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Rethinking of Contemporaneity in Persian's Biographical Books (Tadhkerahs)

*Saeid Radfar*¹

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Abstract

In this article, "contemporary" has been studied as a "concept" by the first historians of Persian literature, i.e. biographers. I have tried to describe this concept in exactly the same way that the Persian biographers has experienced and known it. First, there is an introductory discussion of the lexical roots of "contemporary" and then its current meanings and interpretations of contemporary. These studies show the extent to which perceptions of the contemporary depend on cultural and social conditions. After that, the meanings of "contemporary" are discussed by biographers. The meanings are contemporaneity, novelty and being in the same level. It has been shown that for biographers, these perceptions are fluid and the reasons for their fluidity have been investigated. The fluidity of these perceptions has led biographers to use restrictive criteria. This has been used so that they can do their job in writing about their contemporaries with more precise limits, and reduce the fluidity of the contemporary concept.

Keywords: *contemporaneity, tadhkerah, literary history, biographies of poets.*

¹ Doctor of Persian Language and Literature, Ferdosi University; *Email:* saeidradfar66@yahoo.com

Extended Abstract

1- Introduction

Many readers of literature, while reading a book on the history of literature, expect to be confronted with the biographies and selected poems of poets from the past, such as Ferdowsi, Rumi, Saadi, and Hafez, in order to understand the history and past of literature. Literary history books also meet this expectation and provide the reader with a part of the life and poems of the past literature. But this is only one aspect of readers' expectations. Sometimes they want to be aware of the situation of their contemporary literature, and of course this need is met by the history of literature. Much of the history of literature represents contemporary literature. These representations could be very important and readable for the audiences. Because it raises their awareness of their contemporary literature and also provides primary sources for writing the literary histories of later periods. Therefore, the function of history-literature from this perspective is to provide and meet the expectations of readers. Now this expectation is either knowing the past or knowing the present. Now, if we consider the history of literature as a whole, the Tadhkerahs are also among the representations of the history of literature that are written in response to the expectations of the readers. Tadhkerahs usually have two main parts; One is for the literature of the past and the earlier poets, who were called the "Moteghademin" and the other was for the literature and poets of the present day, which came under the headings of "contemporaries" or "Moteakherin".

Research Question(s)

- What are the meanings of contemporaneity in Tadhkerahs?
- In which way and how these meanings were restricted?

2. Literature Review

Among Persian works, less attention has been paid to the subject and issue of this article. In his *theory of literary history*, Mahmoud Fotoohi has pointed out three general concepts of contemporaneity, modernity, and belonging to today for the contemporary. He also points out that the dominant view of contemporary literary critics and historians is contemporary; Something that is related to the new era. This approach

started in Iran 130 years ago and its prominent feature in contrast to the past centuries is the emergence of a critical perspective and the spirit of innovation (Fotoohi, 1387: 9169-170).

3. Methodology

The theoretical principle of this paper is to follow a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology in the sense of the study of conscious experience, as experienced from the point of view of the subject. The subject of the present research is the biographers of the 9th century to the end of the 13th century AH. The selection of this period was more because most of the Tadhkerahs have been written in the last few hundred years. Also, after this period, the form of writing the history of Persian literature takes a different direction. In order to arrive at a suitable answer to the questions of this article, it is first necessary to examine the “contemporary” from a lexical and etymological point of view. Then, there will be a brief and historical discussion about the applications of “contemporary” perceptions and criteria in Persian biographies.

4. Results

Although the contemporary concept is often used and goes in the sense of contemporaneity, but it is not only frozen in this sense and it is also used in other meanings such as new, new and modern. Entering the modern world has made it possible to have different perceptions of the contemporary. The domain of contemporary perception in the sense of contemporaneity is so open that the exact meaning cannot be deduced from it. This perception itself is dependent on other factors and indicators that have made it as fluid and ambiguous as the contemporary itself. For example, the hundred-year interval is very imperfect and cannot be a good criterion for contemporaneity. The contemporary concept has been used by Persian biographers between the three conceptions of synchronicity, novelty, and peculiarity (participation in one thing). Among these, participation in one thing has provided a clearer meaning than contemporary. However, this meaning has not been considered and has been used in a few notes. The ambiguity and fluidity of the contemporary concept has inevitably affected

contemporary writing. To get rid of this ambiguity and fluidity, biographers have used criteria and limitations. companionship, liveliness, equality, and coexistence are among these criteria. The historical view clarifies the process of the concept and criteria of contemporaneity. Finally, it should be added that writing about the history of contemporary literature is as difficult for us as it was for its predecessors. The choice of synchronicity as a meaning of the contemporary is in the abyss of the concept of contemporaneity. The reference of one vague concept to another, which is itself fluid and indeterminate, causes ambiguity. Just as the contemporary concept has changed greatly since the modern era, and Western society have come up with new conceptions of it that are different from our mental structures, so we can have more different conceptions of it. Let's offer it. Perhaps this will help to make the writing of the history of contemporary literature clearer and more accurate.

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