A Review of Dove Symbol in the Works of Poets in Kadkani's Poetry

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Abstract

The present paper aims at reviewing the dove symbol in the poems of Shafiei Kadkani. Symbol is a literary device, in Iran as well as world literature, in which a word is mentioned but a meaning beyond the apparent meaning is implied. Therefore, symbol, from this point of view, is to some extent similar to metaphor, trope, irony and sign. In symbol, there is nothing to lead us to a meaning different from the original, primary meaning. There are a number of differences between symbol and other literary devices such as metaphor, irony, etc, in which a word is mentioned and its secondary meaning is taken into account. In this paper, firstly, the literal meaning of dove is provided form authoritative dictionaries, secondly, the myths and legends related to this bird are presented, and then, in order to find the symbolic meaning of this bird, the authors look through the authoritative versions of the poet's collections of poetry, extract fragments of poems in whose skies doves have taken flight, and, as a result, the frequency of the use of this bird in the poet's works is arrived at. Finally, the authors analyze the poems in which dove is symbolically represented, and provide the readers with the reasons why some poets use this bird in their poems and some others do not.

Keywords: dove, Shafiei Kadkani.
Introduction:

Ever since ancient times and the composition of the earliest poems of the language, using natural elements has always had significant manifestations in Persian poetry, and poets have used it, in different forms, throughout their works; sometimes they have treated these elements and expressed their qualities and characteristics literally, as in the famous lines that follow:

How does the mountain gazelle run in the fields?
How can she be without a companion?” (Abbasi, 1378, p. 162)

These lines describe the mountain gazelle as a natural creature, and, in poetic form, explain its solitude in the fields. In other instances, these natural elements have been used as the tenors of some other things; the use of this technique was generally begun in the fourth and fifth centuries, and is not a first-hand experience. This has continued to the contemporary age, and sensory similes are clearly observed in the works of contemporary poets, especially the followers of Nima. However, in Nimaesuqe poetry, simile, metaphor, and trope, have gradually been replaced by symbol and the symbolic use of natural elements. These elements, including gazelle, flower, nightingale, cypress, dove, etc, possess a unique beauty in the works of poets.

In order to express their poetic states and to say what they want to say in poetic form, the poets of our age have also made use of nature in various forms, and, most of the time, this has been done in a symbolist manner. From Nima's phoenix and amen bird to Akhavan's dandelion, and Shafiei's dove and toqi (wood pigeon), each poet has, in his/her own peculiar way, used nature for their poetic purposes.

Mythological Vision in the Poetry of Akhavan Sales:

Iranian contemporary poetry may also be called its contemporary history, and there are a lot of symbols and metaphors in Persian contemporary poetry that, if deciphered and interpreted, may show us that the true poet of this age has the pulse of its history in his hand, and his heart beats to the rhythm of the time. On the other hand, the contemporary poetry, in which the love for one's country is expressed, makes the poet rely on the history of his motherland and sing his tune, and this makes the poet use his native myths and legends in his poems. A great deal of myths have been used in contemporary poetry, but the type of myth that Akhavan has used, and been glorified with, is of ethnic, epic, and national origins.

Through the recreation of national-native myths in the form of allegorical and encoded symbols, the contemporary poet tries to compose and versify his national honors and the secret of his society's survival and continuity. Akhavan is one of the poets, or maybe one of the greatest poets, who look at the past. However, he wants to harmonize the past with contemporary concepts; still, in the heritage of the past, he does not seek any truth other than that of his age. Akhavan offers the best mythological interpretation of this day and age:
"... Oh, where is
the capital of this crazy, ruthless century?
With its bright nights that resemble days,
With its bleak and melancholy days, deep in the legends like the night,
With its strong, unbreakable chains,
With its ungenerous smiling through the words, cold and unfamiliar,
Oh, where is it?
Century's capital?
We come to conquer,
To open its wasteland..." (Akhavan Sales, The Ending of Shahnameh, p. 80-4)

Other myths that abound in Akhavan's poetry include urban myths and the poet's interpretation of urban elements. In the poem Address from the collection In the Autumn's Small Yard in Prison, we read:

... Come gather round people! Oh you,
You who have conquered my city
[- Alas, it has become your city now -
In this sad sunset
When you are coming back tired and desperate from your jobs
[- From that despised battle in the market -
I am addressing you,
Addressing you in a rustic manner.
From here, from the top of my tower, this tower of exile, this tower of pain...
I want to come down from the place of terror, and..." (Akhavan Sales, In the Autumn's Small Yard in Prison, p 29-30)
This poem expresses the problems and difficulties of city life; estrangement, grief, sorrow, lack of friendship and innocence.

**Akhavan and Narrative Poetry:**

"Oh, you cooing dove of my lost castles" (The Ending of Shahnameh)

Except for some of his short poems, narration provides the basis for all of Akhavan's poems.

However, Akhavan's poems are in their real height of glory only when narration loses its simple form and takes the form of allegory of myth. Akhavan never kills the spirit of narration in his poems, even when he is making allegories. The long lines found in most of his poems show this narrative spirit:

"Two doves

Have perched on an old cedar's branch

That has grown, far from others, on the foot of the bulky mountain..." (Akhavan Sales, From This Avesta, p. 14-6)

This poem is an example of Akhavan's poems which possess tone, description, characterization and allegorical features, but not a poem in which he produces imagery: "Often in the middle or end of a poem, Akhavan shifts from visual to narrative expression, or from a soft language to an ode-like one, or, with the intention of justification of the poem or explaining it, adds lines or stanzas to the poem, as in the beautiful poem entitled The Return of the Crows in which he adds two redundant stanzas in the middle of the poem and somehow spoils it. (Hoquqi, 1371, p. 366)

"Akhavan has never composed a poem as magnificent as Nima's Amen Bird, and it may be resulted from the fact that Nima is more of an image-maker than a narrator. Akhavan is rather a narrator than an image-maker, and in fact some of Akhavan's sentences and lines are simple and beautiful statements not visual in nature, that come whether from the world of imagination, or his obsession with, or to some extent bombastic behavior concerning, words" (Baraheni, 1371, p. 10-8). "Omid's (Akhavan's) images are so sensual and detailed, and violently shake their readers. This skillful image-making is the result of the poet's power of rhetoric. His poem is the scream of the blows he has received. It is an image of life in a broken mirror, however, the image's structure is not broken or confused; it is clear and tangible, and its material design is consistent with the horrible situation of the modern life" (Dastqeib, 1373, p. 100).

Talking about Akhavan's narrative style, Mohammad Hoquqi says: "Mahdi Akhavan Sales is the singer of the caravans of yearning and wrath and curse and hatred, the story teller of forgotten tales and hopes and dreams gone with the wind. He is poet who is the enemy of deception, obscenity, darkness, lies and evil. He is a human, a friend of the righteous, rightness, light, truth
and kindness. These are the two antithetical principles glimpses of which are caught here and there on the waves of his poetry which is so full of weeping, grief, despair, loss and defeat" (Hoquqi, 1371, p. 13).

The Story of the City of Stones is among the best and most beautiful narratives of Akhavan's in which he recreates one or two stories and some myths from the Iranian ancient mythology, and, doing so, expresses the current conditions of the society. In the Story of the City of Stones "Akhavan puts together fragments of mythology in a most skillful way, and as a result, he is able to communicate through them many references and allusions to the contemporary social and historical conditions. Thus, the reader gradually puts aside the delightful narrative part of the poem and sees himself as the prince of the city of stones, a man in whose eyes all the hopes and dreams are lost forever. The reader identifies with the prince of the city of stones, finds out that all hope of salvation is lost, and considers the failure of that great prince imprisoned inside a cave to be his own failure at individual and social levels" (Baraheni, 1371, p. 11-20).

Khanvan and the Society:

In his own day and age, private life, and poetry, Mahdi Akhavan Sales becomes the representative of a generation and group who have experienced natural and social winter simultaneously, in other words, what they see in the winter of nature is the winter of their society and social environment. He sees a generation of: "Sad, gloomy people who have forgotten how to reply when hailed, who disdainfully shake hands with others, a generation whose very breath is not to inhale clean free air, but to be exhaled as a treacherous wall and stand in front of one's eyes and blind them:

"... They will never reply when hailed, they only keep to themselves

No one deigns to hold his head up and greet a friend..." (ibid, p. 656).

We can describe Akhavan as a shrewd, clever and sad poet, with a gloomy poetry, who cannot wait for the moments of drunkenness and joy. "Because it is only in these moments when he is rid of useless days of the sober world of lies, and is embraced by the world of drunkenness and truth, in moments of purity and freedom.

The origin of his liveliest poems including Namaz (prayer), Suddenly! What Star's Setting, Swamp and Morning Draught, is this same bittersweet essence" (Hoquqi, 1375, p. 16-7).

"We may introduce Akhavan as the poet of the pain of grief, a pain that is the pain of a generation, nevertheless, in language, he finds his own unique expression." (Ashoori, 1380, p. 190).

Akhavan knows and understands well that: "It is not the task of an original artist and poet to put unfounded and useless hope in people's hearts. His first and foremost duty is to reflect, as far as possible, the social conditions and the ugliness and terror and madness that dominate the environment, and in this vision, the poet must stay and try to show human beings in the situation they really are, and not the illusory situation based on false perceptions which are made up in
people's minds. It is only through uncovering the horrible ugliness of the dark nights that we may eliminate the night and see the dawn of the new day" (Baraheni, 1371, p. 656).

In contrast to his contemporaries who sang of hope and hopefulness, Akhavan, from the beginning of his career as a poet, possessed a hopeless frame of mind, and this can be easily observed in his poems contained in the collection Organ; this quality originates from his individuality: "All the poets of this period have suffered the same pain, but each has expressed it in a different language. At the beginning of the path of this pain, Akhavan is with others, but he does not want to stay with them when they reach their destination, he wants to go on a longer journey the end of which is becoming another prophet in From This Avesta: (Ashoori, 1380, p. 191).

In Omid's poetry, despair, failure of body and mind, etc. have been depicted in a realistic manner: "Oh! the narrator of my forgotten tales"

Dariush Ashoori talking about Akhavan in his book Poetry and Thought, says: "In spite of the fact that he has accepted his defeat, Akhavan does not want to go till the end. It is because of this that he, in hope of salvation and achieving the lost goodness, turns to the past. Akhavan's interest in the Persian literature, and his knowledge of the language of the texts and collections of poetry have paved the way for his progress in this field.

Akhavan is a man of morality, compassion, and generosity, and he inside is filled with hope of salvation. He does not want to believe that goodness has totally gone out of the world, or that it has always been nothing but a mirage and deception" (ibid, p. 194).

At the end of this discussion we come to the conclusion that Akhavan is one of the mavericks in the history of Persian poetry who has a hopeless individuality and identity. Akhavan does not see the world and its affairs as black, but knows the darkness of history; we cannot consider him a philosophically pessimist poet when it comes to his ideas about the society. He hates empty moments that are filled with death, and always awaits a moment that puts him on the verge of restlessness, and it is in this way that sometimes his keen, night-breaking eyes cast a look on all ages at once: "Through experience, Akhavan has come to understand that all those ideals are in fact nothing but fancies that may never come true, and, as a result, he finds no other way but to move forward, along with words, in the world of his various poems of drunkenness and joy, and weep out of grief and despair on the stairway of poetry, and even end some of his poems with weeping" (Hoquqi, 1375, p. 20).

Love of Motherland in Akhavan's Poetry:

Motherland is a land where people with common ethnic, linguistic and cultural characteristics live, and this theme is usually seen in the poetry of the poets who have a relatively vast knowledge of the Iranian history and culture.

Akhavan is a Khorasanian poet who can be truly considered the real representative of his Khorasanian and Iranian ancestors; a poet whose poems are filled with the love of Iran, a poet
who proudly calls himself an Iranian: "Akhavan believed in an early Iran which was all purity, and thought that if Iran was kept intact, we would all be undoubtedly saved, and that if there is no hope of salvation now, it is because the foreigners have hindered us" (Baraheni, 1371, p 1659).

Love of Iran and Iranians has made Akhavan a radical nationalist to the extent that: "Akhavan's westernized behavior has tossed him to the ugliest forms of racism; whatever is related to Iran is good and divine, and whatever is related to Arabs is bad and evil. He does not even ask why!

Akhavan, in spite of the fact that he considered himself a murmuring peasant, was concerned with the state of Iranian affairs, and not the affairs of the world. He was afraid the growing destruction of the noble arches that had fallen in the past and were still falling; it is obvious that such a person should be considered something more than a mere murmuring peasant" (Hoquqi, 1375, p. 65).

The Frequency of Dove in Akhavan's Poetry:

Dove is mentioned more than any other bird in Akhavan's poetry. This bird, whether as an image or a symbol, has been mentioned 13 times in Akhavan's Nimaesque poems; 11 times in its usual form kabootar, and 2 times in its colloquial form kaftar. Of course, the frequency of qomri (ringdove) and cuckoo is also noticeable in his poems, but since the focus of the present paper is on dove, it is more emphasized here.

Generally, dove in Akhavan's poetry stands as the symbol of purity, honesty, and warmth, and has come to be known as the bird of glad tidings and promises. In contrast to dandelion for which nobody is waiting, dove is a bird people wait for because it is a bird of glad tidings and promises (refer to The Story of the City of Stones).

Analysis of Dove in Akhavan's Poetry:

The use of the word dove, whether symbolic or allegorical, may be clearly observed in Akhavan's poems. In Akhavan's poetry, this bird is mostly used as the symbol of glad tidings and sweet promises. In this part of the paper, the poems in which dove has been used as a symbol are mentioned, and we try to explain their symbolic meanings as far as possible.

Conclusion:

The first paper provided the basis for the analysis of the symbol of dove in the poems of the poets under study, definitions of symbol were mentioned, and it was also stated that symbol, like metaphor, trope, etc. is the statement of a word with the intention of a meaning other than its literal one; there is however one difference and that is the fact that in symbol there is no other word to lead us from the literal meaning to the meaning beyond the word. Furthermore, it was stated that in symbol, unlike metaphor, the literal and apparent meaning of the word can also be considered intended or predicted. Then the authors provided the readers with an in-depth explanation of symbol's differences and similarities with other literary devices such as irony, myth, and sign. However, in our next discussion that is the basis of this thesis and is presented in
chapter four, searching through the volumes of poetry by the poets under study, we have come to interesting results deserving consideration. The questions presented in the first chapter are briefly addressed in the following parts of this chapter.
References


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