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REVIEW SECTION

A Look at Contemporary Persian Poetry, Currents in Persian Poetry in 20th Century

چشم انداز شعر معاصر ایران، جریان شناسی شعر ایران در قرن بیستم

By Seyed Mehdi Zarqani, Tehran: Sales Publications, 2012. Second edition, 468 pp.

This book is a historical survey of literature though the writer has tried to distance himself from ancient approaches and to apply a modern look of analysis, critique and stylistics. In the first chapter the methodology is discussed followed by the second chapter which talks of text and metatext and the relationship of social structure with literature.

The second part of the book discusses currents of poetry from the last decade of the Qajar era which Zarqani considers instrumental in introducing changes in social and literary contexts. In the next part covering the Constitution period, he talks of the passage of poetry from the traditional to the modern naming the people who were influential in this process, who influenced them and how this process happened.

As the reader is still entangled with the revolutionary mood of the Constitution, the stormy era of Reza Khan begins. In this era the process of modernization of poetry is put on hold and traditionalists who do not like freedom in poetry and were not courageous enough to approach social aspects of the previous age gain control. Interestingly enough the foundations of free verse is established in this very era which shows the paradox of Reza Khan's era. Paradox is the natural twin to modernity in Iran.

The next chapter covers poetry as the young Mohammad Reza is ruling and there is a hope of freedom. Thus many literary movements were allowed to express their views on the art of poetry using different techniques due to extended relationship with the west and the appearance of new literary theories through different journals. However, this period lasts not more than twelve years and dictatorship spreads its wings. On the other hand, the coup d'état on Mordad 28 causes different reactions to poetry: some currents were discarded, some blossomed and new poetics also appeared.

The last chapter of the book covers the years 1342-1357. The dominant mood in cultural and social institutions is pseudo-romanticism best seen in poetic currents such as *Moje No* and *Shere Hajm*. The supporters of classical poetry bring about changes in ghazal. Thus by the end of chapter six the reader reaches the end of a historical-poetical period.

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