Conclusion

The pages in this volume showed the socio-cultural structure and characteristics of Iran in modern times. Iranian society and culture came out from the medieval and archaic rule of the Qajarites, but even in 20th century change was imposed from above, creating major tensions in all area of Iranian society. Changes that benefitted some groups, especially the modernized and westernized new middle and upper classes, often disfavoured the traditional middle classes (or bazaaris, sometimes inadequately called the petty bourgeoisie) and other popular classes. Iran, because of the oil and the speed of “modernization”, even more dramatically than most countries, experienced more increased tensions between the traditional classes and their culture than the westernized classes and theirs.

In the 1960s and 1970s there was an evolution – both in the Ulema and Western educated groups – from more westernized and “modern” positions to more “traditional”, “Islamic”, and sometimes fundamentalist ones. For non-followers, however, the change toward “traditional” ideas, even though not exclusive to Iran, may appear paradoxical. A number of reasons for the popularization of Islam in the 1960s and 1970s may however be suggested. (1) Anti-imperialism, specifically dislike of actions
by the U.S. and Israel in post-war Iran made it difficult to borrow the ideology of those seen as imperialists and oppressors. (2) The ex-Shah was seen as westernizer, associated with the U.S. and Israel, and also with jailing, torture, oppression, corruption and uprooting people. The Shah and those around him followed western ideas and ways and so alternative ideologies to the Shah's became increasingly non-western. (3) The Shah and the SAVAK managed to destroy most secular oppositional organizations. Whether leftist or centrist, with the exception of student groups and small guerilla groups that were also decimated. This left the informal religious – bazaar network the only strong oppositional group. To keep alive hostility to tyranny Karbala sermons, plays and processions were enacted. It was impossible to jail all those who led or participated in such religio-politico ceremonies. (4) Even among western-trained intellectuals there developed profound feelings of alienation as the country became crowded with westerners and old ways and structures were forcibly changed. Most twentieth century novelists and essayists were oppositional, but one may trace the evolution of this opposition from a predominantly leftist and secular one (Alavi, Hedayat, Behrangi and others) through Jalal Al-e Ahmed (d.1969) who, coming from a clerical family, himself went through several phases typical of his generation. He was first a communist then a left-liberal, increasingly disturbed by mindless borrowings of the worst things from the west—which he attacked in his famous Gharbzadegi
(Westoxication); and finally seeking to return to Islam and making a pilgrimage to Mecca – although from his critical account of what he experienced it is unclear whether he achieved his religious aim.

In most areas concerning the position of Women, Iran and many Islamic countries have recently been more conservative than non-Islamic countries; Indian Purdah and Chinese foot-binding, for example were virtually erazed, while veiling persist and may even be more widespread than in the past. One reason is that some customs regarding women are found in the Qoran, believed by pious Muslims to be the literal word of God. Among these are male dominance in marriage, easy divorce for men but not for women and polygamy.

On this (Veiling of Women) as on other matters there was a widening twentieth century split between the “two cultures” – the modernized or westernized culture centering on the new upper and middle classes and the traditional culture centering in the bazaar classes. Reforming authors and poets from the late nineteenth century on increasingly called for unveiling, women’s education, and greater equality between the sexes, while the traditional culture resisted and increasingly put forth written arguments justifying at least a degree of inequality. Reza Shah introduced co-education at the Universities and girl’s public education, and also legislated forcible unveiling in 1936. There was a
backlash regarding women's dress after his 1941 abdication; bazaar and popular class women returned to the *Chador*, though without a face veil, and *Chadors* gradually spread to villages where they had not been seen before.

The ex-Shah showed interest in women's rights. He supported women's suffrage in 1963 and the Family Protection Act of 1967/75 which gave women greater equality in marriage, divorce and child custody (formerly automatically going to the husband after a very young age). However conservatism on women's position with an increasingly popular ulama created a problem for more the liberal group. This undermined the political atmosphere and paved way for the establishment of an Islamic republic. Therefore those supporting modernization should be warned of the pitfalls of facile, western-oriented, rapid “modernization”. Education on modern lines became an urgent realization for the Iranians clamouring for reforms in the twentieth century.

With the establishment of Pahlavi rule Higher education got an impetus and the first measure was the creation of an Arts and Sciences Faculty, first called *Daral – Mo’allemin-e Ali* and later renamed *Daneshsara-ye ‘Ali*, in *Darul Funun* which was lying dilapidated. Later, in 1934 an autonomous university of Tehran with six faculties was setup.
A new university arose in 1966, organized on a private basis, the National University (Daneshgah-e-Melli) had in 1970 3000 students. Its department included architecture, economics, and political science, law, medicine, literature, humanities, dentistry, and natural sciences. In the mid-1970s its chancellor was Seyyed Hosayn Nasr, a noted Sufi Philosopher.

In 1966 the Aryamehr University, with its predominantly technological character, was founded by imperial decree. Initially it was planned to move it to Isfahan, but eventually it was established in Tehran. Instruction was offered in electricity, mechanics, chemistry, metallurgy, natural sciences, and industrial management.

To counteract excessive centralization of government and education in the capital, steps were taken to develop educational institutions in the provinces. This was competitively easy in the western parts of the country but difficult in the south and east, where deserts hindered communication – Tabriz, the largest city after Tehran, had its university, the Daneshgah-e Azarbayjan founded soon after the war in 1946. The journal of its philosophy faculty, Nashriyyehye danesh Kadeh – ye adabiyat va 'olum-e ensani. Besides this faculty the university comprised the departments of agriculture, engineering, medicine, pharmacology, natural sciences, and dentistry attached to it.
The University of Mashhad (Daneshgah-e Ferdowsi) became known for its emphasis on philosophy and for its journal, Majalleh – ye daneshkadeh-ye adabiyat va 'olum-e ensani. Famous for its holy shrine of Reza, the eight Imam, Mashhad developed excellence in the theological studies under the direction of the dean of the theological faculty, Dr. Majtahezadeh.

In 1962 a new development took place: the Pahlavi university was created in Tehran along American lines. Instruction was given in literature, natural sciences, medicine, agriculture, and engineering. An institute of agricultural technology formed part of the university, as well as a college for nurses. Other units included the Sa’di Hospital, the Khalili clinic for Ophthalmology, and the great Namazi Hospital with its section for nuclear medicine.

There was no doubt that mass education [apart from above mentioned universities for Higher education, elementary and secondary schools, foreign and special schools, literacy corps (Prompted by Md Reza Shah campaign for improvement in literacy in Iran, UNESCO held its first International Congress against Illiteracy in Tehran in 1965) were set up] was definitely being introduced in Iran. By 1976 Iran’s pre-university student population had attained 7 million as compared with 5,700,000 in 1972-73.
Mostly because of education, and especially as a result of the conscious attempt by the government, women have been given an important share in the social, economic, and political life of the country. In the Pahlavi phase we saw women senators, deputies of the Majlis, lawyers, educators and heads of administrative departments. Literacy and Health corps that were originally devised for men as an alternative to military service, later also served the women. In present scenario the new president of Iran, Seyed Mohammad Khatami won the May 23, 1997 elections due to positive response from women—one of Khatami biggest vote banks— and responded by nominating a 36 year-old woman journalist, Masoumeh Ebtekar, (US-educated associate professor at Tehran’s Teachers University), as one of the five vice presidents.

The most striking feature of the Prose literature of the period was its preoccupation with social and national problems in all their complexities, with social criticism and the impact of new ideas on human problems. Concern of literature with the predicaments of man in society was now greatly deepened, became widespread throughout Iran and spread in diverse art forms; Novel, Drama, Short story. As already seen, there were close affinities between the romantic movement and the nationalist and social-revolutionary movements.
The great tradition of creativity and subjectivity of Persian literature was further structured by contribution from a series of superb writers from Qaim Maqam Farahani to Ali Muhammad Afghani, with Jamalzadah’s, Yake Bud Yake na Bud crystallising the maturity of modern Persian Prose literature as a turning point in the establishment of modern literary idiom in prose. Bourgeoisie behaviour, cramping social conventions, prostitution, and the subjection of women and the psychological problems as they affected human relations, became the preoccupation of the writers of modern day Iran.

As we all know in the middle and late decades of the nineteenth century, Iran was increasingly opened to western economic expansion, which resulted in influx of western military realities, educational systems and cultural influences. Teachers were recruited from Europe and in addition to bringing western education to Iran, influenced many Iranian students to study abroad. It has often been proposed that the return of these students, (or their publications) from abroad was the impetus for the nationalistic and social yearnings of modern Iran. This is not surprising, as they were maturing in a European cultural milieu that revelled in the romantic expression and national determination. A simple glance at the first works translated into Persian (excluding of course technical manuals) reveals the source of these students rage at the short comings of their
fatherland. They were enthralled by the romantic, patriotic and passionate heroes in the works of Dumas, Cervantes, Verne and Hugo and by the drama of Moliere. They had a new goal for Iran. Comparing their new lives to the backward system dominating Iran they were determined to effect reform. Their medium was the word.

Within this context, the need for a new form of expression became apparent. The translations of western works, the plans of the editors, and in the mushrooming press, even the reporting of daily events required a new prose style. The reaction and resistance of the established literati and the public to those innovations gave the Persian language and its literary genres much of their modern direction.

The upheaval of the constitutional period provided much of the impetus for change in writing tradition, with prose being introduced in great quantity from the west. Prose writing had not been unknown in Iran but in the previous centuries it had been limited to the fields of theology, philosophy and history, or to short moralistic and anecdotal tables. Moreover, the most admired form of that prose had been a style that included metered and rhymed elements. This rhymed prose, Sāj, was an illustration of the strong hold poetic aruz had on all artistic sensibilities. Even then, it was restricted primarily to history, and there had been no tradition of creative fiction. The introduction of the latter was received on
the one hand by an eager public conscious of its entertainment value, and on the other hand, by sharply critical conservative literati who felt responsible, as defenders of the old faith, to be a bulwark against its contaminating influence.

As described earlier there were, however several internal problems with original prose works - problems more significant than opposition to them by the literary establishment. While a purely prose idiom was still evolving and indirect, complex and logical narrative patterns were still ingrained, most attempts at longer works were aesthetically unsuccessful. Original Persian novels were unpalatable to the western tastes they were imitating. Adventure was staid, love had no fervour, and patriotism was of mundane nature. The writers of prose fiction had chosen the historical novel as the vehicle for their social and political comments but there drawbacks rendered their writing sterile. Part of the problem lay in the nature of their attempts: loath or unable to be really bold, enamoured with the historical - romantic novels of Dumas, Hugo, and Verne, they adopted a form that was beyond the capacities of their fledgling talents.

One of the best and most successful of these attempts was Badi’s An Old Legend or the History of Cyrus. Having studied Achaemenid history in western sources, his novel is historically accurate which in itself was an innovative achievement. More than that through this honest but
glorified adventure, set in an Iranian golden age, he hoped to elicit a subliminal patriotic identification. Badi stands above others of this period, such as Zain-al-Abedin Mo’taman and Kamal, through his relatively deep characterisation and the unification of the plot that he managed to produce.

In contrast, the Heroes of Tangestan by Hosayn Roknzadeh Adamiyat can by no standards be called creative literature or even completely composed. What it is however, is a strong patriotic statement couched in a narrative that deals with an uprising against the British and Russian occupation of Iran during world war I. The prose is overbearing and unimaginative. The narrative is often interrupted with dry excerpts from official documents. It was critically acclaimed, nonetheless, for its allegorical condemnation of England and for its suspicion of European influences in Iran.

By far the most vibrant genre of modern Persian prose, the one in which issues and art were equally served, was the short story. There were exceptions and a work like Ahu Khanum’s Husband by Ali Muhammad Afghani proved that as a form of art, as a form of social criticism, and a vehicle for naturalistic expression, the novel had an important future. But the truly great Persian prose works to date have been the short story and the novella.
In the short story, the Persian writer found his reprieve from keeping up the suspense of the dialogue and from the stringencies of developmental plot and characterisation. He was able to make powerful use of stereotypical characters and common institutions, particularly in satires, without be labouring them or being required to examine them more closely. The author needed only minimal plot and significant effective, terse dialogue. Indeed one of the greatest advances in modern Persian prose, and incidentally drama, was the adoption of colloquial and socially distinctive dialogue. However, given the skill and the impetus, deep characterisation and psychological motivations were also accommodated. Stylistically, the short, straight forward syntax, prized by the journalistic reformers of prose, was of perfect adaptability for the short story.

The Persian short story particularly in the twenties and thirties, cannot be isolated from the world scene, as it owed most of its development to the short stories and novellas of the west, as the interwar decades, when Jamalzadeh, who was educated in the west, was publishing, and Hedayat was a student in France, was the high period of the short story; Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Maugham, and Satre were its demigods.

Contact with Europe was essential, but contact with Europe alone did not initiate literary change. Rather, it was the reaction of those Iranian students to what and how European artistic and national ideals were saying
by inference about their homeland, where feudalism was just entering its
deaththroes a social and economic feudalism that sustained itself by class
immobility, religious intransigence, and economic repression, reflected in a
literature that had canonised its own rigidity. Unable to manipulate
political and social forces for change, the pen was their only weapon. They
immediately discovered, however, that a new literate social order required
a new literary idiom, and they were determined to create one. Tied as they
were to past, they moulded not from nothing but from what was at hand.

Of critical pertinence was the realisation that purely social and
patriotic themes were important, but that they severely limited the
celebration of universally literary themes. This realisation of an artistic
responsibility as well as a social one, which arose in the twenties and is
reflected in the literary debate, is the jump that brought Iran into the
modern literary fold. The literary forms had themselves evolved to a point
from which greater sophistication was attainable without their internal
evolution and readjustment.

More than that, once exposed to new possibilities and types of
stylistic devices and contrivances, the Iranian authors, through painstaking
elimination and alteration, evolved styles that today are both independent
and self determined, and share rather than follow international direction.
Contemporary short story writing has developed, paralleling the short story
writing of the rest of the world. While its participation in a literary aesthetic transcends national boundaries, its development and its expression is unquestionably Persian.

From the writer; Sadigh Chubak's viewpoint, we knew that Persian society in the twentieth century - generally from 1900-1960 was full of in contriveable evils countermanding human progress. But this was not whole some and at the same time had some genuine qualities which is special to the Iranian character. For example though critics have taken, characters in Chubak's works to be controversial and unconventional one should support the writer's effort to bring a successful portrayal of an Iranian identity and its readjustment with the traditional Iranian society.

In modern times, as a conscious onlookers and activators the writers were trying hard to interpret various social cultural issues with a new personal perspective. Initially, as had been seen, there was an attempt to increase the level of nationalistic fervour by production of novels on historical themes. Then there was a direct portrayal of the backwardness of social behaviour, with issues affecting Iranian social fabric being brought onto the surface, and making the readers in turn to develop a conscious approach to them. But writer remained impartial and immune to any influences or pressure. To him the portrayal of social ills was significant, not whether they go down the throats of public with corresponding success.
or failure. There were a series of efforts, from every corner for bringing a
new look to the Iranian society and culture, and the writer was nevertheless
an important catalyst in it.

Variations in the attitude of the creative man to new scientific
developments, to social commitments and to himself, initially resulted in
cultural crisis in all parts of the world. To assume that European society
was inimical and immune to crisis in modern times will be farfetched
conclusion. For example, in France Jules Romains sketches the deepening
crisis of West European society in the quarter century before Hitler through
27 inter connected novels, “Men of Good Will” (*les Hommes de bonne
volonte*). In Britain John Galsworthy’s six volumes of the Forsyte Saga
1906-28 provides to the people the gradual disintegration and growing
uncertainties of a middle class family as an indication of English middle
class life. To say at the end, the socio-cultural problems in Iran in modern
times were result of growing change and parting of ways with traditional
patterns. A phase necessary before crystallisation of more fundamental and
accepted socio-cultural norms of scientific world.