

A Content-Based Analysis of Shahriar's *İman Müştətisi*: A Linguistic Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The study aims at investigating one of Shahriar's Azerbaijani poems, namely, *İman Müştətisi* from content-based analysis perspective. Applying the mentioned method, the results show that for Shahriar his faith in God is like his humanity that is a cure for his pain. As far as the content-based analysis of the poem is concerned, some concepts have the same values and they are equal for Shahriar. The mentioned concepts are God, humanity, his country, his hometown Tabriz and his mother. An interesting point is the fact that the poet terminates his poem by praising his poetry as Shakespeare in his sonnet 60 did the same. Shahriar has utilized a political viewpoint in this work. He criticizes Russia and England for attempting to enter Iran. Using a paradoxical paradigm in his poem, Shahriar shows the dilemmas he faces in his life regarding related events.

Keywords: Mohammad Hossein Shahriar; Content-based analysis; Azerbaijani literature

INTRODUCTION

The poet, Seyyed Mohammad Hossein Bahjat-Tabrizi, was born in a village north of Tabriz, Iran in the year 1906. He is popularly called Shahriar and, as a very well-known Azerbaijani poet, wrote poems in Azerbaijani Turkish and Persian languages. He wrote several romantic poems and is well-known for his Azerbaijani poem, entitled *Heydar Babaya Salam*; which instantly became popular after being published in 1954. Moreover, his form of poetry contains many types of couplets, odes, quatrains, lyrics, and elegies. His pleasant poem, *İman Müştərisi*, is investigated in the current study.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many literary scholars, such as Həsənova (2011), Şahbazi (2011), Quliyev (2011), Rəhimli (2011), and Jafari (2013) have analyzed Shahriar's poems. This study also features some parts of the Azerbaijani culture, which have been described in more detail by Əkbəri (2010), Nowruzı (2010), and Zəfərzadə (2010).

No previous reports have analyzed and investigated the Azerbaijani poem by Shahriar, *İman Müştərisi*. In this study, the poem has been studied from a linguistic perspective using a content-based analytical technique. To be

specific, this study aims to address the research question described below:

Which themes have been used in Shahriar's Azerbaijani poem, *İman Müştərisi*?

METHOD

This qualitative analysis research aims to study Shahriar's Azerbaijani poem, *İman Müştərisi*. To put it in another way, in this study, we used a content-based analytical technique to answer the question mentioned above.

Corpus

The study focuses on the poem, *İman Müştərisi*, written by Shahriar, and has been extracted from the published work of Şəhriyar (2007). This poem has also been published in a separate account in Baku in 2005, with the title Məhəmməd Hüseyn Şəhriyar's Qaranlıq Gecələrin.

Procedure

To answer the research question posed in this study, the poem, *İman Müştərisi*, was studied in great detail. The relevant themes were detected using a content analysis technique to answer the question posed in the study. The content analysis technique helps to create easily reproducible and actual inferences from the

texts (or any other published matter) to other contexts using them.

SHAHRIAR'S İMAN MÜŞTƏRISI POEM

To carry out the analysis of Shahriar's poem, *İman Müştərisi*, initially, we presented an explanation of every verse as follows:

Aman Allah yenə şeytan gəlib iman apara
Qoruyun qoymayın imanızı şeytan apara
Mənim insanlığımın gör nə hisari yavadır
Ki günüüz qul-i biyaban gəlir insan apara
Xərməni saqqıza verdik nə yaman çərçidi bu
Hey gəlir kəndə bizə dərd verə dərman apara
Çörək almış əlinə ac necə taqət gətisin
Elə bil yaz gecəsi qız gəlib oğlan apara
Qanlı dırnaqlarınan İngilis əl qatdı bizə
Baxısan Rus da arazdan keçir İran apara
Aradan birdə bizi bölsələr ərbablarımız
Qorxuram qoymayalar Təbrizi Tehran apara
Qara tufan ki daxı xəlq ilə şuxluq eləməz
Sel gərək el dağıda ev yıxa eyvan apara
Bu qaranlıq gecələrdə qapımız pis döyülür
Nə bilim bəlkə əcəldir dayanıb can apara
Anama söyləyin oğlun yıxılıb səngərdə
Tellərin bas yarama qoyma məni qan apara
Səlqəli oğru tapılmışsa bu başsız yerdə
Şəhriyarda da gərək bi dolu divan apara

Interpretation of each verse:

Aman Allah yenə şeytan gəlib iman apara/
Qoruyun qoymayın imanızı şeytan apara

Oh God, Satan has come again to take faith/ be careful, do not let Satan destroy your faith

In the poem, the poet has begun by stating his belief in Islam and Allah, or God. He asks God for help as he believes that Satan has arrived to destroy his faith. Thereafter, he warns his readers that they should never allow Satan to destroy their faith in God. The poet made use of a paradox (i.e., God vs. Satan) to depict the difference between the two.

Mənim insanlığımın gör nə hisari yavadır/ Ki
günüüz qul-i biyaban gəlir insan apara

How weak is the restrictions of my humanity/
that the ghoul comes to take it in daytime

In this verse, the poet complained that his humanity had several weaknesses, which allowed the ghoul (or *qul-i biyaban*) – which was analogous to Satan, as described in his initial verse – to capture it. Also, in this verse, humanity referred to the poet's existence.

Xərməni saqqıza verdik nə yaman çərçidi
bu/Hey gəlir kəndə bizə dərd verə dərman apara

We exchange our crops with gum/It comes to our village to give us pain and take cure from us. This verse describes a bad exchange; wherein the crops have been exchanged in return for gum. The crops have resulted due to great toil by the farmer, who has invested a year's worth of time; whereas gum is not very useful to him. This verse describes a ridiculous deal by the farmer; where he trades his crops for gum; i.e., he is losing on the deal and has traded his energy, time and life, all for a very worthless substance. The poet also uses gum as a metaphor for pain, while crops represent a cure. Therefore, this verse describes the deal made by the farmer, where he exchanges cure and receives pain in return.

Çörək almış əlinə ac necə taqət gətisin/Elə bil
yaz gecəsi qız gəlib oğlan apara

How can a man who is hungry and holds a piece of bread in his hand bear?/ Like a girl who has come to take her lover in spring

In the above verse, the poet used bread, a popular term used in his culture, as a contrast for hunger. The poet creates a picture that shows a hungry person holding a piece of bread in his/her hand, which is a kind of paradox depicting his/her hesitation to eat the bread. Also, the next line presented in the verse is similar to the first line and shows a cultural event. It depicts a romantic relationship between a girl and her beloved in the spring season. Similarly, some of Shahriar's other poems like *Heydar-Babaya Salam*; also describe certain traditions of the Azerbaijani culture, like:

Bayramidi,
gecəquşuoxurdu,/Adaxlıqızbəycorabıtoxurdu,/
Hərkəsşalınbirbacadansoxurdu

Qanlı dırnaqlarınan İngilis əl qatdı
bizə/Baxısan Rus da arazdan keçir İran apara

England has touched us with its bloody nails/
See? Russia crosses to take Iran

Shahriar describes that he feels England possesses bloody nails and is trying to approach

him. He also does not wish Russia to cross Aras and take over Iran. These verses depict Shahriar as a very patriotic poet and an anti-war thinker. The verses imply that both countries attempted to attack his country in a manner similar to Satan who wishes to damage his faith, as described in the earlier verses.

Aradan birdə bizi bölsələr ərbablarımız/Qorxuram qoymayalar Təbrizi Tehran apara

If our landlords separate us again/ I am afraid that they will not let Tehran take Tabriz

In the above verse, Shahriar has specifically named his hometown, i.e. Tabriz, Iran, which is under threat by its many enemies. He describes his enemies to be landlords (*ərbablarımız* means landlords) and thinks that they are trying to divide his country. He warns the people that if the country is constantly being divided, then he fears that Tabriz would separate from Tehran (Iran's capital). He also used this word again to highlight the fact that the Republic of Azerbaijan was separated from Iran a long time ago.

Qara tufan ki daxı xəlq ilə şuxluq eləməz/Sel gərək el dağıda ev yıxa eyvan apara

The storm is not kidding with people/ A flood destroys tribes and homes

The above verse describes the poet's belief that if the unkind and cruel *garatufan* (black storm) brews, it could destroy many houses. It could be possible that the poet has used the storm as a metaphor for Satan who could separate people and destroy their houses.

Bu qaranlıq gecələrdə qapımız pis döyülür/Nə bilim bəlkə əcəldir dayanıb can apara

Our door is hammered in these dark nights/ May be it is the death waiting to take life

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After studying Shahriar's ghazal in detail, several fundamental themes can be observed and are described in the following table:

Table1. Central themes of Shahriar's İman Müştərisi

English Meaning	Negative Themes	English Meaning	Positive Themes
Satan	<i>şeytan</i>	Faith	<i>iman</i>
Ghoul	<i>qul-i biyaban</i>	Humanity	<i>insanlıq</i>
Pain	<i>dərd</i>	Cure	<i>dərman</i>
A hungry person	<i>ac</i>	Bread	<i>çörək</i>
Russia	<i>Rus</i>	Iran	<i>İran</i>
Our landlords	<i>ərbablarımız</i>	Tabriz	<i>Təbriz</i>
Storm	<i>tufan</i>	Home	<i>ev</i>
Death	<i>əcəl</i>	Life	<i>can</i>
To kill	<i>qan apara</i>	Mother	<i>ana</i>
Thief	<i>oğru</i>	Divan (of poem)	<i>divan</i>

This verse depicts a picture, where his door has been knocked on at midnight. In the verse, he used the collocation, like *qaranlıq* (darkness), *gecələrdə* (nights) and *pis* (badly), to emphasize the terror he feels when he hears his door being hammered at night. He also speculates and assumes that it is *əcəl* (or death) which is present and hammering at his door.

Anama söyləyin oğlun yıxılıb səngərdə/ Tellərin bas yarama qoyma məni qan apara

Say to my mother that her son has fallen in trench warfare/ Put your hair to my wound, and prevent bleeding

In this verse, Shahriar calls out to his mother as he feels some threats advancing towards him. He tells his mother that he has fallen into the *səngər* (or trench warfare). Shahriar feels that his mother is his final resort and asks her to place her *tel* (or hair) on his wounds; thus saving his life. The poet, Shahriar, wishes that his mother should save him by covering his wounds with her hair, as it was her who had given him his life in the first place (by giving birth to him).

Səlqəli oğru tapılmışsa bu başsız yerdə/Şəhriyarda da gərək bi dolu divan apara

If there is any tasteful thief in this headless place/ He can take a complete Divan of Shahriar

In this verse, the poet complained that there are no *səlqəli* (or tasteful) thieves present. He feels his condition is *başsız* (i.e. leaderless or headless), which depicts that he is very unsatisfied with the political happenings in his life (during the period of World War II). He declares that any *səlqəli* thieves, if present, can take the poet's complete divan of poetry (or poem collection).

In the case of Shahriar, he considers all positive aspects to be roughly equal on the one side; while he places all equal negative points on the other side. It can be justified that Shahriar considers his faith as his humanity, and thinks that it can cure his pain. It can also be said that he considers his country, (specifically Tabriz, his hometown,) as his life or his mother. Another interesting point that can be noted is that Shahriar has ended the poem by admiring his own poetry. This was previously noted in other works written by famous poets, e.g., Shakespeare, who wrote in his own sonnet:

And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,

Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand
(Greenblatt)

Finally, it can be stated that Shahriar wrote this poem with a political perspective and described his social and personal situation. He used a paradoxical paradigm in the poem and described the various crosses that he bears in life with respect to the many related events. He applied this type of paradoxical paradigm in several of his other poems, for example, the verse mentioned below:

Xəlqəqonaq gəli qüzüsürməli,

Bizimevdən korgetməmişkar gəli.

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