

Introduction

Born in mid-1980s Iran, I grew up hearing “Marg bar Āmrikā” (Down with the US). This was my first encounter with the US and this still continues to be the Iranian state’s way of introducing the US to us: the “Great Satan.”¹ As a schoolboy I was exposed to the school textbooks, which “sketch a dark picture of the Iranian regime’s alleged enemy.”² At the same time, my parents sent me to a language school to learn English. The textbooks were not Iranian and the image they depicted of the US was not that of the “Great Satan.” After the 9/11 attacks and during the period in which “axis of evil” discourse was popular, I started studying English literature at university. As an undergraduate, I came to know a different US, a country that was not as evil as depicted by the Iranian state.³ Although there has been (and still is) no major for American literature in Iranian academia, I did a comparative study on R.W. Emerson and Suhrāb Sipihrī in my MA thesis and I could find some points of similarity and, of course, points of difference between two enemy countries.

In my PhD dissertation, a comparative study of Walt Whitman and Nīmā Yūshij’s literary innovations, I investigated the sociopolitical and literary contexts of nineteenth-century America and those of constitutional Iran to analyse how Whitman and Nīmā translated the discourses of their societies into literary discourses and developed free verse and New Poetry.⁴ There I realised some significant points of convergence between the two countries. Having worked comparatively on American literature and Persian poetry, I became interested in the cultural and literary relations between the two countries. In a section entitled “Suggestions for Further Study” in my dissertation I mentioned the reception of Whitman in Persian-speaking countries as a topic one can delve into. During my Humboldt postdoctoral fellowship I turned towards reception studies and developed my research into a broad study of Whitman’s Iranian reception to delve into the cultural and literary relations between the “Great Satan” and a significant constituent of “the axis of evil.”

In Iran American literature is known mainly for plays and novels, with staged performances of plays by Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller along with translations of works by Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Herman Melville and Mark Twain, and more recently Jhumpa Lahiri, J.D. Salinger, Paul Auster, Saul Bellow and Joyce Carol Oates. However, American literature remained almost entirely neglected in Iran in the period up to the end of Rizā Shāh's reign in 1941, when the focus of literary translation into Persian was predominantly on French and Russian literature. A significant factor at the time was the cultural influence of France; Iranian intellectuals were mostly educated in France, and they translated various literary works from French. Lack of familiarity with English was another reason for neglecting American literature.

In 1940s Iran there was an explosive increase in the number of translations. Due to the rise of the Leftist movement after the fall of Rizā Shāh, Russian literature dominated the translation of literary works into Persian. Following World War II, through a translation effort of the pro-Soviet Tūdiḥ Party of Iran, Marxist ideas became popular in Iran. The increasing Russian influence in 1940s Iran was an alarm call to the US. During the cold war, Iran turned into a front line of cultural cold war between two super-powers, the Soviet Union and the United States. The 1953 coup increased the US's influence in Iranian politics. There was also a need to take some measures in cultural diplomacy, the idea behind which was to use books, among other things, as a cheap and peaceful instrument in order to increase the US cultural presence and influence and to counter the growing threat of communism in Iran. The establishment of the Tehran office of the Franklin Book Programs, Inc. in 1954, not long after the coup, was one such measure.

Founded in 1952, Franklin Book Programs was an American corporation whose main focus was on assisting the publication of translations of US books into local languages in the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Franklin turned into "the unofficial representative of the entire American book world to book interests of other, usually Third World, countries."⁵ The program had seventeen offices around the world, the largest of which was the one in Tehran. Some of the most outstanding public figures and intellectuals including Aḥmad Ārām, Īraj Afshār, Muḥammad-Ja'far Mahjūb, Muḥammad Mo'īn, and Ehsan Yarshater participated in Franklin/Tehran. In 25 years of activity in Iran, from 1954 to 1979, it published about eight hundred books, most of which were translations of American works,⁶ including *The Call of the Wild*, an edition of Robert Frost's poems, *Gone with the Wind*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *The House*

of *Seven Gables*, an edition of Whitman's poems, *Moby Dick*, *My Antonia*, *The Sound and the Fury*, and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Thanks to the efforts of the Franklin/Tehran and a few major publishers including the Institute for Translation and Publication of Books (Bungāh-i Tarjumih va Nashr-i Kitāb), founded in 1953 by Ehsan Yarshater, the translation of American novels remained a vibrant segment of the publishing field by attracting many young translators. Having been introduced to American fiction, Iranian audiences felt the desire to know the history of American literature. Hasan Javadi's translation of Willis Wager's *American Literature: A World View* (1968), published in 1976, was the first step to satisfy such a desire.

The increasing American influence in the four decades preceding the 1979 Revolution was disapproved of by the new "Islamic" system. Turned into the official discourse of the post-1979 political system, the discourse of "āmrikā-sitizi" (i.e. hostility towards the US), depicting an image of the "corrupt" "evil" "enemy" out of the US, tried to erase the manifestations of the American influence of the pre-revolutionary period. However, other discourses were also at work and American novels remained popular. After a decade of stagnation that covered the Cultural Revolution (1980–1983) and the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988), translations of American works along with retranslations and reprints of previously translated works continued. Instrumental in introducing American literature into Iran were translators of American literature into Persian including Muḥammad Qāzī (1913–1998), Sīmīn Dānishvar (1921–2012), Ibrāhīm Gulistān (1922–), Parvīz Dāryūsh (1923–2001), Najaf Daryābandarī (1929–), Karīm Imāmī (1930–2005), Bahman Shu'lihvar (1941–), Šālīḥ Ḥuseynī (1946–), and Aḥmad Ukhuvvat (1951–).

American novelists popular in Iran include Jack London, Mark Twain, John Steinbeck, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Isaac Asimov, Salinger, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Pearl Buck, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner and Herman Melville. Some works by the aforementioned writers have been translated several times by different translators. From among the contemporary writers Toni Morrison, Philip Roth, Don DeLillo, and Paul Auster should be mentioned. *Huckleberry Finn*, one of the first American novels translated into Persian, has been translated six times and reprinted many times. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Moby Dick*, *Great Gatsby*, *Catcher in the Rye*, *The Old Man and the Sea*, *Of Mice and Men*, *The Prince and the Pauper*, and *The Call of the Wild* are among the most popular American works in this genre. American novels have also been adapted for the screen; Riżā Mīrlūhī's adaptation of *Of Mice and Men* in *Tupulī* (1972) is an early example. According to Iranian film critics Nāšir

Taqvāyī's adaptation of *To Have and Have Not* in *Nākhudā Khūrshīd* (1987) is the best adaptation of world literature in Iranian cinema. The only adaptation of J.D. Salinger to screen worldwide is worth mentioning; Dariush Mehrjui, a major figure of Iran's New Wave cinema, did not require permission for *Parī* (1995), an adaptation of *Franny and Zooey* and "A Perfect Day for Bananafish," from Salinger's *Nine Stories*.

"The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" (1936), translated into Persian by Gulistān and published in 1949, was among the first American short stories translated into Persian. Along with Hemingway, Stephen Crane, Faulkner, and Stephen Vincent Benét are the first American short story writers translated into Persian. Hemingway, Melville, Raymond Carver, Steinbeck, Salinger and Falkner are among the most read American short story writers in Iran. American short stories have also been adapted for the screen; Hinrik Istipānīyān and Sālār 'Ishqī's adaptation of "The Million Pound Bank Note" in *Chik-i Yik Milyūn Tūmānī* (1959) is an early example. One may also refer to Manšūr Tih-rānī's adaptation of "The Last Leaf" in *Barg va Bād* (1985).

American plays such as *The Glass Menagerie*, *Death of a Salesman*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and *A View from the Bridge* have been translated and staged in Iran. The translation and staging of American plays have been increasing in recent decades. Tennessee Williams, Thornton Wilder, Sam Shepard, Eugene O'Neill and Arthur Miller are the most popular American dramatists. American plays have also been adapted for the screen; Bahrām Tavakkulī's adaptation of *The Glass Menagerie* in *Īnjā Bidūn-i Man* (2011) and his adaptation of *A Streetcar Named Desire* in *Bigānih* (2014) along with Asghar Farhādī's adaptation of *Death of a Salesman* in *Furūshandih* (2016) are just a few recent examples.

It is American fiction and particularly the American novel that most attracted Iranians' attention. In contrast to the other genres, American poetry is not very popular in Iran. Generally speaking, poetry is not the most popular genre in Persian translation; perhaps the rich tradition of Persian poetry does not feel the need to translate foreign poetry. And when foreign poetry is translated, it is traditionally dominated by French and Russian. However, a few American poets have found their place in Iran. As the number and chronological precedence of translations indicate, Whitman is one such poet.

Following the practice adopted in post-colonial studies of distinguishing between "English" (the language of England) and "english" (the world language), Thomas distinguishes between "Whitman" (the historical figure embedded in nineteenth-century American culture) and "whitman" (the

world poet who has been radically realigned as various cultures have adopted him into their own literary traditions and have read his works in defamiliarising contexts).⁷ As American literature turns into World Literature, multiple Whitmans are appearing, and we have entered the era in which we need to study both “Whitman” and “whitman.” Analysing how Whitman becomes whitman contributes to the globalisation of American studies.⁸

Moving in the same path as that of *Walt Whitman and the World*, the present volume intends to provide readers with fresh insights into the reception of Walt Whitman (1819–1892) in unfamiliar cultural contexts to broaden “the rather provincial understanding of Whitman held by many American readers and writers” who, still seeing him within the American context, “tend to be oblivious to the variety of ways that Whitman has been *construed* for the purposes and needs of other cultures” (emphasis added).⁹ Whitman scholars based in US universities often hear about historical events of the US when they discuss Whitman, so it is definitely amazing to learn about Whitman in non-American contexts such as post-constitutional or post-2009 Iran. As Gutman argues, the “study and reception of American literature reveals national identity. When one culture abuts another, the way in which one encounters or assimilates the other is defining in special ways.”¹⁰ Tracking the ways in which Whitman becomes a Persian Whitman in Iran contributes not only to the globalisation of American studies, but also to a better appreciation of Iranian culture.

Whitman, the poet of “Salut au Monde!,” has been received by diverse audiences from around the world. Literary and cultural scholars have studied Whitman’s interaction with social, political and literary movements of different countries. Along with Blodgett’s 1934 book, *Walt Whitman in England*, which was the first formal reception study of the poet in an international context, Erkkilä’s *Walt Whitman among the French* (1980), Grünzweig’s *Constructing the German Walt Whitman* (1995), Thomas’s *Transatlantic Connections: Whitman U.S., Whitman U.K.* (2005), Skwara’s “Polski Whitman”: *O Funkcjonowaniu Poety Obcego w Kulturze Narodowej* [*The Polish Whitman”: On the Functioning of the Poet in a National Culture*] (2010) and *Polskie serie recepcyjne wierszy Walta Whitmana* [*Polish Serial Reception of Walt Whitman’s Poems*] (2015) are the major monographs in the field.¹¹ On a smaller scale, Whitman’s reception has been studied for such diverse countries as Spain, Brazil, Portugal, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, the Former Yugoslavia, Croatia, Slovenia, Russia, Iceland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Israel, India, Korea, China, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Japan.¹²

The history of Whitman's reception in Iran, which started in 1922 with Yūsif I'tiṣāmī's one-page translation, has so far witnessed four book-length translations, a significant number of translations published in newspapers and other periodicals along with activities in academia including theses and papers. One should also bear in mind the creative and critical reception of Whitman, tracing back to the early stages of Whitman's presence in Persia, and a forthcoming book-length translation by Mehrdad Fallah (1960–), a poet. Despite his continuing presence in Iran, Whitman's reception in this country has remained unexplored by Whitman scholars. Furthermore, Iranian reception of Western literature is a field still in its infancy and under-researched, particularly due to contemporary political circumstances. The present volume fills this significant gap by examining the process of Whitman's heretofore unexplored reception in Iran. Like Hermans, who elaborated on translation not as a question of transmitting content, but instead as a question of the recipient construing meaning,¹³ the present volume is primarily involved with the Persian Whitman Iranians *construe* and *construct* rather than the American Whitman's travel to Iran.

Modern Iran saw increasing American influence in the four decades preceding the 1979 "Islamic" Revolution. Calling the American influence an instance of "cultural invasion", the new "Islamic" system tries to reduce this influence. Contradictorily, Whitman is even more strongly present in this post-Revolutionary period than in the previous period. With its changing attitude towards the US, modern Iran deserves a significant case study.

Whitman was undeniably a force in the development of modernist poetry in different national contexts. His role in the modernist Chinese literature and in Brazilian literary modernism was investigated.¹⁴ One can trace a relation between the desire to break with traditional norms of literature and attention to the father of American free verse in various countries. One can also trace a relationship between the rise of Persian literary modernism and the emergence of Whitman in Persia. The first four decades of the twentieth century were significant in the development of modern Persian poetry. As this volume will show, the outcome of the modernist poetic activities in those decades was New Poetry developed by Nīmā Yūshīj. It was no coincidence that the first four decades of the twentieth century witnessed the first critical reading of Whitman in Persian, along with the first creative reception and the first translation of Whitman into Persian.

In his study of West-China comparative literary studies, Cai writes about the polemics of similitude and the polemics of difference and calls for the

elimination of superiority/inferiority binary opposition which will lead to a better understanding of the other.¹⁵ Thinking about the West-Iran comparative literary studies, I should mention “the polemics of influence/reception and call for the elimination of superiority/inferiority binary opposition in Iranian comparative studies. Appreciating the significance of reception study may contribute to the elimination of the cultural superiority in the practice of comparative literature in Iran.”¹⁶ A recently published paper of mine studies a nineteenth-century US reception of Ḥāfīz.¹⁷ My concern with reception covers both directions: the reception of American culture in Iran and the other way around. This approach to the question of reception leads to a clear understanding of reception as an intercultural dialogue.

The present volume studies Whitman’s Persian reception on three levels. The first *critical reading* of Whitman was offered by Nīmā Yūshij, the pioneer of modern poetry in Iran. He made a seminal statement on Whitman’s relevance to the emerging “urban” modernity, highlighting Whitman’s poetic innovations and free style. The present monograph also examines the *creative reception* of Whitman in Iran. The earliest instance of such creative receptions is Parvīn I’tiṣāmī’s reworking of Whitman’s “A Noiseless Patient Spider” in “God’s Weaver”. Parvīn, the acclaimed twentieth-century woman poet of Iran, introduced in her poetry a spider with unprecedented characteristics which, as I discuss in Chapter six, was an appropriation of Whitman’s “A Noiseless, Patient Spider”. The other level of Whitman’s reception is that of *translation*. Yūsif I’tiṣāmī’s translation brought about the emergence of the first Persian Whitman, a figure that, if not radical or revolutionary, was progressive and corresponded with the country’s constitutional movement towards democracy and human rights. The present volume studies the ways different Persian translators of Whitman produce their own unique Whitmans. Despite the differences, these versions of Whitman have some points of convergence that form the Persian Whitman.

In discussions on the development of democracy in the Middle East, much attention has been paid to the recent developments known as the Arab Spring. The Iranian Constitutional Revolution (1905–1911) indicates that democracy in this region has a much longer history. From a literary perspective, this revolution is the starting point of the reception of the American poet of democracy and of hetero-/homosexuality in an Islamic Middle Eastern country moving towards democracy. Challenging the widely-held perception of Iran as an isolated society and that of the antagonism between Western culture and the “Islamic Middle East”, the present monograph contributes to the understanding of Iranian assimilation of modern ideas.

According to Praver, a writer's willingness to connect with another writer and "to allow it to affect his own literary creations, must depend on a feeling of kinship, or fascinated hostility."¹⁸ These factors have determining roles in the reception of a writer in a foreign country. The cultural importations do not materialise spontaneously, but according to the *ideological necessity* of the receptor. The present monograph takes into consideration the role of Iran's sociopolitical and literary necessities in the reception of Whitman. The volume makes use of the well-established analogy between Whitman and Persian literature in its investigation of Whitman's reception in Iran.¹⁹ Since reception theory forms the theoretical framework of the present monograph, it studies translations of Whitman into Persian in combination with other reception documents such as reviews and statements by translators; the role of the translators as cultural mediators will also be highlighted.

Since the present monograph studies various discourses of Iranian society and their interaction with Whitman's reception, it will employ New Historicism as a critical approach. Discourse, a key concept in New Historicism, is defined as "a social language created by particular cultural conditions at a particular time and place" that "expresses a particular way of understanding human experience."²⁰ The present volume studies how Whitman's reception in Iran represents the interaction of different discourses, including democracy; how it affects and is affected by them; how it deals with the dominant discourse; how it interacts *mutually* with the contemporary discourses; and how this interaction has changed throughout history. It will elaborate on how Whitman's subversive energy was at work when his writing was deployed by political parties to further their political ideology.

From a New Historicist point of view, all events shape and are shaped by the culture in which they emerge. The present monograph extends this New Historicist view to the field of reception studies. It pays close attention to the sociopolitical context, as well as the literary context of Whitman's reception in Iran. It takes into consideration that the relation between a given text and its context, whether sociopolitical or literary, is *mutual*.

Studies on the status of a writer in a foreign country often pay too much attention to the writer, sometimes to the point of ignoring the inevitable *dialogue* between the writer and the foreign context. Even the studies that recognise a dialogue between a given writer and a foreign context consider the dialogue to be mostly, if not merely, *diachronic*. For instance the influence of a classical, medieval or modern literary or philosophical movement or school on a given writer is studied along with the influence of the same writer on the country or culture which previously influenced the writer. This

view of the dialogue between a writer and a country uses a chronological approach to elaborate on a diachronic mutual give and take.

The present volume recognises a dialogue, a *synchronic* reciprocal interaction between Whitman and modern Iran. As Whitman brings his modern messages to Iran, modern Iran constructs its different versions of Whitman. It deals not just with Whitman, but the Persian Whitman, a new phenomenon that is the outcome of the dialogue, both diachronic and synchronic, between the Persian culture and an American poet. This monograph tries to elaborate on how sociopolitical and literary discourses of Iran engage in a dialogue with Whitman; this *simultaneous* mutual give and take is a significant aspect of reception. The Persian Whitman is a new phenomenon that is both Whitmanian and Persian, and it is more than the sum of the two. This focus on synchronic reciprocal intercultural dialogue in the study of a writer in a foreign context is the focus in the approach of the present monograph. Social Sciences and Humanities scholars will find this approach particularly useful in studying the reception of ideas and schools of thought in foreign contexts. It will lead to a deeper appreciation of how various literary, social, political and philosophical theories are translated, received, adapted, indigenised and appropriated in different countries and how each context is an individual case different from any other.

Considering both the “cultural turn” and the “sociological turn” in Translation Studies, the present volume pays close attention not only to source text, but also to the target contexts and many different agents working in between the two. As paratext, including epitext and peritext, plays an important role in the interpretation of a text, the present volume does not confine itself to the study of the texts of Whitman’s poetry and their Persian translations. It pays close attention to both the epitext (things outside a volume such as reviews and the translator’s comments) in chapters four, five, seven, eight and nine, and the peritext (things inside the bound volume such as the table of contents, footnotes, the covers, the publisher’s and the translator’s prefaces) in chapters four, seven, eight and nine.

Organisation of the Book

The chapters in this book are divided according to the different forms of reception including creative, critical and political, along with, of course, translation (both of the written text and of image). Although the chapters are not divided according to the periods in the history of Iran, the chronological

order is observed to provide the reader with a thorough understanding of the formation and development of Whitman's reception in Iran.

In writing this monograph I have been keenly aware that such an interdisciplinary study draws at least three distinct audiences from different backgrounds, including Persian literature and comparative studies. Following Whitman's democratic inclusive approach, I tried to receive all these audiences warmly and to provide each group with fresh insights. The first three chapters focus on Whitman, his poetic innovation and his literary and sociopolitical context including the dominant discourses of the nineteenth-century US. What is discussed in these chapters on Whitman's life and work is primarily intended to relate to his reception in Iran. Therefore, these chapters are selective and they do not delve into certain aspects of his work. Chapter one, which covers Whitman's life and work, discusses different editions of *Leaves of Grass*, particularly the first edition published in 1855. Chapter two investigates Whitman's turn from Democratic politics to democratic poetics. Whitman understands the sociopolitical context of his country and feels the necessity of developing a new poetics and a new poetry. He realises the necessity of democracy to his nation, but he does not confine democracy to politics. He understands that the democratic culture needs a democratic art; thus trying to translate democracy into poetics. The new nation, having achieved political independence from Britain, needs a new poetry that would be an artistic manifestation of American democracy. Whitman strongly believes that art has the power to transform the aristocratic culture and art into democratic ones. His democratic poetry and poetics is an attempt to bring democracy to the mind and manners of every individual.

From the revolutionary era to the culmination of Whitman's poetic career, American nationalism and American democracy were the dominant discourses of the country and the two discourses were interconnected. Chapter three delves into the interconnectedness of democracy and nationalism in a certain period in the history of the US. In the political context it can be traced in Paine's *Common Sense*, the Declaration of Independence, George Washington and the Civil War. In the literary context the interconnectedness of literary nationalism and literary democracy can be traced in Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, Jefferson, Bryant, The Young America Movement, Emerson and Whitman.

Chapter four studies the first Persian translation of Whitman by Yūsif I'tišāmī published in October 1922. This is the period following the constitutional revolution, which took place in the early twentieth century. Born in Tabrīz, an intersection of native and foreign cultures, and familiar with

several languages, I'tiṣāmī was an intellectual who tried to transfer his knowledge of other cultures, including the American, to his compatriots. In the post-constitutional period in Iran a poet was mainly regarded as a cultural reformist informing the nation of its backwardness and Western progress. As the chapter indicates, the first Iranian Whitman, depicted in I'tiṣāmī's translation, was progressive, if not radical or revolutionary, and corresponded with the country's constitutional movement towards democracy. The fact that the Persians chose Whitman from among American writers in 1922, when there was not much American literature and even less American poetry in Persia, is itself significant in their movement towards modernity.

Characteristically, the rise of literary modernism coincided with significant developments in the reception of Whitman worldwide. One can also trace a relationship between the rise of Persian literary modernism and the emergence of Whitman in Iran. To modernise Persian poetry, Nīmā Yūshij, known as the father of Persian New Poetry, elaborated on modern European poets as well as Whitman as a modern American poet. Chapter five closely reads Nīmā's *Arzish-i Iḥsāsāt dar Zindigī-yi Hunarṭāshigān* (1939–1940) to study the modern Persian poet's critique of Whitman's free verse and its literary and sociopolitical contexts. To Nīmā, Whitman observed the developments of modernity and brought it into his poetry.²¹ Considering a relation between city, industry and machine on one hand and art on the other, Nīmā referred to Whitman's poems as quite "urban," a term that signified "devoid of traditional rhyme scheme and meter" among other things.

The literary connection between Parvīn I'tiṣāmī and Walt Whitman remains a largely unexplored field. Chapter six analyses the relation between "God's Weaver" and "A Noiseless Patient Spider" to shed light on Parvīn's creative reception of Whitman. Creating a mixed-breed spider and combining characteristics from both Whitman's arachnid and the Persian spider demonstrate Parvīn's successful poetic inventiveness. The interaction between many forces – including Persian traditions of *munāẓirih* and mystical poetry, Parvīn's poetic genius, her personal life, and the unique characteristics of Whitman's spider – led to Parvīn's creative reception of Whitman. Parvīn's cross-bred spider, Persian and Whitmanian at the same time, is neither Whitman's creature nor that of the classical Persian literature. It provides us with an example of the cultural interaction involved in the reception.

Persians tend to look at Whitman through Nīmā Yūshij or the other way around. Chapter seven elaborates on when and how the association between the two modern poets of Persian and American literature formed. The association between the father of Persian New Poetry and the father of

American free verse owes a great deal to an Iranian philosopher's activities in the 1940s. Iḥsān Ṭabarī, a leftist thinker, connected literary modernism in general and New Poetry in particular with leftist ideology. He was the first critic to support Nīmā strongly and to publicise his poetic modernism on various occasions. He was also among the first writers to translate and to introduce Whitman to the Persian-speaking world. The connections between Ṭabarī and Nīmā along with the connection between Ṭabarī and Whitman developed an association between Nīmā and Whitman and linked the two modern poets under the leftist discourse in Persian literary and intellectual circles.

Studies of the reception of a writer in another culture primarily deal with the translation of the works into the target language. Such studies usually ignore the translation of the writer's image. What does the Persian Whitman look like? Studying the common image of the poet in contemporary Iran, chapter eight answers this question. In this study, "image" refers both to visual representations, such as pictures or photographs, and the mental conceptions held in common by members of a group, such as is the subject of imagology. Through a close analysis of the front covers of two recent book-length Persian translations of Whitman, the chapter examines the interaction of different literary and sociopolitical discourses that affect the translation of the image of the American poet into an image of a Persian Whitman.

Whitman, the American poet of democracy, was translated both before and after the 1979 "Islamic" revolution in Iran. A closer look at how he is depicted in the Iranian cultural arena can contribute to a fuller appreciation of poetry, politics and the relation between the two in post-revolutionary Iran. Although the anti-US, anti-West sentiments of the pre-1979 period, which found a safe place in the post-1979 political system, tried to erase the manifestations of the American influence of the pre-revolutionary period, the interest in Whitman was increasing. As explained in chapter eight, the cultural policy of the new political system was to propagate the image of a poet as a mystic, a person often indifferent to the immediate situation. However, as chapter nine shows, the opposing discourses were also at work to present a different image of the poet. This chapter studies *Ey Nākhudā Nākhudā-yi Man* [O Capitan my Capitan], a 2010 book-length Persian translation of Whitman by Farid Ghadami (1985–), to elaborate on the dynamics of Whitman's representations in modern Iran to investigate the intricate relationship between poetry and politics along with the interactions between the opposing discourses in modern Iran particularly in the post-2009 period.²²

After analysing the interaction between the literary, cultural and sociopolitical issues of Iran and Whitman reception in various periods in the history of modern Iran, the concluding chapter elaborates on the development of Whitman reception in Iran. The Iranians' increasing interest in Whitman is discussed and some thoughts on the future of this trend and its relation to the Iranian society are proposed. A chronology of sociopolitical and literary events of modern Iran interspersed with significant dates in Whitman's reception forms the appendix.

While employing various methodologies and critical approaches familiar to scholars in the Humanities, I tried to avoid too many technical terms and too much jargon so as not to appear unintelligible and confusing to the wider audience. Each chapter in the present volume stands alone and can be read independently of the other chapters. Chapters of the present monograph can be read in any order that readers wish. However, the chapters together, particularly in the order presented here, lead to a deeper understanding of the formation and development of Whitman's reception in Iran.