

A TREND MAKER IN MODERN BALOCHI POETRY

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Abstract

This paper studies and analyzes the important aspects of Atta Shad,s. He notonly integrated glorious history of poetic tradition of balochi poetry but he carried out lot of experimental approaches in poetry and incorporated changes, which have encompassed feelings and expressions. Symbolism, imagism and dramatism were main themes of his poetry, which he brought into Balochi poetry, just to test the reader’s feedback.

He gave a mystical romantic touch in his symbols and metaphors. This romance carried a huge sea of expressions with itself. His themes could only be grasped by having a glimpse into the background of these romantic expressions.

Key words: *Balochi, experimental approach, Symbolism, imagism, dramatism, trend-maker, commitment, camouflage, faceless, excessive*

Atta Shad is the most renowned poet of modern Balochi poetry. He brought revolution in Balochi poetry with different thinking and style, which was not there before. He, not only, played an important role in development of the Balochi poetry but also introduced new and modern techniques. It was him who groomed Balochi poetry by using new literary trends in balochi poetry.

Atta Shad carried out a lot of experimental approaches in Balochi poetry and integrated some changes which have encompassed feelings and expressions. Symbolism, imagism and dramatism were main themes of his poetry, which he brought into Balochi poetry, just to test the reader’s feedback.

His work was not only a linguistic experiment, but also a creative method for discovery of new expressions and metaphors, which explicitly revived modern Balochi poetry.

Atta Shad was a trend-maker and his biggest contribution was introduction of “free poetry” in Balochi language. Although Azaat Jamal Dini practiced “free poetry” for the

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first time and established a foundation for its development, yet, Atta Shad by virtue of his newly introduced expressions and metaphors expanded the sphere of Balochi poetry to new edge.

Atta Shad originated new models for his experiments which includes new words formation and use of latest expressions. His non traditional way of expression was difficult to grasp in the beginning and disliked by people, yet with the passage of time, he became a pioneer in the field of modern Balochi poetry.

In the beginning, Atta Shad gave a mystical romantic touch in his symbols and metaphors. This romance carried a huge sea of expressions with itself. His themes could only be grasped by having a glimpse into the background of these romantic expressions. In other words, Atta Shad's themes could only be grasped when one will have a close mental relationship with his themes. His symbolic language is beyond plain comprehension.

"In order to understand Atta Shad's poetry, it's an obligatory fact that deep understanding of balochi language is must. His approach to the language is akin to thousand years old Hieroglyphic literature and also difficult for modern readers. His words carry their own unique expressions. He used self-invented symbols. Its comprehension requires serious study of three elements i.e. Biography of Atta Shad, History of Balochistan and socio-economic pressures in the region.

"It is not the traditions of mountains to remain silent

Even if night sleeps, flowing water speaks"

Just reading his above mentioned verse opens a vast scholarly theme in reader's mind. This shows that Atta's achievements are not just by a stroke of luck, but because of his harsh experience of life through countless tortures by antisocial elements of the society and system. He criticized the system and proved himself as a man of commitment (Gul Feb.2000: 12).

Despite of having a clear thinking and social commitment, Atta Shad encouraged beautiful blends of classical balochi poetry and modern approaches. He never let slogans and sermons overwhelm the essence of his art. However, he adopted a protesting style, but he also enlightened the positive elements by his artistic demeanor instead of widening the gap between opposite poles. This quality is very rare in literary persons and shows a balanced and creative mind. He never let his art to be a victim of ideology.

Atta Shad's poetic world has a charisma of mystic romance and magical expressions, where his ideology is represented. Basic reason behind these creations was the thrust of peace, love and prosperity in the society.

This dimension of Atta Shad's personality is deeply connected to his psyche and personal life. He integrated social problems by keen observation of individual life in a unique scenario.

Agha Gul has compared Atta Shad's style with ancient Greek philosopher Deojanas Qalbi, who openly said that since ordinary people could not comprehend wisdom, they could only be taught by demonstration. He also said that wise men always live a very harsh life because human society could not tolerate wisdom. Wise men remained in exile on isolated islands for countless years, yet, none was accounted for. Christian churches misguided people by arranging frequent fake demonstrations to attract them towards Christian's belief during medieval ages.

Atta Shad followed Deojanas Qalbi's style. He worked as a bureaucrat and earned a good name in the court of the King, but on the other hand, he also loudly protested every brutal policy of the state and prevailed his message. His main achievement was earning his name as a romantic poet despite of having a mind of a revolutionary comrade. He effectively represented political and social heritage of his time (Gul Feb.2000: 12).

Some people say that Atta Shad camouflaged himself by these generous thoughts. Maybe this is true to some extent, but in my opinion, it is not correct. He absorbed the pain of the society in himself and presented it through his art and by giving it a meaningful touch.

Atta Shads' deep thoughts, in poetry, made him a man of complex personality. Romantic expressions used by him can only be grasped by establishing a philosophical relation with his thoughts. Tragic part of his poetry is indicated in a topic named as "Hopelessness of the society". He argued that helplessness depicts society where there is no sign of creativity and development of thought process and progressive change. Every man of such society is just like a dead man, who has no voice or mind. The society is at its lowest moral and social ebb.

Beginning of a new life by social change and creative vision of a progressive society was a dream of Atta Shad, which he wishes to fulfill. This wish is quite prominent in his poetry and it drives the reader towards reality and progression. His poems especially "پلانی", "کج انت زمین", "امیتء سودا گراں پہ موتکے", "زہیرانی زارہ", "چہر", "راوگوز", "وسء بے وسی", "دلء نہ منات", "مناچے بے وسیں دل", "کجا ماہکان", "روح کجا در پیشگان", "ہشکسین پن" demand the emergence of a new life, which was scarce during Shad's life.

"We are waiting for a dawn

But where is the dawn

In every direction is pouring

The rain of your memories

The gift of destination is away from visible limits

We, smoldering flames of our time

Where is the country we have been promised

This is causing immense pain

I am the throne of your heart

The imagination is dying

We should pick up on our weak shoulders

The load of the hope for centuries

Collect in our weak arms

The pain of waiting" (rah goz) (Shad1996:39)

God

O god

Where is that world

That sky and land

Where is the rise of day and night?

That reddish star

That sky littered with stars

Where is it?

God, o god (was e bewasi) (Shad 1996:39)

I, here

Akin to ruined tombs, am a corpse

I, in the sea of my dreams of bright future

In the water of memories

In the cruel tides of time

Am fighting but till when?

One day i will drown

Where is that world

The promised world

O God!

These haunting shadows of dusk

I don't know

Will lit which night

And convert in the pile of ashes

Put my heart on fire

Thousands of wounds, grievances, problems

Coming my way every minute. (chehr) (Shad 1996:39)

Where is the sun

Who will see the end of this vision?

That the night of wishes is so dark

And evil beyond my comprehension

Life is so helpless

This spark is pre-dawn

And evolution

This spark will ignite a fire

Will reach the stars

But could not do anything for my hollow heart. (Roch kujja) (Ata 1996: 82)

Whether it is the night or the dawn

Mention of morning bliss or falling dusk

What a rainbow, what clouds, what a wind what a splendid land

I no longer believe in those

My heart just like a beggar

Remains quiet

And wishes like a passenger without destination

Gets lost in the way

Where is the land, the sky, the day and the night?

No moon or moonlight, no galaxy, no sign of night or day (kuj int zameen) (Shad December 1994: Title page)

Night falls (we have heard so)

Day rises (people say so)

But who knows the difference between the two

Looks like both are dead (umeet ae sodagran) (Shad 1996:111)

In these poems, Atta Shad, not only, criticized the prevailing selfishness in Balochi society, but also, highlighted lack of leadership for Baloch people. Themes of these poems are much beyond emotions. Whereas, Baloch society is a faceless society which has lost its identity and characteristics and where every individual has a mask of

selfishness and ignorance. The situation can be blamed on political and moral vacuum developed over past few decades and it abruptly decreased the confidence of the society. The society has, thus lost its progressive vision, which is the mere reason of its existence and development. This desperate situation has redefined the parameters for differentiating between the good and the bad and the way of thinking and social relations. Atta Shad was quite sensitive to this social downfall.

Popular English writer Matthew Arnold, while feeling a similar pain for the downfall of English society in mid-19th century wrote, "We are breathing in a space shackled between two worlds, one of whom is dead and the other one also bound to doom". Atta Shad's pain was somewhat similar. Due to cultural division, Balochistan is not a balanced society. Dwellers of Balochistan are victims of social, cultural, psychological stress and uncertainty. Atta Shad's poem "Umeet ae Sodagaran pa Motkay", "sang jah", "Kuja int Zameen", "شپ که بام مه ساریت" revolves around the same theme of desperation and hope.

"The longing for kissing

Killed for thousand times

Finding a flower in a pile of stones

On the tomb of writings of preachers, neglected moments

Weak hearts have merged with the stones

Asking for a new dawn from ruined statues (sang jah) (Shad 1996:78)

Where is the land, the sky, the day and the night?

No moon or moonlight, no galaxy, no sign of night or day

Either a footprint or a clue of the way

Where should this heart go?

Whom should it follow for the hope?

Where is the destination of the new dawn (kuj int) (Ata 1994: title page)

Where it is the mirror of colour for the living

For the dead, day and night are all the same

For darkness seekers, day and night don't bear a meaning

For the creators of light both mean the same

Atta, near us deaf colourless eyes rule

Whom should I talk to, day and night is jail but one" (kuj int zameen) (Ata 1994: title page)

In the heart of land

Far away from the land

Immense sky of imaginations

In this wilderness

For times and centuries

If there is something, it is just

A naked beggar of thoughts and wishes

Holding the bowl for hope

To ask for a ray of light

Roaming around for it (almas) (Ata 1996: 48)

These poems of Atta Shad represent the downfall of the Baloch society on political and intellectual levels and the future of Baloch nation seems menaced by the absence of

thoughts. That is why in the poems like, "سب", "بام", "سمین", "استین", "روح", "مهر", "ہتم", "داہگ", such symbols have not only been used to express negative aspect, but these poems also have an aura of thoughts and moral disintegration. Apparently, these symbols represent hopeless thoughts. But detailed thoughts beneath them suggest that Baloch society has been plagued by lack of leadership and search of destination.

Most of Atta Shad's poems have been decorated with romantic clichés and by using them he has tried to communicate his inner feelings to the world. He seems to be living in a unique world of his own. His romantic clichés have many dimensions. Due to this reason, many of his poems are still needed to be correctly comprehended for their meanings.

National and international political indications are also evident in Atta Shad's poems. He molds political and social problems in an artistic manner rather than just narrating them. In his popular poem "sah kandan", he has depicted the reality in the same way instead of adopting a straightforward slogan oriented style. Atta Shad's hallmark was narrating problems of his time in the forms of symbols and metaphors. His style was different from many other poets of his time. Some of the verses of his popular poem "Sah Kundan" are narrated below.

"Thought cannot be killed by mass killings

Scent cannot be killed by pressing the flower

If at all you want to kill me, kill my soul

For eliminating me

Sacrifice the love i have

For killing me

Kill my conscious

Destroy my thoughts

But killing me is not possible

I am love

Eternal till the end

My prints are there for ever

Till the time i have life and blood in my veins

I will shine in the dark

If i die, so will you

Till the time you are alive

So am I "(Sah Kundan) (Ata 1996: 38)

His poem "Sah Kundan" is a story of struggle between life and death. He interpreted life as eternal hope and opportunity.

In Atta Shad's view, oppression can kill people but cannot kill a cause, neither can kill the intellect. Thought cannot be suppressed with sword. One cannot kill the fragrance by twisting the flower. He says, "In order to destroy me, one need to suppress my conscious or kill my wisdom and intellect, shatter my faith but it's a universal truth faith cannot be killed with a bullet!

Bulgarian poet Nikola Yonkov Vaptsarov said, "Tomorrow the life will be wise. I harbor this belief in myself. The bullet which can kill my faith is inexistent" (Paritam 1987: 37).

Atta Shad frequently advocated the concept of eternity. People may live and die, but life moves on as a whole and inherits for the incoming. Johar Meer wrote at a place,

"Not only us, but other intellectuals too

Who will write the story of brutality?

O man don't get grieved

we are still alive and will face more hardships."

Atta Shad wrote in one place, "If life continues, death will be excessive"(Ata 1996:84).

Atta Shad, as a creative artist, looks at the life in totality instead of focusing on single dimension, era or generation. In his poem, "saa'int namiran int", he looked forward for a better future.

"Time is mortal

People die

For a new and better life

I am waiting"(Ata 1996:84)

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