Mirrors of Entrapment and Emancipation

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Notes

Introduction


2 Marie-Madeleine Martinet in her *Le Miroir de l’esprit dans le théâtre élisabéthain* discusses how the terms “mirror,” “glass” and “looking glass” have not always been used equivalently. In the Renaissance, the term “mirror” was used to convey a more metaphorical and symbolic meaning, while “glass” was used to convey a purely material sense. This distinction gradually vanishes, and today these terms can be used interchangeably. See: Arnaud Maillet, *The Claude Glass: Use and Meaning of the Black Mirror in Western Art*, trans. Jeff Fort (New York: Zone Books, 2004), 31.


Ibid., 100.


Meyers, Gender in the Mirror, 100.

Aptly, the French word for a boudoir mirror or the cheval glass is psyché.


Kristeva, Black Sun, 74.

Meyers, Gender in the Mirror, i and 101.


By English literature, I mean the literature written world-wide in the English language.

Chapter One

2 The ancient Greek aphorism “Know yourself!” was inscribed along with “Nothing to excess!” in the pronaos of Apollo’s temple at Delphi. These two aphorisms are believed by many scholars of antiquity to summarize the whole of Greek thought and culture.

3 Ovid [Melville], Metamorphoses, 62: 357.
5 Ibid., 62: 382–384.
7 Ibid., 63: 418.
8 Ibid., 64: 432.
Though the closer translation from Ovid’s Latin “Iste ego sum” would be “I am that,” giving neutrality to the image, Melville has chosen to translate it as “I am he.” Ibid., 64: 463. By choosing the neutral inhuman “that” for his mirror image, the image’s difference in the material, its insubstantiality versus the substantiality of the subject in front of it, as well as a sense of alienation towards the image as the Other has been discerned. For a discussion of the “untranslatability” of the “Iste ego sum” into English see: A.D. Nuttall, “Ovid’s Narcissus and Shakespeare’s Richard II: the Reflected Self,” Ovid Renewed: Ovidian Influences on Literature and Art from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century, ed. Charles Martindale (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 143–144.


Ibid., 66: 510.


Nuttall, “Ovid’s Narcissus,” 142.

Ovid [Melville], Metamorphoses, 65: 474.

Cf. Ovid [Melville], *Metamorphoses*, 64: 434.


Ibid.

Meyers, *Gender in the Mirror*, 106.


Ibid., 19 and 23 [my emphasis]. Aporia, a recurrent term in the works of Jacques Derrida and Deconstructuralists, is derived from classical rhetoric, meaning “perplexity,” “doubt” and “difficulty.” Aporia refers to moments in a text when the knowledge enters a crisis, the meaning becomes ambiguous or contradictory and the reader faces a dilemma.

Ibid., 34.


Ibid., 116 (Kristeva’s emphasis).


Ibid., 192.

For a succinct study of this switch in the concept of narcissism from a male trait to a feminine vice and the rigidification of heterosexual norms see: Meyers, *Gender in the Mirror*, 100–106.


While some sources say that she was raped by him, others hold that she dallied with Poseidon of her own volition.


Some feminists, particularly in film theories, have argued that the gaze is ultimately always masculine while the image remains feminine. Elizabeth Grosz exhorts us not to mistake the look—“a perceptual mode”—with the “gaze”—“a mode of desire”: “When they [some feminists] state baldly that “vision” is male, the look is masculine, or the visual is a phallocentric mode of perception, these feminists confuse a perceptual facility open to both sexes … with sexually coded positions of desire within visual (or any other perceptual) functions … vision is not, cannot be, masculine … rather, certain ways of using vision (for example, to objetify) may confirm and help produce patriarchal power relations.” Elizabeth Grosz, “Voyeurism, Exhibitionism, the Gaze,” Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary, ed. Elizabeth Wright (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 449. Meyers, Gender in the Mirror, 115.

Havelock Ellis, “Auto-eroticism: A Psychological Study,” Alienist and Neurologist, 19 (1898), cited in Robert Raskin and Howard Terry, “A Principal-Components Analysis of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory and Fur-


Ibid., 75.

Ibid., 88–89.

Ibid., 91.

Ibid., 113.


“Binary opposition,” a pair of terms coined by structuralism, explains the entity of a centre and existence of an opposing centre. It is systematically criticized by Jacques Derrida in his deconstructive studies. His argument is to reveal and hence reverse the hierarchical, and not symmetrical, nature of the binary oppositions. The emphasis is on the superior position of an
entity while the others become inferior. Derrida argues, “Very schemati-
cally: an opposition of metaphysical concepts (e.g., speech/writing, pres-
ence/absence, etc.) is never the confrontation of two terms, but a hierarchy
and the order of a subordination. Deconstruction cannot be restricted to
immediately pass to a neutralization: it must, through a double gesture, a
double science, a double writing—put into practice a reversal of the classi-
cal opposition and a general displacement of the system.” Jacques Derrida,
this regard femininity and masculinity are considered to be homogenous
and fixed binary opposites.

For Wallon’s theory see: Henri Wallon, “Comment se développe chez
l’enfant la notion de corps propre,” *Journal de psychologie*, vol. 28 (Novem-
ber–December 1931): 705–748; and his *Les origines du caractère chez l’en-
study of influences and the development of Lacan’s theory refer to: Elis-
abeth Roudinesco, “The mirror stage: an obliterated archive,” *The Cam-
bridge Companion to Lacan*, ed. Jean-Michel Rabaté (Cambridge: Cam-
bridge University Press, 2003): 25–34; and Émile Jalley, *Freud, Wallon,

Lacan, “The Freudian Thing, or the Meaning of the Return to Freud in Psy-
choanalysis,” *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*: 334–363; also see:
Samuel Weber, *Return to Freud: Jacques Lacan’s Dislocation of Psychoanaly-
sis*, trans. Michael Levine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991);
Richard Feldstein, Bruce Fink, and Maire Jaanus (Eds.), *Reading Semi-
nars I and II: Lacan’s Return to Freud* (Albany: State University of New
York Press, 1996); Richard Boothby, *Death and Desire: Psychoanalytic The-
ory in Lacan’s Return to Freud* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Philippe Julien,
*Jacques Lacan’s Return to Freud: The Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary*,

In his essay “On Narcissism,” Freud argues, “We are bound to suppose that
a unity comparable to the ego cannot exist in the individual from the start;
the ego has to be developed.” 76–77.


Ibid.

Ibid., 75.

Elizabeth Grosz, “Contemporary Theories of Power and Subjectivity.” *Fem-
inist Knowledge: Critique and Construct*, ed. Sneja Gunew (London and
New York: Routledge, 1990), 74.


65 Ibid.

66 Grosz, “Contemporary Theories of Power and Subjectivity,” 74.


71 Grosz, “Contemporary Theories of Power and Subjectivity,” 73.

72 Lacanian Other, always with a capital O, is closer to Freud's Ideal. The capital O marks the absoluteness of its otherness. The Lacanian Other is not a person. It is a locus for the emanation of language and its meanings. “Misidentified with God, the Other is incarnated in human experience in the figure of the Symbolic Father—the authority that real fathers invoke to institute the law” Grosz, “Contemporary Theories of Power and Subjectivity,” 73. On the other hand, Object is the Lacanian equivalent of the other, with small o.


77 Ibid., 78.


80 Ibid., 77; Lacan calls it a *captation* because the image actually “captures” or “seizes” the psyche and turns into a significant formative agent of the psyche as well as a function in the formation of the psychosis.

81 Ibid., 91. In his rejection of Cartesian Cogito philosophy, Lacan was extensively influenced by Alexandre Kojève, the Russian-born Marxist and Hegelian political philosopher. Kojève suggests that in order to become
modern in the thirties, one should move beyond the Cartesian philosophy of “I think” to that of the Freudian and Hegelian philosophy of “I desire.” This move is marked by a schism, a split between the I of thought and desire, which he calls a true I (je), and that of the ego (moi), which is regarded as a site of error, illusion and “mere representations.” Roudinesco, “The Mirror Stage,” 28.

It should be noted here that Freud’s desire is Wunsch, which is different from Hegel’s Begierde. Roudinesco’s short discussion of their differences is summed up in the following: ”Begierde is the desire through which the relation of consciousness to the self is expressed: the issue is to acknowledge the other or otherness insofar as consciousness finds itself in this very movement. The other is the object of desire that the consciousness desires in a negative mirror-relationship that allows it to recognize itself in it. Wunsch, or desire in the Freudian sense, is more simply an inclination, an aspiration, the fulfillment of an unconscious wish.” Ibid.


Lacan, “The Mirror Stage,” 78. The term imago alludes to a Judeo-Christian doctrine in which humans are being made in the image of God—in the Imago Dei (See: Genesis 1: 26, 27). Augustine suggests that humans must strive to restore the divine image in their selves. Therefore, Lacan’s mirror stage can be understood as an ironic version of this theology, that is we are the creation of our own image.

Meyers, Gender in the Mirror, 25.

The perceptual distortion of body image or body-size/weight, in aggravated cases, may lead to anorexia nervosa, where the subject suffers from an eating disorder. There is a vast amount of literature on anorexia nervosa referring to this body-image distortion. Inter alia see: D.M. Garner and P.E. Garfinkel, “Body Image in Anorexia Nervosa: Measurement, Theory and Clinical Implications,” International Journal of Psychiatry in


For a study of the centrality of vision as the basis of human knowledge see: Suzanne Conklin Akbari, Seeing through the Veil: Optical Theory and Medieval Allegory (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

Luce Irigaray, Speculum of the Other Woman, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1985). This work, first published in 1974, led to her expulsion from Lacan’s “école freudienne.” The text provides a deconstructive reading of patriarchal discourse. It reverses the historical order by taking a speculum-like structure, starting with Freud and ending with Plato.


Irigaray, This Sex Which is Not One, 116.


100 It is no coincidence that the full-length mirror, mounted on a movable frame, which became popular in the early nineteenth century, is in French called a *psyché*.


102 Ibid.

103 Ibid.

104 Ibid.


106 Ibid., 85.

107 Ibid., 83 [Italics in the original].


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118 Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 139.
124 La Belle, *Herself Beheld*, 80 [Italics mine].
129 Luce Irigaray, “And the One Doesn’t Stir without the Other,” trans. Hélène

130 Ibid., 63.

131 Ibid., 61.

132 Ibid.


134 This clairvoyant mirror falls within the broader category of magic mirrors which have been recurrent topoi in many literatures of the world. These clairvoyant surfaces were often revered for their endowment with magical and mantic powers, for their “powers of temporal and spatial clairvoyance.” Theodore Ziolkowski, *Disenchanted Images: A Literary Iconology* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), 160. Ziolkowski, based on folklorists’ categorization, divides magic mirrors into two different categories of cognizant (*wissend*) and causative (*wirkend*). See: Ibid., 162–168.


136 Ibid., 519.


138 Irigaray, “And the One Doesn’t Stir without the Other,” 61.

139 Ibid., 64.

140 Ibid., 67. For more on the mother’s mirroring function see: Donald Woods Winnicott’s chapter on “Mirror-Role of Mother and Family in Child Development,” in his *Playing and Reality* (New York: Routledge, 2005): 149–159. Here, Winnicott explains how the individual embarks on the first experience of human relatedness through the mirror experience. He begins his chapter with these words: “In individual emotional development the


"جوانندا، این شعرها را جوون آینه دان، آخر دان که آینه را صورت نیست در خود، اما هر که در او نگه می کند صورت خود تواند دید، همچنین می دان که شعر را در خود هیچ معنی پیست، اما هر کسی از این تواند دیدن که تن قربان او بود و کمال کار اوسط. و اگر کوئی شعر را معنیی آنست که قابل خوانست و دیگران معنی ذکر و وضع می کند از خود، این هم جواننست که کمی گود، صورت آینه صورت روی صقل است که اول آن صورت نود و این معنی را حقیق و خوشی هست که اگر در شرک آویز از مقصود باید مام".

Arthur Schopenhauer says: “Books are like a mirror. If an ass looks in, you can't expect an angel to look out.” And Oscar Wilde in his Preface to The Picture of Dorian Gray writes, “It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors.” (Clayton, Delaware: Prestwick House, 2007), 11.


143 Ibid., 148–149.

144 “Poetry is Not a Luxury” is the title of an article by Audre Lorde first published in Chrysalis: A Magazine of Female Culture, no. 3 (1977); reprinted in Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches (Trumansburg, New York: Crossing Press, 1984). In this article, Lorde explains: “For women, then, poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival.
and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action. Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought. The farthest external horizons of our hopes and fears are cobbled by our poems, carved from the rock experiences of our daily lives.” Lorde, *Sister Outsider*, 37.


147 La Belle, *Herself Beheld*, 180 [Information within the brackets mine].

148 The idea of “reflection” of the poet in poetry can be traced back to the Romantic definition of poetry. For an elaborate study refer to: Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*.


152 Ibid., 27.

153 Certainly, there exist some autobiographical writings by female authors that do not repudiate or even question patriarchal laws and their inherent phallocentrism; for example, autobiographies written by women who have made careers out of their unquestioning social femininity, such as movie stars. They are often happy with their success built on the cultural definitions of womanhood and beauty.


156 Meyers, *Gender in the Mirror*, i.


159 Cixous, “The Laugh of the Medusa,” 880.


**Chapter Two**

1 Šams ed-Dīn Moḥammad Ḥāfeẓ, *Dīvān-e Ḥāfeẓ-e Šīrāzī*, eds. Moḥammad Qazvīnī and Qāsem Ġanī (Tehran: Anjoman-e ḡošnevisān-e Irān, 1368/1989), 86. The translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

2 Rowson explains šāhed-bāzī in the following words: “From a relatively early period—probably the mid-ninth century—some Muslim mystics claimed to see in the beauty of adolescent boy a ‘testimony’ to the beauty and goodness of God, and initiated the practice of gazing at such a boy as a form of spiritual exercise. The boy was thus known in Sufi parlance as a ‘witness’ (šāhed).” Everett K. Rowson, “Homosexuality in the Medieval Islamic World: Literary Celebrations vs. Legal Condemnation.” Paper presented at the conference “Gender and Alterity in Near Eastern Societies” (Princeton University, 6 April 1995), 24; Quoted in Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards: Gender and*...


For more see: Janet Afary, Sexual Politics in Modern Iran (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Najmabadi, Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards.


Robbins, Literary Feminisms, 122–123.

Forough Farrokzhad, Mağmū’a ašār-e Forugh Farrokhzad, ed. Behnâm Bāvandpūr (Essen: Nima Verlag, 2002).

Spencer, “Mirrors and Masks,” 72.

As Millani argues, Farrokhzad’s whole canon of work can fit into the genre of Bildungsroman, though a female one and in verse: “… the first Bildungsroman written by and about a woman in Iran. Although a genre of novel, and although its tradition is almost exclusively associated with male characters, the category Bildungsroman best defines Forough’s ceaseless developmental journey. Her five collections of poetry, viewed as a whole, constitute nothing less than a tale of self-discovery and growth.” Farzaneh Millani, “Forough Farrokhzād,” Persian Literature, ed. Ehsan Yar-
shater (New York: The Persian Heritage Foundation, 1988), 368. See also: Milani, *Veils and Words*, 136–137. Here, Milani discusses how Farrokhzad’s poetic oeuvre “best embodies Farrokhzad’s emergence from cultural conditioning and her struggle to come to self-realization, warranting its adaptation to her journey and to her awakening.” (136) Milani further states that these poems are “the chronicle of an evolving consciousness, the testament of growing awareness.” (136–137)


Ibid., 153.

The complete versions of the poems together with their translations can be found in the Appendix.

Forugh Farrokhzad, *Mağmūʿa āsār-e Forugh Farrokhzad*, ed. Behnām Bāvandpūr (Essen: Nima Verlag, 2002), 1: 69. All the references are to this book. The translations are mine. For the Persian orthography of the poems, I have also followed this book.


The Persian word *hīre* can also be translated as “bewildering at” (bewildering at my wet eyes).

Farrokhzad, *Mağmūʿa āsār*, 1: 70.

This is reminiscent of a very popular classical Persian poem of Arabic origin, Nezāmī Ganğavī’s *Laylī o Mağnūn*. Mağnūn, literally “the insane or the obsessed,” becomes a poet-singer after losing his beloved Laylī and becoming insane. The motif of creativity and madness out of lost love has become a tradition in Persian literature and Farrokhzad in this poem draws upon the same tradition. See: As’ad E. Khairallah, *Love, Madness, and Poetry: An Interpretation of the Mağnūn Legend* (Beirut: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1980); Ali Asghar Seyed-Gohrab, *Laylī and Majnun: Love, Madness


Persian literary tradition holds that sorme (collyrium or antimony) is originally a person who was pounded in the mortar of love until he lost his original stony nature. It is believed that it enhances beauty as well as improving eyesight. Annemarie Schimmel, As through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 122.

Gallop, The Daughter’s Seduction, 115.

Irigaray, “And the One Doesn’t Stir without the Other,” 65.

Farrokhzad, Mağmû’a āśâr, 1: 70.

Irigaray, “And the One Doesn’t Stir Without the Other,” 66.


Farrokhzad, Mağmû’a āśâr, 1: 70.

Ibid., 1: 75.

Melchior-Bonnet, The Mirror, 233.

Farrokhzad, Mağmû’a āśâr, 1: 75.

Ibid.

Virginia Woolf, A Room of One’s Own (Orlando, Florida: Harcourt, 2005), 35.

As in English literature, the theme of “speaking mirror” is abundant in Persian literature. The ability to speak and to provide the beholder with an answer is regarded as one of the powers of the mirror. For an example see: Nasrollah Pourjavady, zabān-e ḥāl dar ʿerfān o adabiyyāt-e pārsī (Tehran: Enteṣārāt-e Hermes, 1385/2006–2007), 158, 650–651. Here, Pourjavady cites an example of a mirror and a comb getting into the debate over the nature of true love.

Farrokhzad, Mağmû’a āśâr, 1: 76.

Ibid.

Čām-e ġam, and all its other equivalents, ġam-e ġamšīd, ġam-e keyhōsro, ġam-e gahān namā, ġam-e ḡahān bīn, ġam-e ʿālam bīn, ġam-e ḡahān āra, āʿine-ye solemān (Solomon’s mirror), āʿine-ye eskan-dar (sekandar or sekandār) have a magical or surreal aura around them. Over time they have acquired rich metaphorical connotations, all orbiting round the centre of reflection, mental or visual. Ġām in Persian means a cup but it also denotes “clean” and “pure.” Furthermore, ġam also means a

It is worth noting here that the vast medieval encyclopaedias that set out to catalogue all knowledge were often called specula. For the study of speculum or mirror as titles see: Ritamary Bradley, “Backgrounds of the Title Speculum in Medieval Literature,” Speculum 29 (1954), 100–115; see also Herbert Grabes, The Mutable Glass: Mirror-Imagery in Titles and Texts of the Middle Ages and English Renaissance (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).


Farrokhzad, Mağmū’a āšār, 1: 146.

Ibid., 147.

Ibid.

In the poem “Afšāne-ye talḥ” (“Bitter Myth”), Farrokhzad openly acknowledges this cultural conceptualization of woman in order to vehemently reject it:

\[
\text{بِهَ اَوْ جَزَ اَز هُوَس چیزی نگِتند} \\
\text{درَ اَوْ جَزَ جِلوَه طَاهَر نُدِیدند} \\
\text{بِهَ هَر جَا رَفَت، درَ کَوْشَش سَرِودُند} \\
\text{کِه زِنِ رَآ بَهْر عَشْرَتُ آَفِرِندُند} \\
\]

She was told nothing but the lust
She was regarded as nothing but the manifestations of appearances
Wherever she went, it was sung in her ears
Woman is created for voluptuousness. Farrokhzad, 1: 52

By astutely entitling her poem “Bitter Myth,” Farrokhzad discloses her full awareness to the unreality of the image of womanhood which her phallicentric culture provides.

The round shape of the mirror in old times is asserted by Melchior-Bonnet, “Nearly always rounded, these mirrors were either concave or convex.”


Ibid.

Ibid., 213.

Ibid., 214.

For the metaphor of the mirror of the heart in its non-mystical sense see: Mūsavī, “Ā’îne dar šahkār-hâ-ye adabi,” 77.

Farrokhzad, *Mağmû’â ašâr*, 1: 135. “the smile of wine cup” alludes to Ḥâfez’s couplet in which he uses “wine’s smile”: عَکَس روى تو جو در آینه جام افتاد/ “When Thy image was reflected on the mirror of cup/The ‘âref from the smile of the wine fell into vain desires,” Ā’îne-ye ģâm, here simply translated into “the mirror of cup,” associates itself with the recurrent Persian motif of ġâm-e ģam. The verse implies that the image in the cup deludes the mystic into a vain and impossible desire, confusing the image with the prior reality, the signified with the signifier, and the manifestation with God. The word ġâm, literally meaning “raw” and “baseless,” also designates “novice” or “inexperienced” in the language of Sufi poetry, thereby hinting at the inexperienced mystic who may mistake the images with the reality of God. Ḥâfez, *Dīvān-e Ḥâfez-e Šīrāzī*, eds. Moḥammad Qazvinī and Qāsem Ġanī, 86. [Translation mine]

The mythological Antigone, Shakespeare’s Ophelia, Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre, and Mary Wollstonecraft’s Maria are among many other love-mad female literary figures in the western literary tradition. For more on love-mad women see: Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*; Helen Small, *Love’s Madness: Medicine, the Novel, and Female Insanity 1800–1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

Farrokhzad explicitly refers to the “psychological interiority” of the mirror in a collaborative poem with Yadollāh Ro’yâī (born in 1932), another Persian poet. The poem, composed in 1966, is entitled “*Deltangî*” (“Depression”). In the collection, the parts composed by Farrokhzad are printed in bold letters. Here Farrokhzad perspicaciously presents the psychology of mirroring:
The depiction of this fracture is incredibly excruciating
The depiction of this fracture, O kind one
O the kindest one
Will upset the equilibrium of the mirror.
Invite me to the garden of my childhood!

Farrokhzad, *Maḵmūʿā ʾašār*, 1: 377

“*Tašvīr*,” here translated as depiction, also means image in Persian. By anthropomorphizing the mirror, onto which the persona projects her inner fragmentation, it has also been given a psychological interiority. The persona nostalgically seeks refuge in the psychological security of her paradise-like childhood years.

The term “speculation” is linked to “speculum.” Through the medium of speculum, one can meditate on the case of an effect reflected on a surface. See: Melchior-Bonnet, 113–114.

In her poems, Farrokhzad does not reject her physicality, despite the long tradition of body-rejection, particularly female body-rejection, in Persian literature. One of the many poems by Farrokhzad that explicitly reveal her anti-transcendental views is “*Rūy-e ʾhāk*” (“Upon the Earth”), 1: 249–250. In this poem, Farrokhzad declares that she has never wished to change her place on earth for that of the stars, the chosen, or even the angels. She claims that she is nothing but an echo, an aural reflection of an echo—an image of an image in the Lacanian sense. The window is significant in this poem (and is studied more elaborately later in this work). For the full text of the poem and its translation refer to the Appendix.


Ibid.


The parable of the mirror of the heart has also been recurrently referred to by many mystical philosophers in their explanation and criticism of the famous ecstatic utterances (ṣaṭṭīyyāt) of some mystics. Among these ecstatic utterances are: Ḥosayn ebn-e Maṃsūr al-Ḥallāj’s (executed in 922) declaration of “I am the Truth,” and Bāyazid Baṣṭāmī’s (d. ca. 874) declaration “Glory be to me! How great is my majesty!” and “I am He!” See: Nasrollah Pourjavady, Ešrāq o ‘erfān: maqāle-hā o naqd-hā (Tehran: Našr-e dānešgāhī, 1380/2001–2002), 25–28 and 105–110.

Ziolkowski argues that this metaphoric thought “descends from Plato and the Bible by way of Christian Platonism. This syncretic analogy, which was first publicized by Augustine and his commentators, is based principally on two passages in the New Testament” [1Corinthians 13: 12 and James 1: 23–24]. Ziolkowski, Disenchanted Images, 152. Melchior-Bonnet discusses the origin and the development of this metaphoric thought, “The mirror became part of the religious vocabulary of the Middle Ages, which developed its symbolic meanings from scriptural writings, Neoplatonic texts, and the patristic tradition (the writings of the church fathers).” Melchior-Bonnet, The Mirror, 108. Also See: Hans Leisegang, “Die Erkenntnis Gottes im Spiegel der Seele und der Natur,” Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung, vol. 4 (1950), 163–183.

For a succinct study of this mirror metaphor in the works of Avicenna and Sohrawardi see: Pourjavady, Ešrāq o ‘erfān, 25–28. For mirror metaphor in the works of Abū Ḥāmed Ghazzalī’s see: Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, Studies in Al-Ghazzali (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1975), 314–320. Lazarus-Yafeh in her thematic study of Ghazzalī’s Arabic works devotes a section to “The Parable of the Mirror.” Here, she has compiled the passages in which the parable of the mirror in the different Arabic works of Ghazzalī appears.

first emerged in the works of Descartes and then was further developed by the following generations of the Western philosophers. The relationship between the mirror and the reality it reflected was comprehended in the form of “speculation.”

Burckhardt, “Die Symbolik des Spiegels,” 13 [Translation mine]. Compare with the original: “Wenn das Herz zum reinen Spiegel geworden ist, so spiegelt sich in ihm einerseits die Welt, so wie sie wirklich ist, nämlich ohne die Verzerrungen, die das leidenschaftliche Denken verschuldet. Anderseits spiegelt das Herz die göttliche Wahrheit mehr oder weniger unmittelbar, das heißt zunächst in der Gestalt von Sinnbildern (išārāt), dann in der Gestalt der geistigen Eigenschaften (ṣefāt) oder Wesenheiten (‘ayān), die den Sinnbildern zugrunde liegen, und schließlich als göttliche Wirklichkeit (ḥaqīqa).”

The following well-known prophet sayings (aḥādīṣ) may arguably be interpreted as God’s self-love: “كُبْث كُرْؤُ مَخْتَفِيًا، فَأُحِبْتُ أَنْ أُعْرَفْ خَلْقِهِ الحَلِيقِ لُكَيْ آَعُرُفُ (I was a hidden treasure and I longed to be known. So I created the creation so that I may be known) and “إِنِ اللَّهُ جَمِيلٌ وَيَحبُ الجَمَالِ (God is beautiful and loves beauty).”


Bidel Dehlavi’s poetry, famous for its stylistic opacity and obfuscatory ambiguities, is a plethora of mirror imagery. Šafīʿi-Kadkanī aptly titles his anthology of Bidel’s poems “The Poet of the Mirrors.” At the end of this book, he provides us with an understandably far from comprehensive glossary of the poet’s mirror associations and interpretation. See: Mohammad-Režā Šafīʿi-Kadkanī, Šeʿr-e āʾīne-hā: barresi-ye sabk-e hendī o še’r-e Bidel (Tehran: Mo’asese-ye entešārāt-e āḡāh, 1371/1992–1993). For the study of Bidel’s mirror imagery also see: Daniela Meneghini, “A new approach to


Ibid., 180.

Ibid.

Ibid., 181.

Ibid., 182.

Ibid.

Ibid., 185.

Ibid., 182.

Ibid.

Ibid., 183.

In a later poem, “ʿEsyān-e ḡodā” (“Divine Rebellion”), the I-narrator (Farrokhzad herself) even seeks refuge in the sexual union with Satan (206).

Farrokhzad, *Mağmû’a āsâr*, 1: 184. On the traditionally recurrent analogy between feminine beauty and the moon in Persian literature, Milani explains, “The age-old, stereotyped comparison of a woman’s beauty to the moon is more than a merely physical analogy for these books. Emotionally, too, the ideal woman, like the moon, revolves around a sun in her life and takes her definition from him. The image of the ideal woman—moon-faced, emotionally moonlike, distant, virginal, silent, living in a world of muted distinctiveness and desire—haunted these autobiographers, as it did the society at large.” Farzaneh Milani, “Veiled Voices: Women’s Autobiographies in Iran,” *Women’s Autobiographies in Contemporary Iran*, ed. Afsaneh Najmabadi (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990), 15.

See pages 76 and 330, notes 42 and 43.


Ḥāfeẓ, *Divān-e ოāfez-e Širāzī*, eds. Mohammad Qazvini and Qāsem Ġanī, 86. For more explanation of the lines see page 332, note 58.

Ibid., 195. Ğamāl, the *mysterium fascinans* or the Divine Beauty, and Ğalāl, the *mysterium tremendum* or the Divine Majesty are two of God’s attributes, usually cited together.


Employing the idea of God-Satan reciprocal mirroring, Abūbakr Vāseṭī, a Sufi master in the tenth century, is reported to have attributed the following statement to Satan addressing God:

> “They made a mirror out of my image and located it in front of you and made a mirror out of your image and located it in front of me. I look at you and cry at myself and you look at me and laugh at yourself.”

Šayḥ Farid al-Din ‘Aṭṭār


This third person gender-free ĥ—within the broader gender neutrality of Persian language—is a source of great ambiguity and controversy in Persian literature. It has often been employed by poets shrewdly as a veiling tactic to shroud the sex of their beloved—he, she, or even God—in a cloak of disguise, thereby adding to the figurative richness of their language. Their texts have also given rise to a series of irresolvable contradictory interpretations. They could be read as: mystical or non-mystical, hetero-sexual or homosexual, and simultaneously all could be valid. The same could be valid in the readings of Farrokhzad. But read in the light of biographical information, I have assumed the masculinity of ĥ and translated accordingly.
104 Melchior-Bonnet, The Mirror, 182.
106 See: Mūsavī, “Ā’īne dar šāhkâr-hā-ye adabi,” 162. It is worth noting that in English the noun mirror derives from the classical Latin root mīrārī. Sharing the same root as miracle, mīrārī means “to wonder at, to admire.”
109 Farrokhzad, Maḵmū’a ašār, 1: 109.
110 Ibid., 110.
111 Ibid.
112 For some examples of ney (reed) in Persian literature and their interpretations see: Pourjavady, Zabān-e ḥāl, 823–870. Nicholson chooses the word reed-flute as the English equivalent of Persian ney and marks its association “with the religious services of the Mevlevi Order, in which music and dancing are prominent features. Rūmī uses it as a symbol for the soul emptied of self and filled with the Divine spirit. This blessed soul, during its life on earth, remembers the union with God which it enjoyed in eternity and longs ardently for deliverance from the world where it is a stranger and exile.” [Ğalāloddīn] Rumi, A Rumi Anthology, Rumi: Poet and Mystic Tales of Mystic Meaning, trans. Reynold A. Nicholson (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000), 31, note 1.
113 In the poem “Donyā-ye sāye-hā” (“The World of Shadows”), Farrokhzad draws upon the shadow—another form of human double—as the version of self repressed back into the unconsciousness—a Jungian shadow. Here, the speaker wonders if she is a shadow of her own shadow; the replica, the image assimilated:

شَبِبِهَرَوِىٍ جَادٌةٍ ثُنَاٍك
ایٍبَسَا پَرْسِیٍهٍ امٍ ازٍ خَوَد
”ژنگیٍ آیٍ دِرْونٍ سَاٍبٍهَ ا۪هٍامُان رَنْکَ مِنٍ کِردِ؟
یاٍگِهٍ مَا خَوَد سَاٍبٍهٍ هَایٍ سَاٍبٍهٍ هَایٍ خُویشٍتَ هَسْتِم؟“

At night on the damp road
Oft have I asked myself
“Does life assume colours within our shadows?
Or are we ourselves the shadows of our shadows?”

Farrokhzad, Maḵmū’a ašār, 1: 169

Ibid.

Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 78 [Italics in the original].


Ibid.

Ibid., 131.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid., 224–225.


Ibid., 225.


In classical Persian literature, the most popular story in which the mirror as a feminine catoptric device of deception has been invoked is the story of Yûsûf and Zoliḥâ. Originally a Qur’ânîc story, it was adopted by some classical poets. In this story, the close intimacy of women with their mirrors and the deceptive nature of the mirror have been drawn upon to entrap the subject within the self and within the physical world of appearances. The mirror is turned into a feminine weapon of the *femme fatale* and has been recurrently associated with sin, and for that reason with Eve, the original sinner and seducer. For the mirror as a powerful tool of deception and temptation to sin in the story of Yûsûf and Zoliḥâ see: Firdausî of Tûs, *Yûsûf

Melchior-Bonnet in her book The Mirror writes, “[The mirror] became the extravagant tool of women’s coquetry and even an instrument of pleasure that certain Roman citizens, like Hostius Quadra, liked to surround themselves with to multiply and increase their lover’s sexual attributes.” (p. 107)

135 In the poem “Gereh” (“The Knot”) (pp. 220–222), Farrokhzad highlights the distorted and asymmetrical character of the mirror image by metaphorizing the mirror to a fog: “تُزییده بر در مه آینه/تصور ما شکسته و پیiamond.” “Slipped into the fog of the mirror/our images crooked and out of harmony.” The poem depicts the persona’s confused and disharmonic relation to her subjectivity, extended to her beloved and the world around her by resorting to a mirror.


137 See: Farrokhzad, Mağmû’a ăsâr, 1: 289–290.

138 Ibid., 290.

139 For more on the mirror and eye see pp. 79–81.

140 Radio interview with Ḥasan Honarmandī, Tehran 1341/1962–1963; published in Farrokhzad, Mağmû’a ăsâr, 2: 26. Compare with the original:

آکر شیا دقت کرده پاشیدن می بیفاید توی زمال داریم زندگی می کنیم که تمام مفاهیم و میتیسا
| داریم معناهای خودشان را از دست می دهند و داریم. نه خواهم که کسی پی ارزش، در
| حال مزئارل شدن هستند.

141 Interview with Sirūs Ṭāhbâz and Ġolām-Hosseyn Sā’edi, Spring 1343/1964; reprinted in Farrokhzad, Mağmû’a ăsâr, 2: 40. Compare with the original:

"دیوبای بیرون ... آنقدر وارونه است که نه خواهیم باورش کم".

142 Farrokhzad, Mağmû’a ăsâr, 1: 293.
145 Farrokhzad, Mağmû’a ašâr, 1: 295, 299 and 300.
147 Farrokhzad, Mağmû’a ašâr, 1: 295.
148 It is noteworthy here that myriad meanings can be attached to the word ḥaqq, making the sentence “ḥaqq bā kasî-st ke mībīnad” ambiguous. Ḥaqq not only means “right” and “just,” but can also stand for “the Truth (= God),” particularly in the Sufi context. Therefore, the sentence can also be rendered as: “The Truth is with the one who sees,” making “ḥaqq” the subject of the sentence. However, considering that Farrokhzad was an anti-transcendental poet, this is unlikely to have been her intention.
149 Farrokhzad, Mağmû’a ašâr, 1: 295–296.
150 La Belle, Herself Beheld, 119.
151 Farrokhzad, Mağmû’a ašâr, 1: 296.
153 Ibid., 9.
154 See pp. 73 and 144.
155 Farrokhzad, Mağmû’a ašâr, 1: 296.
156 Shengold, “The Metaphor of the Mirror,” 100.
157 Farrokhzad, Mağmû’a ašâr, 1: 296–297.
158 Ibid., 297.
159 See: Ibid., 297–298.
160 Ibid., 298.
162 Milani, Veils and Words, 151.
163 See: Schimmel, As Through a Veil, 76.
164 Categorizing this poem as a symbolic one, Šamîsâ indicates that here “the mirror is a symbol for mind and memories,” while “the shutter can be a symbol for seeing, communication and understanding.” These interpretations, though valid and illuminating for the reader, fail to expose the complexities of the poem. Sirûs Šamîsâ, Râhnamâ-ye adabîyât-e mo‘âsher: šarh o taḥīl-e gozîde-ye še’r-e fârsî (Tehran: Entešârât-e mîtrâ, 2004), 291.
165 Farrokhzad, Mağmû’a ašâr, 1: 229.

امشب خیلی دیوانه هستم ... دهیاب روح مرا هر چیز جهان نی فکد ... کاش می توانست مثل آدم های دیگر خودم را در ابتذال رنگی کم کنم ... عن خیلی نت نتسامم امروز خودم را در آنی نماس که کرم ... حالا کم کار قباق قباق خودم و حتی که کم آیا می تواند همان فروغ هستم همان فروغ هستم که صبح تا شب می نداشد و حتی خودش را هزار شکل درست می کرد و به هیون دلخوش بود. ابن چشم های مرض ... این صبرت شکسته و لاغر و این خط های نابنگام چشمها ی و پیشانی مال من است؟

یاروی جان استقامت کرد کار آسانی نیست. نا امیدی مثل موراپه روح مرا کرد می کند ... با این اعصابی مرضی نی دام سراغم چه می شود ... اگر از انجا بروم دیوانه می شوم .... می خودم حس می کنم به روز به روز بی‌تر خلب می روم گاهی اوقات مثل این است که در خودم فرو می رزم و وقت دیگر نیز در خیابان راه می روم مثل این است که هرچند می شود و از اطراف فرو می برزد اما خوب می دام که دیگر نی خواهند خودم را کول بزم روح می میرد در حجم سرگردانی می سورد و من با نامیده به خاکستر آن خبره می شوم.


Ibid., 300.

In Persian *dar-ī-če* literally means a small door. *Dar* means door and *-če* (like the suffix *-let* in English language) is a diminutive suffix. Here the words shutter and window are used as equivalents for *dar-ī-če*. See: Farrokhzad, *Mağmūʿa āsār*, 1: 295 and 299. On the use of *panğare* (window), it is pertinent to note that the word originally meant a lattice or cage; in that sense, although it seems far from Farrokhzad's intention, *panğare* can also signify the poet's feelings of confinement and entrapment. See: Dehţodā, s.v. "*panğare*," *Loģatnāme*, vol. 4, pp. 5743–5744.

Interview with Sīrūs ˙Tāhbāz and Ġolām-Hosseyn Sāʿedi, Spring 1343/1964; reprinted in Farrokhzad, *Mağmūʿa āsār*, 2: 40 [Translation mine]. Compare with the original:

همه چیز وارونه شده بود. حتی خودم وارونه شده بودم. ازند خودم بدم می آمد و تضعیب می کردم. این شعر نتیجه همین دقتها است. بعد از این شعر توانستم کی خودم را درست کم و در من فکر ما و عقیده هایم دست بردم و روی بعضی حالتانی خودم خطر زده من که اما دنبای بیرون هموز یان شکل است. آنقدر وارونه است که فی خواه بهاروش، گاهی، من روی زبان این شعر هم کار کردم. در واقع اولین آرامشی بوده در زمینه به کاربردن زبان کتگیو.
Amin Banani and Jascha Kessler translated *vahm* as “terror”. “Green Terror” *Gramercy Review, A Journal of Contemporary Poetry and Fiction*, vol. 2 (1978), 53; Hasan Javadi and Susan Sallée into “illusion”. *Another Birth and Other Poems*, 83; and David Martin into “Fantasy”. *A Rebirth*, 66. All these meanings are contained within the Persian world *vahm*.


Milani, *Veils and Words*, 69.


Ibid., 302.

Ibid.

Ibid., 302–303.

Milani, *Veils and Words*, 66.

Farrokhzad, *Mağmūʿa āšār*, 1: 303. For the explanation of the *āb-e ğādū*, translated as “talismanic water” by Javadi and Sallée, they have provided thus: “When a man took a second wife, it was important to the first wife that she safeguard her hold upon the man’s affections, and to do so she would employ various superstitious devices. One such device was to sprinkle specially prepared water over the nuptial bed of the new bride, a custom to which Forugh refers in this line.” Farrokhzad, *Another Birth and Other Poems*, 87.

See: Dehḥodā, s.v. “*tašarrof*,” *Loğatnāme*, vol. 5, pp. 6770–6771.

Note that if the term is read as *šekāk*, though not in common usage, it means “the houses in one row.” However, this reading of the word would not fit with the meter of the poem. See: Dehḥodā, s.v. “*šekāk*,” *Loğatnāme*, vol. 9, p. 14356.

“The Road Not Taken” a poem by Robert Frost.


Ibid.


Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own*, 75.


Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 189 [Italics in the original].


195 Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, 195 [Italics in the original].
196 Ibid.
197 Irigaray, “And the One Doesn’t Stir without the Other,” 63.
200 Ibid., 195 [Italics in the original].
204 See: Farrokhzad’s poem “Meeting at Night”, *Mağmû’a ašâr*, 1: 296.
205 Hélène Cixous, “Coming to Writing” and Other Essays, ed. Deborah Jenson (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991), 36.
207 The phrase “new woman” was popularized by Sarah Grand (1854–1943), an Irish-born feminist writer. The “new woman,” as a modern feminist ideal of the liberated woman, emerged at the end of the nineteenth century.
211 Ibid., 340.
212 Ibid., 338 and 340.
213 Ibid., 337–338. The Persian month *Dey* is the first month of winter, corresponding to December–January.
214 Ibid., 338.
215 Ibid., 339.
217 Ibid., 339.
Ibid., 339–340.
219 See pp. 73 and 115.
221 Ibid., 345.
226 Irigaray, “And the One Doesn’t Stir without the Other,” 66.
227 Melchor-Bonnet, *The Mirror*, 102. For mirror as a symbol of purity in Persian literature see: Mūsavi, “Ā’ine dar šâhkâr-hâ-ye adabî,” 55 and 77. “Speculum sine macula” is one of the popular attributes of the Virgin Mary, signifying her immaculate purity. Hans Biedermann explains, “the mirror is also associated with VIRGIN MARY, because she gives us God’s image and reflection, Jesus Christ, without the mirror (Mary herself) being changed or broken in the process”. *Dictionary of Symbolism*, trans. James Hulbert (New York: Facts On File, 1992), 223.
231 Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 19 and 47.
233 Ibid., 344.
234 Ibid., 355.
236 Ibid., 356.
237 Ibid., 356–357.
238 The traditional, particularly medieval, concept of the mirror held that its surface should reflect nothing but the divine Truth, i.e., the image of God.
If the mirror failed to reiterate the image of God, it was generally vilified by theologians and moralists as the wellspring of human desire, vanity and demonic presences. On the other hand, in arguing the mirror’s instructing capacities, some refer to Socrates’ mirror. According to Diogenes, Socrates “recommended to the young the constant use of the mirror, to the end that handsome men might acquire a corresponding behaviour, and ugly men conceal their defects by education.” Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, trans. Robert Drew Hicks (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press and London: William Heinemann, 1950), vol. I, 165.

Šamīsā suggests that the mirror in the poem “Window” stands for the self, heart, mind and the interior (Šamīsā, *Rāhnamā-ye adabiyyāt-e mo’ašer*, 335). In this sense, Farrokhzad seems to be drawing upon the popularly recurrent motif in Persian classic literature: the mirror as a symbol standing for the heart, soul and interior, as discussed earlier. Therefore, the oxymoronic nature of the mirror, revealing to the person in front of it exactly what it cannot in fact reflect, is utilized.

Freud, “The ‘Uncanny,’” 236.


Ibid., 357.

Ibid.


Ibid., 36 [Translation mine]. Cf. with the original:

وسیله آی ست برای ارتباط با هستی، با وجود به معنی وسیع و عمیق، خویش این است که آدم وقتی شعر می کوید می تواند بگوید: من هستم، یا من هستم، در غیر این صورت چطور می شود که: من هستم یا من یکم. من در شعر خودم. پیش یا حاضر خودم. یا حاضر نیست که، بلکه در شعر خودم تازه خودم را یابدی کنم.

Ibid., 51–52 [Translation mine]. Cf. with the original:

همین طویل راه افتادم. مثل یک چیز ای که در یک جنگل کم می شود، به همه جا گرفته و در همه چیز خودم. همه چیز مهم. همه چیز جانم. همه چیز گرد. همه تعلب به یک جنگل رسمی بود. خودم را نتوان این جنگل بیابد گردیم. خودم. که عبارت باشد از خودم و تمام تجربه های جنگل. اما شعرهای...
Chapter Three


5 Ibid, 286–287.


9 Meyers, *Gender in the Mirror*, i.


11 Ibid., 32.


15 Cooper, *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols*, 137.


17 Ibid., 33.


19 Ibid., 51.


22 That is why it is considered inappropriate for nuns to carry mirrors or to look at them. In countries like Iran, which have based their education system on religious and traditional teachings, the mirror is among those items most strongly forbidden for young girls to carry with them in school, because it is seen as facilitating vanity and self-idolatry. Furthermore, the mirror has the power to grant individuality, a distinctive self-image, which is feared most in female subjects and consistently repressed in fundamental religious contexts.


25 Ibid., 129.
28 Ibid., 91.
30 Ibid.
38 In the 1963 poem “Totem,” Plath depicts the spiritual barrenness of the self with resort to the same symbolic elements of the mirror and the weaving spider:

There is no terminus, only suitcases

Out of which the same self unfolds like a suit
Bald and shiny, with pockets of wishes,

Notions and tickets, short circuits and folding mirrors.
I am mad, calls the spider, weaving itself many arms.


40 For instance see the poem “Three Women” in which Plath invariably refers to pregnancy through the metaphor of a hill (Ibid., 176, 180, 183 and 186).


Ibid.


Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson, with Fragment of an Autobiography of Mrs. Hutchinson*, ed. James Sutherland (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 10. The book was first published in 1806. Hutchinson applies the mirror metaphor for her husband, too. But interestingly this time he is “the mirror that reflected the creator’s excellence.” (Ibid., 2). Hutchinson is an illuminating example of the firm puritan ideological faith in the subjection of men to God and women to the God in their men (“He for God only, she for God in him”). (Ibid., xviii).

Ibid., 32–33.


Goethe’s letter dated 8 January 1781 is as follows: “Schwer enthalt ich mich noch einmal in meinen liebsten Spiegel zu sehen, die schöne Dämmerung lockt mich aus der Stube. Wenn Sie nur auch sähen wie lieblich es iezt um mich herum ist. Gute Nacht meine beste. Ich habe keine zusammen-
hängende Gedanken, sie hängen aber alle zusammen an Ihnen. Addio.”

62 For a detailed study of Virginia Woolf’s mirror metaphors see: Squier, “Mirroring and Mothering,” 272–288. The analogy of the mirror and woman’s face has also been the cornerstone of Winnicott’s study of the psychology of individual development which sees “the mother’s face” as “the precursor of the mirror.” Winnicott, “Mirror-Role of Mother and Family in Child Development,” 149. In both the child and adult experiences, the woman’s face provides mirroring essential for the psychological sustenance.
63 Irigaray, “And the One Doesn’t Stir without the Other,” 66.
64 Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 22 and 335 [Italics in the original].
65 Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women’s Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 62. By “the Other,” Daly was specifically referring to Jews, women and Vietnamese.
67 Ibid., 330.
69 For the various meanings and usages of the Persian word *parde* see: Dehşodâ, s.v. “parde,” *Loğatnâme*, vol. 4, pp. 5484–5492.
70 Milani explains, “Like *Parde-ye Bekârat* [the hymen or, more literary, the virginity curtain] that stands for and becomes an instrument of regulation of women’s sexuality, the veil reasserts men’s control over the gateway to women’s bodies.” Milani, *Veils and Words*, 23.
74 Gilbert and Gubar, The Madwoman in the Attic, 468–469.
75 Ibid., 472.
76 For instance, Abū Ḥāmed Ghazālī, the renowned Muslim philosopher (1050–1111) in his Iḥyāʾ olūm al-dīn claims that “the look is fornication of the eye.” See: Fatima Mernissi, Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 141.
77 For an elaborate study of the veil’s function in text see: Patricia Oster, Der Schleier im Text: Funktionsgeschichte eines Bildes für die neuzeitliche Erfahrung des Imaginären (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2002).
78 See: Kendall, Sylvia Plath, 68 and 166.
80 Kroll, Chapters in a Mythology, 164. Neżāmī Ganḡāvī (d. between 1210 and 1215), the famous Persian classic poet, mimicking the dominant cultural belief on the nature of the women and punning on the Persian word rāst, denoting right, truth, rightness, good and just, writes, "زانز چپ گویدی: "برخاست این‌اید هرگز از چپ راستی راست " ("Woman, it is said, rose from the left side/ Never did rightness come out of the left"). The same pun is evoked by Nūr ed-Dīn ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 1492) to reiterate the same meaning, "زانز چپ شد آفریده‌گی از چپ راستی هرگز ندیده "
83 Ibid. For an elaborate study of Freud’s figuration of women as enigmatic beings see: Sarah Kofman, L’Énigme de la femme: La femme dans les textes de Freud (Paris: Editions Galilée, 1980).
84 Plath employs the association of the cat and woman in some of her poems. See the poems: “Aerialist,” “A Sorcerer Bids Farewell to Seem,” “Ella Mason and Her Eleven Cats,” “Face Lift,” “Insomniac,” “The Other,” “The Jailer,” “Lesbos” and “Lady Lazarus.”
85 Gilbert and Gubar, The Madwoman in the Attic, 471.
87 Ibid., 259.
88 Irigaray, Speculum of the Other Woman, 47 [Italics in the original].
89 Kroll, Chapters in a Mythology, 163. For more about the centrality of the image of the Moon in Plath’s poems refer to this book.
90 Irigaray, The Sex Which Is Not One, 28 [Italics in the origin].


6. Ibid.


14. See: Plath, *The Collected Poems*, 244–247. It is important to note that Plath completed her poem “Lady Lazarus” within the same day she wrote “Purdah”.


Butscher, *Sylvia Plath: Method and Madness*, 204.


Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid.


Plath's vehement resentment of her mother's powerful grip over her is also the subject of her 1962 poem, “Medusa.” Here Plath depicts her mother in terms of a Medusan figure, linking her name Aurelia to aurela, the jellyfish medusa. At the end of the poem, she assertively rejects any sort of relationship between herself and her mother: “There is nothing between us.” Plath, *The Collected Poems*, 226.


Ibid.


Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 15: 234; Shakespeare, sonnet XIX.

Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, 195.


Ibid.


Ibid., 174.

Ibid., 127.


Kroll, *Chapters in a Mythology*, 282, n. 56.


Ibid., 174.

Ibid.

Ibid., 156.


Ibid., 64.

Timmerman cites the following two passages from Jung’s *The Archetypes*
and the Collective Unconscious as the possible source of Plath’s poem: “True, whoever looks into the mirror of the water will see first of all his own face. Whoever goes to himself risks a confrontation with himself. The mirror does not flatter, it faithfully shows whatever looks into it; namely, the face we never show to the world because we cover it with the persona, the mask of the actor. But the mirror lies behind the mask and shows the true face.” Carl Gustav Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 20. And the second passage: “Whoever looks into the water sees his own image, but behind it living creatures soon loom up; fishes, presumably, harmless dwellers of the deep—harmless, if only the lake were not haunted. They are water-beings of a peculiar sort. Sometimes a nixie gets into the fisherman’s net, a female, half-human fish. Nixies are entrancing creatures …. The nixie is an even more instinctive version of a magical feminine being whom I call the anima. She can also be a siren, melusina (mermaid), wood-nymph, Grace, or Erlking’s daughter, or a lamia or succubus, who infatuates young men and sucks the life out of them.” Ibid., 24–25. See: Timmerman, “Plath’s ‘Mirror,’” 64.

161 Cooper, An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols, 106.
164 For an example see: Vickers, “‘The Blazon of Sweet Beauty’s Best,’” 95–115.
168 Ibid.
170 Maillet, The Claude Glass, 234, n. 5.
172 Maillet, The Claude Glass, 49; See also pp. 47–55.


Freud, “The ‘Uncanny,’” 245 [brackets in the original].


In her 1960 poem “You’re,” Plath portrays the child through a series of similes and metaphors, including “vague as fog.” Addressing the child, Plath concludes the poem with a mirror image: “A clean slate, with your own face on.” Plath, *The Collected Poems*, 141. Here, the child is metaphorized into the mirror. This clean reflecting surface has no trace of the mother or anything from the world outside whatsoever. All it can reflect is the face of the child itself, stressing solipsism of the baby or enfant. In her 1962 poem “For a Fatherless Son,” addressed to her then eight-month-old son Nicholas, Plath conveys the imbrication of mother-child identity. She describes the dumb stupidity of her baby in terms of a “blind mirror” on whose surface only the solacing image of the mother is reflected:

But right now you are dumb.
And I love your stupidity,
The blind mirror of it. I look in
And find no face but my own, and you think that’s funny.  

*Ibid.*, 205

Plath addressed her 1963 Poem “Child” to her daughter Frieda Rebecca, who would soon be three, describing her “clear eye” in terms of empty space which the mother wishes to fill with “color and ducks,/the zoo of the new,” with “April snowdrop” (alluding to her birth month), and with “Indian pipe.” Ultimately, Plath metaphorizes her daughter’s “clear eye” into a “Pool in which images/should be grand and classical.” (*Ibid.*, 265)

In ancient classical thought, the essential four constitutive elements of life are earth, water, air and fire. To them Aristotle adds a fifth element or quintessence (after “quint” meaning “fifth”), the aether. The atmospheric elements are: temperature, humidity, precipitation, winds, pressure and clouds.

185 Ibid.
188 Ibid.
189 Sally Bayley, “Sylvia Plath and the Costume of Femininity,” *Eye Rhyme*, 248, note 84. In a letter to her mother, dated 12 October 1962, Plath writes: “I miss brains, hate this cow life, am dying to surround myself with intelligent, good people.” Here, the cow not only refers to rural, “brainless” Devon, but also to her domestic life limited to housewifery and motherhood. Plath, *Letters Home*, 466.
193 The depictions of the winged man represent him with a ring around his waist and holding another one in his hand. Its precise meaning remains controversial. His face turning to one side represents the winged man’s turning away from evil towards good. The winged man has two wings at each side and each wing has three rows of feathers, depicting the tripartite principle at the heart of Zoroastrianism: the good reflection, the good words and the good deed. At the same time, the wings represent the winged man’s will to fly, to exalt. For more see: Mary Boyce, “Fravaši,” *Encyclopædia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater, vol. X (New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press, 2001) 195–199.
195 Ibid.
196 Ibid., 258–259.
198 After reading an article in *The Nation* entitled “Juggernaut, the Warfare State”, Plath writes in a letter to her mother, dated 15 December 1961, “I began to wonder if there was any point in trying to bring up children in such a mad, self-destructive world. The sad thing is that the power for destruction is real and universal.” Plath, *Letters Home*, 438.
The New Testament recounts that at Jesus’ baptism the Holy Spirit descended upon him “like a dove” (Matt. 3.16).

La Belle, Herself Beheld, 125.


Ibid., 23.

Ibid., 3.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid., 95.

Ibid.


Plath, The Bell Jar, 96.

Showalter, The Female Malady, 212.

Melchior-Bonnet, The Mirror, 264.

La Belle, Herself Beheld, 91.


Meyers, Gender in the Mirror, 1.

Plath, The Bell Jar, 95.

Ibid.

Ibid., 96.

Ibid., 1.

Ibid., 96.


Spivak, “Echo,” 27.

Plath, The Bell Jar, 97.

Ibid.


Ibid., 202.

dem imaginierten Blick der anderen auf; das fremd anmutende Gesicht und der Betrachter bilden ein gespaltenes Ganzes. Gesicht wie Rede erscheinen als Zonen der Vermittlung zwischen privatem Selbstvorbehalt und öffentlicher Selbstentäußerung, das heißt als Räume einer doppelt kodierten Schrift, die auf die Sedimentierungen des Selbst als und im Spiegel der anderen verweist.”

227 Plath, *The Bell Jar*, 98

228 Barrie M. Biven, *True Pretences: Psychodynamic Work with the Lost, the Angry and the Depressed* (Leicester: Matador, 2005), 96.


231 Ibid.

232 Ibid.

233 Ibid., 337–338.


237 Ibid., 138.


241 Ibid.


Ibid., 173–174. Christodoulides further elaborates, “clearly the poem follows the Kristevan pattern (*Revolution in Poetic Language*) and is now in the ‘thetic’ phase. In the signifying process this phase operates like the threshold that follows the mirror stage where the child recognizes itself as a separate object; in the poem the spring is the mirror where the speaking persona recognizes herself as other (‘It is not I’), and the mother’s green, clean doorstep that leads in and out is the threshold. The doorstep is an allusion to *effraction*, a breach, which Kristeva mentions in *Revolution*: entering a place, like breaching a law, and house-breaking are suggestive of the multiple strategies implicit in breaking through the thetic, a disruption most clearly marked in poetic language.” (Ibid., 247–249). “The persona seems to be hinting that she does not dare break into the mother’s house to go back to the semiotic fusion with her, as there is a ‘stream’, a buffer that divides them, the symbolic order which cannot give her, however, any ‘nourishment or cure’ either, even if she wishes to enter it. Finally, the prodigal child has revealed her predicament: neither the semiotic nor the symbolic: solace is nowhere [sic] to be found—neither with the mother nor the imaginary father.” (Ibid., 174).


Ibid., 24.

Idid., 25.

Ibid.

For a further study of skin imagery, skin metaphor or its substitutes in Plath’s works see: Biven, *True Pretences*, 70–97.


La Belle, *Herself Beheld*, 23. La Belle juxtaposes some interesting examples of the mirror experience by male authors to those of female ones to illuminate the huge discrepancies in their usage. Male authors and poets employ the mirror mainly for purely daily practical ends. Any act beyond
utilitarian practice by a male character or persona is generally considered a “lapse … in an essentially feminine activity.” The rhetoric turns out to be not merely descriptive, but also prescriptive, i.e., it specifies how a man or a woman should act in front of the mirror and react to the phenomena of mirroring. See: ibid., 20–24.


260 During one of his trips to London Ted Hughes leaves a note to Assia Wevill saying, “I have come to see you, despite all marriages.” Quoted in Middlebrook, *Her Husband*, 167.


264 See: Christodoulides, *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking*, 201–204.


269 Ibid., 202.

270 Britzolakis, “*Ariel* and Other Poems,” 109.


274 Ovid [Melville], *Metamorphoses*, 65: 474.


277 Ibid.


279 Ibid.


283 Ibid.

284 Ibid.

285 Ibid., 18.

286 Ibid., 107.

287 Ibid., 108.


Conclusion

1 Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, 195.

Appendix


2 Allusion to the Qurʾān: “As to the Šamūd, We gave them Guidance, but they preferred blindness (of heart) to Guidance: so the stunning Punishment of humiliation seized them, because of what they had earned.” (41: 17).

3 Allusion to the Qurʾānic verses: “Is that the better entertainment or the Tree of Zaqqūm? For We have truly made it (as) a trial for the wrong-doers. For it is a tree that springs out of the bottom of Hell-Fire: The shoots of its fruit-stalks are like the heads of devils: Truly they will eat thereof and fill their bellies therewith.” (37: 62–66). And “‘Ye will surely taste of the Tree of Zaqqūm. Then will ye fill your insides therewith, And drink Boiling Water on top of it.’” (56: 52–54). Ḥamīm is also mentioned in the Qurʾān in: “Nothing cool shall they taste therein, nor any drink, Save a boiling fluid and a fluid, dark, murky, intensely cold. A fitting recompense (for them)”. (78: 24–26).

4 Qurʾānic allusion: “(They will be) in the midst of a Fierce Blast of Fire and in Boiling Water” (56: 42). *Samūm* literally means hot wind and also miasma.

5 Allusion to the Qurʾān: “In front of such a one is Hell, and he is given, for drink, boiling fetid water.” (14: 16).

6 Allusion to the Qurʾān: “But he whose balance (of good deeds) will be (found) light, Will have his home in a (bottomless) Pit. And what will explain to thee what this is? (It is) a Fire Blazing fiercely!” (101: 8–11).

7 Qurʾānic allusion: “To them will be passed round, dishes and goblets of gold: there will be there all that the souls could desire, all that their eyes
could delight in: and ye shall abide therein (for eye).” (43: 71). And “(Here is) a Parable of the Garden which the righteous are promised: in it are rivers of water incorruptible; rivers of milk of which the taste never changes; rivers of wine, a joy to those who drink; and rivers of honey pure and clear. In it there are for them all kinds of fruits; and Grace from their Lord. (Can those in such Bliss) be compared to such as shall dwell for ever in the Fire, and be given, to drink, boiling water, so that it cuts up their bowels (to pieces)?” (47: 15).

8 Qur’ānic allusion: “So; and We shall join them to [houris] fair women with beautiful, big, and lustrous eyes.” (44: 54).


10 Qur’ānic allusion: “The Companions of the Right Hand,—what will be the Companions of the Right Hand? (They will be) among Lote-trees without thorns, In shade long-extended.” (56: 27–30).

11 Allusion to Ḥāfez’s couplet:

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پدرم روضة رضوان بدو گندم بفروخت/ناتخل پاشم بعد هجوی نفروشم
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(“My father sold the garden of paradise for two grains of wheat/I shall be unworthy of him if I wouldn't sell it for a barleycorn.”) In Persian “a grain of barley” is a metaphor for a very little, trifling amount. See: Dehḥodā, s.v. “gó,” Loğatnāme, vol. 5, pp. 7885–7886.


13 Qur’ānic allusion: “Whom Allah doth guide, he is on the right path: whom He rejects from His guidance,—such are the persons who perish.” (7: 178).

14 In this line, Farrokhzad uses the word ḥār (thorn); however, the homophone ḥwār (debased) would also make sense in this context.

15 Āyeh or āyat in Persian means sign, miracle, proof as well as verses of the Qurʾān.