

Analysis and Formulation of Religious (Shiite) and Mystical Themes in Contemporary Tajik Poetry in the Period of Independence (1991-2015)

Dr.Ahmad Tamimdari¹,Dr.Marjan Ali Akbarzadeh Zehtab^{2*}

¹ Professor, Department of Persian Language and Literature, Allameh Tabatabaee University, Tehran, Iran.

² Instructor of Department of Persian Language and Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Islamic Azad University, Varamin-Pishva Branch, Iran.

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

The Russian Revolution of October 1917 caused Tajikistan to be under intellectual, economic, and political dominance for nearly seventy years. Over these years, Tajik literature was named Soviet-Tajik literature; and as socialist realism, the dominant literary school was formed in Tajikistan around 1920. Any mystical and religious thought was suppressed, particularly in the literature of this era. With the death of Stalin and the rise of Khrushchev, there has been an opportunity for freedom of thought and speech since 1953. Perestroika and Glasnost policy (economic reform and open political space) was founded by the last Soviet leader, Gorbachev, in 1985. After this era, religious and mystical themes came to life again, particularly with the Soviet Union collapse in 1991 as well as the declaration of independence of Tajikistan in the same year.

This research, given the full-of-censorship background of Tajikistan in the period of Soviet domination, examines the recent efforts of poets in religious (Shiite) and mystical poetry and reviews this theme in today's poetry in this country. The most important question is: how has the evolution of religious (Shiite) and mystical themes been in contemporary Tajik poetry? Poetic evidence from contemporary Tajik poets are analyzed and this statistical community constitutes the most prominent Tajik poets of religious and mystical concepts to answer the question.

2. Theoretical Framework

When socialist thoughts emerged, religious and mystical concepts were considered as serious threats to the government of Tajikistan at that time and

* Corresponding Author Email: aliakbarzade@iauvaramin.ac.ir

censored. The government that understood the true vacuum of spirituality in literature chose an alternative in this field; a fully humane, friendly, instinctive and, safe alternative. Under the influence of Russian literature, mother was praised to the level of God and Prophet. Thus, many “mother letters” were written, like the mother letters of Loyigh Shir-Ali. Sometimes, in order to fill the huge vacuum of spirituality as well as the lack of true theism, the homeland of Tajik poets, referring to the unified communist homeland in many cases, has been praised at the level of God, such as some of Golrokhsar’s poems (see: Safi Ava, 1994). In continuation of the same materialist perspective, “Soil and Earth” as “Mother of God” is observed in the works of most Tajik Soviet poets (see Ghanat, 1994). Nevertheless, particularly after fading of socialist thought, some poets have considered a disregard for spirituality as the reason for social problems. For instance, in the poem “Bell of Awakening” from *Earth and Time*, Loyigh Shir-Ali complains a lot about the lack of spirituality (see Loyigh, 1993).

Since the study deals with a later part of the contemporary Tajik poetry (from 1991 to 2015) and since in the introduction and the previous lines, a brief overview of the Tajik poetry’s status over the peak period of Soviet domination (Soviet literature) was proposed, only the era after the end of Soviet domination by 2015 (see Khodayar, 2018) is reviewed: 1. The decline of Soviet literature and soft return to tradition (1953-1985), “Khrushchev Thaw”; 2. The beginning of awakening and freedom (1985-1991), Gorbachev Era; Declaration of Perestroika and Glasnost (economic reform and open political space); 3. National independence and self-awareness (1991-2015), collapse of the Soviet Union and independence of the Republic of Tajikistan (1991); 4. Independence, doubt, and strangeness (2015), the beginning of the de-Islamization (Secularization) period.

3. Research Method

This study aimed at studying contemporary Tajik poets’ religious (Shiite) and mystical poems through poetic evidence, library and analytical methods, and using the Iranian and Tajik libraries and Persian and Cyrillic references.

4. Findings and Discussion

With the death of Stalin and the rise of Khrushchev in 1953 as well as the establishment of some political and theological freedoms, some poets, particularly Loyigh Shir-Ali, benefited from the lack of spirituality and religious and mystical beliefs. Later, in 1985, with the Perestroika and Glasnost policies by Gorbachev, the last Soviet leader, poets succeeded to create forbidden themes such as religion and mysticism. With the former

Soviet Union collapse in 1991 and Tajikistan independence in the same year, Tajik relations with their ancestral homeland, Iran, enhanced. In this regard, the effect of the religious atmosphere as well as the mystical thoughts of contemporary Iranian literature on Tajik's present literature and poetry (before 2015 and the beginning of the secularization period) should not be ignored; since a more religious mystical (particularly Shiite) religious atmosphere is observed in the poems wrote by many young Tajik poets.

5. Conclusion

In Tajik poetry, due to the institutionalization of communist thought in the former Soviet republics like Tajikistan, religious and mystical concepts prevailed after Stalin. Although they have experienced a rowing trend due to Iran's growing interactions with Tajikistan as well as its intellectual and ideological effects - before 2015 that is considered as the onset of this country's de-Islamization stage, such concepts can only be observed in the poems of younger Tajik poets. Another significant point is that the mystical themes stated by the Tajik poet are usually a type of religious mysticism. In other words, the confusions, bewilderments, and confusions of pure mystical texts are hardly observed in their works. In Shiite religious concepts like praising Imams (AS), waiting for the promised savior (Mahdi) (AS), speaking about the Karbala event, besides the love of Imam Hussein (AS), it should be noted that since the Tajik poets are Sunni, the advent of these emerging concepts in Tajik's contemporary poetry along with the fading of socialist thoughts and some alterations in the writings and thoughts is highly notable.

Keywords: Religion, Mysticism, Shiite Poetry, Tajik Poets, Independence Period's Poetry

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