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Extended Abstract

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A Critical Review of Mahmoud Kianush's Views on Children's Poetry with Emphasis on the Poems of Abbas Yamini-Sharif

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Introduction

Children's poetry, in its modern definition, is a fairly new movement in Iranian literature. Since the emergence of this new literary trend, various poets from different periods have composed poems for children. However, in the era of distinct attention to this literary genre, Abbas Yamini-Sharif and Mahmoud Kianush definitely stand out with two different, and at times conflicting, approaches. Abbas Yamini-Sharif is one of the pioneers of children's poetry; he published his first work, *Angels' Song*, in 1946. Nonetheless, many attribute the bourgeoning of children's poetry to Kianush. Mahmoud Kianush, in his book *Children's Poetry in Iran*, first published in 1973, presented a framework of dos and don'ts for children's poetry. In this book, through discussions that are sometimes fair and at other times unfair and severe, he criticized Yamini-Sharif's poems. Kianush entirely expounded his opinions on children's poetry in his book, chiefly mentioning examples from his own poetry to support his arguments or criticizing Yamini-Sharif within those same discussions—without feeling the necessity to provide reasoning regarding the poems. One way

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to evaluate Kianush's claims about Yamini-Sharif is to apply his opinions to Yamini-Sharif's poems. This article scrutinizes three collections, *Angels' Songs* (1946), *Songs of the Early Buds* (1966), and *Talking Flowers* (1971), due to their association and conventionality with Kianush's theories about children's poetry, to scientifically approve or disprove his claim that Yamini-Sharif is not a poet.

Review of literature

So far, several research been conducted on Kianush's views limited to his attitudes and has not considered to the critique of Yamini-Sharif's poetry. The subsequent two works have only concisely addressed the critique of Kianush's opinions:

Seyyed-Abadi (2001), even though precisely stating Kianush's poetry and theory in his book, has primarily described Kianush's views and only criticized his views in a few pages. Mirzadeh (2021), by revising several research works in the field of children's poetry, has criticized Kianush's views; though, this critique is also restricted and typically addresses the book as a whole, with only a few references to the poetry of Abbas Yamini-Sharif. Nonetheless, even these restricted references can play an important role in unsettling the absolute modeling of children's poets after Kianush.

It seems that, assumed Kianush's specific approval among children's and young adult poets, no one has yet seriously critiqued his views on Yamini-Sharif—particularly through the method of comparing the work with the opinion and using a critique-of-critique approach—despite the fact that Yamini-Sharif concentrated on children's poetry before Kianush. Breaking this insight in the minds of poets and researchers of children's poetry could lead to more studies on Yamini-Sharif's poetry and the discovery of concealed dos and don'ts for composing children's poetry.

This article has tried to extract examples from Yamini-Sharif's poems in the three collections *Angels' Songs*, *Songs of the Early Buds*, and *Talking Flowers* that line up with Kianush's criteria for children's poetry. It then reviews them statistically and analytically to measure the scope of these poems' conformity with Kianush's opinions.

Discussion

Based on the book *Children's Poetry in Iran*, the key code features of children's poetry from Kianush's viewpoints are as follows: 1. Remarking the poetic quality of poetry and deploying elements such as imagination and rhetorical devices like personification, simile between perceptible objects, repetition, paronomasia (jenās), parallel structure (tarṣīʿ), contrast (tafawīf), antithesis (tażādd), and correspondence (muṭābaqah); 2. The need of using rhyme and metrical boundaries in the prosodic meters (baḥr) of hazaj, rajaz, ramal, munsaraḥ, and mutaqārib; 3. Faithfulness to linguistic limitations in the areas of simplicity, naturalness, modernity, and comprehensibility; using vocabulary within a child's lexicon; placing sentence

components in their precise command; making the language bear a resemblance to conversation; and avoiding poetic filler (pūshāl-e sheʿrī); 4. Recognizing the world of children and using themes suitable for them.

Regarding Abbas Yamini-Sharif's children's poems from Kianush's view point on children's poetry, it can be concluded that over 80% of Yamini-Sharif's poems are composed in the meters highlighted by Kianush. The use of rhyme and the improvement of musicality through radif (repetition of a word or phrase at the end of consecutive lines) are other features where Yamini-Sharif shares Kianush's perspective. Along with the conformity of meters with those preferred by Kianush, the briefness of the poems' meters is also compatible with his views, with the majority of poems written in short meters consisting of one or two arkaan (metrical feet).

Also, imagination suitable for the audience occupies a noteworthy place in Yamini-Sharif's poetry, and all the rhetorical devices highlighted by Kianush are plentifully used in his poetry collections. The language of Yamini-Sharif's poems is generally simple and intimate, free from the intricacies of adult poetry. However, infrequent weaknesses in composition and uncertainty in some poems are notable and have at times made understanding the meaning problematic.

The proper use of music, imagination, and simple, childlike language echoes Yamini-Sharif's experience and precise understanding of children's poetry, to such an extent that they can be deliberated his unwritten strategy on children's poetry.

The themes in Yamini-Sharif's poetry are, for the most part, fitting to the world of his audience, and only a few of his poems can be reflected examples that line up with Kianush's critiques, as stated in the book *Children's Poetry in Iran*. Verbal creativity, the use of sounds and numbers, elements of entertainment and vocabulary building, phonetics, and the use of poetry for learning educational notions—particularly in alphabet poems—hold a noticeable place in many of Yamini-Sharif's works.

Conclusion

A comparison between Kianush's views and Yamini-Sharif's poetry reveals a high compatibility between two. This constancy is observed in various areas such as meter, external music (rhyme and rhythm), internal music (phonetic harmony), literary devices, and themes. Only in a few instances do the poems reveal linguistic inadequacies consistent with Kianush's critiques. It seems that in other cases, given Yamini-Sharif's pioneering role in composing children's poetry, Kianush's personal perception or preferences may have influenced his approach to Yamini-Sharif.

In most instances, Yamini-Sharif not only observed the Kianush's views years before the publication of his book—efficiently acting as a pioneer and theorist in practice—but also in many cases, he even exceeded Kianush's viewpoint, pushing the boundaries of creativity and innovation in children's poetry. With a precise understanding of the place of children's poetry in his time and a deep knowledge of children, he

succeeded in making poems that are still among the purest examples of children's poetry, and many Iranian children still appreciate these poems in their memories.

Keywords: Abbas Yamini-Sharif, Mahmoud Kianush, children's poetry

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