

Analyzing the Thematic Components of the Satire of Death in Ahmad Shamlu's Poetry

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ABSTRACT

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Article One of the most important functions of a research paper is to make it funny. When it is used in relation to noble and tragic concepts such as death and nothingness. It becomes far from its basic functions, such as making it funny, easy to understand, easy to understand, and less subjective to the audience, etc. Death, as one of the main concerns of mankind, has sometimes opened its doors to humor in literature. In this research, death as a humorous and derisive theme in the poems of Ahmad Shamloo has been analyzed. In this article, the humor of death as a bridge to identify norm-breaking includes examining the issue of death in itself, analyzing and interpreting the components of his poems, which include: taking death lightly and taking it easy, humoring death, changing the work of humans. Giving to it. What makes this research important is the miraculous fusion of two tragic and serious categories, namely death and life, in the guise of humor by Shamloo.

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Introduction

Satire in Persian literature has evolved from traditional lampoonery into a potent vehicle for profound social, political, and philosophical critique. While humor traditionally evokes laughter, its application to tragic and existential themes like mortality transforms it into biting, tragic satire. Death constitutes a fundamental existential concern in human thought and literature. In the poetry of Ahmad Shamlu (1925–2000), one of the foremost modernist Persian poets, death is treated with striking complexity—oscillating between defiance, longing, mockery, and philosophical elevation. The primary problem addressed in this study is how Shamlu integrates the paradoxical domains of tragedy (death/mortality) and satire (irony/mockery) to break conventional literary norms. The research seeks to identify the thematic and structural components through which death becomes a vehicle of tragic satire in his poetic oeuvre.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative, descriptive-analytical, and library-based methodology. The entire corpus of Ahmad Shamlu's published poetry—with particular focus on his transformative collections such as *Ghonus dar Barān* (Phoenix in the Rain), *Marsiyyeh-hā-ye Khāk* (Elegies of the Earth), *Shekoftan dar Meh* (Blossoming in the Fog), *Ebrāhim dar Ātash* (Abraham in the Fire), and *Deshneh dar Dis* (Dagger on the Platter)—is comprehensively investigated. Textual evidence representing the satire of death was extracted, categorized, and critically analyzed based on thematic criteria, rhetorical strategies, and contextual socio-political implications.

Results

The analysis reveals seven core thematic components constituting the satire of death in Shamlu's poetry:

1. **Trivialization and Simplification of Death:** Shamlu minimizes the terrifying grandeur of mortality by reducing it through similes to mundane phenomena (e.g., death dissolving easily like a sugar

cube or functioning as a joyful song), thereby liberating the reader's mind from existential dread through hyperbole.

۲. **Humor Through the Humiliation of Life:** By setting life and death in stark contrast and exalting death, Shamlu shames the living. Life under oppression and humiliation is portrayed as far more gruesome and absurd than death itself.
۳. **Altering the Function of Death:** The poet subverts traditional power dynamics between human beings and mortality. Death is personified as a tired, futile laborer bored of its repetitive task, or as a print-shop worker correcting proofs fueled by blood, thereby stripping mortality of its metaphysical terror.
۴. **Mockery of Death:** Approaching death without fear and treating it as a conscious, heroic choice in the pursuit of freedom enables Shamlu to ridicule death's inability to destroy human truth and spiritual immortality.
۵. **Mockery of Life and Bodily Existence:** Shamlu scorns the cowardice of individuals who surrender to servitude out of fear of dying, using sarcastic smiles to target human compliance and physical vulnerability.
۶. **Humanity as Transcending This World:** Noble and freedom-seeking individuals are portrayed as too elevated for this base world. For them, death—particularly execution on the gallows—is not annihilation but liberation from a heavy burden and the attainment of true, immortal life.
۷. **The Certainty and Primacy of Death:** Shamlu attributes ontological authenticity and permanence to death over transient, deceptive life, employing verbs such as “experiencing” for death while treating life merely as a cautious test.

Conclusion

Ahmad Shamlu masterfully constructs a sublime and tragic satire around the concept of death. Rather than viewing mortality as a horrific terminus, he reframes it as a conscious act of salvation, resistance, and self-realization against socio-political degradation. By blending tragic depth with sharp irony, Shamlu's satire of death functions as an artistic paradox: it diminishes the dread of physical mortality while simultaneously devaluing a cowardly, passive existence. Ultimately, this poetic strategy



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converts death from an instrument of oppression into a triumphant manifestation of human freedom and dignity.