

*What Contemporary Iranian
Poets, Scholars, and Critics
Have Said About Naderpour's Poetry and Writings*

Translated by Farhad Mafie

Translator's Introduction

What have contemporaries said about Naderpour the man, Naderpour the poet, and Naderpour the social and political observer?

The following excerpts are from articles that appeared in Iranian magazines, newspapers, and books, or from lectures, interviews, and radio/TV broadcasts. Together they provide a comprehensive view of contemporary opinion about this multifaceted man and a better understanding of Naderpour's role as an Iranian poet and intellectual, of his unique style, and of his artistic ability.

December 2001

Ehsan Yarshater
Kaveh Magazine (Germany), No. 90, Summer 2001 (1379).

In my opinion, Naderpour's poems are lasting poems. Undoubtedly, his works will be counted among the classics in the Persian language. Not only have his poems been written masterfully, but Naderpour's strength in creating expressions and images (that is, in creating pictures of imperceptible contexts and making them perceptible, as well as in making ambiguous sentiments and feelings comprehensible) can be seen only in a limited number of poets. Certainly many have said and written (and quite correctly) that Naderpour is the greatest pictorial creator in Persian poetry in recent times, and this is not an insignificant point. ...

... in a series of interviews with Dr. Sadrol Din Elahi that took more than a year and were published in *Rouzegâr-e- Noe* Magazine, Naderpour has left us with one of the best and most comprehensive analyses of modern poetry. In these commentaries it can be seen that he has read others' poems with a sharp vision and has evaluated them fairly. ...

... Naderpour was a very generous person and never expected any financial help from anyone, and even though he was not well off and had hardships in exile, he always lived very respectably. ... Collectively these qualities are not insignificant, and they are rarely seen in one person. ... In the last twenty years we owe thanks to Naderpour for many expressions that have now become popular and universal, such as “the sadness of the loneliness,” “the sadness of exile,” “being cut from our own roots,” “disheartened by the homeland that is being traumatized.” ... In addition, he has given life to his poems through his beautiful descriptions, and through new, effective explanations he has made apparent to us the ambiguous, complex conditions of our own hidden conscience. His poem is the poem of our sadness, our worries, our hopes, and our disappointments.

Jalal Matini

***Iranshenasi* Magazine (Maryland, U.S.A.), No. 2, Summer 2001 (1379).**

... [Naderpour's] difficulties started in the days before the revolution. In spite of the claims of intellectuals and the people at large who explicitly said they had seen with their own eyes the Ayatollah Khomeini's picture on the moon and a strand of his hair among the pages of the Koran, Naderpour said he had seen neither the Ayatollah's picture on the moon nor the strand of his hair—but instead, a peacock's feather—among the pages of the Koran. He said, “I didn't see these things, but clearly I see with my own eyes that Iran, Iran's history, Iran's culture, language, and Persian literature are once again after fourteen centuries being attacked from various directions.” In spite of this, he did not think about leaving Iran. Finally, with the insistence of one of his very close friends, Naderpour decided to go to Paris. That's why I believe that we owe Naderpour's last twenty years of life and the poems he wrote in those years to his friend's timely advice. Otherwise, with his temperament, his habits, and his nature, if Naderpour had stayed in

Iran, he would have been killed many years ago for his defense of freedom, his deep love of Iran and Iran's culture, his opposition to crimes against women, and his opposition to punishments such as stoning. ...

After Naderpour's death, the Islamic government did not allow any memorial service or ceremony to be held in Iran, proving once again that the Islamic government is not willing to acknowledge people who are not part of their system, even after their death.

Naderpour was a generous and magnanimous man, and in the years that he lived in America he did not accept help from anyone. He was able to manage his very limited lifestyle thanks to the tuition he received from students in his private classes, the same loyal students who fulfilled their moral obligation to Naderpour in the most exemplary manner right up to the poet's death, when they wrapped his body in Iran's three-color flag with the signs of the lion and the sun, while a large number of participants sang the anthem "ey Iran, ey Marze Porgohar" ["far from Iran, that he loved so dearly and so sincerely"].

... I believe Naderpour is one of the few poets whose names in the next century will be counted among the first level of poets of our era. This point should not be taken lightly.

...

Fereydoun Moshiri

From a radio interview after Naderpour's death in February 2000.

I believe Naderpour is the greatest modern Iranian poet. ... I am willing to compare all his works with others' works and prove my points to those who want to challenge me. ...

Fereydoun Moshiri

Roshanfekr [Intellectual] Magazine, 1961 (1339).

... Naderpour is one of the best poets of our homeland and one of the most dedicated defenders of modern poetry. His vision continuously seeks new things; he flies to

unknown lands and far horizons of thought and imagination; his vision and his flights have given his poetry a very special significance. Among the modern poets, some use literary words to express today's elegant expressions, and others use common words and simple terms. But Naderpour's poems and writing represent today's literature. In his long poems, in his beautiful expressions, and in his clarity of words are many examples.

His special attention to and respect for Hafez and also his extensive study of the poems of this great and divine poet have made Naderpour very particular about his own work so that he is not satisfied with average or ordinary work. ...

Maybe some of his expressions seem strange for those who are used to classical poetry, and some of his expressions might not even be considered appropriate for poetry. But we see that Naderpour's poetic vision gives spirit even to the simplest elements of life. ...

I hope that his flourishing garden of creativity continues to spread flowers and bring more enjoyment to the readers of his work. ...

Mehdi Akhavan Saless

Dar Rahe Honar [In the Path of Art] Magazine, 1956 (1334).

Naderpour is truly one of Iran's greatest contemporary poets, and his poems show his grasp of Iran's classic poetry and literature. As with many other poets, the classic influence has not changed Naderpour's style but has actually enriched his work. This poet has been able to distance himself from repetition and tediousness, an artist's key enemies, and instead brings his readers news from the imaginary lands he has traveled. ... All his creative works and images are very much original, and fortunately he uses very simple, clear, poetic language to express his feelings and describe his images.

Pejman Bakhtiyari

Khosheh Magazine, 1963 (1341).

... One has the right to carry the revolutionary flag in literature, if like Naderpour and a few others like him the poet maintains a commitment to the Persian language, follows the rules of correct Persian grammar, [and] shows a clear and organized way of expressing his thoughts from beginning to end. ... Naderpour and a handful of other modernist poets follow these rules. ...

I have been familiar with Naderpour's work for a long time. His poems are very sensitive and thoughtful. ...

Fereydoun Tavallali

Kavian Magazine, 1955 (1333).

... With a special fluency, Naderpour's poems take the reader to a world of color, suffering, and hope, one by one. All his poems have a beautiful sound, one of Naderpour's most artistic abilities. In his collection *Eyes and Hands [Chashmha va Dastha]* the first poems, such as "Praise the Night" ["Doroud-Bar-Shab"], "Crazy" ["Divaneh"], "Memories" ["Yad-bod-ha"], and "Unfinished Act" ["Pardeh-Natamam"], use a descriptive style colored with great, elegant expressions and images. It appears that at the time he created these poems, all of nature's symbols inspired the poet's very delicate and sensitive feelings. These poems show that despite the fact that Naderpour is unable to release the deep pains of his life, he is overwhelmed with nature and uses beautiful expressions and terminology.

I have known this great poet for many years, and I consider him one of Iran's greatest modern poets. There are only a few poets who have Naderpour's expertise in arranging expressions and words. ...

For Naderpour, art is not a hobby. For him, art is a burning desire that does not leave even for a second. ...

Parviz Natel Khanlari

Sokhan Magazine, 1958 (1336).

Naderpour's third collection of poems, *The Grape Poem [She'r-e Angour]*, is the result of two years of work [1957 and 1958]. Naderpour is one of the great young poets who are constantly improving, and his artistic talents and abilities are more and more obvious in each new work. As the reader finishes *The Grape Poem*, he or she will keep an explicit image of Naderpour's style in mind. All his poems in this collection, like his other works, are very descriptive. Naderpour is a descriptive poet, and he expresses his personal feelings and thoughts in his poetry. ...

His love is true humanly love, not mystical love. ... What makes this artist very special are the images that he uses to articulate his thoughts and feelings. All his images are new and original. In each case they express Naderpour's feelings and his intentions very effectively. ...

... Naderpour is one of the greatest contemporary poets, and the pieces in [*The Grape Poem*] are some of the best examples of modern poems.

Mohammad Hossain Rahi-e Moayyeri

Sepid-va-Sieah Magazine, 1962 (1340).

... In my opinion, the current era of poetry is one of the brightest in Persian literature because of the high number of great poets in every category. Such a great number of poets coupled with such a wide variety is very difficult to find in our history. ... Current poets such as Fereydoun Tavallali and Nader Naderpour have created great masterpieces that deserve our admiration and give us a source of hope. ...

Mohammad Zohari

Irab-Bad Magazine, 1960 (1339).

... Naderpour's claim—

“If I am good or if I am bad, if I am a capable poet or an incapable poet, whoever and whatever I am, I am a poet of my generation and of my time.”

—is not wrong and is not an exaggeration. ...

In poetry and in other writing, skillfully and expertly using common words with wider meanings—not literary words with narrow meanings—is a great contribution to the Persian language.

... Naderpour's poems, because of his expertise in classical Iranian literature and European literature (especially French), have special fluency and a firmness that distinguish him from the other poets of his era. In his hands, words are warm clay that he is able to form and shape as he desires. The words in his poems are well carved and well placed. ...

Mohammad Hossain Shahriyar

Tehran Mosavar Magazine, 1956 (1344).

... Naderpour is truly a great poet, and some of his works are very superb. ...

Mohsen Hashroudi

Rahnama-e Ketab Magazine, 1958 (1337).

... [Naderpour's] poems and the magic of destiny have been so ambiguous and intermixed that they are not separable. ...

... [Naderpour] gives life to the moon's blue color, the flower's fragrance, etc., in such a way that space becomes full of fragrance. ...

Habib Yaghmai

Roshanfekr [Intellectual] Magazine, 1962 (1341).

... I agree with modern poetry, with the words of the modernists, and even with breaking away from rhyme. But I disagree with poor styles. Among the young poets I believe in are Tavallali, Naderpour, Moshiri, Honarmandi, and Sayeh. ...

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