

# Karl Popper and the Iranian Intellectuals

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## **Abstract**

The ways in which Popper's ideas have been introduced to Iranian society will be discussed, and the reactions of several prominent Iranian intellectual groups, namely, the leftists, the Heideggerians, the religious conservatives, the religious intellectuals and the moderate seculars, to Popper's views will be critically appraised.

The upshot of the paper is that while Popper's views have been used and misused in the power struggle between various groups in post-revolutionary Iran, they also have been instrumental in creating collective intentionalities and shared understandings concerning a range of important concepts in such diverse fields as epistemology, politics, culture, social action, and religious beliefs.

## **Introduction**

In this paper, following a brief historical background concerning the introduction of Popper's ideas to the Iranian public, I shall concentrate on the approaches taken by a number of distinct Iranian intellectual groups toward Popper's views. The groups in question are the leftists, the Heideggerians, the religious conservatives, the religious intellectuals and the moderate seculars.

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Drawing on textual evidence and my own personal first-hand experience, I shall argue that while some of the secular intellectuals have played a role in promulgating Popper's views, the lion's share in introducing Popper's theories and disseminating them among not only ordinary readers, but also the intelligentsia and even the decision-makers in Iran, belongs to the liberal-minded religious intellectuals. Thanks to their efforts, Popper is now a household name in Iran, and his views have become an integral part of the intellectual discourse in modern Iranian society. However, despite this apparent success, opposition to his ideas has remained as fierce as before, if not even stronger, among a certain strata of several secular and religious groups that are culturally influential in Iran.

An effort will be made, within the limits of the space provided for the paper, to examine critically the forms, variety, and strength of the arguments against Popper's views by his Iranian opponents. It will be shown that these arguments are, for the most part, ideologically motivated and, as a result, plagued with logical fallacies.

### **The Popper Phenomenon**

Popper is a well-known philosopher in present-day Iran. Not only are the intellectuals, academics, university students, and even the educated public familiar with his ideas to varying degrees, but many policy-makers and high-ranking as well as middle-ranking executives in the state machinery also are interested in his views and tacitly or explicitly use them in their short-term to long-term planning. Even writers hostile to Popper's views acknowledge, albeit reluctantly, his immense popularity in Iran.<sup>1</sup>

The so-called Popper phenomenon is a post-Revolution creation. Prior to the advent of the Islamic Revolution in 1978-79, only one of his books, *The Poverty of Historicism*, and one of his interviews, *Revolution or Reform*, had been translated into Farsi.<sup>2</sup> However, despite the relevance of his views to Iran's sociopolitical circumstances during the 1960s and 1970s, and notwithstanding the fact that Iranians are historically a people in love with abstract thinking and philosophical system building for a variety of reasons,<sup>3</sup> the ideas of the Viennese philosopher were not properly introduced to and/or appreciated by Iranian readers before the Islamic Revolution.

Perhaps the first-ever reference to Popper's name and some of his ideas in Iran was through the Farsi translation of George Sarton's *A History of Science*,<sup>4</sup> in which he praises Popper's views on the nature of scientific

thought and its progress, and makes extensive use of his views on the Greeks' scientific ideas as expounded in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*.<sup>5</sup> However, neither this rather indirect reference nor the two translations of his own works captured the attention of educated Iranian readers.

As for Sartori's book, only the most attentive readers who were sensitive to issues concerning the methods of historiography could have noticed the significance of Popper's approach. However, such awareness was not commonplace even in the West before the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, as the quality of the translation of *The Poverty of Historicism* was not particularly reader-friendly, the uninitiated soon lost interest in its author's views. In contrast, the quality of the translation of *Revolution or Reform* was good. However, due to the leftist tendencies of the translator, who was taken to be in favor of Marcuse and not Popper, a rather inaccurate impression was conveyed to the general public: In the politically charged atmosphere of the 1970s, Popper was taken to be a reactionary advocate of capitalism who opposed the masses' emancipation through radical change and revolution.

However, the reasons for Popper's obscurity in prerevolutionary Iran run deeper than the relative inaccessibility of translations or the creation of a wrong image. To better understand this particular state of affairs, the reader, following Popper's own methodology of situational logic, should have a closer, albeit brief and rather cursory, look at Iran's sociopolitical and cultural/intellectual circumstances during the period in question.

### Historical Background

Iran is a Muslim country with a rich cultural history. Iranians are the heirs of one of the greatest ancient empires, as well as the prime movers in and main contributors to building the golden age of Islamic civilization (eleventh to thirteenth centuries CE).<sup>7</sup> Many of the greatest Muslim scholars and thinkers in various fields of knowledge were Iranians. The long list of such world-renowned personalities includes, among many others, al-Farabi (philosopher), Ibn Sina ([Avicenna] physician and philosopher), Abu Rayhan al-Biruni (polymath), Imam Muhammad al-Ghazzali (jurist and theologian), Omar al-Khayyam (poet and mathematician), Ghyasuddin al-Kashani (astronomer and mathematician), al-Khwarazmi (mathematician), Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi (geographer), Zakariyya al-Razi ([Rhazes] physician and chemist), and Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (polymath).<sup>8</sup>

Despite this glorious history, a general decline befell the country in later times. Successive waves of invasions by nomadic tribes, together with

constant rivalries and power struggles among local warlords and feudal dynasties, severely curtailed the flourishing of science and art. Religious sciences, especially jurisprudence, gained ascendancy at the expense of other types of intellectual pursuits. As a result, jurists or *mujtahidun* gradually became a powerful social class, while philosophers and scientists had to put up with their diminished social status.

This sorry state of affairs continued well into the twentieth century, when, in 1906, Iranians brought about a constitutional revolution to get rid of the despotic Qajar dynasty. The new regime, the Pahlavi dynasty, though more modern in its outlook, was nonetheless equally despotic in its political approach.<sup>9</sup>

During the second half of the twentieth century, Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, whose throne had been secured for him by an Anglo-American coup in 1953, launched a forced modernization-cum-westernization program prescribed by President Kennedy's administration. In the mid-1970s, following the oil crisis, the country underwent a period of rapid change that eventually culminated in the overthrow of the shah's regime in 1978-79.<sup>10</sup>

The Revolution, which swept away the *ancien régime*, was a truly popular upheaval in which people of all walks of life took part. Nevertheless, consistent with Edward Said's observation that "there has been no major revolution in modern history without intellectuals,"<sup>11</sup> Iran's intellectuals played a prominent role in it. We now turn to the intellectual situation during the shah's rule and the succeeding period.

### **Iran's Main Intellectual Groups: 1960s-1970s**

In a broad sense, Iran's intellectual class during the 1960s-70s could be divided into two general camps, pro- and anti-regime groups, each of which had many subdivisions and ramifications ranging from overenthusiastic commitment to downright indifference toward the time's political/ideological struggles.

The monarchy's official ideology was a mixture of glorifying Iran's pre-Islamic civilization plus a crude creed of modernization along the lines dictated by America through such official channels as the World Bank.<sup>12</sup> The shah also had a personal dislike of leftist groups and politically inspired religious activists, as shown by his occasional angry outbursts toward them. However, being the ruler of a Muslim country, he also tried to preserve a veneer of respect for the masses' popular religious beliefs.<sup>13</sup>

Many of the intellectuals promoting the monarchy's image were ex-Marxists who, either genuinely or tactically, had converted to the new cause. They were assisted by a group of western-educated intellectuals and a larger number of pro-West, home-grown organic intellectuals (in the Gramscian sense). These intellectuals, largely secular in outlook, acted as heads of universities and research centers, university professors, editors of national and provincial newspapers, popular magazines, or scholarly journals, and also controlled the radio and television stations. In addition, they mostly propagated the cultural ideas and trends that were popular in America and western Europe and encouraged the dissemination of views that criticized leftist views and Islam as an outmoded belief-system. Milvan Djilas's *The New Class*, Andre Pietre's *Marx and Marxism*, and Ali Dashti's *The Twenty-three Years* were among the better-known titles of such publications.<sup>14</sup>

There was also an Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy whose president, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, was a historian of science and a prominent member of the so-called international Traditionalists (believers in the transcendent unity of religions).<sup>15</sup> Under his leadership, the Academy mostly concentrated on promoting the Islamic intellectual heritage and the ideas of such Traditionalists or pro-Traditionalist writers as René Guénon, Frithjof Schuon, Henry Corbin, and Louis Massignon. Nasr and his colleagues, in tandem with other like-minded intellectuals active in other cultural institutions, were, somewhat like the secular intellectuals, against the leftists' doctrines and political Islam.

But contrary to the secular intellectuals, they were critical of modern science and technology and the West's moral decadence. This attitude was influential in the views that they chose to promote. Thus Ivan Illich, for example, who had written extensively on these themes, was one of their favorite writers, and his writings on such topics as wasteful energy consumption and the hazards of the education and health systems were, with this group's full support, translated into Farsi.<sup>16</sup> Interestingly enough, none of the pro-regime intellectuals, despite their ideological and political opposition to the leftists' doctrines, showed any interest in Popper's criticisms of Marxism. Moreover, his ideas on science, technology, and methodological issues also did not seem to appeal to this group.

The anti-regime intellectuals were, broadly speaking, divided into five groups: leftists, secular nationalists, religious nationalists, religious conservatives, and religious modernists. Within each division, many finer subdivisions could be discerned. Each group pursued its own particular agenda and, like their pro-regime counterparts, almost none of them appeared to be

familiar with Popper's views. Leftist intellectuals were busy translating leftist anti-imperialist literature from Russian, French, English, and German sources. If there were any references to Popper in this leftist Iranian literature at all, it most probably would have consisted of a disparaging remark.<sup>17</sup> The only exception that I can think of was a poet-philosopher, Ismail Khuii, who, among other things, taught methodology of science at one of Iran's higher-education institutes. Although a Marxist, Khuii, who had studied at the University of London, briefly referred to Popper's views on methodology in two of his books, and used his conception of "decision" in relation to the course of action taken by scientists or social actors.<sup>18</sup>

Secular nationalist writers were concerned mostly with the aftermath of the 1953 coup and the role of the deposed prime minister, Dr. Mosaddiq, in nationalizing the oil industry and its national, regional, and international impact. They seemed to be unaware of Popper's existence and his views on nationalism. Here again, one significant exception is Homa Katouzian, an Iranian political economist and historian based in England, who has written extensively on the Iranian national movement. Katouzian, like his fellow nationalists, had never referred to Popper's views prior to the Islamic Revolution. However, in his *Ideology and Method in Economics*,<sup>19</sup> published shortly after the Revolution, he critically discussed Popper's views on historicism. We shall return to this later.

Popper's views also were unknown to the religious writers and intellectuals, despite the fact that they were at pains to reject Marxist ideology and Freudian doctrines. The main intellectual sources for the more conservative elements within the religious circles were the writings of contemporary Arab writers as well as the traditional Islamic sources. They were, by and large, apolitical and not against the shah's regime. In addition, they had an affinity with the Traditionalist intellectuals.<sup>20</sup> In contrast, modern religious writers were, more or less, politically active and familiar with the ideas of several contemporary European writers, mostly from Europe. They knew very little, if at all, about the modern analytic philosophers,<sup>21</sup> and, in any case, none of them seemed to have read Popper or to have even heard of him.<sup>22</sup>

### **Popper inside and outside the Universities**

Popper's absence from Iran's intellectual scene was perhaps most obvious in the departments of philosophy and, to a lesser extent, of political science and sociology. The University of Tehran's department of philosophy, the oldest and the most prestigious of such departments in Iran, featured a

syllabus mostly devoted to ancient, classical, and early modern thinkers.<sup>23</sup> Twentieth-century developments were only marginally and briefly mentioned, except for Existentialism, which was being taught more extensively. A course on the methodology of science was offered, but for more than 2 decades its standard text was a small treatise by a French writer, Felicien Challaye, which had been published originally in 1929 and revised in 1947.<sup>24</sup> Analytic philosophy was largely absent from the curriculum.

One reason for this apparent lack of interest was that the department, from its inception in the 1940s, had been mainly under the influence of lecturers who had either studied in France or whose second language was French.<sup>25</sup> Another reason was that almost all department members were unfamiliar with modern science and post-Fregeian developments in logic.<sup>26</sup> In their view, analytic philosophy was tantamount to logical positivism. The technical language of this philosophy led them to believe that analytic philosophy was not philosophy proper, but rather something more suitable to technicians (in the French sense of the term).

There was one notable exception: Manucher Bozorgmehr, the only lecturer in the University of Tehran's department of philosophy who taught British empiricist philosophy. Prior to the Revolution, he had published translations of some of the works of George Berkeley, John Locke, David Hume, Bertrand Russell, A. J. Ayer, Susan Langer, and two small books on Ludwig Wittgenstein.<sup>27</sup> Bozorgmehr also wrote a short book on analytic philosophy, in which he introduced its early developments.<sup>28</sup> In the second half of the 1970s, another member of the department, Dr. Jalaluddin Mojatbavi, translated several general books on philosophy, including Richard Popkin and Avrum Stroll's *Philosophy Made Simple*.<sup>29</sup> Significantly, he tried to supplement each section, including the one on the early Wittgenstein, with critical remarks drawn from the resources of Islamic philosophy.

University departments aside, and even in the wider context of intellectual circles, few people had some familiarity with analytic philosophy. A rare exception was the engineer-cum-amateur philosopher Aligholi Bayani, who wrote a treatise rejecting Marxism. In it, he used Carnap's verificationist approach to dismiss many Marxist claims as nonsensical.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Shah's Last Year and the First Few Years after the Revolution**

This situation underwent a sea change during the monarchy's last year (1978/79). Abdulkarim Soroush, an Iranian research student at Chelsea

College, University of London, was working on his Ph.D. in the philosophy of science. During this time, he published a series of philosophical books, heavily based on Popper's ideas, that rejected Marxist views.<sup>31</sup>

Soroush, a pharmacologist by training, was well-versed in Islamic philosophy and Persian literature, as well as a capable orator and writer. He introduced the Viennese philosopher's ideas to Iranian readers through a series of lectures and essays (later collected and published in book form). The writer, who soon became one of Iran's leading religious intellectuals, presented Popper's views in a manner that appealed to Iranian readers as indigenous, home-grown products.

Drawing on Popper's works, such as *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, and *Conjectures and Refutations*, as well as the works of Popper's followers, disciples, and peers (e.g., Heinz Post, Joseph Agassi, and Carl Hempel), Soroush challenged Marxists' claims on a wide range of issues, including Marxism's scientific status and its advocacy of historicism, system of ethics, and rejection of metaphysics (religion).<sup>32</sup> He later started a course on philosophy and the methodology of science at the University of Tehran's department of philosophy, and, for the first time, systematically introduced Popper's ideas to Iranian post-graduate students.<sup>33</sup>

During this period, other efforts were made to introduce Popper's ideas to the Iranian public. Bozorgmehr translated Brayan Magee's *Popper* into Farsi.<sup>34</sup> Bahauddin Khurramshahi, in a short critical treatise on logical positivism, translated Popper's remarks on this topic in his intellectual autobiography.<sup>35</sup> Interestingly, the eminent Iranian historian Abdol-Hossein Zarrinkub briefly discussed, in a review of the Farsi translation of Plato's *Complete Philosophical Works*, the notion of a closed society under the rule of a philosopher-king, and asked the Popperian question of whether a Platonic utopia has any place for a truth-loving Socrates. Although endorsing Popper's concerns about the danger of closed societies, at the same time he tried to show that the idealist Plato would have had no difficulty in subscribing to Popper's view.<sup>36</sup>

For almost a decade after the Revolution, Soroush enjoyed the support of the religious establishment and the intellectuals who were opposing Marxism, and had joined the new regime. During the period from 1980 to 1991, he taught several courses on the methodology and the philosophy of science at the University of Tehran's department of philosophy; the philosophy of history at the departments of history at the University of Mashhad and the University of Shiraz; Marxism at the University of Tehran's depart-

ment of theology; and the philosophy of social sciences at the Iranian Academy of Philosophy, which he later joined as a member.

In tandem with his course, Soroush published several papers and books, all of which were heavily indebted to Popper's views: "The Problem of Induction," "The Notion of Empirical Testing," *What Is Science? What Is Philosophy?*, and a new edition of *A Critical Introduction to Dialectical Logic*, in which he included a Farsi translation of Popper's "What Is Dialectic?" reprinted in *Conjectures and Refutations*.<sup>37</sup> The translator, a young well-educated cleric named Sadiq Larijani, later became one of Soroush's foremost critics.

### The Heideggerians

The honeymoon between Soroush and his allies did not last long. While the Marxist writers, with perhaps one notable exception to which I shall return later, apparently could not produce cogent rebuttals of Soroush-cum-Popper's views, which apparently were quite new to them and had left them out of their depth, some members of Tehran University's department of philosophy and a number of their students started a campaign against Popper's views as expounded by Soroush.

This group, known as the Heideggerians, pursued a twofold strategy. On the one hand, they claimed that Popper's views were anti-Islamic and posed great dangers to the nascent Islamic state. On the other hand, they tacitly or explicitly argued that university or religious seminary students and their professors, as well as executives and policy-makers, should familiarize themselves with Heidegger's ideas instead of using Popper's. They claimed that Heidegger was a genuine philosopher and that there was a degree of similarity between his philosophy and the true traditional Islamic philosophy that, according to them, was different from what had developed out of Greek philosophy.

However, their strategy vis-à-vis Heidegger's views was somewhat inconsistent: They never translated his works or provided comprehensive expositions of his views. In other words, although they frequently referred to Heidegger in their claims, they never introduced his ideas in a systematic and methodical manner to their audience. In this way, they have, no doubt, done a great disservice to the famous German philosopher.

The Heideggerians' spiritual mentor was Ahmad Fardid, a somewhat enigmatic behind-the-scenes, although influential, university professor. Due to his influence upon his followers, this group is sometimes called the

Fardidians or Fardidies. As Fardid rarely put his ideas into writing, his views were disseminated primarily through his followers and students. He had studied Islamic philosophy as a young student and had spent some time in Germany and France during the 1940s, apparently studying Continental philosophy, though without much success in obtaining a Ph.D.<sup>38</sup>

In the 1950s, Fardid joined the University of Tehran's department of philosophy and taught, among other things, a course on phenomenology and the existential philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard, Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger, and Jean-Paul Sartre. During the 1960s, a group of secular intellectuals, many of them ex-Marxists, gathered around him to discuss such finer cultural issues as East-West relationships, the role of technology in modern societies, and the status and function of Iran's intellectuals.

Drawing on Heidegger's views, Fardid argued the thesis of an essential difference between the East and the West with regard to the fundamental questions of *truth* and *being*. Following Heidegger, he maintained that *truth* and *being* manifest themselves in different guises in various historical epochs. There was a time when *truth* and *being* in their original, genuine, and unmasked form were easily accessible to the people. However, western metaphysics since Plato had lost sight of the questions of *truth* and *being*. While concern for genuine cosmological questions remained alive in the East, the West continued its intellectual journey along a mistaken route starting from Greek cosmocentrism, going through the Middle Ages' theologism, leading to the modern times' anthropologism and anthropocentrism. During this wrong-headed journey, the West replaced thinking about the cosmos with the ideas of a metaphysical God and eventually ended up with a type of individualism devoid of all religious and spiritual meaning.

Fardid also argued against what he would call "calculative reason," which he claimed to be the driving force behind modern science and technology. Echoing Heidegger, he argued that the modern cult of technology is a way of relating to the world, for it treats things only as objects of domination and consumption and has no insight into its own limitation. This attitude is itself an expression of nihilism, which is the only philosophy left for a metaphysical ambition that has come to grief.

Like Heidegger, Fardid was very fond of etymological arguments and evocative neologisms. One such new term was *westoxication*, by which he meant the domination of westernized values and norms over indigenous value systems.<sup>39</sup> In Fardid's view, *westoxication* started with Plato. However, prior to the modern times it was of a simple type, for people still kept their faith in God, whereas in the modern period it became a complex one in that

anthropocentrism and egocentrism took the place of Deus-centrism. Fardid's message, though not stated in clear terms, was that the East must comprehend and surpass the West. However, he did not clarify how such a feat should be achieved.<sup>40</sup>

Despite the facts that Fardid's language, both spoken and written, was not quite clear and straightforward and that he was not always consistent in his philosophical positions, his Heideggerian approach had a great impact upon his secular followers, who later developed views that were not dissimilar to Heidegger's. This is all the more important, given that Fardid rarely put his ideas into writing.<sup>41</sup> The literature produced by these writers had a considerable influence upon the younger generation of Iranian intellectuals during the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>42</sup>

During the 1970s, Fardid apparently tried to forge closer and wider links with the religiously inclined audience, both among the clergy and the university students. Thus he prepared the ground for a new group of Fardidians who were, unlike the original group of the 1960s, practicing Muslims. For this audience, Fardid developed an almost mirror-image of Heidegger's theory based on Islamic sources, which he dubbed *Hekmat-e Unsi*.

The Arabic term *hikmah*, which appears in the Qur'an, was used by some early translators of Greek philosophical texts as an equivalent for the Greek *sophia* (wisdom). However, some modern writers have disagreed with this usage. For example, Nasr and other members of the Corbin Circle have used it to denote the philosophical system of Molla Sadra, the eminent seventeenth-century Persian philosopher. However Fardid, in true Heideggerian spirit, claimed that *hikmah* is equivalent to the Greek *hegêma* (to guide and to lead). According to him, both terms have a common root. In his view, the same holds for the Arabic *uns* which, he claimed, is equivalent to the Greek *Gnôsis* and comes from the same root.<sup>43</sup>

Fardid further claimed that *Hekmat-e Unsi* is the only true philosophical system developed by Muslims. In other words, only this system was consistent with Islamic religious doctrines. He traced this school of thought's major exponents back not to such well-known Persian philosophers as Ibn al-Sina, al-Suhrawardi, or Molla Sadra, but to such Muslim mystics ('*urafâ'*) as Sadruddin Qunavi, Qaysari,<sup>44</sup> and even Ayatollah Khomeini.<sup>45</sup>

The main subject-matter of *Hekmat-e Unsi* is, according to Fardid, God's being, attributes, and manifestations. The discipline's basic aim is to investigate the *asmâ'* (names) of God, His manifestations in various phenomena, and the mystical ways and methods of unification with God. Each historical period, so the proponent of *Hekmat-e Unsi* would argue, is ruled

and dominated by one of God's names. When this name's role is superseded, it is replaced by another name, and new manifestations related to this new name become apparent.

Fardid claimed that apart from *Hekmat-e Unsi*, no other philosophical school produced by Islamic civilization was pure, for all of them followed the Greek pattern of thought as epitomized in Plato's and Aristotle's metaphysics. However, as Greek thinkers, contrary to the true Muslim *hukama'* (holders of *hikmah*), did not believe in the God of Abrahamic religions, their philosophical systems could not provide a true framework for revelation-based doctrines. Fardid argued that the same is true for the post-Renaissance western philosophers, the only difference being that while the ancient Greeks believed in many gods, for post-Renaissance thinkers "man" occupies center stage and so replaces the God of Abrahamic religions.<sup>46</sup> The history of thought, therefore, can be divided into the following periods: "worship of God," "worship of gods," and "worship of man" (namely, humanism in the form of individualism or socialism). Modern man has forgotten his links and relations to God. Although God is omnipresent, modern man cannot "see" him, for many veils prevent him from recognizing his own divine roots and returning to them.<sup>47</sup>

During the 1980s, Fardid ran his lectures parallel to those of Soroush. In these lectures, he mounted direct personal attacks on Soroush/Popper's views, branding them as representatives of a degenerate liberalism that recognizes no bounds and advocates the policy of "anything goes" in ethics and politics. Fardid argued that Popper preached a religion whose god is Allah's archenemy, and warned his audience not to be fooled by views that might appear as interesting but, in reality and in essence, are nothing but thick veils of ignorance.

While Fardid's fiery and abusive remarks about Popper, his philosophy, and those individuals promulgating his view in Iran were largely confined to the lecture halls, his disciples and followers propagated his views through various outlets. The most prominent of these disciples was Reza Davari, a University of Tehran professor of philosophy who had obtained his Ph.D. from the same university and belonged to the Fardid Circle during the 1960s. Davari, who is now perhaps the most outspoken critic of Popper's views in Iran, is currently a member of the influential Council for the Cultural Revolution and head of the Iranian Academy of Science.

A Marxist for a short period during his student days, Davari also studied in Qom's religious seminary for a while before pursuing his studies at Tehran University's department of philosophy. He later joined the depart-

ment as a lecturer and, like Fardid, taught courses on phenomenology and existentialism. Also like Fardid, Davari tried to establish himself as a main expositor of Heidegger's philosophy in Iran, although, in the spirit of a thorough Fardidian, he never published a translation of one of Heidegger's major works or produced a systematic and methodical exposition of his ideas. Instead, he applied a Heideggerian/Fardidian approach to the topics under discussion, be it *The Status of Philosophy in the History of Islamic Iran*, *The Present Status of Thought in Iran*, or *The Islamic Revolution and the Present Status of the World*.<sup>48</sup>

Like the department's other members, Davari's familiarity with analytic philosophy was minimal. In recent years, largely to educate himself, as he himself told the present author, he translated a French book on analytic philosophy. However, the innocent mistakes that found their ways into the translation reveal that the endeavour was not an unqualified success.

Davari launched his first public attack on Popper in his review of two almost simultaneous Farsi translations of Popper's *The Open Society and Its Enemies*.<sup>49</sup> In a 1985 article, "Observations Concerning *The Open Society and Its Enemies*," published in the then-prestigious literary monthly, *Kayhan-e Farhangi*,<sup>50</sup> he poured scorn upon Popper and those whom he alleged were trying to promote his views in Iran. Davari accused Popper of not being a proper philosopher, but rather a propagandist of degenerate liberal values, a sophist who insults true philosophers to provide grist for the mills of the capitalists and [neo-]colonialists. He further claimed that Popper defends the West's hegemony and has no concern whatsoever for the oppressed people of the Third World. In other words, Popper does not champion freedom and democracy; rather, he promotes dangerous ideas whose end result is to fool the downtrodden so that they will not rise up in order to obtain their rights.

Even in the field of the philosophy and methodology of science, Popper's significance, Davari claimed, should not be exaggerated, since he puts method over and above the genuine way of philosophizing. Popper, Davari continued, is a positivist who upholds a method of critical rationalism that is incompatible with any type of [religious] belief. In addition, he advocates a type of reason that serves modern science and technology and is alien to religious sentiments. Popper is not a significant thinker, and this is why he is famous only in the Anglo-Saxon cultural milieu, whose philosophy is actually anti-philosophy, while Continental philosophy does not mention him. Davari also accused the Iranian translators and publishers of *The Open Society* of pursuing a dubious political agenda against the Islamic regime.

### Rebuttals and Rejoinders

In an article entitled “The Open Society and the Closed Society”<sup>51</sup> and published in one of the following issues of *Kayhan-e Farhangi*, I tried to respond to Davari’s charges against Popper. I argued that Davari has both misunderstood Popper’s views and deliberately misrepresented him to his readers. I compared several quotations that Davari had cited from Popper, with the original texts as well as the Farsi translations, to show that Davari accused Popper of views that he clearly does not hold. In other words, I argued that Davari, in effect, is fighting a straw man. I also explained at some length why it is wrong to call Popper a positivist. While exposing Davari’s fallacious and even contradictory reasoning, I pointed out that while Davari accuses Popper of being irreverent toward his opponents, his own approach and language leave much to be desired.

Davari responded to my article in the next issue of *Kayhan-e Farhangi*.<sup>52</sup> In his “Yes to Knowledge and Freedom and No to Eclecticism,” he reiterated his previous charges and warned Muslim youths not to be deceived by Popper’s “anti-religious” views. He expressed his regret that a writer who was serving the interests of Britain, America, and the West should have become the intellectual leader of the younger generation of Muslim thinkers and activists. Davari emphasized that despite what was being said about the significance of Popper’s ideas, his views have had no impact on the policies pursued in western Europe, America, and Israel. Moreover, Davari stressed that Popper’s views were alien to the way of life of the faithful and the believers.

Popper, Davari claimed, was an anti-revolutionary and a supporter of anti-revolutionaries. The freedom he advocated was that of the arrogant powers. His defense of knowledge and freedom was a ploy to deceive the people of developing countries and make them subservient to western powers. Popper, so Davari continued, places modern science over and above all types of knowledge, including divinity. Furthermore, he identifies scientific knowledge with scientific method and thus reduces knowledge to the level of technology, which is the means for conquering and subjugating nature and cultures.

My reply, under the title “The Gentle Polemic,” appeared in the next issue of *Kayhan-e Farhangi*.<sup>53</sup> I pointed out that Davari had not responded to my earlier article, but had continued to use fallacious ways of reasoning, including *ad hominem* arguments, misrepresent his critics’ ideas, and resort to category mistakes as a means of conflating and confusing the issues at

hand. I also tried to defend Popper against Davari's other charges, including his hostility to religious beliefs, his insensitivity to the plight of the oppressed in the Third World, and his being an agent of western imperialism.

There was one other reply to Davari's in a subsequent issue of *Kihan-e Farhangi*. Akbar Gangi, an investigative journalist, in an article entitled "Challenging the West, Keeping Faith, and . . .,"<sup>54</sup> parodied Davari's attack on Popper by turning the table against Heidegger and his ideas. Gangi first quoted from Davari's published works to demonstrate that, in Davari's view, Heidegger is the most important thinker of the twentieth century as well as of the centuries to come. He then went on to expose Heidegger's relationship with the Nazis and his treatment of Edmund Husserl, and quoted textual evidence to show that Heidegger, contrary to what Davari and the other Heideggerians were trying to indicate, did not believe in God and therefore could not be credited with views that agree with the thinking of strict Muslims.

Soroush also responded, somewhat indirectly, to Davari's views in several articles first published in *Kayhan Farhangi* in 1984-85. For example, in an article entitled "The 'existence' and the 'nature' of the West,"<sup>55</sup> he argued against Davari's Hegelian-Heideggerian approach in claiming real existence for such social constructs as civilizations.

Davari soon found allies among the more conservative personalities within the religious circles and especially the Qom seminary. A number of dailies and weeklies published by the religious conservatives, including the daily *Keyhan* (the conservatives' semi-official organ) also lent their full support to the anti-Popper campaign. These publications, by frequently publishing articles against the Viennese philosopher and his domestic followers, played a significant role in demonizing the views of those who advocated such themes as critical rationalism and the open society.

### **The Leftists' Reaction**

By and large, Iran's leftist movement has remained inactive with regards to Popper's ideas. During the early months after the Revolution's victory, some leftist groups published a series of articles in criticism of "liberalism" in their official organs. For example the Rah-e Kargar (The Path of Workers), a fringe leftist group, published a series of five articles in its weekly. Another small leftist group, Vahdat-e Komonisti (The Communist Unity), followed suit in its weekly *Rah-e Rahae* (The Way to Liberation) by publishing one or two critical articles written in the same vein. These articles, in which

Popper's name might have been mentioned by the way, were essentially political propaganda and not the outcome of thoughtful deliberation on either liberalism's fundamentals or the essentials of Popper's views.

One of the more active leftist groups, Cherrick-haaye Fadayi (Fedayin Guerrillas) in response to the Popper-cum-Soroush attacks on Marxism, published a partial translation of Maurice Cornforth's *The Open Philosophy and the Open Society: A Reply to Dr. Karl Popper's Refutation of Marxism*.<sup>56</sup> The translation consisted of only the book's third part, "Towards the Open Society." The translator, Latif Attari, in line with his group's conciliatory attitude toward the Islamic government, emphasized in his introductory notes that he made this translation available to Iranian readers to help informed discussions about Marxism and to pave the way for achieving truth by means of a healthy encounter of opinions. Attari explained that despite the fact that the book's content was entirely in response to Popper's views, which had not yet been properly translated into Farsi, the numerous quotes from Popper's work should remedy this defect to some extent.

The only serious leftist effort for an unbiased criticism of Popper's views of which I am aware is an essay-long critical appraisal of Popper's criticism of Marx's views. The author, Najaf Dariabandari, a distinguished translator, writer, and veteran leftist intellectual, tried, in his paper "Irrational Rationality: A Brief Critical Discussion of Popper's Social Philosophy,"<sup>57</sup> to analyze and rebut Popper's objections to Marx's doctrines in a methodical and objective way, avoiding *ad hominem* arguments as much as possible. Drawing on his own reading of Popper's four main texts, namely, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, *The Poverty of Historicism*, and *Conjectures and Refutations*, and using the views of such French Marxist writers as Lucien Sève, he in effect argues that Popper has misunderstood and misrepresented Marx's views.

In Dariabandari's opinion, Popper's own methodology in the realm of social and political sciences is far closer to that of Marx than he admits. Dariabandari argues that Popper has criticized Marx for advocating essentialism and essentialistic approaches. However, Marx clearly argued against such a position in his earlier works, where he discusses his methodological ideas, especially in *The Paris Manuscripts* (1844), *The Holy Family* (1845), and *The German Ideology* (1845-6). Interestingly, Dariabandari notes, Popper made no reference to these works in his major writings on Marx.

Dariabandari further argues that Popper has introduced historicism as the cause for the emergence of fascism and communism; however, he fails to produce a cogent causal model to substantiate his claim. Moreover, in

Dariabandari's view, Popper's own proposed solution for effecting political reforms without resorting to violence is utopian, since he considers that human society is a unified and homogeneous entity that responds to logical reasoning in a uniform way and, maximally and without exception, would benefit from freedom. Furthermore, Dariabandari argues, Popper's critical rationalist philosophy is also toothless when dealing with the complex problems in social life, for when it comes to applying force and violence, Popper cannot suggest something constructive and rational. For him, Dariabandari claims, the choice of aims cannot be decided by means of rational measures.

Dariabandari, in his appraisal of Popper's social and political thought, tries to be as fair as possible and does his best to base his conclusions upon his understanding of Popper's work. However, a closer look reveals that his reading of Popper's views is far from satisfactory, and it is only fair to say that he has misunderstood the Viennese philosopher to a great extent. For example, he has not noticed the important difference between the first order knowledge of a political scientist and the second order methodological prescriptions of a political philosopher. Thus he takes Popper's piecemeal social engineering to be a first-order hypothesis concerning the actual status of societies.<sup>58</sup> He further claims that Popper came across this hypothesis by inductive means,<sup>59</sup> and takes this to be a clear refutation of Popper's claim that inductive logic is not valid.<sup>60</sup>

Daribandari claims that Popper's piecemeal engineering is not substantially different from the utopians' method, and that their difference is only in degree, not in kind.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, he criticizes Popper for proposing a method that has no direction and therefore can be used by capitalists to further their cause.<sup>62</sup> Daribandari has also unwittingly let an unfortunate ambiguity, resulting from similar Farsi translations of the two English words *nonrational* and *irrational*, to confuse his discussion of Popper's views on rationality. From Popper's claim that his own critical rationalism cannot be rationally proven or justified, and that the decision to adopt a rational approach is nonrational, he concludes that Popper's model is irrational and necessarily leads to violence.<sup>63</sup>

Hossein Bashiriyeh, a leftist writer and political scientist at the University of Teheran, has indirectly expressed his disagreement with Popper's views. He translated Robert Holub's *Jurgen Habermas*,<sup>64</sup> in which Holub, among others, replies to those critics of Habermas, whom he terms the "The Popperians." In his *The Twentieth Century Political Theories*,<sup>65</sup> Bashiriyeh followed a general introduction to Popper's liberal views and only quoted some of Ernest Gellner's criticisms of Popper.<sup>66</sup>

In recent years, a number of well-known leftist and secular writers and translators have translated works that contain critical assessments of Popper's theories. Morad Farhadpur has translated "Karl Popper and the Problem of Historical Laws,"<sup>67</sup> Khashayar Deyhimi has published the Farsi translation of Michael Lessnoff's *Political Philosophy of the Twentieth Century*,<sup>68</sup> and Baqir Parham has produced a translation of Christian Delacampagne's *Historie de la Philosophie au XXe Siècle*.<sup>69</sup>

### Later Developments

In the meantime, the monthly *Kayhan-e Farhangi* was acting as a *de facto* tribune for the so-called religious intellectuals, a loose coalition of writers, university professors, and researchers promoting a more critical and rational approach to philosophy, religion, politics, and social issues. It came under fierce fire from the more conservative religious circles, who accused it of disseminating dangerous ideas that, in their view, harmed the populace's religious beliefs. Under pressure from the conservatives, the journal was forced to close down in June 1990. Fifteen months later, it reappeared under a new management that was composed entirely of conservative elements.

In response, the religious intellectuals who had temporarily lost their main forum launched another monthly, *Kiyan*, with more or less the same format, in the summer of 1991. Until its forced closure by the judiciary in February 2001, *Kiyan*, which had become the main platform for introducing Popper's ideas to the Iranian educated public, published a number of Popper's essays, articles, and interviews, as well as some expository articles about his views. These include

"Indeterminism is not Enough," the first appendix of *The Open Universe*<sup>70</sup>; "In Search of a Better World," taken from Popper's book with the same title<sup>71</sup>; "On Knowledge and Ignorance," Popper's lecture at the University of Frankfurt on 8 June 1979 on the occasion of receiving an honorary PhD degree<sup>72</sup>; "On the Sources of Knowledge," the text of Popper's lecture at the University of Salzburg on the occasion of receiving an honorary PhD degree in 1979<sup>73</sup>; "Popper on Democracy," first published in *The Economist*, April 1988<sup>74</sup>; a translation of Roger James' "Consciousness: Popper's Contribution"<sup>75</sup>; "Reason or Revolution," which first appeared in *Archives Européennes de Sociologie 1970*<sup>76</sup>; and "The Frankfurt School," the text of Popper's interview by BBC in 1974<sup>77</sup>; "Husserl in Popper's View"<sup>78</sup>; and "Utopia and Violence" taken from Popper's *Conjectures and Refutations*.<sup>79</sup>

In December 1992, *Kiyan* published an exclusive interview with Popper. The interviewer was a young researcher, Hossein Kamaly, who, under Soroush's supervision, had translated and published part of Popper's *Logic of Scientific Discovery* in 1991 with an introduction written by Popper for "The Iranian Reader."<sup>80</sup> During the interview, which was carried out at Popper's home in Kenley in June 1992, Kamaly asked about his views on religion, Heidegger's philosophy, recent trends in the philosophy of science, and Popper's objection to the language-based approaches in philosophy. In his replies, Popper, among other things, rejected semantic approaches of the kind advocated by Bas van Fraassen as irrelevant, criticized Paul Feyerabend attitude's towards his own ideas, and named David Miller as "someone who has understood my views better than others."<sup>81</sup>

Another Iranian writer and researcher, Mohammad-Ali Katouzian, in an article in *Kiyan* entitled "Popper and the Poverty of Historicism"<sup>82</sup> reproduced a Farsi translation of his critique of Popper, which he originally published in his book *Ideaology and Method in Economics*.<sup>83</sup> In his original article, Katouzian had criticized Popper on two points: first, to maintain that Marx's method was historicist, inaccurate, and not supported by contextual evidence, and second, to regard the method of the Orthodox Economy as "by and large scientific" was not correct.

In an introduction to his article in *Kiyan*, Katouzian pointed out that in 1980 Popper had written two letters to him in response to his criticisms. In his first letter, Popper acknowledged that Katouzian's brief exposition of his ideas was more or less correct. However, he added that in rejecting the charge of historicity of Marx's method, Katouzian had erred. In his second letter, Popper provided some interesting textual evidence to show that Marx's historicist approach can be seen not only in his *Capital*, but also in his other texts, such as *The Manifest* and *The Introduction to Political Economy*. Popper however, had not discussed Katouzian's second criticism in his letters. And, in the author's view, this perhaps was an indication of Popper's acceptance of that point's validity.

Between the mid-1980s and the end of the 1990s, a number of Popper's essays, articles, and interviews, as well as some expository articles about his views, were published in a variety of scholarly journals in Iran. *Negah-e No* and *Kelk* were among such journals. One such article was Khosrow Naqid's translation of *Die Welt's* interview with Popper in February 1991, which was published in *Kelk*, a literary quarterly, that same year.

In the same period, and especially throughout the 1990s, many of Popper's books, as well as some works on Popper, were translated into Farsi.

Apart from a Farsi translation of *The Unended Quest*,<sup>84</sup> Ahmad Araam, a veteran translator who was the first to introduce Popper to Iranian readers via his translation of *The Poverty of Historicism*,<sup>85</sup> single-handedly translated almost all of Popper's major books, including *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, *Conjectures and Refutations*, *Realism and the Aim of Science*, *The Open Universe*, and *Objective Knowledge*.<sup>86</sup> But unfortunately, the quality of these translations leaves much to be desired. Popper's *Lesson of this Century* and *The Myth of the Framework* were both translated by the present author.<sup>87</sup> I supplemented each translation with a long introduction on Popper's views. The first was a thorough analysis of his political and social philosophy; the second covered his views on the issue of rationality. Popper's essay, "The Sources of Knowledge and Ignorance," was published separately as a booklet.<sup>88</sup> Soroush also included some of Popper's articles in two of his books on the methodology of the natural and social sciences.<sup>89</sup> One of these articles, "The Logic of the Social Sciences," also appeared in the Farsi translation of *The Myth of the Framework*.

In 1994, shortly after Popper's death, a private cultural institute, Farzan-ruz Institute for Research and Publication, whose director, Dariush Shayegan, was a prominent member of Fardid's pre-Revolution circle, organized a one-day seminar in honor of Popper. In this seminar my friend and colleague, Yusuf Aliabadi, whose untimely death in early May 2002 has deprived Iranian students of a competent teacher and philosopher, delivered a critical appraisal of Popper's views.<sup>90</sup> The second speaker, Ezzatollah Fouladvand, one of the best Iranian translators, who, among other things, has translated Popper's *The Open Society and Its Enemies* and Jeremy Shearmur's *Popper's Political Philosophy*,<sup>91</sup> highlighted some of the finer aspects of Popper's thought.<sup>92</sup>

While Soroush, due to some disagreement with the head of the Institute for Human Sciences and Cultural Studies, who was also the head of the Iranian Academy of Philosophy, could not continue his university courses, other lecturers, including Aliabadi and myself, started regular courses on the philosophy of science at various universities and academic institutes, such as the Iranian Academy of Philosophy and the University of Tehran. A new M.Sc. program in the philosophy of science also was started at the Sharif University of Technology.

In 2000, in response to a proposal made by Iranian president Seyyed Mohammad Khatami, the United Nations' General Assembly declared 2001 as the "Year of Dialogue among Civilizations." Subsequently, an International Centre for Dialogue among Civilizations was opened in Tehran

to promote the idea and ideal of dialogue among cultures and nations. Since then, many Iranian intellectuals, academics, and scholars have tried to make better sense of the various aspects of the notion of “dialogue among civilizations, nations, and cultures.” Popper’s ideas have proved very useful in this respect, and a number of scholars and academics have resorted to Popper’s views to tackle this vexing issue.

In several papers delivered at international conferences, I have made extensive use of Popper’s approach to argue for the possibility of holding a dialogue among individuals and groups belonging to different conceptual and cultural frameworks, and to emphasize the benefits (epistemological and otherwise) of such an engagement.<sup>93</sup> Yusuf Abazari, a fellow sociologist, in a more or less similar vein, argued that Popper’s notion of World-3 can be used to tackle the counter-argument of those who are pessimistic about the prospect of obtaining the right conditions for holding a proper dialogue.<sup>94</sup>

In recent years, Davari, who is by far Popper’s most famous critic in Iran, published a pamphlet, *Karl Popper in Iran*, and a book, *On a Critical Excursion into Carl Popper Philosophy* [sic].<sup>95</sup> In the latter, he discusses two main questions, namely: Why is Popper so famous in Iran? And why has Davari opposed his views? His answers, although couched in a somewhat milder and less abusive language than his earlier attacks on Popper, is essentially not very different from what he had produced in his first article on the same subject, which was published almost two decades ago. In his latest works, Davari has tried to go into more details and has made more references to Popper’s other books than *The Open Society*. However, in doing so, he rather innocently reveals that he has not fully understood Popper’s system of thought and that his familiarity with this system has remained superficial.

Davari still argues that Popper is not a significant philosopher, and that his method is not a method for advancement of understanding, but in effect, a method for domination over the world and its inhabitants. Popper, so Davari claims, pays no attention to the basic assumptions underlying various systems of thought, nor does he admit any significance for the inter-relations between different constituents of such systems. In criticizing the views of other philosophers, Davari says that Popper resorts to propaganda tactics and actually attacks a straw man, does not deal with the real issues at stake, and that the individualism he advocates is a licence for moral and spiritual decadence. Perhaps the only noteworthy point in this latest “critique” of Popper is that Popper’s notion of World-3 is problematic. However, even here, Davari fails to expand his criticism adequately and does not back up his claim with substantial arguments.

It is only fair to say that Popper's critics in Iran have manifestly failed to come up with novel and cogent arguments against his ideas. For the most part, apart from a few exceptions, they have remained content with *ad hominem* attacks. Even when the critics have argued in a constructive way, their arguments hardly are over and above what has already been produced by Popper's critics in the West.

### Popper's Impact

In the Revolution's third decade, while Iranians are still struggling to create a better society in which social and economic justice, political and civil liberties, and respect for human rights can be fulfilled more satisfactorily, Popper's ideas are playing a significant role in this struggle. Popper's views have left deep marks in present-day Iran's intellectual milieu. Many of his notions, theories, and even vocabularies have now become part of Iran's common, everyday discourse.

A large part of the educated Iranian public, and not only the intellectual elite, are nowadays fully aware of the significance of such dichotomies as critical rationalism vs. dogmatic approach; the use of a clear and comprehensible language vs. resorting to vague, evasive, and unfalsifiable assertions; open society vs. closed society; respect for the other and treating him or her as a potential source of knowledge vs. regarding people as either sheep in need of a shepherd or second class citizens; learning through our mistakes by producing conjectures and trying to refute them vs. blind reliance upon prophecies; piecemeal engineering vs. utopianism; and reform vs. revolution. Even more interestingly, those who are opposed to Popper's views also use his ideas or at least try not to take a position that would put them on the wrong side of the above dichotomies.

In today's Iran, not only are those who are active in political, social, and economic spheres benefiting from Popper's views, but also the more abstract and intellectual debates on issues (e.g., the contrast between modernity and tradition, the nature of religious beliefs, the relation between science and faith, and the status of epistemological claim) are all being informed by ideas put forward by Popper.

Many centuries ago, when Muslims first encountered culturally rich civilizations of ancient times, one of their major strategies for survival was to start an intellectual campaign for translating the treasures of these culturally powerful rivals in order to equip themselves with what they realized they badly lacked. A similar grand project of self-education through absorb-

ing ideas produced in far-away lands is going on in present-day Iranian society. A foreign visitor may be astonished by the range and diversity of the ideas of the internationally renowned thinkers and writers that are available to Iranian readers through translations and domestically produced expositions. Works by Jurgen Habermas, Jacques Derrida, Richard Rorty, Thomas Khun, Imre Lakatos, Theodor Adorno, Michel Foucault, Mikhail Bakhtin, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Noam Chomsky, Willard van Orman Quine, Jacques Lacan, Isiah Berlin, Paul Feyerabend, and many more have been translated into Farsi. On occasions, there might be even more than one translation of the same work.

There is however, perhaps one significant difference between the endeavours of contemporary Iranians and their forefathers. Present-day Iranians are, by and large thanks to the teachings of the Viennese philosopher, much more sensitive to the fine distinction between genuine intellectual output and fashionable intellectual fads.<sup>96</sup> And this seems to be an outstanding achievement, by any standard, for a first-rate thinker.

### Notes

1. See for example, Reza Davari, *On a Critical Excursion into Carl Popper Philosophy* [sic] (Tehran: Cultural Institute for Contemporary Knowledge and Thought, 2000).
2. Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* [originally published in French as *Misère de l'Historicisme* (Paris: Plon: 1953). Farsi tr. Ahmad Araam (Tehran: Khawrazmi Pubs., 1971). Houshang Vaziri (trans.), *Revolution or Reform* (Tehran: Khawrazmi Pubs., 1972).
3. Ali Paya, "The Development of Philosophical Thought in Iran" (paper presented to the International Conference on New Developments in Understanding Islam and the Modern International Situation, Centre for the International Studies, University of Helsinki, 28 March 1994). A German translation of this paper, entitled "Die Zeitgenössische Entwicklung des Philosophischen Denkens im Iran," appeared in *Fadschr*, no. 11 (September 1994): 17-26.
4. George Sarton, *A History of Science: Ancient Science through the Golden Age of Greece* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: 1952); Farsi tr. by Ahmad Araam (Tehran: Franklin Pubs., 1957).
5. Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1962).
6. See J. Agassi, *Towards an Historiography of Science, History, and Theory*, Beiheft 2 (1963); facsimile reprint (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1967).

7. For a study of the status of theoretical thought in Iran before the advent of Islam, see A. J. Arberry, *The Legacy of Persia* (London: 1953). On the role of Persian thinkers in promoting Islamic civilization's intellectual life, see S. H. Nasr (1964) and "The Significance of Persian Philosophical Works in the Tradition of Islamic Philosophy," in *Essays on Islamic Philosophy and Science*, ed. G. F. Hourani (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1975); Morteza Mutahari, *Khadamat-e Mutaqabl-e Islam va Iran* (The Reciprocal Relations between Islam and Iran) (Tehran: Sadra Pubs., 1977).
8. See Nasr, "The Significance," and Mutahari, *Khadamat-e*.
9. Erwand Abrahamian, *Iran: Between Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).
10. Abrahamian, *Iran*; R. N. Keddie, *Roots of Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).
11. Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures* (New York: Pantheon Books, c1994), 8.
12. Keddie, *Roots*.
13. S. Akhavi, *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran: Clergy-State Relations in the Pahlavi Period* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1980).
14. Milovan Djilas, *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System* (New York: Praeger, [1957]; Farsi tr. 1973); Andre Pietre, *Marx and Marxism* (n.p.: n.d.; Pr. tr. 1974); Ali Dashti, *The Twenty-three Years* (Tehran: 1974).
15. For background information on the Traditionalists, its prominent members, and their views, visit [www.traditionalists.net](http://www.traditionalists.net).
16. The following books by Ivan Illich were translated into Persian: *Deschooling Society* (New York: Harper & Row, [1971]); *Energy and Equity* (London, Boyars, 1976); and *Limits to Medicine: Medical Nemesis: The Expropriation of Health* (Harmondsworth, NY: Penguin, 1981, c1976).
17. A well-known Iranian writer and translator recently told me that one rather famous leftist writer in the mid-1970s, while commenting on Popper's assertion that he had joined the Communist party at a young age, shortly afterward made the following rather sarcastic and scornful remarks in an influential weekly, *Ferdousi*: "This is an age most kids spend their time in the playground; it is too soon for joining a political party."
18. Ismail Kuhii, *Jedal ba Modda'i* (Dispute with the Pretender) (Tehran: Javidan Pubs., 1972) and *Freedom, Right, and Justice* (Tehran: Javidan Pubs., 1977).
19. M. A. (Homa) Katouzian, *Ideology and Method in Economics* (New York: New York University Press, 1980). Farsi tr. Mohammad Qaed (1985).
20. See Ali Paya, "The Contemporary Shi'a Political Thought," in *Perspectives on Modern Islam*, ed. Scott Morrison and with a preface by Charles Butterworth (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).
21. An interesting exception was Ayatollah Haeri Yazdi, an eminent cleric who was a master of Islamic philosophy and had studied modern philosophy in the United States, where he obtained his Ph.D. in 1970s. Although he had read

Carnap and Quine, as he told me during a visit to London in the mid-1980s, he had never come across Popper's name while working on his dissertation. In our meeting, he showed me a copy of the American edition of *Pocket Popper* (*The Essential Popper*, ed. David Miller) that he had recently bought to familiarize himself with Popper's ideas.

22. There seems to be one odd case that perhaps goes against the general point stated in the text. A leading Iranian intellectual, Abdulkarim Soroush, has told me that while he was working on the unpublished manuscripts of Ayatollah Moretza Motahhari (one of the most prominent contemporary Iranian thinkers and a key intellectual figure in the Islamic Revolution, who was murdered by a terrorist shortly after the Revolution), noticed that Ayatollah Motahhari used Popper's key question concerning the issues of running the state. According to Soroush, Ayatollah Motahhari had approvingly sided with Popper, but without mentioning his name, that the most important problem is how to change the undesired ruler without bloodshed, not who is the best ruler.
23. There were also some courses on Islamic philosophy. However, in a rational division of labor, the task of teaching Islamic philosophy was delegated to the department of theology.
24. Felician Challaye, *Philosophie Scientifique et Philosophie Morale* (Paris: Nathan, 1929; 2d ed., 1947). Farsi tr. by Yaha Madavi (Tehran Univ. Press: 1953).
25. Those lecturers, who were familiar with English, were largely engaged in teaching themes from the classical period to the early modern period, or topics from the Islamic system of thought.
26. A rather advanced book on symbolic logic, written by the mathematician Gholam-Hossein Mosahab (1960), attracted few readers. One possible explanation could be that its content was perhaps beyond the reach of those who were familiar only with classic Aristotelian logic.
27. Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (London: T. Butterworth, [1912]) and *Our Knowledge of the External World as a Field for Scientific Method in Philosophy* (Chicago: Open Court, 1914); Alfred Jules Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic* (London: V. Gollancz, 1946); Susanne K. Langer, *An Introduction to Symbolic Logic* (New York: Dover Pubs., [1967]); Justus Hartnack, *Wittgenstein and Modern Philosophy* (Garden City, NY, Anchor Books, [1965]; Farsi tr. 1972); Arne Næss, *Four Modern Philosophers: Carnap, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Sartre* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1968]; Farsi tr. 1973).
28. Manuchehr Bozorgmehr, *The Analytic Philosophy* (Tehran: Khawrazmi Pubs., 1968).
29. Richard H. Popkin and Avrum Stroll, *Philosophy Made Simple* (Doubleday and Co., 1955)
30. Aligholi Bayani, *The Logic of the Faithful in Marxism* (Tehran: Franklin Pubs., 1977).

31. Abdulkarim Soroush, *A Critical Introduction to Dialectical Logic* (Tehran: Yaran Pubs., 1978, 1981); *Satanic Ideology (Masked Dogmatism)* (Tehran: Yaran Pubs., 1978); and *Knowledge and Value: An Investigation Concerning the Relationship between Knowledge and Morality* (Tehran: Yaran Pubs., 1978).
32. Ibid. Also see Abdulkarim Soroush, *Philosophy of History* (Tehran: Yaran Pubs., 1979).
33. This course was presented for one semester, before the temporary closure of the universities between 1980-81. However, he resumed his academic activities after they reopened.
34. Manuchehr Bozorgmehr, *A Persian Translation of Bryan Magee's Popper* (Tehran: Khawrazmi Pubs., 1981).
35. Bahauddin Khurramshahi, *Logical Positivism: A Critical Study* (Tehran: Centre for Scientific and Cultural Pubs., 1982).
36. Abdol-Hossein Zarrinkub, *Ba Karevan-e Andishe* (Tehran: Amirkabir Pubs., 1984), 171.
37. Abdulkarim Soroush, "The Problem of Induction," *Nashr-e Danesh*, no. 2 (1982); "The Notion of Empirical Testing," *Farhang*, no. 3 (1985); *What Is Science? What Is Philosophy* (Payam-e Azadi Pubs., 1982, 1992); *A Critical Introduction to Dialectical Logic* (Tehran: Yaran Pubs., 1978, 1981); Ahmad Araam, tr., *Conjectures and Refutations* (Soroush Pubs., 1986).
38. Dr. Yahya Mahdavi, founder of the University of Tehran's department of philosophy, told me at a meeting in Tehran (December 2000) that Fardid could not obtain his PhD during his stay in Europe because he was not systematic and methodical in his approach to philosophical issues.
39. The term *westoxication* has enjoyed a large degree of notoriety among Iranian intellectuals and the public since the 1960s, thanks to a book with the same title by Jalal Al-e Ahmad, a well-known Iranian intellectual who was a member of Fardid's Circle during the 1960s. Later on, with Fardid's encouragement and that of Mahmood Hooman, another Iranian philosopher, he translated Ernst Junger's *Crossing the Line* (Al-e Ahmad 1968).
40. For a critique of some aspects of Fardid's views see R. Barahani, *Tarikh-e Mozakkar* (The Masculine History) (Tehran: 1991); I. Nabavi Ibrahim, *A Conversation with Ehsan Naraghi* (Tehran: 2001).
41. Recently, one of Fardid's disciples published the edited script of Fardid's tape-recorded speeches that he delivered at the University of Tehran shortly after the victory of the Islamic Revolution. S. A. Fardid, *Didar-e Farrahi va Futuhat-e Akher al-Zaman*, ed. M. Madadpur (Tehran: Nazar Pubs., 2003).
42. Some of the better known of such works are Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Westoxication* (1963); Darius Shayegan, *Asia Faces the Occident* (Tehran: Soroush Pubs., 1970); and Reza Davari, *The Present Status of Thought in Iran* (1978).
43. These claims have been strongly disputed as unsubstantiated by some Iranian scholars. See, for example, Bahauddin Khurramshahi, *Hafiz-Nameh* (Tehran: Soroush Pubs., 1987).

44. S. Qunavi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb va al-Shuhud* (The Keys to the Realms of Unseen and That Which Can Be Seen); Qaysari, *Al-Tawhid va al-Nubovvat va al-Velayat* (Monotheism, and Prophethood, and Guardianship); Qaysari *Sharh-e Fusus* (A Commentary on Fusus).
45. Ayatollah Ruhullah Khomeini, *Misbah al-Hedayah ila al-Khelafat va al-Velayat* (The Light of Guidance toward Caliphate and Guardianship). Farsi Tr. Seyyed Ahmad Fehri (Tehran: Payam-e Azaadi Pubs., 1981).
46. Fardid, in a Heideggerian vein, would argue that from an etymological point of view, the Greek god Zeus (Theos), which in Latin is Deus, in Sanskrit is Deva, and in ancient Persian is Daiva, is the same as *Taghut* in Arabic and in Qur'anic usage. However, the validity of his claims in this respect has been rejected. See Bahauddin Khurramshahi, *Qur'an-Shenakht: Discourse on the Culture-inspiring [sic] Aspects of the Holy Qur'an* (Tehran: Tarh-e No, 1996).
47. Given the theological connotations of Heidegger's views, it is easy to draw parallels between the two systems. What needs to be done is to simply replace Heidegger's "Being" with *Hekmat-e Unsi's* God. The similarities, of course, go further than that. Fardid and his students are very fond of "arguments from etymology." Moreover, like Heidegger, their method of philosophizing is description and hermeneutic interpretation rather than logical analysis and critical valuation. In fact, in line with Heidegger, they totally dismiss all analytical trends of thought.
48. The articles that appeared in this anthology were written few years before the Revolution. Davari's *The Islamic Revolution and the Present Status of the World* was published in 1982.
49. The first translation, minus the "Notes" (almost half of the book), by Ali Asghar Mohajer, was initially published in the United States in 1984 and subsequently reprinted in Iran (Tehran: Inteshar Co., 1985). The second translation, a complete and definitive one, plus Popper's 1961 and 1969 addenda, by Ezzatollah Fouladvand was published in 1985 by Khwarazmi Publications. A third translation by Jalal Ud-Din Alam was due to come out in the same year. However, the translator and the publisher decided not to publish it.
50. Reza Davari, "Observations Concerning *The Open Society and Its Enemies*," *Kayhan-e Farhangi* 2, no. 10, (1985).
51. Ali Paya, "The Open Society and the Closed Society," *Kayhan-e Farhangi* 2, no. 12 (1985).
52. Reza Davari, "Yes to Knowledge and Freedom and No to Eclecticism," *Kayhan-e Farhangi* 3, no. 1 (1986).
53. Ali Paya, "The Gentle Polemic," *Kayhan-e Farhangi* 3, no. 2 (1986).
54. Akbar Ganji, "Challenging the West, Keeping Faith, and ...," *Kayhan-e Farhangi* 3, no. 5 (1986).
55. Abdulkarim Soroush, "The 'existence' and the 'nature' of the West," *Kayhan Farhangi* 1, no. 5 (1984).

56. Maurice Cornforth, *The Open Philosophy and the Open Society: A Reply to Dr. Karl Popper's Refutation of Marxism* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1968). Farsi tr. Latif Attari (Tehran: Shabahang Pubs., 1980).
57. Najaf Dariyabandari, "Irrational Rationality: A Brief Critical Discussion of Popper's Social Philosophy," in *Beh Ebarat-e Digar* (In Other Words) (Tehran: Payk Pubs., 1984).
58. Ibid., 231.
59. Ibid., 232.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid., 229.
62. Ibid., 230.
63. Ibid., 261.
64. Robert Holub, *Jurgen Habermas* (London: Routledge, 1991). Farsi Tr. Hossein Bashiriyeh (Nash-e Nay Pubs., 1996).
65. Hossein Bashiriyeh, *Twentieth Century Political Theories* (Tehran: Nash-e Nay, 2000).
66. Gellner 1985.
67. The original article appeared in *Studies in Critical Philosophy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), 197-208. The Farsi translation was published in a prestigious Iranian quarterly, *Organon*, no. 13 (fall 1998). This quarterly journal is devoted almost entirely to translations of well-known works in philosophy, literature, and the humanities.
68. English ed. Blackwell: 1999; Farsi tr. Tehran: 2001.
69. French ed. (Paris: du Seuil, 2000). Farsi tr. Tehran: 2001.
70. Ahmad Naraghi, tr., "Indeterminism Is Not Enough," *Kiyan* 2, no. 9 (1992).
71. Khosrow Naqid, tr. "In Search of a Better World," *Kiyan* 4, no. 21 (1994).
72. Rahman Afshari, tr. "On Knowledge and Ignorance," *Kiyan* 5, no. 27 (1995).
73. Rahman Afshari, tr. "On the Sources of Knowledge," *Kiyan* 5, no. 29 (1995).
74. Sa'id Mohebbi, tr. "Popper on Democracy," *Kiyan* 6, no. 33 (1996).
75. Roger James, "Consciousness: Popper's Contribution," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 2, no. 2 (1995): 188-90; Farsi tr. by. Abbas Esfandiyari, *Kiyan* 6, no. 40 (1997).
76. Farsi tr. Ali Paya, "Reason or Revolution," *Kiyan* 8, no. 41 (1998).
77. Farsi tr. Ali Paya, "The Frankfurt School," *Kiyan* 8, no. 41 (1998).
78. Abbas Bakhshi-Pur Rudsari "Husserl in Popper's View," *Kiyan* 8, no. 43, (1998).
79. Farsi tr. Rahman Afshari, "Utopia and Violence" *Kiyan* 9, no. 45 (1999).
80. In his introduction, Popper writes:  
 "As described by the translator, Mr. S. H. Kamaly, this book, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, was written 55 years ago. It is a compressed version of what it was originally intended to be. However, it appears that many readers (but not all) have read it with enjoyment and have learned something from it. I believe that these were readers who read the book slowly: it was not a book to be read through quickly.

The book tries to explain how we can learn from experience. At the same time it stresses that we do not learn from experience by making observations repeatedly: the repetitions play no role compared with thinking. Everything depends on our active thinking about the world. We constantly try to interpret, in thought, our experience. We try to understand them. One could put it in the following way: we learn mainly with the help of our brain. Our eyes and ears are important, but mainly for correcting and eliminating false ideas, proposed by our brain, by our thought.

All this is a severe correction to the usual view that we learn, more or less passively, by letting impressions stream into us and allowing them to be digested by our brain. This, I believe, is a mistaken picture. We are always active, not passive, even in the formation of our perceptions. Every perception contains hypotheses. If I see a chair, I hypothesize that it can be used to sit on it. The hypothesis may be mistaken and the chair may break down when anyone tries to sit on it. Clearly the hypothesis went far beyond what our senses could tell us.

This is a new view, not only of science but of life and of the evolution of living things. All living things are always active; try to anticipate what will happen in their environment and to solve the problems that face them when their anticipations have been wrong. I believe that this way of looking at life and at the evolution with the eyes of active and responsible persons who try to solve the problems in such a way that the future will be better for mankind.” (Kenley, 8 December 1989.)

Kamaly, prior to the publication of his Farsi translation of Popper’s *LSD*, had published a translation of Popper’s introduction to his *LSD* in an academic Quarterly, *Farhang* (Kamaly 1988).

81. *Kiyan* 2, no. 10 (1991).
82. *Kiyan* 4, no. 22 (1994).
83. M. A. (Homa) Katouzian, *Ideology and Method*. A Farsi translation by Mohammad Qaed was published in 1985.
84. Iraj Aliabadi, tr. *The Unended Quest* (Tehran: The Organisation for Publication and Teaching of the Islamic Revolution, 1980). A second translation of this appeared recently: Aqili (2002).
85. Ahmad Araam, tr. *The Poverty of Historicism* (Tehran: Khawrazmi Pubs., 1971).
86. Ahmad Araam, tr. *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (Tehran: Soroush Pubs., 1985); *Conjectures and Refutations* (Tehran: Soroush Pubs., 1986); *Realism and the Aim of Science* (Tehran: Soroush Pubs., 1996); *The Open Universe* (Tehran: Soroush Pubs., 1996); and *Objective Knowledge* (Tehran: Soroush Pubs., 1996).
87. A second translation, by Hormoz Yazdanpur, of *The Lesson of this Century* also appeared in 2001. I also translated this as *The Lesson of This Century* (Tehran: Tarh-e No, 1997); and *The Myth of the Framework* (Tehran: Tarh-e No, 2000)
88. Abbas Baqeri, tr., *The Sources of Knowledge and Ignorance* (Tehran: Nashr-e Ney Pubs., 1998).

89. The papers, translated by some of Soroush's students were: Sa'id Bahmanpur, tr., "The Aim of Science"; Sadiq Larijani, tr. "The Buckets and the Searchlights," both of which appeared in Abdulkarim Soroush, *What Is Science? What Is Philosophy?* (Tehran: Payam-e Azadi Publications, 1982, 1992); and Sa'id Bahmanpur, tr., "The Logic of the Social Sciences," in Abdulkarim Soroush, *Lessons in the Philosophy of Social Sciences* (Tehran: Ney Pubs., 1997).
90. On another occasion, Aliabadi delivered a talk at the same institute in which he critically assessed Heidegger's notion of technology. Unfortunately, the texts of his talks are not yet published. Aliabadi had submitted a paper to Popper's Centenary Congress in Vienna. Regretfully, it was not destined to be presented by him.
91. Ezzatollah Fouladvand, tr., *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (Tehran: Khwarazmi Pubs., 1985), and Jeremy Shearmur, *Popper's Political Philosophy*, Ezzatollah Fouladvand, tr. (Tehran: Tarh-e Nou, 1998).
92. Fouldavand told me recently that he is preparing a Farsi translation of Popper's *All Life Is Problem Solving*, to be published in 2003. Included therein is one of the essays in this volume, namely, "Against the Cynical Interpretation of History." This work is a collection of translated essays on the theme of the philosophy of history. Fouladvand previously published John Gray's "The Liberalism of Karl Popper" in an anthology of essays he had collected and translated under the title of *Reason in Politics* (Tehran: Tarh-e Nou Pubs., n.d.). Gray's essay was a chapter of his *Liberalisms: Essays in Political Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1993).
93. One paper, "Dialogue in a Real World: Quixotic Pursuit or Sine Qua Non?" is to be published in the forthcoming issue of the *International Journal of Applied Philosophy* (IJAP) (spring 2003). I have also published a collection of my essays on the theme of dialogue, in Farsi, with the same title. My debt to Popper in formulating my thoughts on this issue cannot be overemphasized.
94. Yusuf Abazari, "The Conditions for Dialogue," *The Report of Dialogue* 1, no. 4, 2001. Published by the International Centre for Dialogue among Civilizations.
95. Reza Davari, *Karl Popper in Iran* (Tehran: Cultural Institute for Contemporary Knowledge and Thought, 1999), and *On a Critical Excursion*.
96. When the early Muslim scholars encountered scientific ideas from various established civilizations, which were very attractive to the Muslim public and especially the youth, they created quasi-scientific or even pseudo-scientific views and, claiming to be authentic sayings (traditions) of the Prophet. See Mohammad Baqir Behbudi, *Motale-ei dar Tarikh-e Hadith* (n.p.: 1985).