

## Why Do Many Writers in Iran Say Little through So Many Words?

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**Abstract:** Some evidence indicates that redundancy (superfluous repetition of an idea, word, phrase, sentence, etc. in a text) is not just an editorial error but also a symptom (a form of compulsion to repeat). To understand why there is so much redundancy in the works of many writers in Iran, we may need to delve into the social link between educators and students in Iranian education institutions. The educator is raised to the position of the Knower who not only demands that the student acknowledge that he knows something about her desire, but also that she still has not learnt that he knows. The student, however, distances herself from her link to the educator, claiming an independence from him. This social link between educator and student is reproduced in the written works of many writers in Iran: they either posit themselves as the student, thereby unconsciously compelled to repeat their gesture of independence from the Other; or as the Knower, thereby unconsciously compelled to repeat that they know. However, because, at some level, redundancy is what we want and enjoy, but nonetheless cannot enjoy enjoying it, the true question is how to enjoy the enjoyment of redundancy; the answer is found in act and love, as understood by Slavoj Zizek.

**Keywords:** redundancy, the discourse of the university, compulsion to repeat, act, love, Iran, Slavoj Zizek.

### ***From redundancy as explained by editors...***

A most common editorial error made by university students, graduates, and professors in Iran is redundancy: repeating an idea, word, phrase, or sentence without making a new point. Numerous examples of common forms of redundancy in Farsi are discussed by Mohammad Esfandiyari (1995: 5-32).<sup>i</sup> To render one example into English, the phrase ‘from all sides’ in ‘they surrounded him from all sides’ is redundant (ibid: 16), since it does not add anything to the concept ‘surround’ (so, the right sentence is ‘they surrounded him’). However, there is little, if any, work published by him or other Iranian editors about another form of redundancy where ideas or sentences specific to a text superfluously repeat themselves. In a talk I had with Mohammad Mehdi Baqeri, a prominent Iranian editor and avid reader of Persian literature, he told me that the latter form of redundancy has been much more widespread among Iranian writers during past 50-60 years than among those who published before this period (Baqeri 2022). But the reason why it is not discussed by editors might be in part because they cannot find a pattern among the instances of redundancy, which vary from one text to another. Take for example this English translation of a sentence in Farsi: ‘A lever to combat corruption in the governmental system is transparency, which is seen as a fundamental move to improve policy-making aimed at enhancing ties between the government and populace’,<sup>ii</sup> whereas the Farsi text, if translated into English word by word, reads: ‘A lever to combat corruption in the governmental system is transparency, which is seen as a fundamental move to improve policy-making aimed at enhancing ties between the government and populace and *a lever to combat corruption in the governmental system*’ (the redundant part emphasized by me) (Hosseini 2021).

### ***... to redundancy as a symptom***

Redundancy, however, does not seem to be committed intentionally. It does not usually come about that the writer thinks to themselves: “I will repeat it over and over to make my work long enough for publication, for submission to the professor, etc.”), partly because, it would seem that, as soon as redundancy becomes the product of a conscious effort, it requires a great deal of effort, for then one has to think up ways of saying the same thing without making any new points.

In other words, the way linguistic redundancy happens is not like in a Persian comic film I vaguely remember watching in my teens on the Iranian TV, where a female teenage pupil - who was supposed to write a composition about a regular topic such as ‘how did you spend your summer?’ and to read it out in front of class - wrote one single banal introductory sentence and then repeated it in so many different ways until the end of her composition just in order to fill the pages, simply because she had done virtually nothing during the summer. The girl was smart and honest, and through her fake composition itself she conveyed the message, which was, unsurprisingly, too bold from the standpoint of the teacher who chastised her for her work (in the setting of a comic movie though, if my memory serves me).

In my experience as a teacher, editor, and translator, however, those who too often commit redundancy are amazingly bad at a very similar yet crucially different skill i.e. paraphrasing, which is to make some clarification or a new point through approaching, from a different perspective, the point you have already made. And I have always observed that when I manage to bring someone’s attention to the redundancy they have committed they genuinely *notice* it, as though they had forgot that they had made the exactly same point just a few lines above. This indicates that redundancy is not just a matter of failing to learn how to use words, phrases, and sentences to convey one’s meaning, because more often than not redundancy happens despite ourselves when we have adopted our usual instrumental approach to language.

So, if redundancy is neither usually the product of a conscious effort, nor simply a matter of “how to use language”, then how could it be explained?

***From recollections of the social link in class ...***

Perhaps, we can start off by addressing the social link between educators and students at Iranian education institutions. For example, in a typical class at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tehran, Iran, where I got my bachelor’s degree, and at the Department of Sociology, Kharazmi University, Tehran, where I got my master’s, it was clearly noticeable that questions from students about the whys and the wherefores of professors’ claims were not usually welcomed by professors (sometimes, especially during the master’s course, nor were they welcomed even by fellow students).<sup>iii</sup> Even if a professor provided some kind of explanation for his claim, the explanation itself was not usually supposed to be questioned. Too often,

students would just take lecture notes and repeat those notes in the answer sheets when sitting an exam. Other students at other Iranian universities do not appear to have a different experience. In her book in Persian *An Unfinished Dream*, which is a research conducted across four Iranian universities on the lived experience of female students using the method of focus-group discussion (FGD) (2018: 58), Khadijeh Keshavarz quotes from a female student of biology at the Arak University:

‘There is no discussion in class. Despite the fact that our field of study is a lively one where we can see everything for ourselves ... the professors in class simply read out just like in school the very content of their notes. We are no different from a student who studies at school. It’s the same system; the same schedule.’ (ibid: 110)

It thus seems that the professor is in effect elevated to the position of the Knower (Zizek 1998: 79-80; Zupancic 2006: 168-177; Verhaeghe 1999: 115-118). Such a Knower is in a sense too close to students. For he<sup>iv</sup> - take a history professor for instance - never says to his students that they should confirm that a particular historical event happened exactly the way he described it *because he says so*, but, rather, that students should accept his judgment of the event because if they do genuine research they, as students, will want to affirm his judgment. So, discussing even some little historical fact which might have happened hundreds of years ago, *the professor implies a judgment on his students’ desire*, on what they want deep down.

However, he *qua* the Knower expects us to show him not only that we think he knows something about us, but also that we as students have not yet completely learnt that he knows. Why not? The mere fact that the student may not ask questions from the professor that could challenge his knowledge sufficiently indicates that in spite of his claim for knowledge the figure of the professor is that of the master, the one whose orders must be obeyed (ibid). Yet through enunciating that teaching involves giving the student what she really wants, he makes a master out of the student. This distortion of the social link, projection by the professor of his figure of the master onto the student, brings it about that the student will never reach a point where she can stop learning from him (ibid), for when the professor asks the student to understand that he is the Knower not the master, what, at some level, he really wants the student to understand is *nothing*, simply because he *is* the master. Insofar as the student recognizes the professor as the Knower, however, this nothing is represented as a residual difference between *something* that the

student is supposed to say and what she actually says, i.e. as a “this is not it”, as if there is a substantial point, a “this is it”, yet to be realized by the student. One is tempted to extrapolate this point to politics to account for why those who try to give advice to politicians or political activists often fail to find a sympathetic ear. This is not because the politicians or activists do not recognize them as the Knower, but, perhaps, precisely because they do recognize them as such. Giving advice is always a self-defeating action, since the person who receives it should not only show the counsel-giver that she thinks he knows, but also that she has not yet learnt that he knows. In cases where eventually someone is found who seems to listen to counsel, if we are careful, we detect that she has not recognized it as counsel, but simply as *a suggestion to be experimented with*.

### ***... to recollection of exams***

The usual way this social link can come to an end (i.e. the usual way the ultimate failure can be embodied) is, of course, through exams, especially final exams. It is precisely through them that the students will learn their final lesson from the professor: that he knows something about them which they can never know; hence there remains a particular feeling of indeterminacy between taking the exam and the announcement of the results even if the student thinks she has done very well (or very badly) on an exam. One is even tempted to claim that *this feeling of indeterminacy is the whole point of the education system in Iran*.

### ***Do professors and students really believe?***

Before we can explain how exactly all this can be related to committing redundancy, we may need to ask a simple question: do the student and professor really believe that the professor knows?

Let's start from the professor. In view of chronic economic instability in Iran, it might be safe to hypothesize that an average professor would tell himself something along the lines of ‘I know very well that to measure up to expectations from me as a professor, I should read and think much more, but nonetheless I have to provide for a family, so, I cannot afford to engage in too much serious intellectual work, which, in any case, would remain unappreciated by almost everyone. However, if I openly admit this point I will most probably lose my very position as a professor, so I should pretend that I am someone who knows his stuff. What about students? I

can deal with them. I won't let them ask disturbing questions. I will make them show me respect.'

Perhaps, anyone who has studied at a university in Iran will confirm that most students usually do not think very highly of most of their professors, even though they may talk very respectfully to them. As one example, let's have a look at the accounts that a female student of educational sciences at the Mazandaran University gives of her professors:

'In my major there are very few good professors. A professor should not be at the same level as a student like me. We had a professor who was very competent. He mastered his work and most students were happy with him. It took him 12 years to be recruited as a member of the academic staff. There is another professor whose class, as God is my witness, if you attend it, you will be reduced to tears! Professors have a very important part to play. Yet most of them are not at a high level scientifically.' (Keshavarz 2018: 145).

A survey conducted by Serajzadeh et al also confirms that most students do not hold very high opinions of most their professors at Iranian universities (Serajzadeh quoted by Keshavarz 2018: 142). According to this survey which was published in 2016, only 36.5 of students have made a positive assessment of their professors (41% of female students and 31.4% of male students have ranked their professors as 'good' in regard to professor's updated knowledge, ability to convey their knowledge, cordial relations with students, accessibility and providing advice outside class, and interest and competence in doing research) (ibid).

Given the chronic problem of credentialism in Iran (Farasatkah 2009: 452, 636; Khaliji quoted by Farasatkah 2016: 16; Farasatkah 2016), it might be safe to hypothesize that an average student's attitude towards the professor qua the Knower can be summarized as something like: "what I mostly care about is that I have my credits and complete my degree. If I challenge him too much, I may jeopardize my goal, so, to avoid this, let him believe that he is the Knower."

The hypotheses thus suggest that the student believes through the professor and the latter through the former: no one personally believes but at the same time everyone believes (Zizek 2008: 210-211; 2012: 86-87). Interestingly enough, the hypotheses indicate that to believe through someone else you don't even necessarily have to really believe that this someone else really believes: at

least the professor could be well aware of the fact that students do not really believe in him, thus staging a scene where students play believers.

***Why does the unconscious matter?***

However, it might be precisely at this point that we can find an explanation for redundancy. Although an average student maintains a cynical distance towards her position, thinking to herself “let him believe that he is the Knower. What I mostly care about is that I have my credits and complete my degree”, she, despite herself, superfluously repeats her point to the professor qua the Other, betraying *her compulsion to keep making it known to him that what she says is from her point of view, not his*. Hence one might risk hypothesizing that redundancy cannot come about in just every part of one’s writing, but in those parts where the main ideas, words, phrases, and/or sentences are presented as an explanation of the whys and the wherefores of the other parts, that is, where the student posits herself as a unary “I” who is independent from the Other, or, to put it yet another way, where the writer identifies herself with a certain belief from which she draws her other beliefs. We have already provided an example of this at the beginning of the present study: transparency as “a lever to combat corruption in the governmental system” is the master signifier in the article’s abstract we have quoted. The author follows an old Muslim public intellectuals’ notion that modern values such as freedom, democracy, transparency, etc. can already be found in Islamic (or, when it comes to this article’s abstract, Shiite) sacred texts (the author specifically cites *Nahj al-Balagha* a book attributed to Ali ibn Abi Talib (599-661 AD) the first Shiite Imam), and that all one needs to do is discover the ideas in those texts and then apply them to one’s “modern” life. Thus, the author does not even raise the question of whether today’s idea of government transparency is the same as the ideas on governing proposed in *Nahj al-Balagha*. No matter what the answer to the question, the mere fact that it is not even asked seems to indicate sufficiently that the figure of the big Other, the judge in the final analysis, is not the Shiite Imam, but, rather, what is presumed to be the West, as if one has to read one’s sacred texts in a way that, no matter what, is in accordance with supposedly Western basic values, such as government transparency; hence the superfluous repetition of the idea of transparency as ‘a lever to combat corruption in the governmental system’. One has to act out this gesture of independence from the western thought precisely before the eyes of the supposed West from whom one claims to be independent.

Now let us discuss another example which might show another side of the same coin. In the abstract of an article published in the same Farsi journal from which I provided the first example (and in which many Iranian writers seem to be vying to publish in order to gain promotion in the academic echelons, as the journal is confirmed by the Iranian Ministry of Sciences, Research, and Technology to be at the highest academic level), the author tries to apply the term “syntagmatic relations” to his study of *Nahj al-Balagha*. In the abstract he says:

“*The research results show that* [this part superfluously repeats itself several lines later] semantic components of knowledge can be presented on two [syntagmatic] axes: requirements, and effects and results. Words such as ‘patience’, ‘thought’, ‘reasoning’, and ‘practice’ are the requirements of science and those such as “understanding”, ‘insight’, ‘wisdom’, ‘knowledge’ (*ma’rifat*), ‘certainty’, ‘benefit’, and ‘good’ are among the effects and results of science and, centered upon science in an oppositional relation to words ‘ignorance’ and ‘ignorant’, form a configuration whose parts in one semantic field sit next to the word ‘science’ in order to amplify its meaning. *The obtained results show that* [the redundant part emphasized by me] the words sitting next to ‘science’, namely, ‘thought’, ‘reasoning’, ‘practice’, and ‘patience’ have a significant relation with the word and heighten its meaning”.<sup>v</sup> (Fallah 2022)

The point simply is that this usage of the term ‘syntagmatic relations’ bears little relationship to the theories of those who are known to have used it in their theoretical work (Jacobson, Saussure, Barthes, Lacan, etc). Thus, disconnected from any of the theories it belongs to, the term is just a “floating signifier” (Zizek 2008: 95), but when is its signification supposed to get fixed? Precisely in the conclusion, where ‘the results show that ...’. Indeed, ‘the results show that ...’ seems to be a softened/perverted form of ‘the following is true because I said so’, which is why here the moment of making the gesture of drawing a conclusion is in a sense even more crucial than the content of the conclusion; hence the compulsion to superfluously repeat that gesture. But it is a perverted gesture because the author talks as if he has a factual knowledge of how the term is used in modern linguistics.

So, it can be seen why the two examples happen to be two sides of the same coin. In the first, the author makes a gesture of independence from the Other (i.e. from the supposed ‘West’), while compulsively repeating the gesture before the latter’s very eyes. But in the second, the



author plays a good scientist who is just doing his job as the Other desires. That is to say, on the face of it, he is properly applying a theoretical ‘linguistic’ term to a text, whereas the way he uses the term and his redundant words betray that his underlying figure is that of the master who arbitrarily interprets a theoretical term.

Even if all this is the case, however, what does it have to do with the previously explained “social link” in class? Put differently, why does an average writer (students/graduates/professors) in Iran reproduces the social link in class in their written work, i.e., either occupy the position of the Knower (as in the second example) or the student addressed by the Knower (as in the first)?

It is not that they don’t have an idea of a better education (however vague their idea might be), nor that they cannot even imagine that a theoretician such as Barthes or Lacan might have a different approach from theirs. Rather, they, typically, seem to think to themselves that educational utopia and different approaches belong to somewhere else, disconnected from their everyday reality, and therefore rationally calculate that as long as they live in Iran, they should not involve the utopia in the details of the organization of their everyday life. The same kind of attitude might also account for why sometimes Iranian house or office decorations can be very modern-looking, but when you strike up a conversation with the people who live or work there, there is a disjunction between the decoration and their favorite topics of conversation, as if the decoration is purely aesthetic, just something nice to look at, disconnected from the ugly reality of their everyday life.

‘Saying little through so many words’ does not just mean redundancy: even reading the parts which are not technically redundant one gets the impression that little is being said through so many words, simply because the text does not ask or answer any true questions.

All this might be true even about the efforts made to rectify the above explained situation. In their book written in Persian *Monitoring and Evaluation in Higher Education System* which at first sight seems to be a step towards reformation of the Iranian education system through its effort to find practical ways to monitor and assess its performance, Abbas Bazargan and Maqsud Farasatkah ask the following questions about the education system in Iran:

‘To what extent the mission and objectives of Iranian universities enjoy transparency? To what extent the universities pay attention to the objectives and realize them? To what extent students’ admission and other inputs of the higher education subsystems are directed towards the realization of their mission and objectives? Do Iran’s academic subsystems respond to the needs of the surrounding environment, in view of technological transformations, economic globalism, and entrepreneurship? To what extent the academic subsystems have the required quality?’ (Bazargan and Farasatkah 2019: 2)

The point is not that the authors seem to have taken for granted that Iranian universities should respond to the needs of economic globalism (a great mistake as this assumption might be, because economic globalism would redefine transparency, mission, objectives, entrepreneurship, etc.). To find what seems to be most problematic, let us take a look at the redundant words that they say a few lines after they have asked those questions:

‘On the one hand, monitoring and evaluation in the higher education reflect the universities’ ideal, and on the other hand *compare* its existing situation *in comparison with* the ideal. [the redundant parts emphasized by me]’ (ibid: 3)

At first glance, to draw the comparison, one must have adopted the point of view of the big Other, the one who is supposed to have received the ideal education. The compulsion to repeat the gesture of comparison, however, betrays that the authors have adopted the position of the small other who acts out before the eyes of the big Other. This might explain why after reading just a few pages of the book, one cannot help asking oneself why the book is so badly written, full of editorial mistakes of different kinds, while authors sound so sure of themselves (for example, they say in the preface to the second edition that in it ‘the content of the whole book was revised and the errors were removed with utmost care. Therefore, this edition perfectly matches educational goals, and the edits required from the technical and linguistic point of view have been conducted’)? The authors are sure of themselves, perhaps because consciously they think they have adopted the position of the big Other, whereas unconsciously they have shouldered the responsibility of making sense onto the Other, expecting him to confirm it to them that they have adopted their independent points of view.

### ***Boredom in the classroom***

The imaginary independence from the Other betrayed by the mere fact of compulsion to make one's independence known to the Other, when represented as student's rational calculation ("I must have my credits and complete my degree, so I must tolerate these classes"), can engender boredom. Boredom is not merely when you do something you do not really want to do (sitting at your desk in the office, listening to a pretentious, talkative person, etc.), are in a place you do not really want to be (in an adults' party with no friends to play with, prison, etc.), or in a situation you do not really want to experience (having to wait for long hours, etc.), but also when *you feel compelled to pretend (either to others, to yourself, or both) that it's fine*. The professor qua the Knower, however, does not mind even if he knows full well that the student pretends that it's fine, since the pretense fits perfectly into his formerly explained inter-subjective belief in himself as the Knower: 'the student has not realized that what I say to her is what she really wants, so, I don't mind if she pretends, because, as it happens, *what she pretends to be is what she really is.*'

This is why in a typical class the relatively uncommon cloying students who show "gladness" for learning from the professor are considered by other students as idiots of the first order who seem not to understand what is going on: they are eager to give the professor what he does not even desire. One of the few forms of happiness allowed in this kind of social link is, of course, mischief. Students' mischief in class is not simply something they do against the existing order, but an attempt against *something within themselves which resists their mischief*, against their compulsion to pretend that they are fine with what is going on in class, which is why far from there being anything emancipatory about most forms of mischief, it is already provided for by the professor. The student must be in the illusion that her true self does not want to be in class, so it is only natural that she makes mischief. Either she observes the boundaries, in which case she just adds variety to my class, or oversteps the mark, in which case I will punish her. In both scenarios, I remain the professor and she the student. So, although we might enjoy making mischief, *we cannot enjoy enjoying it* (Fink 1999: 210) because it is a form of resistance to what we feel compelled to enact.

### ***Can we enjoy redundancy as a symptom?***

Now let us return to our discussion of redundancy. The mere fact that in Iran redundancy is committed by professors and students alike (I say this from my personal experience: as a translator from Persian to English who has worked for around seven years I have noticed no

significant difference between professors and students/graduates in terms of the regularity of committing redundancy. To draw on Mohammad Mehdi Baqeri's subtle view (2022) which I quoted at the outset of the present work, however, we can hypothesize that our statement is truer about professors in Iran born from the 1970s onwards, although I might not necessarily agree with his explanation for the fact) is enough to indicate that professors who are elevated by their students to the position of the Knower had elevated their own professors to such a position. It thus seems as if someone is always raised to the position of the Knower, without anyone really knowing. Then, in their writings, they seem to reproduce the social link in class, taking up the position of either the student or the Knower, as was illustrated earlier.

But if it is true, as was explained before, that at some level we really believe in the professor as the big Other, then we *enjoy* redundancy, because we think that the superfluous repetition is what we really want. But again, though in a different way, the problem with redundancy is that we do not enjoy enjoying it, since it appears to us that it just happens beyond our control, as a symptom. So, how can we come to enjoy our enjoyment of superfluous repetition, our symptom? If the student unconsciously believes in the professor not as the Knower but as the Master, then the answer to this question is just to treat the professor as such.

I might actually have a first-hand experience of this. Writing my master's dissertation I had to work under the supervision of a professor who, when it came to certain points, insisted in effect that I should write in my dissertation what was right in his view not in mine, trying hard to show me that I was wrong during our many long discussions (although readers need to note that not many students in Iran dare to have long discussions with their professor, expressing their disagreement with him. And my attitude made me go through bitter experiences during my studies). It came to a situation where I felt if I didn't acquiesce to his views on some parts of my work, he would not let me defend my dissertation to get graduated. So, one day I asked him on the phone to tell me what exactly to write in my thesis and I would act accordingly. He answered that I talked as if he was making me write things I did not wish to. And I simply replied: 'well, that's the truth of the matter, isn't it?' There was a silence for a moment, then he implicitly expressed his agreement and started dictating the points he wanted me to include in my dissertation. So, thankfully, I survived my act,<sup>vi</sup> which put an end to my position as 'the one who is presumed to learn from the professor', setting me free to enjoy superfluous repetition of his

words. In fact, I enjoyed doing it so much that I made an effort to formulate his comments even better than he did. In our next talk on the phone, having listened to my writing he mildly objected that this did not sound like his words, but when I told him that what I wrote was the crux of his argument, he started to praise my ability to understand!

So, how did it come about that I treated the professor as a master, but the result was not my slavery (after all, although a master may praise his slave's ability to understand the "job description", he may never praise him for understanding the crux of the master's argument, as I have tried to explain elsewhere in greater detail (2022)? Or, to put the question bluntly, how is a Zizekian act not ultimately a mere act of self-humiliation? The point is that the dimension of individuality which brings with it dignity and respect shines through this very act of admitting unconditional obedience to the Other, i.e. precisely through carrying out what the professor's demand means but is never acknowledged by him, thereby hystericizing him rather than making him treat the student like a servant: 'if this student really meant to be my servant, why did he do something *different* from what I demanded?'

### ***Can we enjoy redundancy as a symptom in the period of academic apathy in Iran?***

But it is not always that this kind of 'confrontation with the professor' happens, and, furthermore, is it not a bit too much to take each and every professor seriously? Moreover, it seems that if the predominant mood in class is boredom, even outside the class, say, in the faculty's halls, yard, café, etc. the predominant mood is apathy about the possibility of an academic movement that would have focused *only* on education [Reader, I finished writing this article nearly two months before the outbreak of the Iranian revolutionary movement of 'woman, life, freedom'. A proper analysis of the movement obviously needs a separate piece of writing, but for the purposes of the present article, the student movement which plays a significant part in the wider movement does not seem to have any particular focus on education, not unexpected from a revolutionary movement. In any case, the reason why I did not make tweaks to the main text of my writing following the onset of the movement was because I thought if I leave it how it is, the text would illustrate how lethargic a movement-driven society such as Iran might really look just two months before the outbreak of a headless revolutionary movement, which could lead us to the concept of miracle in Zizek's theory...] This apathy had been noticed by Rick Steve while making his otherwise quite optimistic two-episode TV show about Iran in 2009:

‘I wanted to know: where are the free spirits in Iran? And I just thought I’m going to university. I went to the greatest university in Iran [the University of Tehran]. We had our permission. We went there ... and this was one of the most discouraging parts of my whole trip. I go to the university and see nothing but compliance, nothing but conformity, nothing but students who get free education, kissing up to professors ...’ (Steve 2009).<sup>vii</sup>

So, how in such days of apathy can we find a way to enjoy (Zizek 2022) redundancy?

As was said a few pages back, instead of taking things too seriously, students usually take lecture notes and repeat those notes in the exam sheets, and an average professor is quite comfortable with such a routine. The question thus is what students do with their time after the class. They can enter a romantic relationship, (prepare to enter) the job market, or do both. Or, if they like to do intellectual work, they can read, think, find like-minded people and forge bonds of friendship with them, have discussions with them about their field of study, etc. In other words, after class, students can work out what they *love* to do with their life (though a vast majority of the students who I have met in my life hardly gave me the impression that they are keen to realize who or what they love). This love for someone or something, surprisingly, positions everything else including the social link to the professor in one’s life. For example, if one is in a truly romantic relationship with someone, this will determine to what extent the professor should be taken seriously and to what extent the job market; if you love intellectual work, this determines which professors should be taken seriously and which professors should not; if you love a particular job, it determines how far you should go in a romantic relationship, how much you should take your studies seriously, etc. This, however, means that love does not protect you against redundancy, but sets you free to enjoy doing so. The lover goes through the same unconscious process leading up to linguistic redundancy as anyone else, but, although she is more or less surprised (Zupancic 2017: 135) by noticing them in her writing, she recognizes herself in them, and therefore realizing and enjoying redundancy coincide in her. In a nutshell, *she is surprised that what she apparently had no idea of is exactly what she wanted*. Even the extent to which she is keen to correct her redundancy depends on the part the correction might play among other parts revolving around her love for someone or something else, if she doesn’t love editing as a job.

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## Notes

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- <sup>i</sup>. In Persian it is called *hashv-i qabīh*, which translates into English as egregious/glaring pleonasm/redundancy.
- <sup>ii</sup>. All translations from Persian to English in this article are conducted by me. I also would like to take this opportunity to thank Robert Hughes who kindly read through the article manuscript and made many editions for English expression and helpful comments and criticisms, and asked me important questions.
- <sup>iii</sup>. My experience of the first university was much better than my experience of the second. What made it different, however, did not seem to be a significant difference in the educational structure. Rather, I found the student environment at my first university much more lively and dynamic, and there were also a few good professors and one good, especially learned, and charismatic professor who influenced me as well as many other students (although I also had a couple of good professors during my master's degree). However, the basic educational structure, more or less, remained the same in both universities.
- <sup>iv</sup>. There are, of course, many female professors in Iran. The reason why we refer to the Knower as "he", however, is because "the Knower" is a male position (Fink 1999: 171-174).
- <sup>v</sup>. Note that "the words sitting next to 'science, namely, 'thought', 'reasoning', 'practice', and 'patience' have a significant relation with the word and heighten its meaning" is not technically redundant, since the author differentiates words and their meanings.
- <sup>vi</sup>. Needless to mention that at the time of writing the dissertation (2007) I had little or no acquaintance with Zizek's theory.
- <sup>vii</sup>. In 2003-2004 there was an inchoate student movement for academic reforms at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tehran, but it seems to me that before long the leading figures of the movement decided to turn their focus to pursuing those reformist ideas which sounded more familiar to an average reformist's ears (i.e. the ideas of freedom and democracy for wider Iranian society). To judge whether their decision was right, however, I would need much more data than my memory of those days provides.