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Extended Abstract

Short Article

A Study of a New Symbol in Shahriar's Poetry

Mahdi Ramazani* iD

Introduction

The transformation of symbols and literary imageries in contemporary Persian poetry stands as one of the most salient indicators of stylistic and thematic changes in this era. Literary interaction with the West — particularly with French literature— has provided fertile ground for semantic innovation, defamiliarization, and the redefinition of classical symbols. Mohammad-Hossein Shahriar, one of the influential figures in modern Persian poetry, has, drawing upon his lived experiences and linguistic competence, re-envisioned the symbol of the planet Venus (Zohreh/Anahita) in an innovative and distinct manner. This article, adopting a comparative and semiotic approach, examines the origin and the mechanism of the formulation of the novel symbol "the shepherd of the heavens" (Shabān-e Falak) ascribed to Venus in Shahriar's poetry, and seeks to elucidate its position within the broader process of the transformation of symbols in contemporary Persian poetry.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative analysis of literary texts and historical sources. The research entailed the collection and frequency analysis of instances of the Venus symbol in Shahriar's poetry, the investigation of its historical background in classical Persian texts and authoritative dictionaries, and the examination of French sources —including Larousse and Robert dictionaries as well as nineteenth-century French literary texts— aimed at identifying analogous semantic patterns. Furthermore, Shahriar's biographical and cultural

* Assistant Professor of Persian Language and Literature, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran.
mehdi.ramazani85@gmail.com

background and his linguistic interactions with the intellectual figures of his time have been considered as supplementary data within the framework of comparative evaluation.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that, although Venus has predominantly been identified in the Persian literary tradition as the goddess of music and beauty, Shahriar, through the adoption of the expression "the shepherd of the heavens" (and "morning star"/"shepherd's star"), opened up new semantic horizons for this celestial body. In French popular culture, the epithet "shepherd's star" (Étoile du Berger), owing to Venus's astronomical property of visibility at dawn and dusk, evokes the meaning of guidance for shepherds. Linguistic and intertextual evidence indicates that Shahriar was not a mere imitator; rather, by creatively assimilating the foreign motif, he transformed and indigenized the symbolic function of Venus. This symbolic transformation should be contextualized within the three principal waves of Western influence on modern Persian poetry, representing the substantial capacity of contemporary Iranian poetry to synthesize tradition and innovation.

Conclusion

The present research reveals that the selection and re-creation of the "shepherd of the heavens" symbol in Shahriar's poetry results from a conscious and deliberate process of defamiliarization from classical models and the establishment of a multilayered approach to meaning-making in contemporary Persian poetry. Shahriar's achievement in this domain lies in his authentic synthesis of Persian and French cultural elements, producing a novel and original image that serves as an exemplary case of intercultural capacity-building and symbolic transformation in modern Iranian literature. Accordingly, this study not only explicates the origin and mechanism underlying the formation of this particular symbol, but also opens new horizons for comparative semiotic research and the study of literary relations between Iran and the West.

Keywords: Shahriyar, French language, Venus, the constellation of shepherd, allusion

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