

Persian translation of this paper entitled:

جایگاه کوه در ادبیات ایران در گذر زمان و تأثیر مدرنیته بر آن
is also published in this issue of journal.

The Importance of Mountains in Iranian Literature in the Course of Time and the Effect of Modernity on its Conceptualization

Babak Dariush*¹, Heshmatollah Motedayen²

1. Ph. D. Candidate of Urban Studies- Landscape, NAZAR Research Center, Tehran, Iran & University of Geneva, Switzerland.

2. Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Tehran, Iran.

Received 2018/08/27

revised 2018/10/20

accepted 2018/11/20

available online 2019/04/22

Abstract

Mountain is the place of gods in mythical thoughts and it is a place for revelations and conversations of the God with the prophets in important religions. But mountain itself is of utmost importance in Iran plateau due to the geographical condition of this territory and the fact that mountain has been the source of water. In Avesta, the book of the Zoroastrianism, the term mountain has been repeatedly used respectfully and the holy Quran has often highlighted its importance. As it is mentioned in the statement of the problem section of this article, the existence of water resources have been the main and preliminary factor for the establishment of the majority of Iranian cities and villages on the hillsides and mountain slopes but there have been other important influential factors like the pleasant weather of the mountain, the defensive role of the mountain against the natural and human disasters and the existence of the livelihood capacities as well as an array of the other factors that heavily affected the formation of these residential places and the continuation of their construction in the mountain sides. These functions have intensified the importance of mountains in Iranian lives. However, the significance of mountain has declined in the course of time for various reasons, especially because of the advent of modernity and technology; which accordingly, the meaning of mountain which was once a vital element, has been changed. Considering the current issue, the aim of the present study was to investigate the importance of the mountain in the course of the time in Iranian literature using a qualitative method for studying the historical documents through historical investigations of those poetic samples of poets who had had a brilliant position in the construction of Iranian language and memory. Later on, changes in the poets' approaches and attitudes toward mountain were explored. As it is mentioned in the statement of the problem section of the present study, considering the importance of modernity's entry to the mental position of people, the extent of the modernity's effect on the meaning of the mountain in poetry was also under investigation. The results of the study indicate- that the semantic position of the mountain has been changed during the time in the poets' minds, especially in blank poems that are stemmed from the modernity's entry into Iran. The substantial approach adopted by the blank verse poets toward mountain is mostly objective. Moreover, the investigations are reflective of the idea that there is another factor influencing the changes in the meaning of the nature and mountain before the entry of modernity into the contemporary poetry that might be even more important than the modernity itself, which is the poets and intellectuals' repugnance of the Qajar and the Safaviyya eras due to the decline of the power of cultural generation and inappropriate retrospectively of the spiritual thoughts.

Keywords: *Iran, literature, poetry, mountain, modernity.*

 *. Corresponding author: Babak.dariush@gmail.com
+989125143797

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Mountain was considered an important phenomenon by the ancestors. A mountain's height and elevation, its echo, magnificence and grandiosity and the dominated feeling over the humans after being in the mountain or upon observing it have all been reasons for the human beings' special attention to this important natural phenomenon. "The majority of the religious rites were held at the top of the mountains because people thought that the mountain was the closest place to the sky which was believed to be the place of the gods. Living on the mountains was an emblem of being detached from corporeal matters and getting connected with otherworldly interests. Moreover, it was a sign indicating humbleness and prostration of the human beings before his creator" (Rashed Mohassel, Behnamfar & Zamanipour, 2012). But, this phenomena is really important in Iran. The mountains in Iran Plateau are the sources of fresh water due to the special geography of the region. Since the large civilizations and cities have always come to existence at the sides of sustainable water resources, a large number of great cities have also been formed on the mountain slopes in Iran. Therefore, the first and most important factor that has substantially contributed to the cities' establishment on the mountain slopes of Iran is the existence of water. But mountains have had other characteristics for the accommodation of large populations at its sides, including the facts that mountains were defensive barracks against the enemies' attacks; they defended the humans against natural disasters; they had pleasant weather for life; they functioned as a sign for the cities on their slopes; and the existence of alluvial soils made it a proper place for agriculture purposes. These capacities of the mountains have caused the humans and mountainside cities to be largely dependent on them. They also make mountains mean more than just one simple element to people. For example, the mountains in the vicinity of the cities and villages in Iran were given names which have made this issue to be a way of

communicating with the mountains and bestowing meaning to them. Furthermore, the existence of numerous relationships and dependencies between the mountains and the mountainside domiciles led to the formation of the stories and myths in mountains that subsequently were associated in the people's minds with symbolic elements. For example, Sabalan has a symbolic and mythical role on a regional scale and Damavand has the same role on a national scale. "The most important myth related to the mountain was formed in the rites of the Iranian Aryans: the primitive human beings were created in the mountain and lived in the mountain and the souls of the dead are judged at the entry to Chinot Bridge (Musavi Haji & Kaikha'ei, 2008). On the other hand, despite the valuable position of mountains in the past, we are currently bearing witness to the fact that the mountains have been forsaken by many of the people and such an important natural element that was once playing a vital role for the city and citizens has lost its importance in their lives.

"The investigations indicate that the entry of technology has made people forget the symbolic, mythical and, occasionally, ecological properties of the mountains and also the people-mountain interactions of thousands of years have been forgotten and the mountain is now even considered as a natural relief in the urban planning and according to the best and the most advanced considerations, it is seen as a simple natural environment" (Dariush, 2017). This issue can be easily recognized in the mountains of Alborz and Tehran city. "The view toward Mountain, especially from Iranian's perspective, has not been an ad hoc part of nature serving only a single function. The Alborz Mountains are in fact a basis where on Tehran has been formed. The residents and the texture of Tehran have not been and are not separate from Alborz Mountain, which means that Tehran has been formed in Alborz context and it cannot be apart from it. In addition, based on landscape approach it is said that mountain had been a cultural element in the past including both

objective and subjective aspects but it has lost its objective aspect in the course of time and it is not a cultural element of the landscape anymore” (Dariush & Taghavian, 2019). Generally it can be stated that the reduction in the functions of the mountains for the people and domiciles results in the decrease of the relationship of the people’s objective views and their domiciles with mountains and also it makes the people’s views more materialistic. On the other hand, literature is amongst the main manifestations of a culture. “Literature is a full-length mirror of events, rites, behaviors, efforts and thoughts of a society and it is envisioned as a nation’s present language and ID card, it could be said that a society can be recognized with a careful examination of its literature contents and subjects, realizing the events and social behaviors and tracing the trend of the social phenomena’s evolution” (Ruh Al-Amini, 1997). The aim of the present study was to investigate the importance of the mountain in the course of time in Iranian literature using a qualitative method for studying the historical documents through historical investigations of those poetic samples of poets who had had a brilliant position in the construction of Iranian language and memory. Later on, changes in the poets’ approaches and attitudes toward mountain were explored. As it is mentioned in the statement of the problem section of the present study, considering the importance of the modernity’s entry to the mental position of people, the extent of the modernity’s effect on the meaning of the mountain in poetry was also under investigation. Thus, to achieve these goals, the current research is divided into two substantial parts of the investigation of the semantic changes of mountain in Persian poetry and the investigation of the effects of the modernity on this changing process.

Research Background

The prior research found about mountain’s importance in Iranian poetry and literature is listed as below:

- The article about mountain and its manifestation

in Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh compiled by Fatemeh Jafari-e-Kamangir & Modaberi published in the periodical journal of literary research, issuance no. 2.

- The article of the mountain’s manifestation in ancient Iran and a glance at its embodiments in Iranian literature, compiled by Muhammad Reza Rashed Mohassel, Muhammad Behnamfar & Maryam Zamanipour published in the journal of Iranian studies, Spring, 2012, issuance no.21.

- The article about the mountain similarities and differences in Mawlavi’s works compiled by Karimi & Nikmanesh, published in two journals of research on Mawlavi, fall and winter, 2012

- The article about mountain and its symbolic meanings in Mawlana’s mystic and amorous expressions in Masnavi, compiled by Muhammad Behnamfar and Mariyam Zamanipour, published in lyric literature, fall and winter, 2012, issuance no.19.

The studies conducted about the effects of modernity on Persian poetry are outlined as below:

- The article about European romanticism and Persian blank verse compiled by Akram Pour Ali Fard, published in the journal of literature and humanities department in Tabriz University, fall, 2003, no.188.

- The article about a sociological criticism of Qajar Era’s poetry, compiled by Shirzad Tayefi and presented in the international literature and linguistics conference, July, 2016.

- The book named “death or modernism (a review of the constitutionalism era’s poetry and literature)” compiled by Masha Allah Ajudani, published by Akhtaran institution, 2003.

- The article about the role of the audience in the evolution of constitutionalism poetry, by Zahra Ekhtiyari and Morad Ali Wa’ezi, published in the journal of literature and humanities department of Mashhad University, 2008, issuance no.160.

Methodology

In the present study, efforts have been made to investigate the position and meaning of mountain in

Iranian literature, through extracting the references to the mountain from the poems of the poets who have played a significant role in the construction of the Iranians' memories and literature based on a qualitative study of the historical documents. To this end, considering the temporal scales and durations, some poets like Rudaki, Feroawsi, Nezami, Sa'adi, Hafiz and Mawlavi were selected from amongst the traditional poets, Malek Al-Sho'aray-e-Bahar and ParvinE'etesami were selected from the contemporary classic poets and SohrabSepehri and Nima were selected from the contemporary blank verse poets; then, those poems and verses that were more credible or more similar were selected to be subjected to further evaluations. It is worth mentioning that all of evaluations were carried out on the works of ten poets. The reason behind selecting four of the contemporary poets has been the frequency of the number of the poets in this period of time. Additionally, to investigate the effects of modernity on Persian poetry, as well, documentary method through using library research has been conducted.

The term Mountain in the Poets' Verses and Minds

• Rudaki

Dr. Muhammad Reza Rashed Mohassel has stated in an article about the mountain's manifestations in ancient Iran and a glance at its embodiments in Persian literature: "Rudaki beautifully depicts the magnificence of mountain in his poems and points to mythical and towering mountains like "Qaaf", "Thahlan" and "Judy" (Rashed Mohassel, Behnamfar & Zamanipour, 2012). The poet's approach in these verses highlights the majesty and grandeur of the mountain and the meaning and the function of the mountain convey a fully blessing element:

"Your brightness brighter than the sun; your blessings more everlasting than Judy and Thahlan"
(In the elegy of ShahidBalkhi)

Rudaki also assumes mountain as a symbol of

human beings. He describes mountain as a patient person who withstands the problems like an enduring and resistant mountain. In a beautiful simile, he resembles himself to a mountain covered by some white snow. His look at mountain in such types of poems is a sort of human approach and the mountain has been likened to a strong human being in the following verse:

"The white snow covered the black mountain and the rosary-decorating cedar looked like a black core" (odes and ballad no.10).

• Ferdowsi

In Ferdowsi's poems, the mountain's sacredness is considered as one of its mythical aspects which is well-evident with its special characteristics in pre-Islam literature and the rituals and rites of Mazdisna. Mountain is the closest place to the sky and it is believed as the best place of establishing a spiritual connection with the God which has caused the construction of the largest fire temples and Anahita monasteries on mountains (Jafari-e-Kamangir & Modaberi, 2003). Thus, there is a mythical approach towards mountain in Ferdowsi's therefore the meaning and function of mountain in the following verses is related to a place special for worshipping:

"His worshipping place was all in mountain and he was getting increasingly distant from the herd out of the joy he gained therein" (Shahnameh, Zahhak, seventh part)

In another perspective, Ferdowsi has chosen the hugest phenomena, the mountain, to express his own thoughts and ideas. In narrating the stories, the mountains, especially the lofty mountain of Alborz, have special stances in his poems. Shahnameh's most beautiful stories are told in relation to mountain (RashedMohassel, Behnamfar&Zamanipour, 2012). The poet's has referred to its height in the following verse :

"He saw a mountain whose apex reached the star; it seemed as if it is going to pull the world up" (Shahnameh, Manuchehr, second part)

Also, Ferdowsi points to the nature of the mountain

in some of his verses and intends the recreational aspect of mountain in the following verses:

“One should drink savory wine now because the wine smells like musk in the mountain” (Shahnameh, the story of Rostam and Esfandiyar, first part)

- **Nezami**

Dr. Rashed Mohassel has the following statement in expressing the approaches towards the term mountain in Nezami's poems: “Mountain is the symbol of the humanity and a key of resistance, stability, persistence, magnificence, and power. The meaning and function of this term in this verse stems from the poet's view as a stable and robust element:

“If you want to get rid of the flood of sorrow, you should step in places like mountains” (part 78, Khosrow's return from Qasr-e-Shirin)

Dr. Mohassel also believes that Nezami had a good knowledge of Iran's ancient and mythical culture and he points somewhere to the existence of a lady in the heart of the mountain to whom the voice of mountain was attributed. In this verse, from the perspective of the poet, mountain is the living place of a mythical lady:

“The older this group, the better, nothing else matters but the cry of the mountain sounding like a lady” (part 48, the 15th article on the condemnation of the enviers)

- **Sa'adi**

There are generally three approaches to mountain in Sa'adi's poems: in the first approach the mountain plays the role of a human being, next approach is about the mountain's magnificence and grandiosity and the third approach refers to the interior contexture of the mountain. The followings are some examples of such approaches:

In some verses, the mountain has been given the personalities and characteristics of human beings and the poet directly refers to the mountain's feature such as echoing of the sounds and its sympathy with the poet:

“If the mourning of Sa'adi reaches the mountain, it will mourn with sounds” (Sonnets, sonnet no.2)

“If I put this heart-rending pain on my heart on the mountain, the stone will begin crying out” (sonnets, sonnet no.285).

In most of his verses, as well, the magnificence and splendor of the mountain is considered and the poet intends the mountain's size in the following verses: “Like Farhad, I cannot keep myself from thinking about a kiss on Shirin's lips even if the mountain of my sufferings becomes as high as Bistoon” (sonnets, sonnet no.270).

“They can pull out a mountain from its place by a loud shout and cause turmoil in a city by grief” (third chapter on love, drunkenness, zeal and spiritual love).

In some other verses, Sa'adi refers to the mountain from its contextual concept and the poet's intention of the mountain moves towards the depiction of a place other than belongings in the material lives:

“Your love makes me wander in the mountain and desert even if I am attacked by enemies from half of the world” (Sonnets, sonnet no.412)

- **Hafiz**

Hafiz has sought the assistance of nature in creating the majority of the images of his Diwan, There are several important and notable points why he has used nature: the first point is about his different vision based on which he occasionally offers several images of just one thing. The second is the images Hafiz has made of nature in various outstanding forms meaning that sometimes one part of an image has been taken from nature and the other part is taken in some other times. The next vision of his poems hints to the image conceptualizations to the point that not only it becomes applicable for metaphors and similes, but also this outstanding feature can be seen his whole poems and sonnets.

Based on a categorization of poems in terms of their frequency and common meanings, there are generally three substantial approaches in Hafiz's poems towards mountain.

In some of the verses, mountain has been posited as a stable and firm element. In the following verses, Hafiz has mentioned to the mountain as a stable and

firm element:

“The firm mountain was not at all worried about being troubled by such gigantic waves” (ode no.3, in the eulogy of Shah Sheikh Abu Ishaq)

“I am still imperfect even with the perfection of your love because the mountain of my patience became soft as beeswax in the hands of your sadness” (Sonnet no.294).

In some of the poems, as well, the natural aspect, particularly the contexture of the mountain is proposed and the following verse introduces mountain as a place outside the corporeal life’s belongings:

“Do not become famous in the city so that I might not wander in the mountain; do not show the fervor of Shirin so that I might not become Farhad” (sonnet no.316).

In some of Hafiz’s poems, as well, mountain has been personified and the following verse clearly compares mountain with a living being:

“The waist of mountain is smaller than the waist of an ant here; you the wine worshipper do not cease knocking at the door of merciful God” (sonnet no.24).

• **Mawlavi**

The echoing attribute of the mountain is considered very important by the mystics and Mawlavi, as well, has correctly reached to such an insight. In his poems, he realizes the world as a mountain and the humans’ actions as calls (Ebrahimi Dinani, 2013). In these verses, the meaning and function of the mountain are related to its echo and it has been resembled human and world:

“This world is a mountain and our actions are calls the echoes of which come back to us”

“We are like tracheas and the sound in us belongs to you; we are like mountains and the echo in us belongs to you” (Masnavi-e-Ma’anavi, the first book)

“Where is the ambition that can use hack and mattock to uproot such a huge mountain” (Masnavi-e-Ma’anavi, second book)

Mawlavi displays the ideas of resurrection and

return to God within the symbolic form of a mountain which is the most fundamental principle of his mindset: the return of the mankind to the mountain is his major theme in his poems. As a result of which the human and the mountain reunite once again (Karimi & Nikmanesh, 2012)

• **Malek Al-Sho’aray-e-Bahar**

Malek Al-Sho’aray-e-Bahar had unprecedented competencies in taking the advantage of the beautifying elements. The poetical images in Bahar’s verses are served in the expression of his mental concepts. In his recitals, he has made wide use of image-creating elements as simile and metaphor (Tajlil & Biglar, 2010).

Bahar’s poems have many referents to the mountain. These references can be generally divided into three parts. The most frequent of these references are to the contextual concept of the mountain and the following verses point to the mountain’s natural and contextual function:

“I went exactly to the Zoroastrians’ neighborhood and all of a sudden I saw the daybreak that rose up from above the mountain (ode no.106)

“It was as if the beloved was coming from the mountain to the city; it was as if the amigo was coming from the hunt” (ode no.265)

In some of the verses, as well, the mountain has been given human personalities or characteristics and the following verse posits mountain as a fosterer:

“We are the dearest to the mountain and the godson of the cloud; wherever it is greener, is our resorting place” (sonnet no.20).

The most beautiful approach of Malek Al-Sho’aray-e-Bahar to the mountain is that he gives the mountain the symbol of resistance and endurance which is mostly the result of the social issues of his period of life. In the following verses, the mountain bears a r- resemblance to a firm and liberalist creature:

“Every king who has laid the foundation of his court on justice would steadily stand long like a mountain” (ode no. 253)

“O the white foot-shackled ogre, O the dome of the world O Damavand”

“You are the coarse fist of the time and you have remained after the turns of many centuries” (ode no.10)

• **Parvin E’etesami**

The investigation of the poems by Parvin E’etesami shows that the mountain is given more a subjective aspect rather than a contextual one and the nature of the mountain has been less attended to, the following verses depict what is meant by the poet:

“He brought many stones from the mountain in her skirt; they were different and colorful like emerald and sapphire” (the distressed prey)

“What difference does it make that you are a hefty mountain and we are light as straw; it does not matter if you are a mountain or a straw being stricken by the storm of the destiny” (mountain and straw)

“If the woman did not radiate on the mountain of existence like the sun; the goldsmith of love would have not any jewelry in his shop” (the angel of fondness).

• **Nima Youshij**

“Human being is a part of nature” (Youshij, 1984: 570)

According to Nima’s perspective, nature and the human being are inseparable. He sees nature through the human being and he finds the human being inside nature. These two are connected to each other and they supplement one another in social life.

He does not isolate these two elements from each other rather he assesses and identifies both in a single theoretical system. The life which is coordinated with nature prepares and capacitates Nima for accepting a realistic perspective towards the entire life. Moreover, the view of the realistic teachings and experiences make him closer to nature. Doing so, the components and elements of nature become the manifestations and symbols of the life and human’s situation and the human being’s life finds meaning when connected to the nature’s factors and components” (Faraji, 2008).

Amongst Nima’s poetry, in most of the cases, his

approach towards the mountain is a naturalistic one but the two following eclectic ballads indicate that Nima has made use of symbolic meanings of the mountain, and he also points to the real and objective functions of mountain. In the first poem, he refers to the function of mountain as a water reservoir and in the second poem he makes a reference to the function of mountain as the creator of the pleasant wind and weather.

Water roars in the mountain’s reservoir

The mountains are sad

(For they cry)

It is a choke-damp night and the soil

Has become paled in its face

(It is night)

• **Sohrab Sepehri**

“He takes the path towards God by the assistance of recognizing His creatures. The entire universe appears to him as a sign of the Creator. As the nature for human beings, Sohrab’s sharp-sighted look seeks for a clean and beautiful life” (Ghazizadeh, 2004).

The poet’s approach towards the mountain is a sign-seeking approach in which the mountain can be considered as a way of recognizing the universe. Thus, the mountain in these verses is employed as a sign for recognizing the universe (the first poem). In his next poems, he adopts a naturalistic approach towards the mountain, and also he intends to display the stagnancy and silence of nature (second poem).

And, I told them:

Stone is not the decoration of the mountain

The same way that metal is not an ornament to the body of the mattock (Tamasha, Surah)

The red of the sunset

Has been poured everywhere on the stone

The mountain is silent. The river is roaring

(Towards the sunset)

Table. 1 shows the poets’ approaches towards the mountain and its meaning and function in the appointed works of them.

Moreover, the investigation of the mountain’s position in contemporary poetry is indicative

of the idea that the meaning of the mountain has undergone a large change in the minds of the poets and it can have the interpretational meaning of such a cultural element as a mountain. “Mountain has been transformed from a mythical element to a symbolic one. The iconoclasm and ideology are the two primary and evident factors for such a big change: In iconoclasm, the poet tries to free himself from the past formats and he tries to start his new literary life through using the mountain as a symbol of solidarity and resistance in his ordinary

life; the ideological change caused metamorphosis in the civil life with the entry of modern keywords into the community, thus the poet tries to simplify the concept of mountain for the people so as to revitalize and declare the social concepts (Dariush & Atashinbar, 2018).

The Effect of Modernity on Persian Poetry

Modernity in its serious sense has taken place since Naser Al-Din Shah’s era and this has had an important influence on Iran’s poetry. The majority

Table 1. The approaches of the poets to the meanings and functions of the mountain, Source: author.

Row	Poet	Historical period	The poet’s general approach towards the characteristics of the mountain	Meaning of the mountain in the intended verse
1	Rudaki	4th century A.H.	Magnificence and grandiosity Human characteristics and values	Mountain as an element full of blessings Resembling mountain to a strong person
2	Ferdowsi	5th century A.H.	Magnificence and grandiosity Naturalism Mythical sacrosanctity and stance	Mountain as a place for worshipping Mountain’s recreational aspect The loftiness and hugeness of mountain
3	Nezami	6th century A.H.	Stability and endurance Mythical	A stable and robust element The living place of a mythical lady
4	Sa’adi	7th century A.H.	Human characteristics and values Magnificence and grandiosity The contexture of mountain	Mountain’s echo and its sympathy with poet Mountain’s size and largeness A place outside the material life’s belongings
5	Hafiz	8th century A.H.	Personification and embodiment of life to inanimate beings Stability and endurance The mountain’s contexture	A firm and robust element A place outside the material life’s belongings Comparison with the other anime beings
6	Mawlavi	8 th century A.H.	Considering mountain as the world Human beings’ characteristics and values	Mountain’s echo and resembling poet to the world and human being Mountain as a life-endowing element
7	Malek al-Sho’aray-e-Bahar	Contemporary classic	Human characteristics and values Stability and endurance Mountain’s contexture	Resembling mountain to a human being Resembling mountain to a firm and liberal creature Nature and contexture
8	Parvin E’etesami	Contemporary classic	Human characteristics and values Magnificence and grandiosity Mountain’s contexture	Resembling mountain to human’s existence Mountain’s size Mountain as a reservoir for valuable stones
9	Sohrab Sepehri	Blank verses	Naturalism Sign-seeking approach	Nature and context Mountain as a sign of the recognition of the universe
10	Nima Youshij	Blank verse	Naturalism of the mountain’s contexture	Nature and context

of the influences of Iranian poetry in this period have been caused by romanticism which was the common style of European at that time. "The basics of the romanticism poetry of Europe had considerable effects not only on the Persian blank poetry the themes and concepts but also it the form and appearance as well as the language of the poems, this means that the type of the words and phrases that are considered as the instruments of the poets for transferring their feelings and thoughts had great affect on the poems" (Pouralifard, 2003). Furthermore, the social changes of this period and the emergence of the ways for the entrance of the western thoughts caused the Iranian poetry to be drastically influenced by the dominant western literature. "According to the large group of critics, the effect of the European poetry and literature on the Persian blank poetry came about as a result of the direct familiarization of that time's modernists with the European literature as well as via the translations offered for the European literary works and poets in Iranian magazines and journals" (Gholamhoseinzadeh, 2001).

To further investigate the extent to which modernity has influenced Persian poetry, it is necessary to review the pre-modernism eras, i.e. the Safavid and pre-Naseri Qajar eras, to see if there are other factors bringing about such a huge variegation in poetry.

The majority of the experts consider the poems recited in the Qajar era as more of a royal nature (recited for pleasing the king). "During this period, the major purchaser of the poetry were the royal court and it the poetry and poem compositions were dramatically constrained by the royal court and limited thereto" (Hamidi Shirazi, 1985, 15). The poems reminded under the title of "royal poetry" culminated during the kingship of Fath Ali Shah Qajar and such a practice of poetry composition was kept on being promoted and advanced during the reign of his successors and the great many of the then emerging poets continued composing poems in the same previous style (Ariyanpour, Vol.1, 1993).

"Maybe the objective of this group {Qajar era's poets} has been saving poetry from the decline and wastage of the Safavid era and the subsequent fully confused and distressed era after that and it was for the same reason that they carried on the same old style of discourse and poetry composition and endeavored to make up for the weakness and decline of poetry and prose in such an undue return; but, what is clear about is the belonging of the majority of the poems to the uncommitted and royal art till Naser Al-Din Shah's time" (Tayefi, 2016).

This was the issue severely criticized by that time's intellectuals. "In this regard, the first declaration of this field which was somehow rough-spoken and bitter due to its historical backgrounds was issued by Mirza Fath Ali Akhondzadeh who intensively attacked Iran's ancient literature and the methods of composing eulogies and extolments. After him, Mirza Agha Khan Kermani elucidated the principles latent in Akhondzadeh's expressions and criticized and judged ancient Persian literature in a new declaration" (Azhand, 1984).

Discussion

In regard of the investigation of the semantic changes of the term mountain in Persian poetry three articles naming "the mountain and its manifestations in Ferdowsi's Shahnameh", "the mountain's similarities and differences in Mawlavi's works" and "the mountain and its symbolic meanings in the expression of Mawlana's mystic and amorous affections in Masnavi-e-Ma'anavi"; have been presented and investigated the position and importance of the mountain in the works of one poet, however, there seems to be no comparison between the position of mountain and the article named "manifestations of the mountain in ancient Iran" and "a look at the mountains embodiments in Persian literature" has mainly focused on the position and meaning of mountains from the perspective of various poets and no comparison has been made in this regard. In the part related to the investigation of the effects of the modernity on Persian poetry, as

well, the researches have underlined three points: the necessity of changing the form and content of the poetry influenced by modernity; the social changes brought about by modernity; and the role of poets in these changes. However, because of the reasons for welcoming these changes and turning faces away from traditions in Persian poetry no explorations have been done in the current research.

Findings

In sum, the investigations carried out regarding the change of the mountain's meaning in the course of time in literature indicate that the poets have adopted nine general approaches toward the mountain: one approach looks at the mountain as an element featuring magnificence and splendor; as a phenomenon possessing human characteristics and values; as a phenomenon with mythical stance; as a symbol of stability and endurance; plain approaches to the contexture of the mountain; approaches towards the personification of the mountain and rendering it anime; an approach towards the lofty position of mountain all the way to imagining it as a world; purely simple approaches towards the nature of the mountain and sign-seeking approaches to the mountain for the recognition of the universe.

Of course, these approaches towards the mountain and the characteristics given thereto are selected from special verses and as summarized in Table 1 the mountain has a special function and different signification in each of the approaches.

In addition, the investigations are reflective of the idea that the mountain has certain objective and subjective meanings as well as special characteristics and functions (as mentioned above) till the end of the Qajar era, but after the time that Persian poetry is influenced by modernism and the blank verse. In addition, the symbolic and subjective functions of the mountain have completely disappeared and been replaced by the objective (natural) and individually subjective (interpretational) approaches of the poets.

Conclusion

The investigation of the selected poets' poems over time is suggestive of the idea that the meaning and function of the mountain have not undergone considerable changes till the late Qajar era. As mentioned in the introduction part, the issue can be related to the importance and real function of mountain for the people. Until before the entrance of the modernity and technology into Iran, mountain has had various functions such as the source of water supply, its defensive feature and as a refuge for people against enemies and natural disasters, a place for living, also it was economically beneficial. But, these functions are found significantly diminished with the entry of modernity and technology. The results of the current research paper are also indicative of the idea that the mountain's signification is extremely changed in the poems of the contemporary era. This period's major part commenced from Qajar era which coincides with the entering of the western thoughts or let's say modernity. To evaluate the effects of the modernity on the meaning of the mountain, it is necessary to pay attention to its effects on the Persian poetry. Modernity has influenced Persian poetry in two ways: one pertains to its effects on form and the other has affected its content. According to the selected poems, it can be observed that despite the changes that occurred in the society at the time of Parvin E'tesami and Malek Al-Sho'aray-e-Bahar due to the entry of modernism into Iran, the meaning of the mountain is still like past. These changes can be attributed to the poetical formats with the explanation being that the classic poetical formats have not been sufficiently capable of manifesting the social changes. As it can be seen, poets like Mirzadeh Eshghi, Farrokhi Yazdi and Iraj Mirza, in spite of all efforts they have made, have not been successful to insert these changes into the classical poetry formats. It is observed that a movement is formed in Iran during the same period that is called the "handwriting movement" founded

by Fath Ali Akhondzadeh which was confirmed and supported by many of the modernists who announced that Persian handwriting or, as they said, Islamic handwriting was not capable of entering to the world of modernism. The other effect of modernity's entrance is the change in the meaning of cultural and traditional elements. Mountain was an objective and subjective as well as cultural and semantic element to the Iranians and like the other semantic elements, it could not remain immune to the modernity's effects. Although many of the pioneering intellectuals and politicians of the same era believed that the traditions are the reasons for Iranian laggings. The issue can be repeatedly seen in the letter written by Abbas Mirza to the French Juber as well as in the narrations of such other individuals as Malkom Khan, Sani'e Al-Dawleh, Mostashar Al-Dawleh and Agha Khan Kermani.

The reluctant behaviors from traditions proceed to the extent that Taghizadeh states his famous sentence "we have to become like westerners from head to the toe". Blank poetry was born out of these thoughts and changes in the form and content. Mountains, as semantic element, are not detachable from the changes, hence changes in mountain's significations can be witnessed in blank poetry. The mountain is no longer a clear-cut and vivid purport in the Blank verse and it can have countless meanings and this is a result of individualism and paying attention to the individual perceptions of the semantic elements and phenomena. In the meanwhile, due to the familiarity of the majority of the people with mountain as a result of the technology entry and facilities stemming thereof, it can be observed that the natural, contextual and recreational aspects of mountain has become more prominent.

In a nutshell, it can be stated that the poetry and the culture of the Qajar era has lost its re-creation power and it is inferred that the ground for the decline in the subjective and spiritual role of mountain has been set earlier than the modernity's entry into Iran which is because of the fact that the society

has lost its power of culture reproduction. Thus, it can be stated that despite the effect of modernity on Persian poetry, it is considered that the changes in the styles of composing poetry and giving meanings to the cultural elements have come about more as a reaction to the past rather than being caused by - modernity. The depletion of the surrogate mindsets after the Safavid era and, especially during the Qajar era, caused the regression of the spiritual thoughts and nonscientific and occasionally wrong replacement of them in both literature and people's minds or wrong and rushed imitation- was conquered. The other reasoning in this regard is that if the modern culture's hegemony is to be considered as the main reason for the diminution of the mountain's spiritual position in Iran's literature then why Iran's Islamic Revolution and fight against modernity did not cause the elevation of the spiritual spirits concerning mountain.

Reference list

- Ariyanpour, Y. (1993). *Az Saba ta Nima* [From Saba to Nima]. Two volumes. Tehran: Zavvar.
- Azhand, Y. (1984). *Adabiyat-e Novin-e Iran: Az Enghelab-e Mashrootiat ta Enghelab-e Eslami* [Iran's Modern Literature: From Constitutionalism to Islamic Revolution]. Tehran: Amir kabir.
- Ebrahimi Dinani, Gh. H. (2013). *Majmoe barname- y televisioni "Dar tajjali- ye Din va shariat* [A series of TV programs about the manifestations of religion and canonical issues", Sayyed Haidar Amoli, Orafa]. Jaam-e-Jam Channel, chapter four.
- Dariush, B. (2017). The Alborz Mountain in the comprehensive plan of Tehran. *Manzar*, 8(37): 48-55.
- Dariush, B. & Atashinbar, M. (2018). Mountain Landscape in Persian New Poetry; from Lighting Supply to Creating an Artistic Text. *Manzar*, 10 (42): 32-37.
- Dariush, B. & Taghavian, N. (2019). Cultural Study of the Relationship between Mountain and the City. *SOCIO-SPATIALSTUDIES*, 3 (5): 1-12.
- Fadavi, T. (2013). The Investigation and Analysis of the Hafez's Objectives in Utilizing Natural Themes in Poetry seasonal. *Journal of Persian language and literature*, 5(16): 133-154.
- Faraji, F. (2008). Nima va tabiatgeraei [Nima and naturalism]. *Aftab Newspaper*. Sunday, 15th of May, 2008
- Ghazizadeh, S. N. (2004). Nature in Sohrab Sepehri's Poems. *Bagh- e Nazar*, 1 (2):55-68.

- Gholamhoseinzadeh, Gh. (2001). *Seyr- e naghd dar Iran az mashrute ta 1332* [The evolutionary trend of poetry criticism in Iran from constitutionalism till 1953]. Tehran: Rowzaneh.
- Hamidi Shirazi, M. (1985). *Sher dar asr- e ghajar* [Poetry in Qajar era]. Tehran: Ganj-e-Ketab.
- Jafari-e-Kamangir, F. & Modaberi, M. (2003). Mountain and its manifestation in Shahnameh-ye-Ferdousi. *LIRE*, 1 (2) :63-72
- Karimi, T. & Nikmanesh, M. (2012). Taghabol va tashaboh- e ensan va kooh dar asar- e Mawlavi [Mountain similarities and differences in Mawlavi's works]. *Journal of Mawlavi shenasi*, 6 (14): 20-40.
- Musavi Haji, S. R. & Kaikha'ei, M. (2008). Zigurat yek saze- ye tamsili [Zigurat, an allegorical construct]. *Journal of historical researches*, (2): 161-172.
- Pouralifard, A. (2003). Romantism orupa va sher- e no- e parsi [European romanticism and Persian blank verse]. *Journal of the literature and humanities, Tabriz University*, (188): 83-106.
- Rashed Mohassel, M., Behnamfar, M. & Zamanipour, M. (2012). The manifestations of a mountain in ancient Persia with a glance at its reflection in Persian literature. *Journal of the Iranian studies*, (21): 119-146.
- Ruh Al-Amini, M. (1997). *Nemudarha- ye farhangi va ejtemae dar adabiat- e farsi* [Cultural and social schemas in Persian literature]. Tehran: Naghsh-e-Jahan.
- Tajlil, J. & Biglar, M. T. (2010). Balaghat- e tasvir dar divan- e ashar- e Muhammad Taghi Bahar [Image eloquence in poetry book by Muhammad Taghi Bahar]. *Journal of Persian literature*, (28): 72-105.
- Tayefi, S. (2016). Sociological criticism of Qajar era's poetry. *International literature and linguistics conference*. Tehran: Zanis arya Iran Co.
- Youshij, N. (1984). *Name- ha* [Letters]. By the efforts of Tahbaz, S. Tehran: Abi Corporation Publication.

COPYRIGHTS

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with publication rights granted to the Bagh-e Nazar Journal. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).



HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Dariush, B. & Motedayen, H. (2019). *The Importance of Mountains in Iranian Literature in the Course of Time and the Effect of Modernity on its Conceptualization*. *Bagh- e Nazar*, 16 (71):83-94.

DOI: 10.22034/bagh.2019.86875

URL: http://www.bagh-sj.com/article_86875_en.html

