

Music and musical instruments in the life and works of Fereydoun Moshiri from a literary and psychological perspective

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ABSTRACT

Article type: Research Article	This article examines the role of music and musical instruments in the life and works of Fereydoun Moshiri, a contemporary Iranian poet. Music and poetry have always had an inextricable link throughout history, and Moshiri, as a poet whose poems are full of emotion and simplicity, has used music as a source of inspiration and an inseparable part of his artistic worldview. By analyzing Moshiri's poems, this research examines the impact of musical instruments on his poetic space and the symbolic reflection of these instruments in his poems. Musical instruments such as the tar, harp, and drum are used in Moshiri's poems not only as symbols of Iranian culture and art, but also as a tool for conveying deep emotional and philosophical feelings. This article shows how Moshiri creates a poetic atmosphere and beautifully expresses human emotions using music and its instruments. Also, this research seeks to answer the question of how musical instruments serve to express deep concepts in Moshiri's poems.
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Introduction

Throughout the history of Persian culture and arts, music and poetry have maintained an unbreakable, symbiotic bond. Among contemporary Persian poets, Fereydoun Moshiri (1926–2000) occupies a prominent position due to his lucid, melodic, and profoundly emotive poetic style. For Moshiri, music was not merely an external source of artistic inspiration; it was an organic, foundational component of his artistic worldview and everyday life. Having an intimate familiarity with classical Persian literature, modal theory, and musical performance (such as playing the mandolin and collaborating with renowned radio programs like *Golha-ye Tazeh*), Moshiri naturally wove musical imagery into his poetic tapestry.

Despite numerous studies on Moshiri's romanticism, social discourse, and content analysis, the systematic literary and psychological manifestation of traditional musical instruments in his poetry has remained under-researched. This paper addresses this gap by investigating how traditional Iranian musical instruments—namely the *Tar*, *Chang* (Harp), and *Tabl* (Drum)—transcend their physical and auditory forms to serve as symbolic vessels for existential reflection, psychological tensions, emotional catharsis, and the poet's inner dualities.

Method

This study employs a descriptive-analytical methodology based on archival and library-based research. The primary textual corpus comprises the collected poetic works (*Divan*) of Fereydoun Moshiri. The analytical framework synthesizes literary-symbolic criticism with psychological interpretive perspectives. Through close textual reading, verses containing explicit mentions or metaphorical constructs of specific musical instruments (*Tar*, *Chang*, and *Tabl*) were extracted and systematically categorized. The investigation analyzes both the aesthetic/metaphorical functions of these instruments within Persian poetic conventions and their psychological significance—specifically how musical imagery reflects unconscious emotional states, inner dualities (e.g., enthusiasm vs. existential dread), and the psychological drive to externalize deep psychic experiences.

Results

The textual and psychological analysis of Moshiri's poetry reveals several key dimensions regarding the symbolic deployment of musical instruments:

١. **The *Tar* (Lute) and the Metaphor of “The Soul’s String” (*Tar-e Jan*):**

Moshiri frequently pairs the *Tar* with psychic interiority, most notably through the evocative construct *Tar-e Jan* (the string of the soul). In verses such as “*The yearning and anxiety that play the harp upon the string of the soul are no more,*” the instrument embodies the delicate fibers of human consciousness. Psychologically, the *Tar* represents the artistic tension between creative yearning (*showq*) and psychic inhibition or perfectionist anxiety (*eztirab*). It symbolizes both the boundless impulse to express hidden emotional states and the recurring dread of communicative inadequacy.

٢. **The *Chang* (Harp) as an Emotive Spectrum (Grief, Silence, and Natural Harmony):**

The *Chang* appears with the highest frequency and semantic versatility in Moshiri's poetry:

- *Sorrow and Love’s Melancholy*: In metaphors like *Chang-e Anduh* (Harp of Sorrow), the instrument illustrates how love shifts from romance to profound psychic suffering and estrangement.
- *Inner Struggle and Psychic Silence*: The instrument frequently embodies the tension between conscious hope and unconscious despair (“*I had no song on my lips but hope; the voice of this harp silenced me*”), signaling moments where overwhelming reality suppresses expressive agency.
- *Expressive Inadequacy*: In lines describing “a thousand melodies from the heart’s harp,” the instrument underscores the inherent limitation of artistic mediums in capturing the immense, boundless depth of human emotion.

- *Nature–Human Symphony*: When paired with natural imagery (e.g., *Naghmeḥ-pardazan-e Baran* / “the song-makers of rain”), the *Chang* functions as an instrument of soothing integration, symbolizing psychological homeostasis and emotional release through nature.
- ۳. **The *Tabl* (Drum) and Thanatological Despair (*Tabl-e Marg*):**
Occurring singularly in the chilling compound *Tabl-e Marg* (The Drum of Death) within the line “*My heart beat the drum of death in my chest / While my body burned like a furnace from fever,*” the percussive instrument shifts away from festive or military contexts. Here, it functions as a potent psychological marker of extreme psychosomatic anguish, existential crisis, and the rhythm of imminent mortality.

Conclusion

The study concludes that musical instruments in Fereydoun Moshiri’s oeuvre are far more than decorative, acoustic, or classical tropes; they constitute a dynamic psychological vocabulary and an integral pillar of his poetic ontology. Moshiri skillfully transforms tangible traditional instruments into multi-layered subjective metaphors: the *Tar* articulates the fragile chords of the human spirit; the *Chang* mediates between existential melancholy, artistic silence, and cosmic harmony; and the *Tabl* channels the rhythm of mortality and visceral suffering.

Ultimately, Moshiri achieves an inseparable synthesis between music, verse, and psychology, employing musical symbolism as a therapeutic medium to externalize intricate unconscious conflicts, bridge the human psyche with nature, and present a deeply empathetic, melodious worldview.