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contemporary tastes, there is too much of the agonizing author, of the perspective of the undefined (presumably American academic) "we," and not enough of the voices of the Komachi.

Ambiguous Relations is a delightful book, honest, informative, and entertaining, shot through with memorable phrases and insights, and beautifully written in fluent, accessible and attractive prose—though sometimes excessively colloquial (the intensifier "terribly" is overdone). No book is perfect. Here, much of the index predates the final pagination of the text. Marriages within the group appear not to have been "double-counted" in the statistics. Transliterations of proper names are sometimes inconsistent and misleading. Some of the economic models and arguments are either unpersuasive or impenetrable. Bradburd uses the term "pastoralist" for pastoral nomads on the grounds that pastoralism is the economic base, hence prior to nomadism, yet in places he confuses "tribal" with "nomadic" or "pastoral." He might, finally, have paid more attention to Georg Stober's work on the Afshar and other nomads of Kerman.

But these objections do not seriously detract from an excellent monograph, which has a great deal to offer students of anthropology generally and of Iranian society and economic history in particular. For the Iranist, Bradburd highlights the existence of unstable, fragmentary, politically "invisible" "tribes," which are indeed not confined to the Kerman region. For the specialist in the economy and society of pastoral nomads this is a feast, a mine of detailed information on households, production, gender, pastoralism and much more. For those interested in micro-level social systems, this is one of the most sincere and successful attempts I know of to marry social theory and ethnographic practice.

Richard Tapper
University of London

Daneshvar's Playhouse, Simin Daneshvar, trans. Maryam Mafi, Washington, D.C.: Mage Publishers, 1989, pp. 183.

There has been a growing interest in the discussion and translation of Simin Daneshvar's works in the last few years. Maryam Mafi's translation of six short stories and a monograph is a welcome addition. It is noteworthy that in this selection the English reader is introduced to the works of a Persian woman who has enjoyed recognition unknown to most male Persian writers.

Aside from the historically and socially significant place of such an author in the gamut of Persian contemporary literature, this translation once again exposes those crucial and controversial issues that will remain at the heart of the practice of translation, namely, loyalty to the source text as well as commitment to the intelligibility of the translation. Mafi's work, for the most part, is a faithful one. It swerves from authenticity and loyalty in those instances where an English translator has to make a crucial decision between Anglicizing a culturally Persian element or Persianizing the English language in order to open room for the reception of a foreign phenomenon. Mafi often is capable of doing both, but

there are instances where she makes a simplistic choice. By doing so, she diminishes the native environment and flavor of Persian culture for that of a clumsy and short-sighted rendition into English. The examples of such carelessness are numerous. I will only cite a few cases in the hope that these examples will point out the deficiency of this translation. When Mafi confuses *simorgh*, the mythical Persian bird, with the phoenix (p. 68), she chooses to bring the Persian element into English, but fails to explain or clarify its significance. It is true that both the *simorgh* and the phoenix are mythic birds, but they share little else. *Şigha* has been translated as “temporary wife” (pp. 17, 103); marriage through *şigha*, however, is of particular significance, and such a translation does not impart all its religious and cultural implications. The same is true with the translation of a “dervish’s *kashkūl*” as a “basket” (p. 18). Though a dervish’s *kashkūl* may be used as a basket, it is not in fact one. The *kashkūl* has a particularly cultural and ethnic aspect that cannot be understood without directly bringing it into the target language. In “The Traitors’ Intrigue,” Mafi translates *khoms* and *zakāt* simply as “Islamic taxes,” while they are, more specifically, the Islamic version of alms and tithes. When such precise vocabulary exists in English, a more faithful translation is possible without footnotes. In these instances, it would have been advisable to use the Persian noun and explain its fuller significance to the work. The translator has done this in other places, for example, when she uses the Persian “Khanum” in the English text, explaining its meaning in a footnote (p. 310).

There are other errors of a simpler nature which mainly point to a misunderstanding of the literal meaning of the Persian text or a mistake in finding parallel words in English. The error in the title of “The Traitors’ Intrigue” (“Traitor’s” instead of “Traitors’”) could be typographical, but considering the fact that the translated text is nicely free of such errors, one could assume that it is a mistranslation of *khā’enin* (plural of *khā’en*). *Nakhlestānhā-ye Bahmanī* is translated as “Bahman orchards” (p. 34), whereas “Bahmani palm groves” would have been more accurate and appropriate. *Tigh-e khod-tarāsh* is a razor blade, not an “electric shaver” (ibid.), while *mafātīh* means keys and not “clues” (p. 36).

Questions of translation aside, the reader expects Mafi to explain the basis of her selection of stories in the Afterword, but she does not provide one. She speaks of the different works written by Daneshvar, but leaves unmentioned why she has selected these six stories and the monograph. The only common bond apparent among the six stories, with the exception of “The Playhouse,” is that all contain central women characters. Is this the primary criterion for the selection of these particular stories? One is left to speculate. Instead, the Afterword gives a biographical account of the Persian author’s life and works, and in broad terms mentions the thematic concerns of Daneshvar’s stories in which are included “the lifestyles of the lower classes, the traditional middle class, and the bourgeoisie,” “the social factors contributing to the unfortunate situation of women,” and “folklore and traditional Persian customs.” The collection also includes a monograph and a letter by the author addressed to the reader, as well as four photographs—three of which are pictures of ancient Iranian figurines and one of the author with her late husband, Jalal Al Ahmad. It is not clear what the relationship is between the pictures of the female figurines and the stories selected for this book, other than the fact that both the writer and the translator are female and, as mentioned before, gender seems to be an issue here.

Daneshvar's Playhouse is elegantly published, its prose style captures most of the flavor of the original text, and is above all a notable introduction to the works of Daneshvar in English. It carries with it the sanctification of the author.

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