



Women Poets Iranica
A Research Compendium

Īrāndukht Taymūrtāsh: A Maternal Voice in the Making of Modern Iran

Hanieh Bakhtiari*

PhD student

November 23, 2025

<https://poets.iranicaonline.org/scholar/hanieh-bakhtiari/>

*Hanieh Bakhtiari is a PhD student in the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations at the University of Toronto. Her research interests encompass sexuality, gender studies, and the history of women's writing in the Middle East. Hanieh's current project explores the co-constitution of femininity and modernity in early twentieth-century Iran. Hanieh has published "A Cinematic Rupture with the Mythic Representation of Male Nudity" in the *Journal of Bodies, Sexualities and Masculinities*. She is also an active participant in the University of Toronto-funded *Iranica Poetica* research project.

Introduction

Much of what is known about Īrān'dukht Taymūrtāsh (1295–1370/1916–1991) comes from the influence of her father, 'Abd al-Husayn Taymūrtāsh (1261–1312/1882–1933), who played a key role in the transition of power from the Qajar dynasty to the Pahlavi dynasty and served as Reza Shah's first Court Minister from 1304/1925 to 1311/1932.¹ Īrān'dukht is also remembered in the Iranian consciousness for the dramatic account of chasing her father's murderer, Pizishk Ahmādī, to execution. As a result, her literary and cultural contributions as a modernist Iranian author have received comparatively far less attention.² Within the canon of Iranian literature, unfortunately, not many of her poems have been published or even preserved. However, through her contributions to women's periodicals and her broader cultural activism, she left behind valuable textual legacies for both the women of her time and for posterity. In most compendia of Iranian women writers, compiled while she was still active in Iran, she is consistently recognized as both an orator and a poet.³

In recognition of her literary identity, I refer to her by her first name, Īrān'dukht, rather than her family name, Taymūrtāsh, throughout this paper. Although it is common in women's historiography for their identities and accomplishments to be mediated through the names of their fathers or husbands, I intentionally highlight her first name. Continuing to use her sur-

name risks reinforcing the very narrative that has long defined Īrān'dukht mainly through her father's political legacy, rather than her literary and cultural contributions.



Figure 1: Irāndukht Taymūrtāsh with her father, 'Abd al-Husayn Taymūrtāsh (circa. 1930)

To better understand her authorial identity beyond this inherited legacy, it is useful to situate Īrān'dukht within her educational and cultural milieu. Īrān'dukht Taymūrtāsh was born in 1295/1916 in Kashmar, a city in the Khorasan province of eastern Iran. She grew up in Tehran, where her father served as a cultural activist and later as a politician.⁴ Her career as an author began when she enrolled at the Nāmūs School, a prestigious institution in Tehran that attracted girls from progressive Iranian families. Girls who attended this school became among the most learned women of their era, despite pressure from extremists who sought to have Nāmūs School shut down. This was in line with the school's founder, Tūba Āzmūdāh (1275/1896–1315/1936), who claimed that “women's education was an integral part of Islamic faith, and not contradictory to its teachings.”⁵ Later, Īrān'dukht attended the Iran Bethel School (also known as the American Girls' College in Tehran), which was founded and run by Christian American missionaries.

Īrān'dukht remained influenced by the Christian domestic ideol-

¹Rouhollah Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941–1973: A Study of Foreign Policy in Modernizing Nations* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1975), 185.

²Ahmad Ahmādī (1266/1887–1323/1944), known as Pizishk Ahmādī, served as a nurse at Qasr Prison in Tehran, where he was involved in killing political prisoners, including 'Abd al-Husayn Taymūrtāsh, with his unique lethal injections. Īrān'dukht successfully tracked him down in Baghdad, where he was hiding, and facilitated his extradition to Iran. After a legal trial, Ahmādī was executed on multiple charges of murders in 1323/1944.

³Fakhri Qavīmī, *Kār'nāmah-i zanān-i mashhūr-i Īrān: Az qabl az Islām tā 'asr-i hāzir* [The record of renowned Iranian women: From the pre-Islamic era to the contemporary period] (Tehran: Vizārat-i Āmūzish va Parvarish, 1352/1973), 270; and 'Alī-Akbar Mushīr Salīmī, *Zanān-i sukhan'var: Az yak hizār sāl pīsh tā imrūz kih bih zabān-i Fārsī sukhan guftah'and* [The eloquent women: They have spoken Persian from a thousand years ago until today] (Tehran: Mu'assasah-i Matbū'āt-i 'Alī Akbar 'Ilmi, 1333/1954), 15–16.

⁴Qavīmī, *Kār'nāmah-yi zanān-i mashhūr-i Īrān*, 270.

⁵Helen Rappaport, *Encyclopedia of Women Social Reformers* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2001), 37.

⁶Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, "From Patriotism to Matriotism: A Tropological Study of Iranian Nationalism, 1870-1909," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, no. 2 (2002): 233.

Īrān'dukht Taymūrtāsh, "Nutq-i sarkār 'ilīyyah Īrān'dukht khānum Taymūrtāsh" [The speech by lady Īrān'dukht Taymūrtāsh], 'Ālam-i Nisvān 10, no. 6 (Ābān 1309/November 1930): 269-75.

⁸During the first Pahlavi era, much of the content published in journals exclusively tailored for women was still written by male authors as male names lent more credibility to the publication.

⁹Mas'ūd Bihūd, *In sih zan, Ashraf Pahlavī, Maryam Firūz, Īrān Taymūrtāsh* [These three women, Ashraf Pahlavī, Maryam Firūz, Īrān Taymūrtāsh] (Tehran: 'Ilm, 1374/1995).

ogy instilled during her education, which emphasized the spiritual role of women within the private sphere but linked their feminine care to broader civilizational and national progress. Though these schools emerged from a context intertwined with imperialist logic of educating women in Islamic nations, their overriding ideology that women's education was a vital aspect of modernization offered women like Īrān'dukht a model of female uplift rooted in education, literacy, and domestic reform. At the same time, the portrayal of vatan (homeland) as a dying mother when she was young positioned educated women as the first pedagogues of the nation and facilitated their entry into a newly imagined public sphere.⁶ After graduating from Iran Bethel School in Urdībihisht 1309/May 1930, Īrān'dukht gave a speech in which she described how girls like her were able to change the direction of a modern, progressive Iran by defining new social goals and enacting new forms of womanhood. Importantly, the speech was published in the journal 'Ālam-i Nisvān, the most well-read women's journal of the day.⁷ This helped Īrān'dukht find herself in a more active dialogue with women of her time, particularly at a time when getting published was not straightforward or common for women, even in their own journals.⁸

Prior to her father's removal from office in 1311/1932, Īrān'dukht is said to have been the first Iranian woman to appear in public without hijāb, particularly remembered during her graduation speech.⁹ In the years that followed, she channeled this public visibility into activism by founding a women's association dedicated to establishing a boarding school for destitute women. This organization remained active for several years and engaged in charitable work and educational programs, such as providing literacy classes for disadvantaged women and orphans. Building on this early activism, Īrān'dukht pursued higher education in France and eventually earned a doctorate in philosophy from the Sorbonne University. Another point of distinction that enhanced the status of Īrān'dukht Taymūrtāsh in the eyes of Iranians is the Legion of Honour (Légion d'honneur) medal, which



she received from the French government in recognition of her cultural and philanthropic contributions. Despite these accomplishments, Īrān'dukht has received little attention as a scholar and activist, just like many other Iranian female authors whose contributions have gone unnoticed.



Figure 2: Īrān'dukht Taymūrtāsh

Īrān'dukht: The Poet, The Writer

Since Īrān'dukht's legacy has long been overshadowed by her family's political prominence, her literary contributions have received scant attention. The few existing sources that do mention her as an author are either limited to brief biographical notes or contain inaccuracies. One such source, for example, mistakenly identifies her as "the wife of Court Minister Taymūrtāsh" rather than his daughter.¹⁰ Another erroneously claims that she authored only a single short story and did not publish any other works after this, an assertion that disregards the second novella she published.¹¹ The near-total erasure of her novellas from literary scholarship has continued to obscure Īrān'dukht's place in the intellectual and cultural history of modern Iran. To deflect this pattern and to pay a feminist tribute to her works, I will briefly draw on her two novellas when analyzing her poetry in this paper. As Elaine Showalter notes, one of the central contri-

¹⁰Stephanie Cronin, *The Making of Modern Iran: State and Society under Riza Shah, 1921-1941* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 134.

¹¹Hasan Mīr 'Ābidīnī, "Nakhustīn gām 'hā-yi zanān dar adabiyāt-i mu'āsir-i Īrān" [The first steps of women in modern Persian literature], in *Markaz-i Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif-i Buzurg-i Islāmī*, www.cgie.org.ir/Fa/news/9891/ - گام - های - نخستین - زنان - در - ادبیات - معاصر ایران - (1) - حسن - میر - عابدینی .

¹²Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), 8.

¹³Mushīr Salīmī, *Zanān-i sukhan'var*, 16.

butions of feminist historiography “has been the unearthing and reinterpretation of ‘lost’ works by women writers, and the documentation of their lives and careers”, a task that is especially urgent in Īrān’dukht’s case.¹²

Given the erasure of much of Īrān’dukht’s literary output, the traces that do survive acquire heightened significance. The only widely cited poem attributed to Īrān’dukht is an elegy composed in memory of her younger brother, Mihrpūr Taymūrtāsh, who died in a car accident shortly after the family’s release from exile in Khaf, Khorasan, due to a sentence imposed on Taymūrtāsh’s family by Reza Shah and lifted following his abdication in 1320/1941.

رسید نامه منظوم و آفرین گفتم / بدان قریحه سرشار پرشور، ترا
ستوده (فرخ) فرخنده سخن پرداز / گزند حادثه چرخ باد دور، ترا
دلالتم بصبوری، چگونه فرمائی / که بود آگهی از مرگ (مهروپور) ترا
بجای (مهر) نشاید گزید دیگر کس / وگر گزینی ناید بدیده نور، ترا
زمانه ساخت مرا سوگوار در همه عمر / نصیب ماست چنین بهره باد سوز، ترا¹³

Your rhymed letter arrived, and I offered my praise
for that abundant, fervent gift of yours

O eloquent (Farrukh), master of auspicious speech,
may the turns of fate forever spare you from grief’s reach

How do you encourage me to be patient?
now that you are aware of Mihrpūr’s death

In place of (Mihr), who else can one ever choose?
and if you choose another, no light will ever reach your sight.

Fate has made me a mourner for my entire life
such is my portion; may such a bitter portion never fall to you.

This poem by Īrān’dukht is very brief and might not provide adequate textual evidence for the reader to interpret much beyond



an elegy in mourning for a loved one. However, considering that this is the only piece of poetry surviving from her, it deserves a closer attention and can act as a prism to interpret her broader concerns as a modernist author. Īrān'dukht composed this poem in response to a letter of condolence from an important literary figure, Mahmūd Farrukh (1274/1895–1360/1981), who was also from Khorasan province. Farrukh had likely written to console her as she mourned the loss of her brother. In the poem, she expresses gratitude for Farrukh's compassion and message of condolences, yet she resists his advice to be patient in the face of such grief: "dilālatam bih sabūrī, chigūnah farmāyī" (How do you encourage me to be patient?). More than being a munāzirah (conversation) between herself and the other poet, Farrukh, these brief elegiac verses are mostly dedicated to expressing her profound sense of loss as a result of Mihrpūr's death. She emphasizes that her grief will remain with her "hamah 'umr" (entire life), reflecting a sorrow that refuses any resolution for her. She portrays her brother as an irreplaceable soul, whose untimely death has left an enduring void in her life. The word mihr carries the dual meanings of affection or love and functions as a linguistic echo of her brother's name, Mihrpūr. Īrān'dukht had two other brothers, Hūshang and Manūchihr. Mihrpūr was the founder of the newspaper Rastākhīz-i Īrān and worked closely with Īrān'dukht, who served as the chief editor of this journal, despite repeated interruptions by government censorship.¹⁴ The poem transcends the conventions of a typical Persian elegy. It serves not only as a tribute to her brother's far (virtues) but also as an expression of the care and emotional depth that defined Īrān'dukht's bond with her brother.

Īrān'dukht's feelings for her brother could also serve as a link between the elegy and her later writings in which private sorrow becomes a lens to interrogate public injustice, and the personal is turned into a didactic mode of moral instruction and collective awareness. Placed in the context of Īrān'dukht's broader literary work, this concern with grief and vulnerability resurfaces in Īrān'dukht's first published literary work, *Dukhtar-i tīrāh'bakht*

¹⁴Rastākhīz-i Īrān was a leftist newspaper published between 1321/1942 and 1324/1945. Its content was highly political, and its articles reflected on global affairs, with some featuring regular columns dedicated to women's issues.

¹⁵Īrān'dukht Taymūrtāsh, *Dukhtar-i tīrāh 'bakht va javān-i bu'l-havas* [The ill-fated girl and the promiscuous young man] (Tehran: 'Alī Ja'farī, 1309/1930).

¹⁶Īrān'dukht Taymūrtāsh, *Yak pardah az zindigī-yi ijtimā'ī, Khātirāt-i Āb'alī* [A scene from the social life, Memoirs in Āb'alī] (Tehran: Kayhān, 1325/1946).

va javān-i bu'l-havas (The ill-fated girl and the promiscuous young man), published in 1309/1930 when she was only fifteen years old. Based on a real incident in her neighborhood, the story follows a naive fourteen-year-old girl named Maryam, who is seduced by a charming but deceitful young man. After running away with him, she manages to escape and return to her family, only to be rejected by them. With no alternative, she returns to the young man and seals her fate in ruin. Īrān'dukht herself introduces the story as a "lesson" for "inexperienced girls" who might fall victim to their emotions and jeopardize their future.¹⁵ The subtitle of the novel reads: *Dar atrāf-i huqūq-i nisvān; Barāyi 'ibrat-i khānum'hā* (Regarding women's rights; For edification of ladies), which further demonstrates her deep concerns with gender equality and reforms. Throughout the novel, she reiterates that her desire to write this story rises from the sorrow and concern she feels for her neighbor Maryam. Rather than merely recounting grief, both her poem and the story articulate an emergent feminist sensibility to loss, which is also committed to transforming that loss into a simultaneous caution and care.

Īrān'dukht's second and lesser-known novel, *Yak pardah az zindigī-i ijtimā'ī, Khātirāt-i Āb'alī* (A scene from the social life, Memoirs in Āb'alī), which she published in 1325/1946, still bears the mourning of her late brother. She opens the work with a dedication to Mihrpūr: *bih pas-i afkār va andīshah'hā-yi 'amalī nashudah-'i tu va umīd va ārizū'hā-yi nā'umīd shudah-'i man* (to your unrealized thoughts and ideas and my ruined hopes and expectations).¹⁶ From this personal dedication, the novel shifts into a series of social encounters that extend her private loss into a broader critique of injustice. Set during a short trip to Āb'alī (a countryside near Tehran), the story unfolds through her observations of the everyday lives of ordinary people in Iran. On the streets of Tehran, she notices young boys who are working for a minimum wage instead of attending school. She later meets an old friend Farīdah, whose early marriage and imposed divorce led to a life of prostitution and deprived her of



parenting her only child. This novella ends with the image of a mother in poverty, unable to feed her children, not out of neglect, but because of the crushing weight of social injustice that mostly uneducated women from the lower classes of society had to deal with. Through these scenes, Īrān'dukht applies her mourning and sorrow to a wider practice of care for women of her country, showing how the maternal sensibility that marked her grief for Mihrpūr is in fact a lens for interpreting women's suffering in society. She weaves her private emotions into a social critique by highlighting how women, particularly as mothers, endured the burdens of a nation rushing toward modernity. These works together create a maternal-authorial figure who mourns, critiques, nurtures, and simultaneously advocates for reform through a cautionary and educational approach.

While a poem is always open to endless interpretations from its readers, the short length of Īrān'dukht's only surviving piece leaves very little room for close reading and textual analysis. However, this short elegy finds its meaning when read as resonating with the maternal role that many women of her generation envisioned for themselves as modern participants in the project of nation-building. Despite the persistent pressure in literary criticism to keep formalism and historicism analytically separate,¹⁷ the interpretation of Īrān'dukht's solo poem needs to be historicized to lead us to her broader critical thoughts as a female author in early twentieth-century Iran. By the time Īrān'dukht composed this poem, discourses of women as mothers and healers of the nation were deeply intertwined with the task of caring for the homeland.¹⁸ For the first time, women were given a role in the broader scheme of modernizing their country and their duties as mothers of a new emerging nation were kept abreast of men's influence in politics. While the exact date of the elegy is unknown, it was composed after the death of her brother Mihrpūr, which occurred following Reza Shah's abdication in 1320/1941, and during the early years of the second Pahlavi era. This period was shaped by intense efforts to modernize Iran along European lines, particularly in relation

¹⁷Caroline Levine, *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 14.

¹⁸Tavakoli-Targhi, "From Patriotism to Matriotism," 233

¹⁹Lila Abu-Lughod, *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), 8.

²⁰Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Women With Mustaches and Men Without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity* (California: University of California Press, 2005), 186.

²¹Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Crafting an Educated Housewife in Iran," in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), 102.

²²Īrān'dukht Taymūrtāsh, "Bih munāsibat-i 17 Day va āzādī-i zanān" [In memory of 17 Day and the freedom of women], *Āyandah* 6 (Urdūbihisht 1339/May 1960).

²³Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," trans. Keith Cohen, and Paula Cohen, *Signs* 1, no. 4 (1976): 881.

to social and cultural reforms. As Lila Abu-Lughod has noted, by the turn of the twentieth century, debates across the Middle East, including in Iran, were already centering on women's roles within broader discourses of national progress, anti-colonial resistance, and social transformation.¹⁹ During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, gender dynamics in Iran began to shift significantly. Women were no longer viewed merely as passive individuals, but increasingly as active participants in the project of modernization and nation-building. Their role was reimagined as they were now seen as the educators of future generations and as moral and intellectual companions to men. As a popular slogan of the time proclaimed, "women should be educated because they were educators of children, companions of men, and half of the nation."²⁰ Afsaneh Najmabadi notes that by the early twentieth century, the argument had gained so much importance that women's education took precedence over men's, on the grounds that "from educated women would arise a whole educated nation."²¹ These concerns are frequently reflected in Īrān'dukht's different writings, whether in her repeated appeals to Iranian mothers in *Dukhtar-i tīrāh'bakht va javān-i bu'l-havas*, or in an article she writes years later in memory of Day 17, 1314/January 8, 1936, where she continues to underscore the critical role of mothers in shaping the moral and intellectual fabric of society.²² In a discursive field dominated by male voices who often presumed authority over women's issues, Īrān'dukht's intervention marks a significant shift by proposing an unmediated form of schooling in which a learned and educated woman like her would educate other Iranian women.

While personal and rooted in mourning her brother, this elegy belongs to this wider tradition where feminine writing works to care for and nurture a growing nation. After all, these works are written by a woman, and, as Hélène Cixous reminds us, "in women there is always more or less of the mother."²³ The maternal affect here is not necessarily a biological role accepted by women authors, as Īrān'dukht herself never had any chil-



dren from her marriage, which lasted only three years. This affect is instead a metaphor for the generative force that links a woman author to others through her use of language and the act of writing. As Emily Jeremiah observes, maternal writing “entails a publicizing of maternal experience, and it subverts the traditional notion of mother as an instinctual, purely corporeal being.”²⁴ In this way, maternal sentiment in literature need not belong solely to biological mothers. Rather, it can arise through acts of feminist writing that adopt care and concern for society as political and emotional gestures.

A Poet in Prose

Īrān’dukht’s turn to prose writing, despite her evident poetic talent, reveals the profound influence of the European educational models to which she was exposed, particularly during her time at the Iran Bethel School. This American missionary-run institution combined Christian values with a reformist educational mission and shaped its students through Western pedagogical ideals by exposing them to new literary forms. While Persian literary tradition had long privileged poetry over prose, modern Persian prose emerged largely through contact with European models, especially in terms of form. Following the Constitutional Revolution of 1284–1290/1905–1911, a wave of literary reform emerged as many modernist writers challenged the artificial prose of the Qajar era. Influenced by contact with the West, these writers advocated for clarity and accessibility in literary expression and “emphasized the necessity of the use of simple Persian and indeed encouraged their contributors to write in a language that ordinary people could understand.”²⁵ Although Īrān’dukht’s work often retained lyrical qualities and made references to classical Persian poetry in her writings, her decision to write novellas rather than poetry reflects the modernizing drive of her education and her desire to engage with emerging literary forms that prioritized narrative and reform over classical forms. As a woman composing in prose during the 1930s and 1940s when women’s prose in Iran was just be-

²⁴Emily Jeremiah, “Troublesome Practices: Mothering, Literature, and Ethics” in *Mother Matters: Motherhood as Discourse and Practice*, ed. Andrea O’Reilly (Toronto: ARM Press, 2004), 231.

²⁵Kamran Talattof, *The Politics of Writing in Iran: A History of Modern Persian Literature* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 21.

²⁶Anna Vanzan, "From the Royal Harem to a Post-modern Islamic Society: Some Considerations on Women Prose Writers in Iran from Qajar Times to the 1990s," in *Women, Religion and Culture in Iran*, ed. by Sara Ansari and Vanessa Martin (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2002), 90.

²⁷Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 9.

ginning to develop, Īrān'dukht's writing must be seen as both shaped by and contributing to this cross-cultural literary transformation.

If modern Persian prose emerged with a tangible delay in comparison to its European counterparts, then Persian women's prose suffered a double delay shaped by authors who were not only navigating a process of cultural acculturation but also contending with the constraints of gender. ²⁶ Within this context, Īrān'dukht's literary legacy stands out. Although she was not the only woman poet active in early twentieth-century Iran, she was the first Iranian woman to channel her poetic sensibility into prose, producing what is widely regarded as the first Iranian novel written by a woman. This shift is significant not only because prose writing by women was still uncommon, but because her novellas retain a distinctly poetic texture and sensibility that extend her lyrical voice into narrative form. Rather than marking a break from poetry, her prose reimagines it as a modern literary vehicle capable of articulating the layered and evolving experiences of women in a society undergoing rapid transformation. What makes Īrān'dukht's work especially notable is the way she narrates modernity through the lens of a woman living at a time when women were increasingly entrusted with the responsibility of reforming the nation. Her writing presents the fractured temporalities of this moment, starting with mourning the death of a brother and gradually propelled by a maternal, authorial voice invested in the future of the vatan. In this sense, Īrān'dukht offers a distinctly gendered perspective on modernity, echoing Rita Felski's provocation: "How would our understanding of modernity change if instead of taking male experience as paradigmatic, we were to look instead at texts written primarily by or about women?"²⁷ Īrān'dukht's prose indicates that modernity in Iran cannot be comprehended exclusively through narratives of reform and progress; it can incorporate themes of grief, care, and maternal accountability. Her writing demonstrates that these emotional and social experiences are not on the edge of modernity but are a part of it. By incorporat-



ing mourning and maternal investment into the narrative of the vatan, Īrān'dukht recontextualizes the nation's contemporary path through the perspective of women's lived experiences and the costs, burdens, and unacknowledged efforts they put into the modernization of their nation.

Concluding Notes

Regrettably, we do not have much written material from Īrān'dukht Taymūrtāsh, who was known in her time as much for her poetry as her writings and speeches in periodicals. This could explain why most works that have referred to her have stopped at a biographical level merely to introduce her or highlight her family background. Despite the small amount of surviving textual evidence for Īrān'dukht Taymūrtāsh, one should not solely gauge the importance of her literary and intellectual legacy by its volume, but rather by the depth of insight and impact it holds. While it could be argued that a brief elegy for her brother, Mihrpūr, may not fully offer a complete depiction of her thoughts and concerns as an author, contextualizing it alongside the two other novellas she authored can serve as a foundation for recognizing her influence on early twentieth-century modern Persian literature. The grief and care she wove into her poetry invite interpretation as part of the affective and ideological networks that shaped women's authorial activism of her time. Her decision to write prose, despite her poetic sensibilities, does not make her less of a poet but instead reflects the broader literary reform she was after, like other thinkers of her time. Her poetic prose reflects her commitment to using literature as a tool for social change and education. By embracing a new form of expression, she was able to reach a wider audience and respond to the calls for change. By placing Īrān'dukht's maternal voice in a historical context characterized by both emotional care and political involvement in the educational reform of Iran, we can appreciate a uniquely gendered portrayal of Iranian modernity through a female lens. This perspective sheds light on the significant role women played in shaping the intellectual and

²⁸Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 10.

moral landscape of Iran during this period. It also challenges traditional narratives that often overlook the contributions of female writers and thinkers in discussions of modernity and reform. Īrān'dukht's works embody precisely what Felski terms the "felt experience of being modern" from a woman's standpoint.²⁸ Through her pioneering merging of poetic voice and narrative form, Īrān'dukht not only paved the way for Iranian women's literary expression in prose but also positioned them as active educators of the future generation within the project of Iranian modernity. Īrān'dukht exemplifies what it meant for a woman to write modernity rather than merely inhabit it. Her writing challenges us to expand our understanding of modern Persian literature by centering the affective labor and intellectual agency of women who were shaping, caring for, and educating the nation.

