

Zarathustra's Homecoming. Nietzsche in Iran

And verily, toward your mountain and tree
many eyes are directed today; a great longing
has arisen, and many have learned to ask,
"Who is Zarathustra?"

Zarathustra IV, "The Welcome"ⁱ

I. Nietzsche's Zarathustra versus the Iranian Zarathustra

Zarathustra is the Old Persian name for the prophet of the official religion of pre-Islamic Iran as recorded in the Avesta, the holy book of Zoroastrianism. He is believed to have lived between c. 628 BC and c. 551 BC. In classical antiquity, he was known in Greek literature as Zoroástrēs which is the origin of Zoroaster or Zoroastre in modern European languages. In Modern Persian, his name is pronounced Zardosht, or in more literary usage, Zartosht.

In Nietzsche's writings, the name of Zoroaster appears for the first time in his unpublished notes (*Nachgelassene Fragmente*) of 1870-71, about a decade before he wrote the first part of *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. In these notes he speaks of Zoroaster and his religion with great admiration to the point of showing a belated implicit sympathy for the dominance of Zoroastrianism in Greece, had Dariush the Great, the Persian emperor, succeeded in conquering it.ⁱⁱ And again, in his posthumously published work of the same period, *Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen*, he refers to the story of Heraclitus's studies under Zoroaster (KSA 1/806). The name "Zarathustra" first appeared in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (fragment 342), published in 1882. In this work, Nietzsche included the first section of the prologue from *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, that is, Zarathustra's prayer before the sun, which appeared in the published text of the first part of the book the following year.

It is reasonable to ask why Nietzsche used the original Old Persian form "Zarathustra" instead of the more familiar name of Zoroaster. "Zarathustra" was only known to experts of the ancient Indo-Iranian languages, and Nietzsche, with his philological expertise, was also well acquainted with the name. In general, Nietzsche admired ancient Persians (*Persien*), their warlike passions and imperial institutions. Moreover, he regarded the Zoroastrian cyclical conception of eternity positively which somehow resembled his own conception of eternally recurring time. In a note dated 1884, he wrote: "I must pay tribute to Zarathustra, a *Persian (einem Perser)*: Persians were the first who *thought* history in its full entirety." (KSA 11/53) On this basis, by adopting the name of Zarathustra to communicate his philosophy, Nietzsche pays homage to the original Zarathustra. But he does it, paradoxically, by setting his own ontological immoralism against the ontological moralism of the ancient Aryan prophet. The second Zarathustra radically challenges the proto-historic ontological stance of the original. In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche himself explains why he chose the name of Zarathustra as the principal figure for his prophetic work:

I have not been asked, as I should have been, what the name of Zarathustra means in my mouth, the mouth of the first immoralist: for what constitutes the tremendous historical uniqueness of that Persian is just the opposite of this. Zarathustra was the first to consider the fight of good and evil the very wheel in the machinery of things: the transposition of morality into the

metaphysical realm, as a force, cause, and end in itself, is *his* work. But this question itself is at bottom its own answer. Zarathustra created this most calamitous error, morality, consequently, he must also be the first to recognize it. [...] To speak the truth and to *shoot well with arrows*, that is Persian virtue.---Am I understood?--- The self-overcoming of morality, out of truthfulness; the self-overcoming of the moralist, into his opposite—into me—that is what the name of Zarathustra means in my mouth.ⁱⁱⁱ

The original Zarathustra stands at the dawn of human spiritual history as one of its founding figures and great thinkers. He initiated this history with his teachings which interpreted the history of Being in moralistic terms. According to Zarathustra, the history of Being first began and was continually dominated by the struggle between two fundamental elements, good and evil, represented in two divine figures, Ahuramazda, god of Good, and Ahriman, his adversary, representing Evil. This primordial interpretation of Being with its promise of final victory of Good over Evil, gave meaning, direction, and *telos* to the world, and, therefore, to human life. Moralistic interpretation of being, according to Nietzsche, has been the core of all metaphysical philosophies and religious beliefs until recent history. The onset of modernity and new human attitudes towards being have thrown this historically persistent interpretation into deep crisis, and, consequently, human life and its meaning.

Like the original Zarathustra, as related by Zoroastrian tradition, Nietzsche's Zarathustra goes to the mountains to meditate when he is thirty years old and descends ten years later to convey his message to humanity. However, contrary to the moralistic interpretation of being taught by the original Zarathustra, Nietzsche's Zarathustra appears at the end of the spiritual history of humanity and teaches his ontological immoralism. He begins his prophetic mission by announcing the most dreadful news for humanity: the death of God. The crucial, fundamental and logical implication of this event, the death of God, is the impossibility of the moralistic interpretation of being and the denial of the historical and eschatological expectations based on it, i.e., the final victory of Good over Evil. Without the eternally stable foundation of being as determined by the supernatural destiny, Being and human life also lose direction and meaning; humanity is in danger of being lost in the turmoil of nihilistic attitudes toward itself and the world. As a result, Nietzsche's view of the coming history is full of apprehension, because he witnesses the appearance of nihilism on its horizon. With great anxiety and disgust, he regards the descent of man from his historically and ontologically privileged position in being, as a being in the presence of God, addressed by His words, degenerating and becoming somehow subhuman, sinking to the position of the "last man". A life drowned in commonplace absurdities of everyday life and pleasures, bereft of any sublime horizon.

Therefore, in order to overcome the terrible darkness of nihilistic prospects caused by the absence of God and the extinguishing of His light, Nietzsche's Zarathustra teaches transcendence from "man" to "overman" (*Übermensch*) through force of will and a consciously chosen objective. For this purpose, he teaches humans how to replace God and give meaning to the world and their own lives by voluntarily and courageously accepting responsibility for being as it is, in its full temporality and natural presence, devoid of any metaphysical, i.e., timeless or eternal element. To this end, he must discard the old, false conceptions of "Being" which entail the belief in the metaphysical, changeless or eternal idealities, essentialities, or godliness. The concept of being must be replaced with the concept of "becoming", i.e., the incessant changeability of everything as the most basic, natural and empirical reality of the world and life.

As a European "prophet", the second Zarathustra appears at a time when modern civilization is faced with a moral crisis caused by the burgeoning nihilism of modern times. Therefore, he bids (Western)

Europeans to abandon their Christian morality and Greco-Judaic world views, as they are historically responsible for this doomed process. He invites them to partake in a post-metaphysical history founded on self-sustaining free human will. In order to do this, man must overcome his past history as a "metaphysical animal" – as Schopenhauer puts it – and become an *Übermensch*, that is, a human being "redeemed" of his illusory, metaphysically-afflicted history; a history full of superstition, ignorance, falseness, and human miseries, all of which are embodied in Christianity.

Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* is obviously a book like no other. It is both a uniquely poetical and philosophical work, imbued with a grand prophetic intonation which imitates in part the aphoristic and parabolic style of the Bible. Nietzsche himself looked at his *Zarathustra* as an "evangelistic" book, as an antidote for Christian Evangelism to "redeem" humanity from its false and sinister effects. It is also worth noting that this work exhibits a sustained, explicit and implicit disagreement with the Bible, and particularly the New Testament. Nonetheless, despite its prophetic tone, Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* is a work by a modern European poet-philosopher. It attempts to overcome the unwise, obsessive rationalism of the classical and modern Western tradition of thought, and, likewise, Christian irrationalism by replacing them both with a more courageous, and, therefore, deeply founded wisdom based on a more realistic and critical ontology. With its poetical-philosophical insights, this wisdom attempts to undermine all superstitions and illusions of antique, medieval or modern fabrication. It begins by reminding us of the original Zarathustra, the prominent pioneer of spiritual history, and his "most calamitous error", the heightening of a necessary element of human life – morality – to the level of the ontological foundation of Being.

II. Zarathustra in His Motherland

It is certainly questionable whether a work like *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, when translated into a foreign linguistic and cultural setting, can actually mean or communicate something of relevance to other people? That is, a cultural setting which is totally foreign to Greco-Judaic or Christian institutions in European civilization and its subsequent developments in modernity. Moreover, we must consider the additional problem of non-translatable linguistic structures which are major barriers for transferring the poetical idiom and intonation of such a work; one that masterfully employs the linguistic potentialities and cultural memory of its native tongue with its embedded figures of speech, metaphors, allusions, and symbols.

Despite all of these hurdles, there is one non-Western, semi-modern country which boasts a considerable number of intellectuals who exhibit a meaningful, enthusiastic curiosity regarding Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* – Iran, the birthplace of Zarathustra, or Persia, as it was formally called in many European languages until recent times.^{iv} Iran has had a very long and complicated relationship with Zoroaster throughout its history which spans more than 2,500 years. The curiosity surrounding Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* in Iran was initially sparked by the title of the work which led one to expect a book about the ancient Iranian prophet and his message from the perspective of a great European philosopher. However, this first approach and expectation prevalent among earlier generations of modern Iranian intellectuals because of the availability of his work in Persian, has long been replaced by a more authentic curiosity to understand and absorb the real philosophical message of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*.

Three Features of Zarathustra in Iranian History

Iran's relationship with Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism has passed through several fundamentally different and contradictory historical phases. A synopsis of this history allows one to better appreciate this relationship and understand the meaningful presence of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* in contemporary Iran.

For the greatest part of Iran's pre-Islamic history, the name of Zoroaster (Zartosht) dominated Iranian spiritual and religious life. In the Sassanid era (from the early 3rd century AD to the Arab Moslem conquest of 651 AD), Zoroastrianism was the official religion of the Persian Empire, during which its high priests shared in supreme state power. But the invasion of the Arabs and the dominance of Islam caused radical changes in the political and cultural fabric of the Iranian world. Zoroastrianism suffered the most from these fateful changes. As the majority of Iranians converted to Islam, Iran's ancient history and its dominant religion gradually sank into oblivion. As the centuries passed, the fanatic believers of the country's new "bona fide" monotheistic religion only equated the name of Zoroaster and his religion with the pagan past of Iranian history. In later centuries, despite the heavy pressure of Islamic militancy and fanaticism, a few small minorities of Zoroastrians were able to survive in low profile in certain regions of Iran.

In the midst of the dominant Muslim community, with various links to one another, the survival of these Zoroastrian minorities had one crucial result – they preserved the name and memory of Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism, often used metaphorically and symbolically in Persian mystical poetry which developed in the middle centuries of Islamic history. Apparently, the Zoroastrian custom of winemaking and operating wineries created some longstanding relationships with some unorthodox Muslims, including liberal-minded Sufis. Growing and serving wine was forbidden to Muslims and, at times, was punished severely by religious authorities. But in Zoroastrian tradition, not only was wine served at parties and festivities, but also as part of religious rites.

In Persian poetry and especially in ecstatic mystical lyricism, frequent references are made to "Zoroastrians" (*moqān*) as wine sellers, as well as their wine-cellars (*mey-khāhnē*), often with symbolic mystical connotations. Although the name of Zoroaster lost its historical reference to a large extent, in certain mystical literature it became equated with a primordial spiritual teacher, like Hermes. In this literature, the symbolic usage of the name *mogh* (a Zoroastrian priest or believer), *pir-e moghān* (the spiritual master of the *moghs*), and *deyr-e moghān* (cloister of *moghs*, where "wine" was served), accompanied the metaphorical-mystical usage of terms such as "wine", "winery" and "drunkenness" which referred to the ecstatic experience of the union with God.

Until recent history, the name of Zartosht (Zoroaster) and its related terms, like *mog* and *moghān*, generally appeared metaphorically whenever there was an allusion to fire worship (an age-old custom in Zoroastrianism) or wine service in bacchanal and Dionysiac mystical poetry. Therefore, the name of "Zartosht" symbolized and recalled something of ancient Persian history with a pleasant poetical ring for unorthodox Muslim Iranians who retained only a dim legendary memory of ancient Persia. The historical figure who played a determining role in keeping this legendary memory alive was the great epic poet Ferdowsi, whose magnificent work, the *Book of Kings* (*Shāhnāmē*), compiled at 10th Century A.D., in modern times became a key text for defining Iranian national identity. This *magnum opus* was also highly effective in preserving the Persian language under the incessant, heavy pressure of Arabic as the holy language of the Koran as well as the official language of scholarship and administration in the Islamic empire.

In the following centuries, under the sovereignty of the Turk and Mongol emperors, and particularly as a result of the supremacy of fanatic Shiism, the name of Zartosht grew more obscure as the Islamic

spirit and culture completely dominated all aspects of life. Ancient Persian history, even in its legendary narrative by Ferdowsi, became more remote and foreign to Iranians who increasingly identified themselves with their sectarian Islamic denomination and integrated an unlimited influx of Arabic words and phrases into the Persian language.

The third phase of Iran's relationship with Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism which is also the most relevant to our subject matter, began as medieval Islamic history came to an end, brought about by the exposure of the Iranian world to modern Europe. The already worn-out empires and their despotic power structures were shattered within decades as the European colonial powers entered the arena of the Asiatic world in the 19th century. The modern concepts of "nation" and "nationalism", introduced by the newly-developed Westernized cultural elite, resulted in a new historical consciousness with a new sense of ethnic or racial identity. In Iran, the Westernized cultural elite were always anxious to link their historical origin to the country's pre-Islamic history.

Some acquaintance with the thriving philological studies in 19th-century Europe, which had established the Indo-European affinity with the Iranian languages, was an effective stimulus in this regard. Moreover, philological findings concerning the Indo-European languages and their historical monogeny assumed the existence of a certain tribe as primeval speakers of the hypothetical proto-Indo-European language. Not only did intellectuals suppose this tribe to be the ethnic origin of contemporary Indo-European languages, but they also ascribed certain "Aryan" racial characteristics to it, certainly influenced by the racist atmosphere which prevailed in Europe in 19th and early 20th centuries. This assumption formed a relationship between Iranians and Europeans both linguistically and racially. The new sense of racial and national identity was reinforced by archeological discoveries and historical studies by European scholars on the ancient history of the Persian Empire. Studies of Zoroastrianism and its extant texts were, of course, another important element which led to the reappearance of Zoroaster as a historical figure.

The belief in a pure, Iranian ("Aryan")^v origin and identity among modern ultra-nationalists, coupled with their hatred of everything stemming from the Arabic race and culture, gave a new, colorful and extremely attractive feature to everything belonging to the pre-Islamic history of Iran. The glowing name of Zoroaster, the most spiritual figure in pre-Islamic Iran, obviously stood at the top of the list of names, legendary and historical, belonging to that history. This time, Zoroaster was depicted as a pure-blooded Persian prophet, which in his high-minded moralistic and humanistic doctrines reflected the sublime Aryan virtues -- in contrast to the base "Semitic" or Arab virtues. It was possible to trace these doctrines back to the oldest part of the Avesta, the Gathas, which, according to modern scholarship, directly originates from the prophet himself.

The period between the First and Second World War – which largely coincides with the reign of the first king of the Pahlavi dynasty – marked the culmination of Iranian nationalism among modern Iranian intellectuals and its establishment as a state ideology. The modern state-run system of national education and other means of political propaganda, monopolistically implemented by the dictatorial government, indoctrinated younger generations with the racist tendencies found in the ultra-nationalistic beliefs. The fascination with Zoroaster and his religion during these decades naturally made some ultra-nationalists curious about Nietzsche's *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, which they believed was a book based on the original Zoroaster and his teachings.

III. Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* in Persian

The first Persian translation of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* appeared in 1948. It was a prosaic, rough translation, full of mistakes, which barely reflected the lofty poetical idiom and spirit of the original work.

Less than a decade later, I was introduced to the translation by a friend who was my age and who, through his affiliation to the Pan-Iranist party, was a strong sympathizer of Nazi Germany. At that time, I was a sixteen-year-old youngster, extremely interested in learning about Iran's history and literature, including Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism. Without any introduction to its subject matter, the translation was unable to satisfy my curiosity, but it did acquaint me with the name of Nietzsche and gave me an initial taste of his strange words in its aphoristic style. In a small, friendly literary circle to which my Pan-Iranist friend and poet, another poet of my age, and I belonged, we read this book, understood it as a poetical work that celebrated power and masculinity, and together, recited some of its lines by heart. However, this first encounter was brief.

My second encounter with Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* occurred in my early twenties – this time in its English translation – and was motivated by my strong fascination with literature and philosophy. This new encounter with Nietzsche's major work with its fascinating and challenging name of Zarathustra and remarkable poetic language and imagery left me thoroughly puzzled yet intrigued. I understood that I could not penetrate this work through a foreign language which I had learned mainly through self-instruction. This is how my odyssey of translation commenced. At the time, I could barely anticipate the significance of my decision and its fateful impact on my entire intellectual and literary career, nor, most importantly, its possible impact on future generations in my country.

The first phase of my endeavors, which culminated in its first publication, took a number of years and I continued working for two more decades on several revisions. I was not interested in simply producing a translated text. Rather, I was committed to recreating it in a style comparable to the original – a task which turned out to be a great intellectual and literary enterprise and demanded a daringly long attempt. In spite of all its difficulties and, at times, disappointments, it was a great challenge that subsequently proved to be highly rewarding in several ways.

During the first phase of translation, I became more and more conscious of the handicaps involved with translating from a second language. Therefore, I began learning German so that I could follow the original text and gain a direct sense of it. During the following two decades, I checked the whole translation three times against the original German text and three English translations; revised, readjusted, and refined its Persian prose by rereading my translation innumerable times.

My very ambitious aim was to employ the highest potentialities of the Persian language in order to produce the most faithful translation and, at the same time, achieve the highest poetical eloquence. Obviously, it is impossible to produce a literal translation with corresponding poetic elements like rhymes, cadences, alliterations, puns, and play of words at every place where they occur. Therefore, wherever it was linguistically possible, I attempted to compensate for this deficiency through similar Persian language constructions. It is interesting to note that the poetical ring of words, images, metaphors, allusions, ideas and concepts in Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, with all their strangeness to the Iranian ear, has given the Persian translation an exotic flavor. Another indispensable part of my task was to research the Biblical and other allusions and citations contained in the text.

An extremely difficult, but joyfully engaging aspect of my work was restructuring and refining the Persian prose. The historical maladies of Persian prose had turned it into a clumsy, obscure, and inefficient language, lacking all precision with its traditional, extravagantly ornate and lengthy style,

full of nonsensical usage of unfamiliar words, and heavily burdened with a boundless influx of Arabic words and phrases. Despite the endeavors of two generations of modernist writers and their considerable achievements in renewing the Persian language along modern lines, the high-handedness of traditional scholarship and forces of habit had allowed this undesirable heritage to persist. Therefore, to achieve my goal, I had to reevaluate and revise this heritage in minute detail in order to reconstruct a language worthy of a translation of *Zarathustra*. This long and continuous experimental linguistic venture proved extremely helpful to my work as a translator, essayist, and lexicologist. In addition to *Zarathustra*, I have translated three other major works by Nietzsche: *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*; *Zur Genealogie der Moral*; and *Götzen-Dämmerung*.

IV. Nietzsche's Presence in Contemporary Iran

I have entitled this article “Zarathustra’s ‘Homecoming’” in reference to the relationship of the original Zoroaster with his homeland and, of course, in allusion to the “Heimkehr” chapter in Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra*. In reality, however, the translation of Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra* into Persian is never a “homecoming” as such, but rather a visit from a stranger with a familiar name to a new land with an intention to settle there if the conditions were favorable enough. Keeping this fact in mind, I can claim that my translation of *Zarathustra* is an established popular work at present. Its seventeenth edition was published in 2001. The fourth revised edition is currently published once or twice each year. It is especially popular among the intellectual elite of the younger generations who are interested in modern Western literature and philosophy, or are simply curious about the two *Zarathustras*.

When I started working on *Zarathustra* in the 1960s, the country was under the unrestrained dictatorship of the Shah’s regime; the general political atmosphere was extremely unfavorable for such a work. At that time, the intellectual milieu was generally influenced by leftist revolutionarism and partially influenced by radical Islamist movements. In such an atmosphere, earlier nationalistic sentiments had all but vanished and curiosity about Zoroaster, or Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra* for that matter, was at its lowest level. Under the influence of leftist propaganda, many considered Nietzsche to be a theoretician of Nazism.

However, the aftermath of the Revolution and the disillusionment with all extremist ideologies, coupled with radical changes in the post-revolutionary atmosphere of the country, has produced a new generation of intellectuals, both men and women, with a strong desire to understand and absorb modernity in philosophical and scientific terms. The never-ending discussions about topics of modernity and post-modernity in journals, periodicals, and even newspapers clearly support this claim. Correspondingly, this trend has sparked substantial efforts in the translation of philosophical works, although the majority of these are not up to scholarly standards.

In addition to the incomparable attraction of Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra* for younger generations, the interest in Nietzsche has continued to increase as a result of the importance of his ideas as a pioneer of post-modern philosophy and the innumerable references to him in related philosophical works. Consequently, a new generation of translators are endeavoring to translate his works. One publisher has even projected publication of Nietzsche’s complete works in Persian. Nowadays, one can even find two different translations of some of his works. These are mostly translated from the English or, in some cases, French translations of his works. Direct translations from the original German remain rare.

In general, one could say that Nietzsche holds almost a central position in this new approach to Western modern thought in Iran. The dynamic, poetical, polemical, and stylistic characteristics of Nietzsche's writings, especially his *Zarathustra*, are more suitable to translation in a language like Persian, which possesses a grand classical heritage of poetic idiom, than other philosophical works which are burdened with professional jargon and a solemn, erudite style.

However, there are many ways in which Nietzsche can bring us in contact with European philosophy. In addition to the superb stylistic character of his writings, what might make him attractive to Iranian taste is an "Oriental" ingredient in his thought and style. At times, the words he chooses are closely similar to the sayings of the great mystic poets in Persian literary tradition. His great admiration for Asia and its wisdom, in contrast to his radical criticism of the Judeo-Greek intellectual and religious tradition of the West, probably tells of some affinity to classical Oriental thought. Like Goethe, Nietzsche's admiration for Hafiz, the great Persian classical mystic poet, and his repeated references to him demonstrate his interest and relationship with the Orient (See KSA, Gesamtregister: Hafis). He even has a poem in praise of Hafiz addressed to him. There are certain Iranians who wrongly interpret Nietzsche along these lines and claim that his ideas completely correspond to those of the Persian mystic poets like Rumi and Hafiz.

There is no need to reiterate the fact that every work which enters another language through translation actually enters another human "life-world" (*Lebenswelt*) or, using Martin Heidegger's term, a new "destiny". The translation of a work often means a displacement from its native linguistic and cultural homeland to a foreign land. This process forces it to readapt itself to the soil of a new linguistic and cultural environment and, moreover, exposes it to the new hermeneutical approaches which reinterpret it according to the spiritual demands of the new environment. As many historical cases testify, even "misunderstandings" are, at times, fertile ground for new understandings and provide a new destiny for a translated work. "Misunderstood" works, in some cases, have even created their own magnificent cultural traditions.^{vi}

As a forerunner of modern hermeneutics, Nietzsche himself has sophisticatedly taught us about the disputability of "original meanings". Even the most successfully translated works, while they seem to express the words and messages of the original works faithfully, enter the arena of current discourse in their new environment. This is why many translated works experience an early death, especially in completely strange and unfavorable environments. Many times, they remain mute or vanish even before "opening their mouths".

Now planted in the soil of the Persian language and post-revolutionary Iranian culture, Nietzsche is passing through this crucial trial phase of understanding – and that indispensable phase of misunderstanding. The constraints of this article do not allow me to go into detail about the difficulties and handicaps of translating a work like Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* into a language like Persian. However, the indispensable linguistic and cultural grounds for misrepresentations and the resulting misunderstandings need not be mentioned in a gathering of Nietzsche's translators. But I can say with certainty that Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* with its attractively sounding name for Iranians and its poetical appeal to Iranian linguistic taste, crowns all translations of his works in Persian. But what it communicates to our Iranian ears is a question which still requires more time to be addressed with some precision. The only thing I can say is that it is not mute: although it is vague at times, it tells us something. The "dynamite" is working!^{vii}

Certainly, Nietzsche's extreme individualism, his rebellious stance against all establishments, and his anarchistic gestures expressed with the most forceful of words, is an essential part of his appeal to readers who belong to the rebellious younger generation in Iran. Finally, we should not forget that his most remembered prophetic words, "God is dead", most likely echoes strongly in the ears of a people who find themselves in a period of great transition, progressing from a theocentric culture and theocratic political system to a secular one.

ⁱ *The Portable Nietzsche*, translated by Walter Kaufmann, New York, 1970.

ⁱⁱ KSA = Friedrich Nietzsche: Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden, hrsg. von Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinari. München 1980ff. (7/106).

ⁱⁱⁱ *The Portable Nietzsche* (s. Anm. 1), S. 327-28.

^{iv} Persia, of Latin origin and based on the Greek word Persis, was the name ancient Greeks gave to their neighbor, the first Iranian empire. The whole empire was named after Parsa, the southern Iranian province and centre of the Achaemenid Empire (c. 550-330 BC), now the state of Pars or Fars. In 1925, at the persistent request of the Iranian government, "Persia" was replaced in all diplomatic and official documents with "Iran", the native name of the country. Though no longer used in European languages, "Persia" is still preserved in its adjectival form, e.g., the Persian language, which has recently been replaced by Farsi, named after its place of origin.

^v Iran was the name given to the country in its early history and etymologically means "the land of Aryans".

^{vi} Notable examples are translations of Greek texts into Arabic and Buddhist texts into Chinese. In spite of their "misunderstandings", both have made great contributions in creating a new cultural environment by implanting foreign ideas into the existing native context of "pre-understandings".

^{vii} "Ich bin kein Mensch, Ich bin Dynamit." (I am no man, I am dynamite.) Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*.