spend the night beside the coffin praying for her soul. During the night he cannot quench the temptation to see the beautiful face of his beloved once more. He is caught kissing the lips of the dead girl and ends up in jail.

"*Bila dig bila čoḡondar*" (What's Sauce for the Goose) is a piquant satire on the despotic order, way of life, ruling circles, and class distinctions of the late Qajar times. Fate takes a European bath-attendant to Persia, where he becomes adviser to a minister, and his memoirs about life in Persia remind one of some of the most amusing passages of James Morier's *Hajji Baba of Isfahan* (q.v). It was mainly the remarks made in this story that disturbed religious and state dignitaries in 1921 when the book was first published (Jamalzadeh, 1999, pp. 99-101).

The remaining stories of *Yeki bud, yeki nabud* are "*Rajol-e siāsi*" (The Political Figure) and "*Veylān-al-Dawla*" (Vagrant of the Realm). *Rajol-e siāsi* is a satirical account of how political figures can emerge through opportunism and deceit in times of social upheaval. "*Veylan al-Dawleh*" is a tragic lampoon of a vagabond symbolizing annoying but harmless people who are do-nothings, and who live off of the charity, and face, on occasion, the callousness of others (Balay and Cuypers 1983, pp. 201-6).

In his exuberant letter of praise, Moḥammad Qazvini the leading scholar and critic of the time wrote that in his stories, Jamalzadeh had succeeded in portraying the best representation of the current Persian language of

the time—spoken by literati as well as by the common people (Jamalzadeh, 1985, pp. 25-29). While other intellectuals and educated people praised the book, according to a letter written to Jamalzadeh by ʿAbd-al-Raḥim Ḵalḵāli, some of the *ulama*, some members of parliament, and groups of people congregated in Jāmeʿ mosque in Tehran in condemnation of the book and its allegedly insulting images of the clergy, leaders, and state officials, particularly in the stories "*Fārsi šekar ast*," "*Bila dig, bila čoḡondar*," and "*Dard-e del-e Mollā Qorbān-ʿAli*" (Katouzian, 2003, pp. 190-91). The protestors demanded that the book and its author be accused of *kofr* (apostasy), and that its publishers be punished and exiled. Most of the resentment came from the conservative *ulama*, their students and followers who were already embroiled in an effort to pass a law in the Majles to impose censorship on whatever was deemed as insulting to Islam in the press. Meanwhile, a counter demonstration in defense of the book was held in the Sepahsālār Mosque. (Moayyad, 1985, pp. 10-11). While initially, socio-political reasons attracted attention to the book, its literary merits ultimately established Jamalzadeh's reputation as a major writer of fiction.

These literary merits can be summarized as follows. First, the stories of *Yeki bud yeki nabud* demonstrate a focus on fiction and literary style over other considerations, a departure from the predominantly didactic and political nature of the fiction produced in the constitutional and post-constitutional era (Katouzian, 2003, pp. 191-96). As the critic Reza Barāheni has stated, with Jamalzadeh, the literature of the constitutional period entered the realm of the short story, and Dehḵodā's caricatures in the *Čarand parand* columns of *Ṣur-e Esrāfil* evolved into the fictional characters in *Yeki bud yeki nabud*. (Barāheni, 1983, p. 550; Balay and Cuypers, 1983, p. 110, ʿĀbedini in Dehbāši, 1998, p. 151). Second, the stories were the first introduction of the modern genre of the short story to Persian fiction. This genre differed from traditional tales in that each story was situated in a particular time and place, each character had distinctive features including his or her voice or language, and events occurred according to a structured plot (Barāheni 1983, p. 551). Preceded by attempts to develop the genre of the novel in works such as Marāḡaʾi's *Ebrāhim Beg*, various works by Ṭālebof and Ḵosrovi's *Šams o Ṭoḡrā*, the short story proved to be popular with readers and writers alike, as it was similar in length to traditional folkloric tales, but did not require the complexity of plot and character development necessary for a novel. To

this day, the short story has been more successful for Iranian writers than the novel (Raḥimi in Dehbāši 1998, pp. 375-76; Katouzian, 2003, pp. 194-95). Third, Jamalzadeh's stories comprise the first instance of the Western style of critical realism with its focus on mirroring society and its immediate problems, and interest in the representation of average people in Persian fiction. As such, they made a lasting impact in the body of literature and influenced several subsequent generations of writers like Sadeq Hedayat, Ṣādeq Čubak and Hušng Golširi (qq.v.; Balay and Cuypers, 1983, pp. 107-8; Katouzian, 2003, p. 191). Fourth, the particular and conscious employment of language in the stories is a departure from the traditional styles of prose writing in Persian. The language of the narrative is direct, unadorned, and colloquial, and the choice of words varies according to the class and educational level of the characters (Katouzian, 2003, pp. 192-93; Mirṣ;ādeqi in Dehbāši, 1998, pp. 295-303). Scholars correctly trace the origin of this type of language use to the newspapers of the constitutional period, particularly to satirical essays and poetry of Dehḵodā in the *Čarand parand* column in *Ṣur-e Esrāfil* and the poetry of Sayyed Ašraf-al-Din in *Nasim-e šemāl* (Balay, 1998, p. 29; Katouzian, 2003, p. 192).

Like other modernist intellectuals, Jamalzadeh had both political and cultural intentions in the conscious use of a language that would be comprehensible to people of different classes and educational levels. These intentions, which are expressed in a manifesto-like introduction to *Yeki bud yeki nabud* by the author, state that it is incumbent on writers and intellectuals to emerge from the limited inner circles of their patrons and colleagues and to create a new literature that would expose the ills of society, and address, include, and give a voice to the people (Jamalzadeh, 1921; 1954 edition, pp. 3-21; Balay 1998, pp. 77-8). He highlights European successes in technological, scientific, and social development, and the instrumental role of literature in the transmission of a common language, education, and knowledge (Balay 1998, p. 78). In essence, his argument pointed to the responsibility of Iranian writers and intellectuals to create a common national language in order to conduct the national discourse necessary in the construction of a modern society and state in the beginning of the 20th century (Navabpour 1996, p. 71).

To highlight the importance of words and language, Jamalzadeh, ended

the book *Yeki bud yeki nabud*, with a glossary of colloquial Persian words and phrases. He continued to collect and document colloquial terms through much of his life, and his collection was later published as a book in 470 pages entitled *Farhang-e loḡāt-e ʿamiāna* (Dictionary of Colloquial Words; Afšār in Jamalzadeh, 1999, p. 278).

Dār al-majānin (Lunatic Asylum). Despite the critical acclaim of intellectuals and modernists, the uproar in religious and government circles after the publication of *Yeki bud yeki nabud*, and the re-imposition of censorship by the state led Jamalzadeh to refrain from publishing fiction for the next twenty years (Kamshad 1966, pp. 94-95). He resumed his literary activities in earnest in 1942, proving to be one of the most prolific authors of modern Iran. The first of his new books was the novel *Dār al-majānin* (Tehran, 1942), the engaging story of a mad-house in which some interesting characters, each with his own philosophy, habits and idiosyncrasies, are in custody. While throwing light on the abnormalities of his characters, the author also tries to criticize the conditions of a society in which sensitive men prefer taking refuge in an asylum rather than being at large. But this critical note is only incidental: it is droll humor that forms the driving force of the novel. Among the crowd of bedlamites the reader can recognize one unmistakably: a certain Hedāyat-ʿAli Khan, known as Monsieur, who calls himself *Buf-e kur*. He is a writer, and some of the passages and hallucinations of Hedayat's *Buf-e kur* (q.v.; The Blind Owl) are given as samples of his writings. The allusions are clear enough, and the author's love and respect for the late Sadeq Hedayat are touching. The book also contains a good selection of quotations from classical Persian poetry about wisdom and insanity.

Qoltašan divān. Jamalzadeh's second novel, *Qoltašan divān* (Tehran, 1946), concerns the age-old struggle between good and evil. The book opens with a neat description of a little street and its residents in Tehran that resemble many other streets and people in the country. The following chapters scrutinize the life of two inhabitants of the little street: first the hero, Ḥāji Shaikh, a wholesale dealer in tea and sugar; a virtuous, patriotic man with a good reputation among the people, he has been a deputy in the first Majles. Then there is the villain, *Qoltašan divān*, a cunning and ruthless opportunist who would stop at nothing to attain his personal aims. The villain fails in his first attempt to use the

good name of Ḥāji Shaikh for his own ends, by marrying off his own compromised daughter to the son of old Hajji. Embittered by Ḥaji's refusal, he waits for an opportune moment to take his revenge. During the First World War, when Hajji's trade and financial strength are badly disrupted, the villain reappears asking for a huge consignment of sugar to be bought and kept for him. In the following months the acute shortage of provisions brings the people to the doorstep of Ḥaji, who they know has a whole store loaded with sugar. But he cannot sell the stuff and the real owner refuses to show up. Cursed and despised by everybody, defamed as a vicious hoarder, Hajji dies in grief and misery, without being able to defend his innocence. The villain, on the other hand, having made his fortune in this bargain, builds an orphanage and throws a lavish party for ministers and notables in his newly constructed, sumptuous house. At the height of his career *Qoltašan divān* dies peacefully in his sleep of a stroke. The newspapers devote their front pages to the glorification of his benevolence and service to culture; his name is whispered on every lip as that of a great man, and all the dignitaries mourn his death as a grave national loss.

The principal characters of the book, like many other characters created by this author, belong to the middle class; and their ideas, ambitions, and personal dilemmas, as well as the tragedy of an honest man entangled in an unbalanced society, are skillfully portrayed. This has led some critics to consider *Qoltašan divān* to be Jamalzadeh's most mature novel in its poignant utilization of humor to highlight injustice (Kamshad 1966, p.97).

Ṣaḥrā-ye maḥšar (Plain of Resurrection, Tehran, 1947) is a fantasy about the day of resurrection, possibly inspired by the pamphlet *Roʾyā-ye ṣ;ādeqa* (A Truthful Dream) composed in part by Jamalzadeh's father some fifty years before. His father's "Plain of Resurrection" had a serious intention: to prophesy the hard times that were awaiting certain despotic rulers and political opponents of the time when they finally reached the presence of their Maker. The son's flight of fancy, however, is primarily in the realm of humor and satire: he is amusing himself by visualizing the position of people of various walks of life when they stand before the divine scales in which their deeds are to be weighed. Implicit, however, is a traditional Islamic dogma, which runs through the medieval Persian works that offer counsel to rulers and princes: the dogma that we are answerable for all our misdeeds in this life. So to

understand the salient points of this satire, the reader should have a fair knowledge of Shiʿa doctrine. But even then he is likely to be confounded by some of the things happening in the heavenly kingdom. We learn, for example, that influential connections, string pulling and even bribery play a considerable part in the placement and promotion of angels and other ministering spirits. The prophets, on the other hand, are dispatched to heaven straight away without any demur or interrogation. Some smart sinners, by reciting an appeasing Qurʾānic verse or an apostolic tradition, are let off lightly; and a great number of people escape the blazing fires of Hell by reciting an appropriate line of poetry or even by cracking a joke that amuses God. But, in general, moderation and compromise seem to be the order of the day: moral issues and human values, not the religious dogmas, are the criterion of divine justice.

But when it comes to *āḵund*s, mullahs, and religious pretenders, the handling of affairs take a different turn: the gates of mercy are shut, for the sins of this group weigh much heavier than their good deeds. Among the crowd who line up for questioning, the reader may recognize some familiar faces. One delightful moment is the appearance of Omar Khayyam. Despite his apparent mischief, the celebrated poet-philosopher is granted celestial bliss.

In the final section the narrator meets Satan in a lonely corner, and after some exchange of views on a number of scriptural topics, Satan, who is on good terms with God, obtains permission to take him back to earth endowed with eternal life. But before long the narrator grows tired of this troublesome gift and asks to be given liberty instead; liberty in its fullest sense, including that of dying when he chooses.

Rāheāb-nāma (The Drainage Controversy). For social criticism, a study of the characteristics of different social classes, for humor and excellence of style and language, Jamalzadeh's *Rāheāb-nāma* (The Drainage Controversy," 1948) stands high above his other novels. The framework of the book is rather similar to that of *Qoltašan divān*, the scene is a cul-de-sac in Tehran; the characters are members of the six households living there. But the problem this time is the repairing of a blocked water channel, without which they cannot have a drop of water-so precious in the days before the capital was equipped with a piped water system.

The hero is a European-educated Iranian student spending his summer vacation at home. Having learned about the hitch in the drainage he calls a meeting of the neighbors, who unanimously authorize him to make arrangements for the necessary repairs. He thanks them for their confidence in him and promptly sets to work. After endless troubles with the architect, the mason, and other workmen, with all expenses having been paid from his own pocket, the job is completed and he sends the neighbors the bill. But they, unfamiliar with the principle of "business is business," find it hard to lend themselves to such extravagance. They start dilly-dallying, each one making various excuses and all refusing to pay their share. With his meager allowance floating down the drain, the kind-hearted, civilized student is unable to return to Europe to resume his studies. He leaves his ancestral home and finds shelter in a cozy little room in the courtyard of a holy shrine, away from any neighbors, disillusioned at all the lectures he had received on good neighborly relations, and cursing his compatriots for their moral degradation.

Contrary to the general pattern of Jamalzadeh's novels, *Rāhāb-nāma* is concise, coherent and very much to the point. Three sketches at the beginning of the book-the unbearable heat of a Persian summer day, the active life of the bazaar and the peaceful atmosphere of the holy shrine-are portrayed with mastery. There are many other pages of skilful writing; and the author's knowledge of and deep insight into the inner lives, habits and thinking of middle-class families deserve praise. The unrestrained criticism of the national character with which the book ends, however, is not entirely free from exaggeration (Kamshad 1966, p. 100)

Sar o tah yek karbās. In the two-volume work *Sar o tah yek karbās* (Cut From the Same Cloth, Tehran, 1956) or *Esfahān-nāma*, the first chapter is an account of the author's childhood. The rest of the book is devoted to episodes in the life of a friend, which, though immensely rich and interesting, deny us the pleasure of learning more about the later years of the author's life.

Jawād Āqā is the son of a merchant, and after the death of his father he becomes interested in mysticism and ascetic teachings. After divorcing his wife and abandoning his home, he joins a Sufi guide (*moršed*) whose daily life is full of spiritual sublimities. What follows is an account of the adventurous life these two, the guide and follower, go through. Their

tireless wayfaring, their experiences with people of different creeds and social standing, all imbued with the recollections, beliefs, and instructions of the dervish, form the chapters of the book. But the book is not a close-knit, consistent piece: several stories, some historical details, and many mystical speculations are woven into the overall texture of the narrative.

The first chapter, about the childhood of the author, is written with a sincerity and innocent candor rare, if not absent, in the works of any writer living inside Iran. In two other chapters, one on the history of Isfahan and the other a description of the old Persian polestars or wrestling houses, their amiable ceremonies and traditional customs, a great deal of valuable information is offered. Of the various stories and anecdotes included in both volumes, some (in particular, *Jahannam-e taʿaṣṣob* (The Hell of Fanaticism), about the hypocrisy of an *āḵund*, and *bāj-e sibil* (extortion), illustrating the thuggish character of army officers, are in fact independent pieces superimposed on the narrative. Taken as a whole, *Sar o tah yek karbās* is the most erudite work by Jamalzadeh. Meditations on philosophy, metaphysics, religious instructions, mysticism, and their expression in Persian ethics and literature are to be found throughout.

STORY COLLECTIONS

In addition to his novels, Jamalzadeh published several collections of short stories. *Sargozašt-e ʿAmu-Ḥosayn-ʿAli yā šāhkār* (The Story of Uncle Hussein Ali or The Masterpiece, Tehran, 1942), *Talḵ o širin* (Bitter and Sweet, Tehran, 1956), *Kohna o now* (Old and New, Tehran, 1959), and *Ḡayr az Ḵodā hičkas nabud* (There was no one but God, Tehran, 1961). The first was republished in 1957 in a two-volume enlarged edition called *Šāhkār* (Masterpiece). Some of the pieces in the second volume of this collection had been written much earlier and published in the periodicals of the time. Among them "*Kabāb-e ḡāz*" (Roast Goose), "*Ḡayr az Ḵodā hičkas nabud*," "*Palang*" (Leopard), "*Noparast*" (Modernist), and "*Došman-e ḵuni*" (Mortal Enemy) are famous either for their abundant humor or for the freshness, vigor, and pathos that characterized Jamalzadeh's earlier writings. But save for the title-piece "*ʿAmu-Ḥosayn-ʿAli*," written with ingenuity and brilliance, the contents of the first volume exemplify some of the author's later trends: prolixity, effusion, and reverie laden with poetic and proverbial quotations.

These tendencies are also detectable in the second collection, "*Talḵ o širin*," especially in the first three stories, "*Yak ruz dar Rostamābād-e Šemirān*" (A Day in Rustamabad of Shemiran), "*Ḥaqq o nāḥaqq*" (Just and Unjust) and "*Darviš-e mumiāʾi* (Mummified Dervish), where the main emphasis is on poetry and philosophical speculation. Other pieces in this book, together with six stories and one play collected in "*Kohna o now*," deal with social problems such as the difficulties of life for honest families living in a corrupt society, and the credulity of young intellectuals when they first come in contact with the rough and tumble, resulting in their bitterness and disillusionment later. Other collections include *Ḡayr az Ḵodā hičkas nabud* (There was no one but God, Tehran, 1961), "*Asmān o rismān*" (From Here and There, Tehran, 1964); "*Qeṣ;ṣ;ahā-ye kutāh barā-ye bačahā-ye rišdār* (Short Tales for Bearded Children, Tehran, 1974) and "*Qeṣ;ṣ;a-ye mā be sar rasid*" (The End of the Story, Tehran, 1978). Within the latter collections, the story "*Šurābād*" met with critical acclaim and was translated into Ger-man, French, and Italian. Along with "*Namak-e gandideh*" (Rotten Salt) these stories reflected the prevailing despotism and social problems of Iran in the 1960s and 1970s (Jamalzādeh, 1999, p. 282; Cornesello, pp. 20-48).

In general, there appears a sharp distinction between the early works of fiction written by Jamalzadeh and his later compositions. Conciseness, novelty of form, originality of ideas, a biting sense of humor, and, above all, observance of the conventional divisions in storytelling (development, climax, and denouement) mark the earlier writings. His later works, however, show a tendency toward prolixity, sage remarks and mystical and philosophical speculations; there is frequent use of classical poetry and at times a lack of shape and order. Common to all his compositions is the language he uses: the charm of his prose discourses cast in a familiar yet individual style. Everyday expressions adorn almost every line, to the extent that his care for juxtaposing idioms seems to override other considerations. Years of hard work have equipped him with masses of slang and colloquial proverbs, and he has the gift to use them with skill; but his indiscreet dwelling on these terms appears over-righteous at times. A single idea is normally expressed in a variety of ways, in as many roundabout phrases as the author happens to remember; as if the flow of the story mattered less than the recording of expressions. The frequently synonymous phrases render a kind of superficiality to his description and a certain amount of immobility to

the progress of the narrative. Moreover, Jamalzadeh believed in imbuing his stories with incidental acts of personal perception, which again hold up the plot. From the technical point of view, then, the majority of his novels lack a firm and continuous narrative: they are episodic, and in this regard he displayed more talent for short- than long-story writing. In his later works he grew increasingly intent on abandoning fiction for erudition.

OTHER WORKS

Historical, Social, and Political Studies. Jamalzadeh began writing historical, social and political essays in the period when he was writing for the journal *Kāveh* (1916-22) in Berlin. His first contribution to this paper, an article entitled "*Vaqti ke yek mellat asir mišavad*" (When a Nation is Reduced to Slavery), condemned the policies of Britain and Russia in Iran before and during World War I. A translation of this article appeared in some German newspapers of the time. It was also during this period that he published his first book, *Ganj-e šāyegān yā awżāʿ-e eqteṣ;ādi-e Irān* (The Worthy Treasure, or the Economic Situation of Iran, Berlin, 1916-17), which deals with the physical geography of Iran, a history of commerce, customs, transportation, mines, arts and crafts, reforms, finances, weights and measures, post and telegraph system, life in the capital, and a great deal of other useful information about the country. This work was praised by the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (January 1921), and was translated into German.

Jamalzadeh's second work of research entitled, "*Tārik̲-e rawābeṭ-e Rus o Irān*" (The History of Russo-Persian Relations), appeared serialized in *Kāveh*, but was in fact never completed because of the journal's closure. "*Bolševism dar Irān-e qadim*" (Bolshevism in Ancient Iran), was a study of the beliefs and preaching of Mazdak, which has been translated into Russian and published in Moscow. To introduce European men of letters and their way of thought to the Iranian public, he wrote articles in various papers; his subjects included Maxim Gorky in *Yaḡmā* 6/7 1953, pp. 265-72, "Ničeh and Jeyms Joys" (Nietzsche and James Joyce) in *Soḵan* 5/1 1953, pp. 25-31 and 5/2, pp. 99-108), and "Kont do Gobino" (Comte de Gobineau; in *Yaghmā*, 1960, pp. 478-84; and 14, 1961, pp. 17-20, 63-68).

While Jamalzadeh had written mostly fiction in the period of intense politicization and turmoil in Iranian society between 1941 and the coup

of 1953, he resumed his critical writing about society and politics in the early 1960s when the issue of land reform and other reforms had been raised. His "*Āzādi o ḥayṯiyat-e ensāni*" (Freedom and Human Dignity), an anthology of prose and poetry on these subjects from Western and Persian literature was published in 1960, followed by "*Ḵāk o ādam*" (Earth and Man, Tehran, 1962), and "*Zamin, o arbāb o dehqān*" (Land, Landowner, Peasant, Tehran, 1963). *Ḵolqiyāt-e mā Irāniān* (Our Iranian Character Traits) a compendium of writings on the positive and negative traits of Iranians by foreigners and Iranians in history was first published in a serial form in the magazine *Masāʾel-e Irān* (Problems of Iran) in 1965, and then in book form in 1967. The aim of this book and of the others mentioned above was to shed light on the social problems of Iran, and to provide a self-critique, which would pave the way for finding solutions. Our Iranian Character Traits was subsequently criticized by the government and eventually banned in Iran (Jamalzadeh, 1999, p. 283; Matini, in Dehbāši 1998, pp. 445-57). Before his death, Jamalzadeh also published *Taṣ;wir-e zan dar farhang-e Irāni* (The Image of Women in Iranian Culture) in 1979, which predominantly consists of the image of women in Persian poetry.

Literary Criticism. Throughout his literary career Jamalzadeh was either closely associated with or an ardent contributor to the Persian press inside and outside the country. A list of the articles and shorter pieces he wrote for various journals has been compiled by Iraj Afšār (1999, pp. 271-87). Another longer bibliography by Nāhid Ḥabibi Āzād includes books, articles, translations and works about Jamalzadeh (Iraj Afšār and ʿAli Dehbāši, eds., pp. 651-97). These bibliographies list the numerous articles and book reviews that Jamalzadeh wrote on classical and modern Iranian literature including the examples below.

Golestān-e nikbaḵti yā pand-nāma-ye Saʿdi (The Garden of Prosperity, or The Counsel of Saʿdi, Tehran, 1938), published on the seven hundredth anniversary of publication of the *Golestān*, is a compilation of the prose-counsels laid down in that immortal book. In the book entitled *Bāng-e nay* (Lamentation of The Reed; Tehran, 1959), Jamalzadeh tried to collect some of the scattered stories of Rumi's great *Divān*, the *Maṯnawi*, and by putting them together he produced one smooth amalgam of all the verses related to each story. *Qeṣṣa-ye qeṣ;ṣ;ahā* (The Tale of Tales, Tehran, 1948) is a compendium of the biographical work *Qeṣ;aṣ; al-*

ʿolamāʾ (Stories of the Learned), written by Moḥammad b. Solaymān of Tonokābon in 1873. It throws light on the life and works of some Shiʿa scholars who lived between the 10th and 19th centuries. Jamalzadeh's ideas about the modern trends in Persian poetry are expressed fully and candidly in his Introduction to Moḥammad Esḥāque's *Soḵanvarān-e Irān dar ʿaṣ;r-e-ḥāżer* (Poets and Poetry of Modern Persia, I, Delhi, 1933), and later, in a detailed review of the work of one of the younger poets in *Rāhnemā-ye ketāb*, the journal of the Book Society of Persia.

Hazār piša (The Pigeon Hole, Tehran, 1948) is a kind of work-box containing a thousand interesting and amusing notes made from the author's reading of various books and articles. This, the first of two volumes, includes part of the first thousand jottings; the second volume, containing 309 different items, appeared in 1960 under the title *Kaškul-e Jamāli* (Beggar's Cup of Jamāl). The final collection was published as *Sanduqča-ye asrār* (Chest of Secrets, Tehran, 1964). Jamalzadeh continued to write and publish reviews of classical poetry and modern prose in Persian journals until late in life.

Jamalzadeh's translations of other works. With his excellent knowledge of French, German and Arabic, Jamalzadeh translated a large number of books and articles into Persian. The best known among these are the following: Hendrik Willem van Loon, *The Story of Mankind* (*Dāstān-e bašar*, Tehran, 1955); Friedrich Schiller, *Wilhelm Tell* (*Vilhelm Tell*, Tehran, 1955, 2nd ed., 1969) and *Don Carlos* (*Don Kārlos*, Tehran, 1956); Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, *Le Cafe de Surat* (*Qahveḵāne-ye surāt yā jang-e haftādo do mellat*, Berlin, 1961); Moliere, *L'avare* (*Ḵasis*, Tehran, 1957); and Henrik Ibsen, *En folkefiende* (*Došman-e mellat*, Tehran, 1961).

Translations of Jamalzadeh's works. Because of his colloquial style and the wealth of idiomatic phrases in Jamalzadeh's works, the translation of his books into foreign languages is a formidable task. This is probably why, despite the literary value and great significance of his writings for modern Persian letters, attempts at introducing him to foreign readers have been relatively few. The untidiness of his novels and the cultural specificity of many of the situations in his stories are two other problems facing the translator. Hence, apart from an unpublished German translation of *Ganj-e šāyagān*, only some of the short stories published in the collection *Yeki bud yeki nabud*, and a few other stories, have appeared in foreign languages. An English translation of *Dard-e del-e*

Mollā Qorbān-ʿAli was first printed in the magazine *Āhang* (Delhi, April 1944). *Yeki bud yeki nabud* was translated into English by Heshmat Moʾayyad and Paul Sprachman and published in its entirety as *Once Upon a Time* in 1985. *Sar o tah yek karbās* or *Eṣ;fahān-nāma* (Cut from the Same Cloth) was translated by W. L. Heston and published as *Isfahan is Half the World: Memories of a Persian Boyhood*, Princeton, 1983.

In his book *Kulturskitser fra Iran*, Arthur Christensen included a Danish translation of "*Rajol-e siāsi*" (Christensen 1931, pp. 179-84). This story has also been translated into German, as *Mein debut in der Politik*, and published in Austria in *Die Reise zum wonnigen Fisch: die besten Humoresken der zeigen; ossischen Weltliteratur* (Trip to the Jolly Fish; The Best Humorous Short Stories from Contemporary World Literature, Vienna, 1960). In addition, an Austrian professor, Karl Stolz, has translated "*Veylān-al-Dawla*" into German. This piece was also broadcast from Vienna Radio in October 1951 under the title "*Der Tod des Vagabunden*."

In the first issue of the journal *Fikr o naẓar*, published by the Association of Letters of Aligarh in India, there appeared Munibur Rahman's translation in Urdu of the short story "*Dusti-e ḵāle ḵerse*." Rudolf Gelpke's German rendering of this and another of Jamalzadeh's stories were included in a collection called *Persische Meistererzähler der Gegenwart* (Zurich, 1961). The volume entitled Im Garten des Hadschis: persische Erzählungen (The Haji's Garden: Persian Stories) contains a collection of Jamalzadeh's stories translated by Touraj Rahnama (Frankfurt, 1993). A recent dissertation which includes a German translation of *Ganj-e šāyegān ya awżāʾ-e eqtesʿÂādi-e Irān* has been published by Leila Nabieva, *Der unermessliche Schatz, oder die wirtschaftliche Lage Irans: Galazades Studie zur iranischen Volkswirtschaft am Vorabend des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Berlin, 2006).

The Russian translation of *Yeki bud yeki nabud* (Byli i nebylitsy) by Boris Nikolaevich Zakhoder appeared in Moscow in 1936. The book contains some useful explanatory notes and a detailed preface by A. Bolotnikoff about the writer, the stories in the collection, and some general observations on the literary revival of the period in Iran. Discussing the influence that Jamalzadeh's first collection of stories had on Iran's contemporary literature, Bolotnikoff, quoting K. Chaikine, attributes the beginning of the style of realism in Persian literature to Jamalzadeh in

Yeki bud yeki nabud. More recently, Jahangir Dorri has translated *Bila dig bila čoḡondar*, in a volume entitled *Chudesa v reshete* (Wonders in a Sieve), which was published in Moscow in 1989. Further Russian scholarship on Jamalzadeh includes a bio-bibliographical index by Jahangir Dorri and N. M. Safarova (Dzhamal-'zade: bibliograiceski ukazatel', Moscow, 1972) and a book about the life and works of Jamalzadeh (Mokhammad Ali Dzhaml'zade, Moscow, 1983) by Jahangir Dorri.

Finally, a collection containing eight of Jamalzadeh's better-known stories appeared in French in 1959. The book, entitled *Djamalzadeh: choix de nouvelles*, was translated by Stella Corbin and Hassan Lotfi and published by UNESCO (Paris, 1959). It contains a preface by Andre Chamson, member of the French Academy, and an informative introduction about Jamalzadeh's work and life written by Professor Henri Massé, the celebrated French Orientalist and expert on Persian folklore.

BIOGRAPHIES/MEMOIRS

Jamalzadeh wrote and spoke extensively about friends, colleagues, intellectuals, and writers who were his contemporaries such as Ebrāhim Purdāwud, Sayyed Ḥasan Taqizādeh, Yaḥyā Dawlatābādi, Moḥammad Qazvini and writers, poets, and scholars from a younger generation like Ṣādeq Hedāyat, Parvin Eʿteṣ;āmi, Moḥammad Moʿin and Mojtabā Minovi.

He also wrote and spoke at length about his memories of his father and his own long life. These memoirs and interviews—along with many of his thousands of letters—have been published in various journals and books (see bibliography).

MAJOR THEMES IN JAMALZADEH'S WORK

Almost all of Jamalzadeh writing reflects his didactic purpose in the writing of literature as evidenced by the essays he wrote as a preface or introduction to his stories. His main themes explore the negative consequences of the combination of despotism, poverty, and fanaticism—prevalent in twentieth century Iran—on the lives of normal people, predominantly from the middle and lower classes. A corollary of this unfortunate combination in many of Jamalzadeh's works is the

prevalence of corruption and insecurity among all social groups (Kamshad 1966, p. 110). He had a particular distaste for despotism and the culture of subservience that it perpetuated (Katouzian, 2003, pp. 15-17).

In his social criticism he was principally concerned with exposing the ills of despotism, and with probing with sympathetic insight into its shortcomings, of middle-class elements. He blamed the young middle-class students for their *naivete*. He showed them victimized by old charlatans of power and influence, thwarted by fear and seduced by vain fancies. In this he was speaking as a middle-class Iranian who had lived abroad for many years. He was concerned about the outmoded practices and beliefs in education, and the rights of women, and questioned the reactionary aspects of religious practice.

Wholesale imitation of Western ways was always a source of concern to Jamalzadeh. Apart from frequent references in his works, he expressed these apprehensions in the Preface to *Sar o tah yek karbās*, where he indicated that not only the cultural products, but names, manners, even foods and drinks were indiscriminately influenced, or often replaced, by their European counterparts.

The dilemma of Western-educated Iranians who returned to their country often appeared in Jamalzadeh's novels and stories. Numerous characters of this type were depicted in different situations and with different potentialities, but none of them were able to tolerate the prevailing conditions, accommodate to the requirements of their milieu, or even to feel at home once they returned to their own country. Not only in their social environment but often in their own family circle they seemed like outsiders. All of them, even if endowed with exceptional learning and capabilities, failed in whatever they took up and generally ended up as morbid and useless members of society. For example, there was the strange creature in "*Fārsi Šekar Ast*," the Francophone youth, whose absurd imitation of Western ways and language became a great subject for ridicule. Then there was the hero of *Rāhāb-nāma*, who wanted to be civil and helpful to his neighbors but was easily swindled by them. Or Raḥmat-Allāh, in "*Ātaš-e zir-e k̲ākestar*" (The Fire under Ashes), trained as a skilled carpenter in Germany, he opened a factory in Tehran after his return home. As he was a master-craftsman, his trade flourished rapidly. But rival firms could not tolerate the success of their

young colleague and their plotting lost Raḥmat-Allāh both the factory and his profession.

The hero of "*Darviš-e mumiāʾi*" was another outcast. Though a learned and conscientious student, he locked himself up in his room in Geneva and without proper food or sleep brooded on abstract ideas such as the existence of God, the secret of creation, and free-will and predestination. In contrast to this bookworm living like a hermit, we have the son of a wealthy merchant in "*Dār al-majānin*" who was sent to Paris to study commerce; but after three years' stay in that city, he could not yet identify the building of his school.

A slightly happier situation can be found by looking at another of Jamalzadeh's heroes, one who finally did achieve a position of honor, though in an unorthodox manner, after going back to his country. Aḥmad Āqā, the hero of "*Ḵāna-beduš*" (The Wanderer), returned to Iran from Europe with a Ph.D. degree in education. But the job he was given by the government was that of sticking labels on bars of opium. Even in this menial employment he found occasion to complain of the prevailing bribery and corruption. His complaints were ridiculed by his friends and his own father. He felt an absolute stranger at home and finally, giving up the attempt to settle down with his own people, found a teaching job among the wandering tribes. He completely identified himself with the nomads, living and moving with them and winning their love and gratitude for teaching their children. When he died his tomb became venerated as a place of pilgrimage for the people of the tribe.

Jamalzadeh's preoccupation with cultural alienation and the clash of cultural identities as symbolized by the tragedy of the returned student points to a major sociological problem in Iran's state of social flux from the end of the 19th century until the revolution of 1979 (and perhaps beyond). The unhappy Westernized, idealistic, and ambitious young student returning home faces a situation where poverty, illiteracy, and adherence to outdated traditions coexist with the predominance of selfish, dominant classes with no sense of civic responsibility, and corruption prevails at all levels. Jamalzadeh was most admirably suited to handle this theme, for he was the archetype of that Iranian student who could never again adapt himself to prevailing conditions in his own country. In this regard, Jamalzadeh spoke for his time and for a number of young Iranian intellectuals in the first half of the twentieth century.

Another theme that looms large in Jamalzadeh's works is criticism of Muslim clerics and the religious institutions. Jamalzadeh was brought up with a religious as well as a modern education; the *ʿabā* (q.v.; cloak), *ʿammāma* (turban) and *menbar* (pulpit) occupy a more prominent place in his vision of Iran than they did in the minds of most other secular writers between the Constitutional Revolution and the 1979 Revolution. But unlike Hedāyat, who hated the religious institution as something alien, and as part of the evil resulting from the Arab conquest which suppressed true Iranian ideals, Jamalzadeh believed that ignorance, outdated interpretations, greed, and corruption among the clergy made them fall short of the ideals and requirements of a just and forward looking religion. It is for this reason that Jamalzadeh exposed the clergy to ruthless satire. Perhaps Jamalzadeh could not forget that some of the supporters of popular and progressive causes during the Constitutional Revolution—among them his own father—were clerics, whom he considered to be an essential element in the life and culture of his people. Jamalzadeh was by birth a member of the clerical-professional element of the middle class. Thus he could portray middle-class people with an accuracy and vividness born only of the most intimate acquaintance; and he could beat the *āḵund* with the *āḵund*'s own stick, defeating him with the clerics' own techniques and terminology, as in the argument with the mullah in the story "*Jahannam-e taʿaṣṣ;ob*." With the skill of a Moliere, he made his characters fulfill the worst charges against them.

Finally, reference should be made to Jamalzadeh's preoccupation with language. When he left Iran for good, before the First World War, the state of the language was chaotic. Some practiced the elaborate and convoluted traditional style of writing, and others, supporting the idea of a literary revival, were pushing for a simpler and more concise mode of expression. With literacy gaining ground, the written word was ceasing to be the preserve of a traditionally educated few; the growing number of newspapers and importance of the press was an important factor. Contacts with the modern and technically more advanced states of the West were on the increase. People educated abroad, like the young man in "*Fārsi šekar ast*," went too far in the pretentious use of foreign terms and suffered from either having forgotten, or never having learned, the resources of their own language. The reactionary clergy indulged in pretentious and almost incomprehensible use of an Arabic jargon

associated with *feqh* (q.v.) and *oṣ;ul*.

Against this background Jamalzadeh began writing his *Yeki bud yeki nabud*, and the Persian literati of Berlin, with whom he was associated in the 1920s, began consciously, through their journal *Kāveh* and other publications, to reform the language and to establish a suitable modern medium of communication. However, Jamalzadeh continued to harp on linguistic circumstances that no longer prevailed. He continued to write and discuss language as if the old battle of styles were still being fought with its former intensity, whereas, in fact, due to him and Hedayat more than others, from the 1940s and 1950s, writers committed neither the linguistic solecisms nor the anachronisms that Jamalzadeh was criticizing in "*Farsi šekar ast*" (and later in certain passages of "*Rāhāb-nāma*," *Ḵāstegāri*," "*Roʾyā*," "*Ṣahrā-ye maḥšar*," etc.). The contemporary writer gradually became equipped with a settled brand of modern Persian, with which he or she could be intelligible and inoffensive to the majority of readers.

In its overall effect, Jamalzadeh's writing is powerful enough to conceal his defects of style; yet these defects are serious. In introducing his characters, for instance, he often uses the method of a dramatist: depicting them at the outset of the story rather than letting them develop gradually (see, for example, *Dār al-majānin*, *Qoltašan-Divan*, *Rāhāb-nāma, and Namak-e gandida*). He also presents them as types rather than as individuals through whose actions their type may be perceived. Another aspect of Jamalzadeh's technique is his almost Dickensian flow of words, with adjectives piled up, numerous repetitions, and popular phrases never omitted where they can possibly be squeezed in. Also, particularly in his later works, he seized every opportunity for quoting maxims, poems, proverbs, and popular sayings, as well as Qurʾānic verses and quotations from the Traditions. He allowed his copious literary memory to run freely when he took pen in hand.

CRITIQUES OF JAMALZADEH'S WORKS

The body of criticism on Jamalzadeh's work focuses on three major points. First, that after his major literary contribution with *Yeki bud yeki nabud*, he essentially regurgitated the same themes with the same forms and styles and language but in different configurations. In other words, his early spurt of genius and innovation was not developed any further,

yet he kept writing. Second, that Jamalzadeh's work became increasingly cut off from the social and political realities of Iran and the experiences of its people. He lived abroad and rarely visited Iran but kept on writing about Iran and Iranians. Third, it is alleged that by not challenging the despotic authorities in Iran and their allies in the west, he was essentially collaborating with them. He claimed to be an advocate of the people, but he acted as an accomplice of the oppressors. The first of these points is the only one that directly addresses literary concerns. The second and third are essentially political in nature.

Among post-war writers, Jalāl Āl-e Aḥmad has been most vociferous in his criticism of Jamalzadeh: he openly accused Jamalzadeh of producing worthless and insignificant work for decades, of being out of touch with Iran and its realities, and of collaborating with the pro-Pahlavi writers (Āl-e Aḥmad, 1988, pp. 65-76; Hillmann, 1988, p. 311; Dehbāši 1988, pp. 65-77). The political tone of Āl-Aḥmad's critique outweighed his specific literary arguments. Alternately, Navabpour states that although Jamalzadeh writes often about the poor and conditions of injustice, like his contemporary European thinkers, he talks to the poor from above, in effect, with the goal of dominating them with his own ideological vision (Navabpour, 1996, pp. 72-74).

Writer and critic Reża Barāheni's analysis of Jamalzadeh's work is more grounded in literary criticism. Considering him to be stranded in the tradition of 19th century European literature, he acknowledges Jamalzadeh's talent as a writer not in exploring depths, but in examining outward manners and exposing moral and material corruption through satire (Barāheni, 1983, pp. 551-53). He accuses him of predominantly regurgitating his outdated memories in his later works (Baraheni, 1983, p. 560). Other critics of Jamalzadeh's fiction such as Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak have contended that after his initial innovation with *Yeki bud yeki nabud*, he lost his creativity and produced writing that was tedious and obsolete (Karimi-Hakkak, 1985, pp. 423-24). Heshmat Moayyad stated that his language was too archaic and verbose, and that his stories and novels, particularly the later ones lacked even plot development and technical refinement (Moayyad, 1992, p. 14). Ḥasan ʿĀbedini argued that Jamalzadeh's didactic approach to storytelling and his deliberate use of language as a method of social reportage evokes the religious and political discourses of the constitutional period (ʿĀbedini in Dehbāši,

1998, pp. 151-53). Paul Sprachman noted that "[Jamalzadeh's] fiction at times serves as an advanced species of dictionary" (Jamalzadeh, 1985, p. 19).

The charge that Jamalzadeh never came back to live in Iran, that his work demonstrated that he was out of touch with the real problems of Iranians (Dastḡayb, 1977, pp. 5-6), or that he served Mohammad Reza Shah's regime or the West by his refusal to take a firm political stand, stemmed from the fact that his work did not fit into the mold of any of the prevailing ideologies in Iran. Though his fiction was often socio-political, and though he remained deeply involved and interested in Iranian culture, Jamalzadeh was not a proponent of the romantic Iranian nationalism (Aryanism) in the 1920s and 1930s; he was not leftist or a "committed" writer in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. His writing was thus considered to be irrelevant by many of the revolutionary writers and intellectuals. Furthermore, he was never a monarchist, and did not join the establishment before the revolution. He was generally timid about taking a firm political stand perhaps because he hated dictatorship but feared it at the same time (Katouzian, 2003, pp. 17-20). This tendency to be politically non-committal can possibly be explained by his deep disappointment, during his early revolutionary days, in the outcome of national and international events from the Constitutional Revolution to the aftermath of the First World War.

Nevertheless, all critics point to Jamalzadeh as the indisputable innovator who introduced modern, realist writing to Persian prose literature, and who demonstrated great ability and creativity in using the Persian language and the genre of fiction as a means of communication with all Iranians.

Bibliography: See iii. Bibliography.