

An Investigation into the Concept and Nature of Love in the Poetry of Forugh Farrokhzad

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One of the most frequent topics in the contemporary poets' Diwans of course, with a new and special method and style, is "love" and everything related to it, and investigating its various aspects with regard to the topics of ontology, cosmology, anthropology, etc. in contemporary poetry requires a large and comprehensive research. From this point of view, Forough Farrokhzad is one of the prominent poets who has an influence on contemporary Persian poetry and in the mentioned field with a new approach in quiddistic knowledge, existentialism, teleology and conscientiousness in the field of love, both in terms of quantity and quality has written many poems. In this article, which has been done by analytical-descriptive method, the author has classified, analyzed and reviewed this poets' Diwans in the four above-mentioned sections. With a comprehensive look at the subject of love and the approach of this poet, it turns out that, Forough, regarding the ontology of love, believes that in the first period, the creation of the devil and its expulsion from heaven, and in the second period, familiarity with mysticism and revelatory concepts are the most important factors in the emergence of love.

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Introduction

Love constitutes one of the most prominent, recurrent, and transformative themes across Persian literary tradition. In modern Persian poetry, its conceptualization reflects shifting psychological, socio-cultural, and philosophical dynamics. Among prominent contemporary figures, Forugh Farrokhzad occupies a pioneering and distinguished position. Her poetic evolution offers a profound trajectory of existential and emotional exploration, transitioning from raw physical intimacy to transcendent spiritual consciousness.

Despite the existing scholarship on Farrokhzad's gender consciousness and modernist aesthetics, a comprehensive philosophical examination encompassing the full ontological, semantic, teleological, and deontological dimensions of love in her complete poetic corpus remains underexplored. To bridge this gap, this study examines the multidimensional nature of love across Farrokhzad's intellectual framework. Specifically, it investigates how the concept of love evolves between her early and late poetic phases, addressing two primary questions:

١. How is love defined, classified, originated, and finalized across her poetry?
٢. What distinct ethical responsibilities (deontological orientations) does the poet adopt when confronting evanescent versus transcendent love?

Method

This research employs a descriptive-analytical methodology rooted in thematic and text-based discourse analysis. The study establishes a fourfold analytical framework derived from philosophical inquiry and the psychology of love:

١. **Semantics (*Ma'na-shenasi*):** Examining the definitions, linguistic equivalents, and conceptual representations of love (e.g., *dust*

dashtan [affection], *mohabat* [kindness], *showq* [ardor], *eshtiaq* [yearning]).

۲. **Ontology (*Vojud-shenasi*):** Classifying the typologies of love (transient/evanescent vs. eternal/imperishable) and tracing their mythological and experiential origins.
۳. **Teleology (*Ghayat-shenasi*):** Evaluating the outcomes, functions, and final purposes of love (negative/destructive consequences vs. positive/elevating fruits).
۴. **Deontology (*Vazifeh-shenasi*):** Analyzing the moral agency, ethical stance, and behavioral responses of the lover (avoidance/evasion vs. endurance/patience).

The corpus is systematically divided into two distinct chronological phases:

- **Phase I (1331–1337 SH / 1952–1958 CE):** Covering the early collections *Asir* (The Captive), *Divar* (The Wall), and *Osyān* (Rebellion).
- **Phase II (1342–1345 SH / 1963–1966 CE):** Covering the mature collections *Tavallodi Digar* (Another Birth) and *Iman Biavarim beh Aghaz-e Fasl-e Sard* (Let Us Believe in the Dawn of the Cold Season).

Results

The descriptive-analytical evaluation demonstrates a distinct conceptual transformation between the two poetic periods across all four dimensions:

- **1. Semantic Transformation:**

In Phase I, love is frequently expressed through high-frequency, raw, and tangible terminology centered on youthful passion, female desire, and gendered vulnerability. The term *eshq* appears 125 times, reflecting an immediate, earthly impulse. In Phase II, love undergoes linguistic sublimation; the overt mention of *eshq* recedes in favor of broader terms such as *dust dashtan* (genuine loving kindness), intertwined with symbolic motifs of light, windows (*panjareh*), stars (*setareh*), and cosmic unity (*towhid*).

- **2. Ontological Typology and Origins:**
 - *Phase I:* Love is ontologically defined as transient, earthly, and corruptible (*zaval-pazir*). Mythologically and existentially, its emergence is tied to the fall of humankind, the creation of Satan, and expulsion from paradise. It manifests as a fatalistic, agonizing force linked to existential entrapment, domestic crisis, societal hypocrisy, and alienation.
 - *Phase II:* Love shifts into an imperishable, metaphysical, and socially conscious force (*zaval-napazir*). Its emergence is catalyzed by spiritual awareness, mystical communion (*irfan*), and Quranic/revelatory motifs.
- **3. Teleological Outcomes:**
 - *Negative Outcomes (Phase I):* The consequence of transient, lust-driven love is predominantly destructive—resulting in guilt, social scandal, inner despair, loneliness, captivity, and rebellious individualism. The poet uses imagery such as frozen suns (*khoshid-e yakh-basteh*), burning golden drops, and prisons.
 - *Positive Outcomes (Phase II):* Transcendent love culminates in emotional integration, self-sacrifice (*isar*), and spiritual illumination (*kheiregi*). In poems like *Fath-e Bagh* (Conquest of the Garden), love becomes a communal bridge and an existential haven that transcends societal decay.
- **4. Deontological (Ethical) Framework:**
 - *The Strategy of Evasion (Goriz-padhiri):* When confronting transient, debasing earthly passions that diminish self-worth, the ethical requirement is **courage** (*shoja'at*)—the bold agency to break boundaries, rebel, and flee from emotional bondage.
 - *The Strategy of Inevitability (Goriz-napadhiri):* When encountering transcendent, genuine love, the required ethical virtue is **patience** (*sabr*) and total spiritual surrender, embracing suffering as a pathway toward existential rebirth.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Forugh Farrokhzad's treatment of love represents a coherent philosophical evolution rather than mere emotional fluctuation. In her first period, love functions as an inescapable yet destructive earthly entanglement—a volatile catalyst for feminist rebellion and existential anxiety, originating from the mythos of expulsion and resulting in emotional desolation, which ethically demands courageous evasion (*goriz-padhiri*).

Conversely, in her mature period, Farrokhzad achieves a synthesized ontology where love is transformed into an imperishable, mystical, and socially expansive force. Rooted in revelatory awareness and existential maturity, this elevated love overcomes alienation, yielding spiritual peace, communal solidarity, and transcendent perseverance (*goriz-napadhiri*). Ultimately, Farrokhzad's poetry charts a definitive journey from the agonizing entrapment of physical desire to the enlightened liberation of universal love.