





A Study of Semiotic Functions in Two Poems by Hafez Mousavi and Wadī' Sa'ādah: Based on Umberto Eco's Theory

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ABSTRACT

In addition to studying the relationships between literatures of different nations, comparative literature can shed light on the relationship between literature and other disciplines. One such discipline is psychology, which was introduced into literary studies in the first decades of the nineteenth century and created a mode of criticism called the “psychological literary criticism” or “psychoanalytical literary criticism.” One of the most important theorists in this area is Alfred Adler, who played a significant role in examining the various dimensions of human personality through his influential theories. Adler was one of the first scholars to raise the social aspect of Man through his psychological theories. Based on Friedrich Nietzsche’s “will to power,” Adler declared that Man’s main motive is “striving for power” and that the real motive behind his behavior is “the quest for superiority” and the other motive for a person, from which superiority stems, is the feeling of inferiority and the efforts exerted to eliminate the causes of this feeling and other deficiencies. “Inferiority,” “the search for superiority,” “imaginary or illusory purpose,” “social utility,” “self-awareness,” “lifestyle,” and self-creativity constitute the main tenets of Adler’s theory. From his point of view, human life begins with a sense of inferiority and with the goal of striving for superiority—whether on an individual or a collective level—by consciously setting a goal and choosing a type of lifestyle that seeks individual creativity and ends with personal or social benefit. In fact, the social aspect prevails in Alfred Adler’s theory, and its central idea is that man is an important member of the social system, and his personality is formed within this framework. In light of the aforementioned, the main characters in Mikhail Naimy’s “Shorty” (1919) and Muhammad Ali Jamalzadeh’s “Willan Addola” (1954) can be studied and compared from a psychoanalytical perspective based on Adler’s theories in an attempt to answer the following questions: Using Adler’s psychological theory, what does the character comparison show in the two stories? What are the similarities and differences between the main characters? And can the protagonists be related to the authors? The results of this study show that the two stories are the product of their specific environment and social conditions. A severe inferiority complex is detected in the two characters, which, in Wilan Addola’s case, results from pampering and neglect and in Shorty’s, from physiological problems. The two main characters follow two different paths to reach their ultimate goal. Whereas Wilan Addola seeks individual success and personal interest, Shorty pursues collective success and social welfare.

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