



Spatio-temporality and Existential Anxiety in Shahrām Sheydāyi’s *A Fire for Another Fire*

Nahid Shahbazimoghadam ^{1*} 

1: Assistant Professor of English Literature, Semnan University, Semnan, Iran.

n.shahbazi@semnan.ac.ir

1. Introduction

A Fire for Another Fire, the debut collection of poetry by Shahrām Sheydāyi (1967-2009), was first published in 1995. This volume was followed by two further collections; *Laughing in the Burning House* (2000) and *A Stone for Life, A Stone for Death* (2009) as well as a collection of Turkish poems, *Delilerin Kölgesi* (2010). Sheydāyi also wrote a short story collection, *The Refugees are Kicked out* (1999), and translated several literary works, mainly from Turkish and Polish into Persian. By the time of his death at the age of 42, he left behind a noteworthy body of work which has proved to be enduring and has gained admiration.

2. Review of Literature

The scholarly reception of Sheydāyi’s works, however, has so far been very limited to a few articles. Insightful as they are, these essays are all published in literary magazines; no formal academic study has yet been published in academic journals, indicating that Sheydāyi’s oeuvre is yet to be diligently explored in the academia. Furthermore, most of these essays provide overall views of the characteristics of his poetry. Only a few of them focus on *Laughing in the Burning House*, and there is just one essay specifically dealing with *A Fire for Another Fire*. Although issues such as temporality and existence as well as taking refuge in art are raised in “A look at *A Fire for Another Fire*,” no research has yet textually examined the first collection with regard to its spatio-temporal liminality or within an existential-aesthetic framework.

3.Objective and Theoretical Frame

This study endeavors to trace Sheydāyi's lack of academic recognition to the conceptual complexity of his poetry, which is further intensified by its uncanny atmosphere and distinctive writing style. It is aimed to examine the interrelatedness of his major themes and how they are depicted through a writing style characterized by novel imagery, defamiliarization, fragmentation, and semantic disruption. The study contends that the true appreciation of his poetry lies in recognizing these features and their interconnections. Accordingly, the three discussion sections are devoted respectively to the poetic strategies and writing style, the thematic liminality of dream in relation to confinement in space and time, and the role of nature and poetry in confronting existential anxiety.

4.Discussion

The textual analyses focus close readings of selected poems from *A Fire for Another Fire*, which depicts themes of existential anxiety, death, space and time. The discussion section is divided into three parts. The first part examines Sheydāyi's poems for their novelty of imagery as well as innovative and experimental quality. Most poems depict a rich array of novel imagery, fragmentation, defamiliarization and semantic disruptions. Other formal features such as intertextual play and metapoetic can also be traced in several poems. By discussing such features and their significance, this study demonstrates how these features efficiently reinforce the thematic concerns of Sheydāyi's poetry. The second and the third part revolves around the thematic concerns of his poetry, respectively spatio-temporal confinement and existential anxiety. In the second part, the claustrophobic atmosphere and time constraints are discussed as interrogated through dreams, which provide a liminal possibility to navigate temporal and spatial dislocation. The third part focuses on existential concerns and discusses how, alongside dreams, nature and poetry function as stabilizing forces, offering additional means of negotiating the challenges of existence. Poetry and natural beauty function not merely as an escape from existential anxiety and mortality, but as means of confronting and enduring them through aesthetic experience.

5.Conclusion

The textual analyses demonstrate Sheydāyi's profound engagement with the most complex dimensions of human existence, despite a

deceptively simple, prose-like language. Strategically, perception is delayed as it undergoes defamiliarization, and meaning is hard to grasp due to fragmentation and semantic disruptions. Conceptually, the interrelatedness among his major themes offers challenge to understanding. The exploration of time, death, and existential anxiety in Sheydāyi's poetry unfolds through a fragmented style that mirrors the instability of being itself. Dream functions as a liminal possibility through which the poet imagines transcendence beyond temporal and spatial confinement, offering momentary release from the burden of existence. Nature and poetry, meanwhile, emerge as interrelated forms of refuge – sources of consolation that transform existential pain into creative and spiritual continuity.

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About the Authors:



Nahid Shahbazi Moghadam is currently attached to the Department of English Language and Literature, Semnan University (Iran), as an assistant professor in English Literature. Her research interests involve the fantastic and the grotesque, Modern Persian fiction and poetry, comparative literary studies, and literary translation. She has published articles in these areas and translated both fiction and non-fiction into Persian. Her notable translations include *Introducing Criticism in the 21st Century* (2015), and *The Grotesque* (From Routledge *New Critical Idioms* Series – 2013) as well as a selection of poems from Shahrām Sheydāyi’s *A Fire for Another Fire* can be referred to.