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The Lost Voice of a Contemporary Iranian Writer in a Play

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Abstract

This article aims to discuss and analyse an overlooked play written by Dr. Majd Al-Din Mir Fakhraai (1910-1972), who was a prominent Iranian poet and writer. Having spent several years outside Iran, his works were published in various journals including *Jahaan-e Nou*, *Armaghāan* and *Yaadegaar*. One of Mir Fakhraai's literary outputs, i.e. this play, appears to have been overlooked in the scholarly works of modern Persian literature. This play is written in a manuscript, which has not yet been discussed in the literature or catalogues of manuscripts. The manuscript Persian MS. 996, which is held in the John Rylands Library, contains this play, entitled *Sonaat-e Dehkade* 'The Village Sonata', which was written under the pen name Golchin Gilaani in 1947 in London. This article will demonstrate the relationship between this work of Mir Fakhraai, and his other works by analysing the content and the structure of the play within the context of its production. Through analysing its content, first it will be shown how its content is a manifestation of the (in) direct impact of war (in this case World War II) on the Iranian diaspora and second the analysis will highlight the contribution of the play to Persian literary works. The final aim of the article is to highlight the importance of exploring Persian manuscripts holdings in which voices of authors, such as Mir Fakhraai, seem to have been overlooked.

Keywords: *Sonaat-e Dehkade*, Persian Literature, Majd Al-Din Mir Fakhraai, Golchin Gilaani, Persian manuscripts

Introduction

This article aims to bring into light a play, by Dr. Majd Al-Din Mir Fakhraai, a prominent poet and writer of modern Iran. This play is different

in nature from his other known works. While Mir Fakhraai is well known for his poems, this play demonstrates that he has also produced other literary works in Persian. This side of his literary output has remained unknown in Persian literature even today. The reason for this is that similar to many older Persian manuscripts belonging to the middle ages, the manuscript containing his play seems to have been overlooked and, hence, ignored as there is no record of it in any catalogues.

There are many Persian manuscripts found in different parts of the world, of which some remain unidentified or forgotten. This is despite the fact that attempts have been made to catalogue these manuscripts and bring them to the attention of scholars of Persian studies (see for instance, Aumer (1866), Browne (1896), Ethé, (1903), (1916), (1937), Flügel (1865), Pertsch (1888), Rieu (1879), Rieu (1881, (1883), Sachau, and Ethé, (1889), amongst others). While attention has mostly concentrated on well-known libraries, such as The Bodleian Library, The Library of The University of Cambridge and The British Museum in the UK, as evident from the catalogues produced for their holdings mentioned above, Persian manuscripts in certain libraries such as The John Rylands Library still remain unexplored and untapped since they are not properly catalogued.

The Persian Manuscripts in the John Rylands consist of various collections, of which the biggest is that of Lord Lindsay (1847-1913) containing over 900 manuscripts. This collection was purchased by Henriqueta Rylands (see Guppy, 1945). The only available catalogue of these items is a 19th century hand-written catalogue, which was privately published in 1898. It provides a good understanding of the content of the collection. However, not only does it not meet the standards of a modern detailed catalogue but also it does not present a comprehensive account of all the items in this collection. Moreover, there are other collections and manuscripts, which were obtained by The John Rylands Library later, which do not appear in this catalogue. One of these collections is Samuel Robinson's collection of which a catalogue was recently published (see Rafiee Rad, 2017). There are also individual manuscripts, which do not belong to a bigger collection, such as

this play, and this may explain why there are several Persian manuscripts, which have been overlooked for decades despite their value and importance.

During one of my visits to The John Rylands Library, I came across a manuscript (Persian MS. 996), a notebook that, contrary to most of other Persian manuscripts in the library, did not seem much aged. Upon consulting the manuscript further, I recognized that it was a play by Golchin Gilaani, and that this manuscript was not mentioned in any catalogues and of which nothing was written or discussed in Persian literary literature. The manuscript was written in Gilaani's handwriting and was signed by him. There is a letter in the manuscript in English, addressed to Professor Arberry, dated 28 December 1947 (see appendix I), with whom Gilaani had contact (see below). This letter confirms that it was a copy made by Gilaani and was sent to Professor Arberry by Gilaani. The handwriting in the manuscript is neatly executed and the manuscript is in good condition. This manuscript forms the focus of the discussion in this article.

This article explores and analyses the play entitled *Sonaat-e Dehkade* 'Village Sonata' in Persian MS. 996. Section 2 will give a brief description of the author and his biography as well as details about the manuscript. Section 3 will discuss the content of the play. Section 4 will analyse the play's content. Section 5 will conclude. The verses from the play that are quoted in this article were translated into English specifically for this article.

Golchin Gilaani, His Literary Works and the Manuscript Persian MS. 996

Iranians, who studied in Iran before and after the revolution in 1979, although they may not be familiar with the name Majd Al-Din Mir Fakhraai or his pen name Golchin Gilaani, are familiar with, or even know by heart, one of his well-known poems *Baaz Baaraan Baa Taraane*, 'Once again the rain, with its melody'. Golchin Gilaani was born in Rasht in 1910. His father held an official position and served in the Department of Finance in various cities, such as Rasht, before they moved to Tehran (see 'Aabedi 2000). Arberry (1947) states that he came into contact with Gilaani as the editor of the periodical *Ruzgar-e Nau*, a cultural magazine that he founded and

published in twenty-two issues. According to Arberry (ibid.), Gilaani completed his early education first, in Rasht and then, in Tehran. He obtained his BA in Philosophy and Science Pedagogy at the Daneshsaraay-e 'Aali in Tehran. He then proceeded to do his M.B. and B.S. at the Chelsea Polytechnic and at the University College, University of London. He started his clinical studies at the Manchester Royal Infirmary but this was interrupted when World War II broke out. Students were called back to Iran but he stayed in London and did not follow the Iranian government's instructions. He worked as an ambulance driver in the London County Council. As Arberry puts it, this continued until the reintroduction of the Aliens' Restriction Act stopped him from benefiting from this source of income and because of this, Gilaani "for a time faced great hardship and hunger" (1947, 232)¹.

Golchin Gilaani was also hired by the British Movietone Film Company to contribute to making war newsreel, translating and writing for the company (see Karimi-Hakkak and Katouzian (2012)). According to Eslaami-Nadushan (2000, 5), he was reporting war news from London in newsreels starting his reports with the phrase "*Golchin Az Inglis Gozaresh mi-dah-ad*" ('Golchin reports from England') producing newsreels in Persian. The cinemas in Iran played newsreels before screening the advertised film. It seems that the first newsreel was shown in Iranian cinema in 1932, filmed by a Turkish photographer of the meeting between the then Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Foroughi and Kemal Ataturk (see Leaman 2001, 135). Through these newsreels Gilaani's name became well known across Iran (Eslaami-Nadushan 2000, 5).

Gilaani managed to resume his medical studies at the University College Hospital by working in journalism and translation. In 1945 he commenced his medical practice in London, and in 1946 he obtained his diploma in tropical disease and hygiene. He also worked as a physician for the Iranian embassy (see 'Aabedi 2000, 23-24).

The very famous poem "*Baaz Baaraan*" was handed to Arberry by Gilaani in 1940 and Arberry sent it to the magazine *Sokhan* in which it was published. Prior to this, Gilaani's early poetic talent in the form of *ghazals* was published in the journal of *Armaghān* in the late 1920s and 1930s.

Various journals, such as *Jahaan-e Nou*, *Armaghaan* and *Yaadegaar*, published his poems in the 1940s. He published his collection of poetry called *Nahofteh* in London in 1948. His two other poetry collections, *Farib* and *Mehr o Kin* were also printed privately whereas his other collection, *Gol-i Baraay-e To*, was published in Tehran in 1969. He died in London in 1972.

Despite his poems being well known, his talent in play writing to our knowledge has not been mentioned anywhere in the literature. At least there exists one play by Gilaani, entitled *the Village Sonata* (سنات دهکده). This is held in the John Rylands Library with the ACC. Number Persian MS. 996.

The play is hand-written in a notebook of 47 pages (although the numbering starts at 5, which is actually page 3 and ends with 49, which is actually page 47). The Manuscript contains a letter from Gilaani to Arberry dated 28 December 1947 regarding the play (see Appendix I for the content of the letter). The cover of the manuscript is decorated with drawings and the name of the author and the title of the play on a sticker in the middle of the front cover. The title page is written in black and gives the name of the play in Persian as “سنات دهکده” followed by the author’s pen name “گلچین گیلانی”. Afterwards, the title of the play and the name of the author occur in English as “*the Village Sonata*” followed by “golchin Christmas 1947, London”.

The manuscript is written in blue ink (except for a section of verse expressed by one of the characters, the cockerel, in Act I, which seems to have been added later); it opens with a list entitled “singers”. This list consists of all the characters in the play:

Translation: “Blacksmith, cockerel, bird, wife of the Blacksmith, young daughter of the Blacksmith, villagers and their children, cat, ducks, geese, the first donkey, the second donkey, muleteer (donkey owner), hostler, and horse”.

The play contains three acts. Section 3 will summarise the content of the play and give a description of the characters.

The Village Sonata

The first act opens at a seaside in a village, presumably in a Western village since a church is described in the background. The centre of the scene is a village house owned by a blacksmith who sings at the twilight of dawn as the church bell rings. The verse he sings is:

Play, my heart	بزن ای دل
My crazy heart	دل دیوانه
Like the bell	چون زنگ

Play, my heart	بزن ای دل
My estranged heart	دل بیگانه
Like the harp	چون چنگ
niousEupho	خوش آهنگ

The author goes on to describe the daily activities in a village, such as feeding chickens at dawn, and describes the encounter of the family of the Blacksmith with other villagers and their children who join in to sing along with the Blacksmith the above verse. This is followed by the cockerel singing about the farm animals and the Sun. He tells the Sun that he is aware that it will disappear but invites the Sun back the next day.

The bell rings the half hour when the Blacksmith and his family set off on the road where they meet another group of villagers who join in singing with them.

The second act opens in a similar setting with the sea in the background and another cottage on the road with an open window and a cat near the window. A bird sings about Nature, the sea, the Sun, wind, fire, green meadow, trees, etc. The bird also sings about freedom. The cat has a dialogue with the bird and encourages the bird to fly and enjoy its freedom but reminds the bird that he, i.e. the cat, is the one with “translation: sharp claws and a mouth full of teeth and a tongue”. The ducks and geese join in and also sing of their freedom and Nature. Following this, two donkeys appear. The

conversation between the donkeys is in longer sentences starting with complaints over hunger:

خر نخست: کیف حالک ای جوانمرد صبور؟

The first donkey: How are you, you the patient, the chivalrous?

خر دوم: حال من خوب است از لطف شما

The second donkey: I am fine, thanks for your mercifulness.

لیک آزارم رساند اشتها.

Hunger is the thing that bothers me, nonetheless.

The second donkey continues to complain about the owner forcing him relentlessly to work day in and day out as a beast of burden. To this complaint, the first donkey responds that the owner is stupid since the owner does not know that such a hasty pace is the devil's act:

خر نخست: نیست اندر کله اش یک ذره عقل

The first donkey: his head is not blessed with even one small bit of intelligence,

ورنه میدانست تعجیل است بد

or he would know haste would be a mistake.

آفت سرعت من الشیطان بود

Roots in the Lucifer the infestation of the haste

اسب بتازد دو تک با صد شتاب

Shall gallop a horse steadfast with extreme haste

بی هنر بی اطلاع است از حساب

This unwise animal, is ignorant of the result

While the donkeys praise eating and relaxing as the best activity, the muleteer approaches them looking for his donkey. The owner calls out to the donkey singing to it that he has purchased a new saddle for the donkey. The second donkey responds:

چیز نو بهر من کهنه پرست؟

Something new, for me who is the admirer of shoddy stuff?

احمق است اینصاحب من احمق است.

How stupid could be my owner!

After saddling the second donkey with the new saddle, the donkey,
however, thanks the owner:

O' my owner I shall sacrifice my life for you!

صاحباً جان و تنم قربان تو

All heavens under your command!

عقل صد آفاق در فرمان تو

Creatures of the world are at the service of your saddle

خلق عالم بنده پالان تو

Oh, how happy I am for the kindness extended by you

واقعا شادم از این احسان تو

While the second donkey tells the first donkey that new things may amuse one, the donkey declares that he is an admirer of aged items and that does not easily let go of old habits. The donkey quotes the *mollaa* of the donkeys saying that discarding old habits is the source of illness. The donkey goes on to tell the owner that regardless of an old or a new saddle, the donkey would carry on with the old habits, and it goes backwards with the owner on the saddle and they disappear. The act ends with the horses appearing, singing that they are the ones “running for bread and hay”, “for one another”, ending the act by repeating “[running] forward”.

Act three opens with the setting in the shop of the Blacksmith with his family in the shop. The time is towards the end of the day and they sing the verse in the first act together. Despite their tiredness, they also sing of courage in the darkness that surrounds them. The horses arrive at the Blacksmith's shop where horseshoes are put on these horses while they sing along with the Blacksmith about “running” at dawn and midday and night, in happiness and sorrow, in darkness and brightness, under the white or black cloud. Villagers who pass by the shop also join in and sing about farming and labour. The ducks and geese meanwhile sing about their freedom. When the horseshoes are fitted, the horses and hostler fade away. At the same time, the Blacksmith and his family sing using the verbs used by the horses and the ducks, such as “I am free”, “I jump and I run”, “I for you and you for me”. More villagers appear and they collectively sing, encouraging the audience to jump up and

reach out to ‘the lovely moon’ even if the earth is cold and dark and miserable.

The act ends with the opening verse in act one:

Play, my heart	بزن ای دل
My crazy heart	دل دیوانه
Like the bell	چون زنگ

Play, my heart	بزن ای دل
My estranged heart	دل بیگانه
Like the harp	چون چنگ
Euphonious	خوش آهنگ

The Play, Its Message and Language

The plot is divided into three acts, which flow from one another. The acts are connected through the use of location. This means that in act one the play takes place inside and outside the cottage of the Blacksmith and ends with the Blacksmith and his family setting off on the road to the centre of the village. Act two takes place on the road to the village with animals as the main characters and their dialogues at the centre of the act. Act three takes place in the centre of village in the shop of the Blacksmith and ends in the village. Therefore, the unity of the play lies in its location and within a full working day from the sunrise to the sunset. Time is expressed by the contrast between the light and darkness, the dynamism in Nature as well as social conventions, such as the church bell ringing. The play brings the voices of humans, animals and Nature together to project the message that all of them are in harmony and act in tune. The props in the play are very basic. As the stage direction states, the props are cottages and trees. The scenery is a seaside village. The play brings together characters of various kinds, mostly static. Moreover, personification emerges as a main characteristic of the play.

The harmony in the village is depicted not only in the actions of humans but also in those of the animals and Nature and at the same time in the perceived social conventions. Take the bell of the church as an example. It announces the time and recurrently appears in the verses as being in harmony with the heart, work and sound of other musical instruments. Similes are used

to depict the similarity between the sound of the church bell and the musical instrument, the harp. The tenor, in this case the bell of the church, is as sweet and in tune with the heart as the sound of the vehicle, in this case the harp.

It could be argued that while on occasions the roles of characters are reversed, to the extent that animals as perceived as rounded characters, the protagonist of the play, i.e. the Blacksmith, represents a hard-working person who at the same time has compassion and is in sync with his fellow villagers, Nature and animals that surround him. He is the centre of the family life. The Blacksmith, as the protagonist, bears certain explicit and implicit virtues. He is an optimistic character who echoes overcoming tiredness and perseverance as he has a monologue with himself talking to his heart:

بشو هی باز و بسته ، بازو بسته

Become open and close, again and again

نشو در زیر بار چرخ خسته

Do not under the load of the wheel of fate get worn,

شکسته

or broken

He is a realistic character who understands the realities of the world, the good and evil, asking his heart to prove to him its strong and rigid nature, or as he puts it to prove to him that “his heart is made of iron”. Moreover, he asks his heart not to be afraid of the darkness, the uncertainties of life, to stand firm in good and bad times and be a champion in sorrow and happiness. His message of hope and optimism shows his leadership characteristics guiding his wife and daughter and other villagers to join him in singing the verses that he chants. His gentle characteristics are depicted in actions such as picking flowers, feeding the birds along with his wife and daughter, and caressing his daughter’s face as he sings:

بچین ای دل بچین گل های خوشبو

Pick, pick o’ my heart the scented flowers

برو دنبال دلجویان گلرو

Seek the charming alluring ones

بهر سو

in all directions

His message of hard work and dedication is echoed especially in the third act when he and his daughter take turn expressing that they “run” and “go [forward] for one another”. The play was written in 1947, post-World War II, a time to rebuild what had been destroyed; hence messages of optimism, work, dedication, encouragement to go forward and building better future were necessary. This can be observed if the play under study was compared to Gilaani’s poem *Barg* ‘leaves’, which was completed during the warⁱⁱ. In that poem, he fell prey to the melancholy and despair that war brought him. In it, Gilaani expresses no sign of hope in recouping what he had lost. In contrast, in his play the characteristics of the protagonist is an attempt by Gilaani to renew the values of the past expressed in classical Persian literature, such as courage, hard-work and fighting the darkness, values which were in particular relevant after the destruction and the carnage of such a war.

The Blacksmith’s wife, his daughter and other villagers emphasize the role that the Blacksmith plays in the sense that they follow him and affirm his message of hope and courage as they repeat his lines. It is when the Blacksmith steps into the garden, in the first act, that we hear the cockerel that declares the start of the day and also gives the message of hope and renewal. The stage direction leads us from inside the Blacksmith’s cottage to the road and then, the heart of the village where the Blacksmith’s shop is based. The actions described by the Blacksmith show various aspects of his character, which, however, do not develop or evolve during the three acts. The same holds true of the other characters who all appear to exemplify determination to fight against darkness, night and fear. The play does not portray a character explicitly as an antagonist but verses seem to address the characters’ fight against bad, darkness and night and fear.

The author breaks some of the stereotypical understandings of the animal personalities. For instance, this is apparent in the donkey characters. They are depicted as wise animals that reflect on their own and their owners’ attitudes. Donkeys are considered to be simple, plain or even stupid animals in Persian culture, yet the donkeys in this play in their soliloquy, criticize their owners for being stupid. They argue that the owner is not aware of proverbs such as “haste is the devil’s doing” and their lines of verse seem to be the most lengthy

of all other lines of verses in the whole play through which they offer to the audience proverbial wisdom. Furthermore, they are represented as lazy animals, whereas in Persian culture as well as other cultures, donkeys are well known for their hard work. While animals in the play, in general, sing words similar to the humans in the play, onomatopoeia is also used to represent associations linked to such animals. The dictions chosen for horses expresses their agility and purpose in life, i.e. moving forward in a rapid manner in contrast to the donkeys. The other characters seem to be injected with well-rounded personalities. The change in location and the time throughout the play explains the inclusion of the characters. The animals are mainly discussed or portrayed in the second act that is on the road from the Blacksmith's house to the centre of the village. The domestic animals, such as the cockerel, are described in the first act within the setting of the Blacksmith's house where they live as part of the household and serve their purpose, such as announcing the start of the working day. In the second act, it seems that the cat's characteristic represents threats and an animosity ready to attack and destroy the freedom that creatures in the village enjoy (as discussed above under section 3).

The play depicts the stark contrast between darkness, uncertainty, threat and evil (which could be what wars bring about) and daylight, brightness, going forward, happiness, courage, hard work and caring for one another (which could be the values of peace and unity).

The theme of the play is the struggle for survival, not giving up in the face of the challenges posed to life. Hard work is praised as the necessary way forward and the heart plays an important role in providing the courage and hope for carrying on. The 'heart' is the representation of a source of kindness and courage, which can overcome the fear of the darkness that tomorrow may bring. Nevertheless, the hope for light and brightness remains unredeemed just like the hope for the arrival of a new day after the darkness of the night. In line with this, all elements of the universe, that is the stars, the wind, the Sun, etc., along with the humans and animals working side by side, work together to bring about change that is necessary. At the same time, there is a hint about the possible return of evil (with the cockerel announcing awareness

that night will reappear again) and the need of vigilance against the threat of darkness.

The language of the play comprises of verse of various kinds but is mainly composed of free style verse. However, the language mainly is made up of simple phrase structures. The use of imperative verbs is a recurrent element of the choice of mood in verbs, which indicates encouragement. There are several repetitions in the verse especially in act one and act three. The only change in the style of the verse is in the dialogues between the donkeys where they discuss in longer sentences and in *masnavi* style:

The second donkey:

my owner asks that I, like the light

in the North, South, West and the East

perform the task of packing day in day out

The first donkey:

His head is not blessed with even one small bit of intelligence,

or he would know haste would be a mistake.

Roots in the Lucifer the infestation of the haste

Shall gallop a horse onward with extreme haste

This unwise animal, is ignorant of the result

صاحبم میخواهد این جانب چو برق

در شمال و در جنوب و غرب و شرق

روز و شب دائم نمایم حمل و نقل

نیست اندر کله اش یک ذره عقل

ورنه میدانست تعجیل است بد

آفت سرعت من الشیطان بود

اسب بیتازد دو تک با صد شتاب

بی هنر بی اطلاع است از حساب

It is noteworthy that the second donkey completes the first hemistich of the second donkey and carries on with the same style of verse.

Most of the language in the play takes the form of dialogue style. This could be rhetoric dialogues, such as the ones between the Blacksmith and his 'heart', or the ones in which information and knowledge are conveyed, such

as the ones between the two donkeys or the one between the cat and the bird. In all cases it could be argued that in the play the pragmatic function of language is met and the information and the message is understood and conveyed. The verses and phrases are short and memorable.

While the play falls into the Musical theatre genre, it bears slight characteristics of the Theatre of the Absurd (for discussion on Theatre of the Absurd, see Esslin, 1960) as it is compatible with the post-World War II genre in theatre, a context in which this play was written. Despite these similarities in characteristics, whether the playwright intended such similarities or not, the play certainly does not fall in that genre. For instance, breaking the logical barriers of the use of language and communication is an emphasised characteristic of the Theatre of the Absurd. In *Sonaat-e Dehkade*, the choice of dialogues between animals and humans in the village is an example of an anti-rationalist characteristic of the language, which is intended by the playwright, in order to provide an opportunity for dealing with the concept of existentialism and the purpose of life. In other words, tackling the purpose of life and the struggle of humanity in controlling one's purpose in life are key characteristics of the works of many dramatists whose works are considered belonging to the Theatre of the Absurd, such as Samuel Becket (1906-1989), Jean Genet (1910-1986) and Harold Pinter (1930-2008). However, Gilaani's play, while dealing with such a struggle in life and the purpose of life, posits a positive message as the result of this struggle at the same time, which makes it different from the works in the Theatre of the Absurd genre.

Conclusion

The voice of Gilaani, a renowned poet and writer of the 20th century, in the play *the Village Sonata* is perhaps one of the many lost voices in manuscripts that may have been overlooked in libraries across the world. The discovery of the manuscript shed light on both Gilaani's life and a distinct type of literary work in comparison to his known works, i.e. a play. The play describes a protagonist who bears several virtues, which put him at the centre of the play. The play not only is important because of its literary nature but also in a historical context it shows an attempt to fight against the devastation

that war inflicts on people. It brings the message of aspiration to the ones affected and encourages them to endeavour towards achieving a better life. It emphasizes the role that humans play but also that Nature and animals play working in harmony with humans to overcome challenges. It contains several moral lessons that are universal, not bound by physical borders and transcend certain ideologies and cultures.

Considering the context in which Gilaani wrote the play, not only does it tell us about Gilaani as a literary man but also about the impact the World War II had on the Iranian diaspora and how it impacted their personal and professional lives. The play and its message can be viewed as a manifestation of the impact of war on Gilaani's work and at the same time highlights the impact of World War II through the lens of Persian literary works.

The language of the play makes use of simple lexical items and grammatical constructions and this, in turn, makes it appealing to a wider range of audience of various age groups and backgrounds. Having gone through difficult times, especially during the early years of his residency in the UK, and overcoming those difficulties, the play is also a depiction of Gilaani's personal life during which, through hard work, he managed to achieve a lot. This play seems to be the only known play by Golchin Gilaani to this date and the question remains whether there may be other manuscripts, which may contain his lost voice in the form of a play.

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Appendix I.

This manuscript (MS. 966) bears a letter hand-written in English by Golchān Gīlānī addressed to Professor Arberry, dated 28 December 1947. The content of the letter is as follows: (I have included the letter in its entirety, that is the words in the last line of the letter which are shown by strikethrough are the words that were written in the letter and crossed out by Gīlānī)

“Dear Professor Arberry,

I am enclosing a copy of “The Village Sonata” which I wrote this Christmas. It is intended to represent simple village scenes in “word-music”.

When I wrote “The Bird پرندہ” I was impressed by the musical potentialities of the Persian language. So I went on writing “The Cat”, “The Ducks and geese”, etc, with the intention to put some of their sound effects into poetical forms. By addition of two of my old poems – the one, which is frequently sung by the “Blacksmith” and the one sung by the “Cockerel” – I completed this little work (which, by the way, seems to me to be suitable to a Persian eastern form).

I am sending a copy to Mr Graves Lau, asking him whether he can arrange to have it performed either by the Persian section of the B.B.C., or by the Dramatic Section of the Iran Society when ~~this~~ such section is ~~organized~~ established.

Yours sincerely,
M. Mir-Fakhraie”

ⁱ Arberry seems to be referring to the Aliens Restriction (Amendment) Act 1919, which under section 6, “Appointment of aliens to the Civil Service”, states, “After the passing of this Act no alien shall be appointed to any office or place in the Civil Service of the State.” (p. 5)

ⁱⁱ This poem was translated by Arberry and published in *Ruzgar-e Nau* in 1944.