

The Effect of Nima Yushij's "Afsaneh (Myth)" Verse Collection on Modern Lyric Poetry

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Abstract

Ali Esfandyari whose penname is Nima Yushij has created a significant change in Persian poetry by composing poetry and propounding his literary theories., in such a way that all of the contemporary poetic trends and all of the famous poets in this area are among his followers, imitators, or the poets whom are influenced by Nima's poetry and theories.

Modern lyric poetry is considered as one of the important trends of the contemporary poetry the emergence and propagation of which is indebted to Nima's Afsaneh Verse Collection.

Afsaneh does not deny all of the components of classic poetry, but corrects or completes some of its aspects. The poet's change of attitude and view about being and love, employing dramatic elements and novel words, as well as exploiting natural elements for expressing internal and mental moods of characters are among the most important components to which the new lyric poets paid attention. In the present study, the characteristics of Afsaneh, the effective aspects of this collection on modern lyric poetry and the components of this trend have been studied.

Key words: Nima Yushij, Afsaneh, Modern Lyric Poetry, Semi-Classical Poetry.

I. Introduction

Persian poetry was entered to a new phase of its historical life via Nima Yushij's innovations and creativities. Casting a glance on poetic trends in the contemporary age depicts vividly that almost all of them are originated from Nima's poetry and literary theories.

One of the poetic trends is the modern lyric poetry, also recognized as Classical Nimaic Poetry.

Modern lyric poetry specifically was emerged by Afsaneh collection, composed by Nima Yushij. Afsaneh was composed in 1921 and was published in sequential issues of the 20th Century Newspaper managed by Mirzadeh Eshghi [1-3]. The novel and uncommon aspect of Afsaneh is the distinctive feature of the main aspect of contemporary poetry stylistics. Specifically, several poetic trends influenced by Afsaneh are classified in different categories in ratio of their being affected from classic poetry and their trend towards them.

One of the trends that has been influenced mostly by Afsaneh and many poets have been involved in is the modern lyric poetry the history of which has lasted several decades.

Indeed, the modern lyric poets have understood and accepted the Nima's novelties in Afsaneh. In their opinion, Afsaneh and its continuation are the most original and the most modern path of the Persian poetry. They were incompetent in perception of the Nima's next innovations and have remained mostly in the scope of Afsaneh. But they have

created ever-lasting poems that are currently considered as a part of the contemporary poetry [4-6].

Nima Yushij, the father of Iranian Modern Poetry, is the founder of a new trend. Almost, all of the famous trends and figures of the contemporary poetry are among the imitators, followers, or the poets who are influenced by Nima's poetry or follow his theories in poetry.

In spite of the oppositions with which Nima has been faced at the beginning, gradually, the young enthusiastic poets help him and stride long steps in the propagation and establishment of the Nima's poetry and his theories through their poems and criticisms.

The change in form, pattern, and contents of Nima's poetry occurs in two stages that is in progress; hence, the followers and the poets whom were impressed by Nima's poetry and theory are classified in two categories:

Some of the poets admire the structure and texture of Afsaneh and try to modify and complete its aspects and consider modernism in the Persian poetry within the same scope. These followers of Afsaneh pursue lyrics in the framework of Afsaneh or close to it and create a new kind of poetry may be called as "Modern Lyric Poetry" [6-8].

But Nima, after Afsaneh, created an essential change in language, form, rhythm, in such a way that it may be said that Nima's poetry made a great distance with the classic poetry and provided a new definition of structure, theme, and poetic area.

Most of the contemporary poets are covered under this change that is well-known as Nima's poetry or Modern Poetry. These poets who are impressed by Nima's modern poetry- the poems composed by Nima since 1937 onwards come to a new style of composition and stride beyond the semantic and lingual limitations existing in classic poetry. This is why Nima consider himself as a river from which anyone can take water as much as he has power and talent [9-11].

II. Problem Description & Research Questions

In the present research paper, we are going to evaluate the influence of Nima's Afsaneh in the formation and development of the modern lyric poetry. What aspects of Afsaneh have been followed by the modern lyric poets? The analysis of the components and features of modern lyric poetry includes the most important poets of this trend and the common aspects as well as the bonds of this trend with Afsaneh collection which are the most important axes of this research. Considering different aspects of discussion, we try to respond to the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics of Nima's Afsaneh and what is its standing on the stylistics of the contemporary poetry?
2. What features and components of Afsaneh have an intervention in the formation of the modern lyric poetry?
3. What kind of poetry is the Modern lyric poetry and what are the most important components and who are the poets of this trend?

III. Research Objective

1. Analysis of Nima's Afsaneh and its standing in the formation of contemporary poetry trends.
2. Analysis of the effective aspects of Afsaneh in the formation of modern lyric poetry.
3. Analysis of the components, features, and the most important poets of modern lyric poetry.

IV. Assumption of Research

1. It seems that Afsaneh is among the Nima's works which have a special standing in the formation of the contemporary poetic trend.
2. The new components of Afsaneh may have a major contribution in the formation of modern lyric poetry.
3. Modern lyric poetry is one of the trends of contemporary poetry that is distinguishable with its specific components and poets.

V. Research Background

Specifically, no separate book or article has been published about the subject of the present research. However, in many of the books in which Nima's

poetry or stylistics of the Iranian contemporary poetry have been discussed, Afsaneh and its followers have been propounded among which we may refer to the following works:

Zarrinkoub, Hamid, 1979., *Prospective of the Persian Modern Poetry*, 1st Edition, Tehran, Toos Publication Center.

In the second chapter of the book, the author has discussed Nima's novelties and has classified them in two stages: Nima Yushij, the founder of Modern Poetry and avant-garde Nima after Afsaneh.

The third chapter of the book has been allocated to the analysis of modern lyric poetry. After writing some essays entitled "Khanlari, the Critic Poet", "Tavalloli, the Flag-Bearer of Modern Lyric Poetry", "Development of Modern Lyric Poetry", the author introduces the following poets: Houshang Ebtehaj, Nader Naderpour, Fereydoon Moshiri, Kasraei, and Sepehri.

- Poornamdarian, Taghi, 1998, "My Home is Cloudy", 1st Edition, Tehran, Soroush Publication House.

"My Home is Cloudy" reviews the poetic life of Nima since the beginning until the end.

The author classifies Nima's poetry into three categories, classical poetry, semi-classical poetry, and free verses. He analyzes some selected samples of Nima's poems under all of the above titles. In this book, Afsaneh is considered as the semi-classical poem of Nima. The new aspects in selecting rhyme and dramatic structure in Afsaneh is analyzed [12-13].

- Langroudi, Shams, 1999, "Analytical History of Modern Poetry", 4 vol., 3rd Edition, Tehran, Central Publication House.

In this book, all of the events and incidents occurred in contemporary poetry from 1905 to 1996 are analyzed. In the first volume, subsequent to discussing the topics such as Nima's Revolution in Form and Contents, Internal Form of Nima's Poetry, External Aspect of Form and Nima's revolution, concerning the external aspect of form, the author expresses that, specifically, Afsaneh, was followed by many of the poets and the first poet who paved this way was Mirzadeh Eshghi [14-16].

- Zarghani, Seyed Mahdi, 2004. "Perspective of the Iranian Modern Poetry", 1st Edition, Tehran, Saless Publication Center.

Dr. Zarghani analyzes the genres of contemporary poetry in more details. He classifies the contemporary poetry into four categories: classical, semi-classical, Nima's free poetry, and prose poetry.

Modern lyric poetry is recognized in this book as semi-classical poetry. The author analyzes the poems composed by poets such as Tavalloli, Naderpour, Mahdi Hamidi, and Houshang Ebtehaj, etc. Dr. Zarghani like Dr. Zarrinkoub believes that the

modern lyric poetry or semi-classical poetry emerged by Nima's Afsaneh collection.

In addition to these books, there are works in which Nima's poems are discussed, but his followers are not been studied, from among them we may refer to followings:

- Hamidian, Saeid, 2004, "Metamorphosis Story, Transformation Process of Nima Yushij's Poetry", 1st Edition, Tehran, Nilofar Publication Center.
- Roozbeh, Mohammad Reza, 2004, "Elaboration & Analysis of Persian Modern Poetry", 1st Edition, Tehran, Horoufieh Publication Center.
- Jawrkesh, Shapour, 2006, "Poetics of Modern Poetry", 1st Edition, Tehran, Ghoghnoos.

VI. Components and Features of Nima's Afsaneh Collection

Afsaneh collection is made of 5-line stanzas from which 4 lines are quatrain, but the conventional rhyming are not observed in all of the stanzas and its rules are floating.

Throughout the collection, a line with free rhyme accompanies any quatrain. The uniform Persian meter of "Faelon, Falelon, Faelaton" is found throughout the poetry and helps in creating romantic and lyrical atmosphere of the poem.

Adding a line after any quatrain which changes the poem as a multiple poem gives more novelty to the form of the poem [17-20].

There are two main sounds in the poem that make its conversational structure, but the dialogue between lover and Afsaneh- similar to the classic samples- does not specify the borders of both characters' speech through continuous repetition of Goftam in Persian (I said), Gofta (She said). The speaker's name is told outside the prosodic framework and gives a novelty to the poem while applying dramatic aspects. Certainly, Nima has employed the semi-dramatic structure of Afsaneh consciously.

But the dramatic structure of the poem is not merely a cliché approach. Nima intends other deep-structural functions through selecting this structure that helps to increase the poem's facilities and assigns some of the descriptive aspects of the poem to the narration [19-20].

What is essentially changed in Afsaneh Collection is the utterance of romantic emotions. Afsaneh enjoys classic themes to some extent, but it has a special novelty as though it is found a kind of motion and excitement in it that matches with its romantic contents, or as Nima says with its dramatic contents.

The language employed in Afsaneh is relatively simple that keeps aloof from the lofty style and language of the classic poetry. This feature is more evident, especially in the vocabulary employed for

composing the poem and deems light and oversimplified compared with the exalted classic poetry. But there are some problems from grammatical point of view that are originated from the fact that the poet is trying to achieve a unique language through escaping from the lingual norms by displacing the basic elements of a sentence and employing noun, pronoun, and adjective in uncommon positions [17-18].

One of the most important and novel aspects of Afsaneh is the fantastic imagination of the poet. Afsaneh is the tale of poet's agonies in a novel language and expression. The critics of that time said "Afsaneh is impressed by the works of poets such as Alfred de Musset and Lamartine.

The poet's concentration is focused upon a kind of individualism and personal experience. His early efforts cross the mental world of the classic poetry and realism is the invariable component of his complete poems. Individualism and realism are the most important components of Nima's poetry and have special standing in his poems.

VII. Followers of Afsaneh

The followers of Afsaneh are divided into two categories:

1. Classical and stylistic poets who, while continuing their own poetic trend, cast a glance on Afsaneh. The poets such as Eshghi, Bahar, and Shahriar whose poetry faced with no great change under the influence of Afsaneh. Indeed, they admire the form and meter employed in Afsaneh, but, they do not put their own language and diction aside. For example, for the first time, Mirzadeh Eshghi published a part of Afsaneh collection in his newspaper, the 20th Century". Eshghi perceives the novel aspects of Afsaneh well and the achievements of his new perception may be found in his "Ideal" or "Three Tableaux".
2. The second category well-known as neoclassical poets, while devoted to the aesthetic fundamentals of established poetry and poetic classic style, strides beyond some of classic poetic norms. One of the first stylistic followers of the early poems of Nima is Parviz Natel Khanlari who is the chief manager of the famous journal, Sokhan.

But Khnalari's poems indicate that he has not understood Nima's novelties well and joined his opponents soon.

The most famous poem of Khanlari is "Eagle" composed in Mathnavi's (couplet poem) form and no much iconoclasm is seen in it. But the powerful rhetorician and critic, Shafiei Kadkani, says about this poem "in the traditional theme, this, maybe, the most successful poem of this era and all of the recent

periods". His poetic Collection, Moon in Marsh" has been published."

Another group of the followers of Niam's Afsaneh, who are mainly the youth, are modern lyric poets. This group admires Nima until composing Afsaneh; they believe that Nima's poetry has deviated from the rule. As Naderpour refers to this matter in the introduction to the poetry collection entitled "Eyes & Hands".

VIII. Modern Lyric Poetry

The most important achievement of Afsaneh is a branch of contemporary poetry named "Modern Lyric Poetry". Afsaneh was published in the 20th Century Newspaper in 1922. After its publication, numerous poetic experiences composed by classical and semi-classical poets were published that were reminiscent of Afsaneh.(Zarghani,2004, p.265).

The real emergence time of modern lyric poetry is 1946 during which the poem "Maryam" composed by Fereydoon Tavalloli was published.As Tavalloli says " He was fascinated by the imagination and form used in Afsaneh and tried to imitate it; but, Tavalloli is not classified among the pure imitators of Afsaneh and he should be called as the creative follower of Afsaneh.

According to Tavalloli, the modern poetry has some components the most important of which are as follows:

Novelty in themes, metaphors, and similes, not observing figures of speech and avoiding the use of difficult rhymes and identical rhymes, creating novel and musical expressions, refrain from synonyms and filling the rhyming gaps with redundancy.

In Tavalloli's view, rhythm is one of the requirements of poetry but it should be in coordination with modes and meaning, i.e., the rhythm should be appropriate with the emotional modes of the poem.

Another important modern lyric poet is Nader Naderpour whose first collection of verse was published in 1954. "Eyes & Hands" attracted the attention of readers because of some features such as romantic and emotional trend, simplicity of language, musical and selected words.

" Nothing has remained but the horror of silence
Nothing has remained but wishing death
There is anger and revenge found only in glances
There is body and weary soul in seek of death
Nader Naderpour, 1969, p.169

The most important difference of Tavalloli and Naderpour's poems are in their outlook to being. On the contrary to Tavalloli whose attitude is disappointing and bitter, Naderpour's poetry is full of novel and live illustrations that reflect romantic delicate themes. Moreover, Naderpour's verse

collections "Daughter of Wine-Cup", Sun Collyrum", and "Verse of Grapes" have been published.

If one day someone asks me
What is your purpose of living?
I will say, since I am afraid of death
Therefore, it remains no way but living.
(Naderpour, 1971, p.35)

The other outstanding poet of this trend is Fereydoon Moshiri (1926-2000).

Moshiri began composing poetry by following Tavalloli's poetic style and the verse collections named "Unfound" (1954), "Thirst of Tempest"(1955), "Sin of Sea" (1956) are the products of this era of his poetry composition. Most of Moshiri's lyric poems have been composed in quatrain and their delicate and romantic themes as well as simple and lofty-free language propagated among the public.

As if the breath of city is hidden in its chest
No leaf shakes over the branch of moments
Sky is imprisoned in its anguish enclosure
No living creature is found over this marsh.
(Moshiri,1992,p.66)

Moshiri continued this poetic style until his death and published the verse collection, "Pearl of Love", "O, Rain", "Moments & Emotions" "The Most Attractive & Eternal Beauty" in addition to the above mentioned works.

Another modern lyric poets who changed the course of his poems later and became one of everlasting figures of the contemporary poetry is Forough Farrokhzad. In her three first verse collections : "Captive", "Wall", and "Rebellion", Forough presents interesting samples of lyric poetry.

The difference of Forough and other poets of this era comes out of the fact that as a woman she is the first historical female voice chanted about her beloved man and reflects feminine affections and wishes.

" I close my two fiery eyes
In order not to cast a glance at his eyes.
In order that my heart beats not severely and becomes hot
Affected by his discomforted look".
(Farrokhzad, 1993, p.65)

IX. Features and Components of Modern Lyric Poetry

This poetic genre is composed mainly in quatrain or couplet poems and its most important semantic motifs are concepts such as love, death, and sin. Some of the poets of this group have admired Nimaic poetry, but most of their Nimaic experiences are more similar to euphuism. It may be certainly said

that so much romantic poetry has not been composed in any era and trend of the Persian poetry.

Two main branches of modern lyric poetry are: classical branch of modern lyric poetry which continues Parviz Khanlari's path with semi-classical and lingual trends that rely on simplicity and eloquence. The other branch the most important feature of which is imagism and metaphorizing is closer to contemporary poetry, especially they are simple and lofty-free from lingual aspect.

The difference of these two branches is embedded in the fact that the neoclassic branch is focused mainly on rhetorical view and the younger branch emphasizes on aesthetical aspect of poetry.

Concerning the relation of political-social atmosphere and modern lyric poetry, it should be stated that the modern lyric poets affected by the atmosphere governing the society after the coup-d'etat in Aug.19,1953 were disappointed and sought a shelter to the composition of lyrics and romantic poems and introspection the poetry was changed into the reflection domain of individualistic soul of the poet. Some of the poets while protecting superficial humanistic attitude began to compose a kind of semi-philosophical poetry samples of which may be found in Naderpour's poems, Forough Farrokhzad's Rebellion, and in a lower level in Karo's morceau.

X. Conclusion

Modern lyric poetry is one of the most important trends of the contemporary poetry emerged by inspiring from the novelties of Nima Yushij's Afsaneh. Afsaneh is a lyric verse collection that presents novel aspects of lyricism and romanticism in the Persian poetry. The most important features of Afsaneh Verse Collection that attract modern lyric poets are : employing natural elements for describing and expressing the spiritual and internal modes of the characters dramatized in poetry, novel imagination, change in utterance of romantic concepts, employing the simple language of the public instead of literary and lofty diction, dramatic structure, paying attention to individuality and personal experiences instead of intertextual relation and subjectivism found in classic poetry. The first impressions from Afsaneh are found in classical poets such as Mirzadeh Eshghi, Shahriar, and Bahar, but it is not so deep to change these poet's outlook profoundly. The deep influence of Afsaneh may be traced in young poets leading by Fereydoon Tavalloli who founded a new kind of romantic poetry since the middle of 1941s. This genre composed mainly in quatrain, mostly rotates on the orbit of love, death, and romantic agony. Pre-coup de eta modern lyric poetry is not free of political trends and a kind of romantic politics is found in the poetry of this era. Change in political-social atmosphere subsequent to Aug.19th Coup-d' etat makes modern

lyric poetry seek shelter to romantic poetry composition tinted with romantic agony.

In addition to Tavalloli, Nader Naderpour, Fereydoon Moshiri, Fereydoon Kar, Forough Farrokhzad (her three first verse collections), Mohammad Ali Eslami Nadoshen, Houshang Ebtehaj (Some of his poems), and Hassan Honarmandi are the most important figures of modern lyric poetry who form the connecting ring of the Persian classic and modern poetry.

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