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***An Analysis of the Reasons of Decline in Mehdi Akhavan-Sales's
Poetry after Az In Avesta***

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Abstract

Mehdi Akhavan-Sales is one of the most famous Persian Contemporary poets. His poetry has undergone significant changes over time. After he turned into Nima'i poetry, and after the dramatic climax manifested in *Az In Avesta*, he gradually declined in the next collections. Given the high status of his poetry, there must have been important factors in this artistic decline. The present study has turned to seek the life and poetry of Akhavan-Sales in order to find these factors with the approach of "external-based historical criticism" and by stating that there is a reciprocal link between the works and the cultural and social situation of the historical period of their creation. Therefore, The environmental issues and factors that have affected the spirit and emotions of Akhavan have caused his poetry to change in different dimensions, under the title of "contextual factors" and as a result of which, contextual factors emerging in Akhavan's poetry has led to declination of his poetry. The titles of the "textual factors" are divided and examined. In the end, it is clear that the environmental conditions that arise in the life of Akhavan after this Avesta, shows that he does not have the necessary motivation and power to compose poems equal to the poems of this collection with all his skills and mastery.

Keywords: *Mehdi Akhavan-Sales, historical criticism, personal style developments, artistic decline.*

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Extended Abstract

1- Introduction

Mehdi Akhavan-Sales is one of the influential figures in the field of Nima'i poetry. Akhavan is in a historical period that has a place in itself an important part of the specific socio-political events of contemporary Iranian history. Also, apart from political and social events, events also take place in the personal life of the Akhavan, all of which have significant effects on his spirit and thinking, and consequently on his poetry.

Akhavan's poetry has undergone changes over time, and for his poetry a course of evolution can be identified. He entered the field of poetry by composing *Arghanoon's* classical poems and turned to Nima'i poetry in *Zemestan*. His remarkable success culminated in *Akhare Shahnameh* in the collection of *Az In Avesta*; But after that, his poetry went downhill and from that peak. The decline of Akhavan's poetry after the collection of *Az In Avesta* is an issue that everyone agrees on.

Akhavan's decline is due, because of the high peak in which *The Az In Avesta* takes over and the fame that its iconic poems gain becomes more tangible and important. To find the cause of this decline, the life and poetry of the Akhavan must be studied and analyzed.

What factors has led to declination of Mehdi Akhavan-Sales's poetry after the *Az In Avesta*?

2. Literature Review

The issues and factors that have influenced the Akhavan's poetry include "hypertextual factors" and "textual factors".

2. 1. hypertextual factors

2. 1. 1. Non-political imprisonment

Akhavan was sentenced to prison in 1344 for a non-political crime. This was one of the bitterest periods of his life. During the imprisonment of Akhavan, his family was in a very bad economic situation. After enduring imprisonment and the deprivations resulting from it, on one hand, he was ridiculed by people and his friend and lost his job. These issues had a great impact on the sensitive soul of the poet.

2. 1. 2. The formation of a frustrated mood

The coup d'etat of 1332 had a profound effect on Akhavan and his poetry. This defeat had an effect on him, which for several years felt anger, protest and rebellion against this defeat. The protest and rebellion that is the essence of most of his poems during the peak years of his art. This protest and suppressed anger gradually subsides after 1944 due to the events and problems that occur in the life of Akhavan, and therefore that epic and crashing tone of his poetry is reduced.

2. 1. 3. The Revolution

In his political poems, Akhavan uses the best form in the service of content. And we said that when the spirit of submission and frustration in Akhavan intensifies day by day, his poetry weakens. After the revolution, the discourse of society changed. Akhavan's worldview was different from the worldview of the poets of the Islamic Revolution, which caused him to deviate from the common discourse and, consequently, the literary community of that time. This issue affected the spirit and art of the poet.

2. 1. 4. Lack of seriousness and the dominance of a spirit of boredom

We said that Akhavan gradually loses the spirit of protest and anger in a gradual process. We should add here that in the continuation of the same course, he suffers from a spirit of indifference and impatience in the last decade of his life. This lack of seriousness and indifference to issues led to the emergence and expansion of features in his poetry which brought him down from that high position.

2. 1. 5. Resolving existential contradictions

Every great artist has an existential contradiction within himself, and the excellence/ sublimity of his art is the product of this contradiction. Akhavan was also one of those great artists who was involved in several contradictions: Contradiction in his feelings towards Iranians, in the field of theology, in the issue of religion and creed, in his treatment of tradition and modernism, etc. It seems that after *Az In Avesta* some of these contradictions are resolved, and this is another reason that takes Akhavan's poetry away from the peak it had reached.

2. 1. 6. Diminishing poetic inspiration

Akhavan believed that poetry was the product of poetic inspiration in certain moments. He seems to have been less exposed to those poetic inspirations after the collection of *Az In Avesta*. He himself mentions this issue in his poems.

2. 1. 7. Poor living conditions

Existence of job security and provision of the minimum necessities of life in the peak years of his poetry has had a positive effect on Akhavan's poetic creativity; Because the decline and artistic declination of Akhavan coincides with the period of his imprisonment for the second time and the problems that arouse for him after that.

2. 2. Textual factors

Comparing the collections after *Az In Avesta* with the previous collections, we see some differences that these different features should be considered as the textual factors of such decline in Akhavan's poetry.

2. 2. 1. Reducing symbolic expression

Akhavan's symbolic poems are his best poems. Looking at his collections, we see that in the collections after *Az In Avesta*, his symbolic poems are significantly reduced. For this reason, the decline of Akhavan's poetry can be considered as distancing his poetry from symbolic expression.

2. 2. 2. Retreat from archaism

Akhavan, who had gradually lost his epic and tumultuous spirit since 1344, realized that such a firm and epic language could not fit in semantic and emotional contexts of his new collections. Therefore, in his recent collections, he tries to bring the language of his poetry as close as possible to the contemporary language and to reduce the archaism of his language. When he retreats from this language, his poetry loses its former prominence; because one of the two factors of causal identification among poets of his time is his specific language.

2. 2. 3. Mismatch between language and content

Akhavan's mind is so occupied with that ancient language that in its later collections we encounter a kind of dichotomy and contradiction between content and language. In the Niāmi's poems of *Dar Hayate Kochake Paiz* collection, apart from the occasional manifestation of the

epic tone, presence of ancient words along with the classical texture of some verses and lines does not correspond to the romantic and lyrical content of these poems.

2. 2. 4. Periphrasis

Periphrasis can be found in all of Akhavan's collections and his Nima'i-poems, but in the second period, in the absence of symbolic expression and that epic and crashing language, Periphrasis finds more prominence and is considered an objection to his poems. The presence of periphrasis without structural necessity and even content in the poems of this period is another factor in the decline of his poetry.

2. 2. 5. Moving away from social poetry and composing personal poems

In the first period, Akhavan was a deep social poet and felt committed to his society, culture and people. In the second period, his social concerns gradually diminished. His personal inclinations become more pronounced and his personal pains reduce the incidence of social pains.

2. 2. 6. Return to classic forms

Mehdi Akhavan -Sales's high position in contemporary poetry is due to his Nima'i poems. Akhavan is so fascinated by classical literature that he has never been able to escape its attractions. However, composing in classical forms was a hobby in his first period of poetry and was the main form of his Nima'i poems, but in the next period Akhavan's tendency towards classical forms and styles increased, because he was impatient and reluctant in his old age and the ability to observe. It does not have the structure of Nima'i poetry and the idea that develops the idea in Nima'i poetry.

2. 2. 7. Turning to hobby and humor

One of the consequences of Akhavan's impatience in the second period was his tendency to indulge, as well as to pay more attention to the verbal artistic arrays and apparent proportions in composing poetry. To some extent, this issue should be considered as a side effect of Akhavan turning to classical formats. The emergence of this feature in Akhavan's poems is another reason for the decline of his poetry in this period.

3. Methodology

In this study, we have used the method of "external historical critique". The researcher who uses this approach in his research on literature seeks to reveal the social, economic, and political forces that led to the creation of literary works at different points in history. Historical critique is based on the premise that intra-textual and structural critiques alone cannot reveal the whole reality of the text. Therefore, in this method, the basis and focus of the research is to pay attention to the context of history as a tool to understand the reality of the text.

4. Results

Based on this research, it was found that the hypertextual factors that occurred in the personal and social life of Mehdi Akhavan-Sales from 1944 onwards have had a significant impact on his poetic art and the decline of his poetry after *Az In Avesta*. Since in the collections of *Akhare Shahnameh* and *Az In Avesta* we see the unparalleled mastery of M. Omid over language and literary works of art, he has usually had this skill and mastery in the following collections as well and given the humiliation we see in these collections, it can be argued that the environmental conditions in which Akhavan found himself after *Az In Avesta* did not claim to be sufficient to make the most of his poetic creativity and artistic skills in composing poetry. For this reason, the poems of this period are technically and structurally inferior to the poems of the previous period.

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