

**A Study and Analysis of the Subject of Mahdism and the
Artistic Ways of Conveying It to Children and
Adolescents in the Works of Yahya Alavifard**

Seyed Hamzeh Mousavi

MA in Persian Language and Literature, Shiraz University

Zarrintaj Varedi

Associate Professor of Persian Language and Literature,
Shiraz University

Introduction

One of the most important concerns of any society is the moral-religious education of children and adolescents. Undoubtedly, this education is more acceptable to the children and adolescents when it is accompanied with artistic delight found in a musical and literary tone. The subject of "Mahdism" is one of the topics that has a special place in the Shia religion, and a number of poets and writers have tried to create poems or stories for children and adolescents about this topic.

Yahya Alavifard is one of the poets who pays special attention to this topic in several poetry collections and tries to use special artistic techniques in the structure and content of his poems to convey this concept to children and adolescents. It is the aim of this article to examine these literary aspects in his poetry.

Method

Using a descriptive-analytical method, this research examines the concept of Mahdism in the works of Yahya Alavifard and analyzes the way this concept is expressed and presented to children and adolescents by focusing on five poetry collections: *Permanent Spring*, *Innovation Is This*, *God Grant There Will Always Be War*, *Muhammad Will Come Again* and *Gift for Everyone*.

Discussion

In his collections of poems about Mahdism, Yahya Alavifard tries to have innovations in the structure and the content of the poems, which make his poetry distinct and attractive. The most prominent aspect of his art in structure and form of poetry, is choosing words suitable for children and adolescents. He usually uses plain and easy words that can be understood by this group of audience. He rarely uses colloquial words to create intimacy in poetry.

Another feature that is remarkable in the structure of his poetry is the method of conveyance of the message. Alavifard usually avoids inducing the message directly to the audience, and involves her/him in the subject matter with a special ingenuity and allows her/him to make her/his own decision while he himself has intelligently chosen the desired result for her/him.

Another advantage of Alavifard's poetry is the music of the poems. In his poetry collections, we can see various formats such as ghazel, chahar pareh (connected quatrains), mosammat, sekhashti and quatrain. In all these formats he uses joyful and melodious rhythms appropriate for the taste of children and adolescents. It can be said that

half of his poems on this topic are composed in "rarmal" meter and the other half in "rajaz" meter, both of which are very joyful. The choice of striking rhymes has also added to the music of his poetry.

The most important and frequent subject matter in Alavifard's poetry is the Second Coming. By citing verses and traditions, he tries to narrate the conditions and even the day and time of the Second Coming to the audience, and to depict this incident in a very attractive and glorious way for the child.

Another frequent theme in his poetry is the theme of waiting. He describes a hopeful person who looks at the bright horizons of the future which is full of justice and truth. This person believes that this will happen and all demons and oppressions will disappear after that. In this topic, he aligns himself and the whole universe with the audience.

"The beautiful sun comes/ It rises from the mountain/
In my eyes on Friday morning/ Everything is beautiful/
Every Friday until the peak of noon/ The sun comes
with us/ This peak is the apex of assignation/ Where
the master of the world comes/ Until noon I'm looking
forward/ Is he coming today?"

In addition, he tries to connect the topic of waiting with contemporary and current events, especially war and the front line.

"One day the father went to the fronts/ there was no
more trace of him/.../ Now that the father is not with us/
the plan of life is here/ we are waiting for the dawn of
the light/ the light that is always in our hearts."

Conclusion

Yahya Alavifard is one of the poets who has mainly written children's and adolescents' poetry in recent years. His poems, while having innovative themes, adhere to moral and often religious principles and are in accordance with the moral ideals of Islam. Among his religious compositions, the topic of Mahdism, especially waiting and the Second Coming, are more important and more frequent. He has his own special artistic technique in writing these poems.

In all his compositions related to Mahdism, his style is narrative. He often does not mention his purpose at the beginning of his poem, in order to apply the artistic capacities of his poetry and to lead the audience's mind into search of a various narrative through his composition.

The most important artistic techniques of Alavifard are the choice of appropriate words, imagination, musical elements, the use of new formats and the connection of religious themes with contemporary social issues.

In the majority of his poems about Mahdism, wherever Alavifard deals with the issue of the coming of the Savior, he considers a documented narrative extracted from authentic books of Shiite traditions. On the surface, this approach may seem unpoetic, but in his poetry, this documentation is overshadowed by the artistic dimension of poetry; so that even without prior knowledge of the text of the hadith, it is difficult to find it in the text of the poem.

The unique aspect of his method of expressing Mahdism themes is that he first directly or indirectly refers to one of the common challenges that plagues the world due to injustice; finally, by pointing

to the savior, and by giving the good news of his coming, he assures the audience of solving the issue of oppression and ending of injustice. While bringing delight to the audience through the poem, this enigmatic method, which is accompanied with a kind of questioning and curiosity in the children and adolescents, it does not engage the questioning mind of the child and adolescent with an unanswered question since the question is answered by the poet himself and with the promise of a good news. In other words, it creates hope and optimism for the future.

In general, it can be said that in the five selected works under study: a) among the themes of Mahdism, the subject of waiting is the most frequent; b) among the artistic techniques, choosing appropriate words had the highest frequency; c) about the music, the prosodic rhythm of ramal and its derivatives were used most often; d) and finally, among the five selected poetry collections, *Mohammed Will Come Again* was evaluated as more creative, more profound and more beautiful than the other four collections.

Keywords

children and adolescents' poetry, Mahdism, Yahya Alavifard, artistic method of conveyance

References

- Alavifard, Y. (2008a). *Permanent spring, adolescent ritual poetry* [*Bahār-e Māndani, sh'er-e Āeeni-e Nojavān*]. Boostan-e Ketab (in Persian).
- Alavifard, Y. (2008b). *Innovation is this, adolescent poetry* [*Noāvāri in Ast, sh'er-e Nojavān*]. Ayandeh-ye Roshan (in Persian).

- Alavifard, Y. (2010). *God grant there will always be war, adolescent poetry of holy defense* [Kodā Konad Hamishe Jang Bāshad, sh'er-e Nojavān-e Def'ā-e Moqadas] Foundation for Preservation of Sacred Defense Works and Values in North Khorasan (in Persian).
- Alavifard, Y. (2011). *Mohammad will come again, Mahdist adolescent poetry* [Mohammad Dobāre Miāyad, sh'er-e Nojavān Mahdavi]. Za'er Press (in Persian).
- Alavifard, Y. (2012). *Gift for everyone, children's poetry* [Hadye Barāye Hame, sh'er-e Kodak]. Publications of the Cultural and Social Vice-Chancellor of the Endowments and Charitable Affairs Organization [(in Persian).
- Alavi Moghadam, M. (2010). Poetry of waiting [sh'er-e Entezar] *Resistance Literature Journal of Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, 1* (in Persian).
- Azimi, K. (2012). An Introduction to Mahdism Literature and its components [Darāmadi bar Adabiāt-e mahdaviat va Ajzāye ān]. *Religion and Communication, 8*(15 & 16) (in Persian).
- Babajani, A. (2007). *Acquaintance with Mahdism bases and centers* [Āshenaii ba Pāyghāhhā va Marākez Mahdaviat]. Farhang-e Kosar (in Persian).
- Baha-oddin A. (2000). *Kashf-e Aqame* (3rd Volume). Rāzi Press (in Persian).
- Ebrahimi, J. (2003). *When shadows become stone* [Vaghti Sāyehā Sang Mishavand]. Sorey-e-Mehr (in Persian).
- Hafezi, A. (1989). *Dialogue in studying and understanding of children's and adolescents' literature* [Qoft-o-Shenud dar Barasi va

- Shenākht-e Adabiāt-e Kodak va adabiāt-e Nojavān*]. Sham'e (in Persian).
- Hakimi, M., & Kamoos, M. (2012). *Principles of children's and adolescents' literature* [*Mabani Adabiāt-e Kodak va Nojavān*]. Aron Press (in Persian).
- Heidari Abhari, Q. (2012). Mahdism is not paid attention to as much as Ashura in children's and adolescents' literature (in Persian). <https://iqna.ir/009sjv>
- Izadi, F. (2015). *The reflection of Mahdism in children's and adolescents' literary texts of the decades of 70 to 90* [Baztab-e Mahdaviat dar Motun Adabi Kodak va Nojavan Dahehaye 70-90]. M.A. Thesis. Shiraz University (in Persian).
- Kermani, A. (1999). The meaning of religious literature for children ["Mafhum-e Adabiāt-e Dini barāye Kodakān"]. *Quarterly of children's Literature researches*, 17, 20-29 (in Persian).
- Majlesi, M. (1981). *Bahr-ol-Anvar* (5th Volume) (M. Behboodi, Ed.). Ketabchi (in Persian).
- Mirzaeeyan, M. (2008). Children poetry, a critique on the definitions of children religious literature ["Naqdi bar Ta'ārif-e Adabiāt-e Dini-e Kodakān"]. *Goharan Journal*, 3, 118-125 (in Persian).
- Mohadesi, J. (2007). *Religious art* [*Honar-e Dini*]. Boostan-e Ketab institute (in Persian).
- Mohammad ibn Ebrahim ibn Jafar Alkateb. (1976). *Al-Qeibeh-ye No'māni* (A. Qafari, Ed.). Maktabeh-ye Seduq (in Persian).
- Mohammad ibn Hasan ibn Ali ibn Hasan. (1990). *Qeybe-ye Toosi*. Al-Ma'aref al-Eslamieh (in Persian).

- Mohammadi, M. (1999). *Methodology of children's literature criticism* [*Raveshshenāsi-e Naqd-e Adabiāt-e Kodak*]. Soroosh (in Persian).
- Pourvahab, M. (2013). *Breeze and dandelion* [*Nasim va Qāsedak*]. Boostan-e Ketab (in Persian).
- Qezel Ayaq, S. (2010). *Children and adolescent literature and the promotion of reading* [*Adabiāt-e Kodak va Nojavān va Tarvij-e Khāndan*]. SAMT (in Persian).
- Safi-Golpayegani, L. (1961). *Montakhab al-asar fi al-Emam al-Sani Ashar*. Al-Seyede Masoome Institute (in Persian).
- Salajeqeh, P. (2008). *From this oriental garden* [*Az in Bāq-e Sharqi*]. Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (in Persian).
- Seduq, M. ibn A. (1984). *Complementarity of religion and plenitude of blessing* [*Kamāl al-Din va Tamām al-Ne'm'a*] (A. Qafari, Ed.). Al-Nashr-e Eslāmi Institute (in Persian).
- Taheri Mahzamini, N. (2017). A study of the themes of waiting in the poetry of after Islamic Revolution [“Barasi Mazāmin Ash'ār-e Entezar dar Sh'er-e B'ad az Enqelābe Eslāmi”]. *Publication of Resistance Literature*, 17, 179-200 (in Persian).