Examining Eschatological Elements
in the Poems of Ahmad Shamlou

Gholamreza Kafi
Associate Professor of Persian Language and Literature
Shiraz University

Introduction

One of the enduring and widely debated topics that has been the focal point of discussions among individuals, theorists, philosophers, religions, cultures, and nations is the concept of the world's ultimate fate. The idea of a beginning for the world implies that humanity consistently perceives the world in a linear path and envisions a destiny for it. Such a perspective leads to various cultures and nations, based on their ways of life, intellectual foundations, beliefs, traditions, and collective experiences, offering diverse predictions about the fate of the world. These predictions, at times, become influential and give rise to multiple movements on a societal level.

Although eschatology is a significant topic in theology and divinity, it has also found prominence in broader fields such as literature and art, giving rise to a literary genre known as eschatological or apocalyptic literature.

In this context, eschatological literature is recognized as a form of visionary and revelation-centered literature that addresses events such as the destruction of the world, the appearance of a savior, the emergence of the Antichrist, resurrection, and more. Essentially, this

literary genre refers to events that humanity is anticipated to experience in the final stage of its existence on Earth (Gorji, 1383: 149).

The approach associated with discussions on the end of history and humanity's ultimate fate holds a distinctive presence in Persian literature. Due to the diverse religious, cultural, political, historical, and social backgrounds present in Iran, a myriad of works exploring this concept can be observed in contemporary literature, particularly in the realm of poetry. The existence of such diversity prompts the significance of examining the roots, emergence contexts, specific manifestations, orientations, as well as convergences and divergences surrounding this concept. Investigating these elements and expressions sheds light on various issues within the underlying cognitive layers of contemporary poetry.

Among the poets, Ahmad Shamlou stands out for articulating his distinctive eschatological mindset in his works, presenting notable and discernible verses on this theme. In Shamlou's poetry, unique aspects of eschatology can be traced, providing insights into Shamlou's particular mental framework regarding this subject. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the eschatological expressions in Shamlou's poetry, retrieve the background and roots of these components, and elaborate on the expansion and development of Shamlou's eschatological system.

In this study, after examining all of Shamlou's poems, those created in an eschatological form have been identified, separated, and subjected to analysis. In Shamlou's poetry, eschatology is predominantly influenced by his political mindset and humanistic approach institutionalized in the poet's existence. It may also be influenced by a form of Marxist eschatology. Moreover, eschatology in Shamlou's

poetry transforms into a tool for political activism and criticism of the contemporary world and society. At times, it serves an anti-eschatological function, engaging in denial, negation, and resistance against apocalyptic elements.

Research Objectives

1. Analyzing and interpreting eschatological elements in the poetry of Shamlou.
2. Investigating the roots and reasons for the emergence of eschatological elements in Shamlou's poetry.

Research Method

In this study, a descriptive-analytical method has been employed. The descriptive-analytical method is a detailed approach that thoroughly describes the phenomena and features under study and subsequently analyzes these descriptions. The researcher, based on their questions and hypotheses, collects comprehensive information and then provides a detailed and accurate description. The descriptive research begins with a broad and comprehensive examination of the phenomena. The researcher collects descriptive information related to their subject using observations, interviews, questionnaires, or other sources. This information includes features, dimensions, characteristics, and other essential details related to the studied phenomenon. In the analytical phase, the researcher meticulously examines this information to identify existing relationships and patterns, providing a better understanding of the studied phenomenon (Creswell, 2010: 49).

In this article, theoretical foundations for the research are established through a review of library resources, previous articles, and the collection of Shamlou's poetry. Subsequently, in-depth analysis of Shamlou's poems is conducted, considering linguistic aspects, poem structure, critique, and the exploration of eschatological themes. Through text analysis, eschatological elements are identified, and key concepts related to these elements are thoroughly examined.

Discussion and Conclusion

Ahmad Shamlou, one of the prominent poets of Persian literature, has captivated the attention of sociologists, literary scholars, and cultural enthusiasts with his poetic language and profound thoughts. A significant aspect of Shamlou's poetry is the presence of eschatological elements, which have expanded in his works and exerted considerable influence on understanding his poetry, especially concerning social, philosophical, and humanistic themes.

In this article, an analysis of Ahmad Shamlou's poems was conducted, delving into the exploration of eschatological elements. This analysis encompassed the identification of key eschatological concepts in his poems, the examination of literary forms and techniques used to express these concepts, and the examination of the effects of eschatology in shaping the reader's emotions and perspectives.

Through this article, the attempt was made not only to clearly articulate the eschatological elements in Ahmad Shamlou's poetry but also to comprehensively investigate their impacts on understanding and interpreting his verses. This research contributes to a better understanding of a complex and profound poet like Ahmad Shamlou

and aids in the development of eschatological concepts in Persian literature.

Based on this discourse, it can be stated that Shamlou, with a humanistic approach, presents apocalyptic components in moments of opposition and within the framework of struggle. Instead of predicting what happens in the apocalypse, he portrays the contemporary world as a lived apocalypse, describing and critiquing it. The depiction and critique of the contemporary world in Shamlou's poetic context create a kind of opposition to the world of gods and apocalyptic elements, turning the apocalypse into an anti-apocalypse. Shamlou not only reveals the cruelty of the contemporary world but also expresses disbelief in the existing system and roots of the apocalyptic.

For Shamlou, the apocalypse is not summarized in critiquing and describing the current situation but engages in confrontation with inhibiting forces, advocating for a struggle, and ultimately providing a way to escape from the present condition. However, the salvation Shamlou speaks of is not hanging onto apocalyptic promises but rather deeming them futile and believing in the creation of change in the fate of the world through collective awareness and universal struggle. In Shamlou's apocalyptic system, he redefines the functions and relationships of entities like humans, God, paradise, hell, Satan, etc., and addresses the inefficiency and denial of non-human factors.

Without any blindfold, Shamlou reconceptualizes himself in the face of the realities and difficulties of the world, facing all forms of despair: self-despair, despair of values and destiny, despair of others, despair of the meaning of civilization, and certainly despair of God, goodness, or divine power. Shamlou demonstrates that he has no belief in any non-

human force, religious, heavenly, or transcendent, and perceives human salvation from existing conditions solely through collective struggle. Therefore, in Shamlou's poetry, salvation and saviorship manifest in the arena of uprising, exhibiting fewer eschatological elements in the mythical and religious sense but resonating with modern philosophical foundations that have an eschatological approach.

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