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The Handbook of Cultural Linguistics

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The Handbook of Cultural Linguistics

With 107 Figures and 78 Tables

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Cultural Linguistics: A Preface

This work is dedicated to our friend and colleague Farzad Sharifian who left us very early in 2020. His massive contribution to cultural linguistics, World Englishes, and pragmatics are nothing to bat an eye at. He is considered the father of Persian Cultural linguistics. That said, I can say with confidence that this work is the most apt tribute to Farzad and his hard work over the years prior to his passing. The sections herein are concerned with the said fields and how! They cover a large gamut of work regionally, and indeed one particular section is entirely dedicated to Persian Cultural Linguistics. Here, I would like to comment a bit on Persian Cultural linguistics, and Cultural linguistics at large, both relatively new fields that have had their critics and of course proponents: I feel I am in both of those camps all the time but more in that latter. Another reason I will focus on this particular field is because of the dedicatee, our friend Farzad. The other sections in this work are brilliant examples of rigor and expertise and I did learn tremendously from every single article.

To use an example, close to Farzad's heart, I will focus a bit on Iran. Iranians live in a country, even a region (as Persian-speaking folk in countries other than Iran), where cultural complexities and historicity have a direct influence on how their language operates particularly as it pertains to idiom. One cannot claim, and it will not be claimed here, that some of these same complexities do not exist elsewhere in the world as they do, and they pose some of the same interesting questions regarding the aliveness of language within a culture. However, we cannot venture into all the many languages and cultures that justifiably rate their own further discussions – as can be seen in some of the very interesting essays we have in this volume dealing exactly with the same and opening up novel new horizons on the subject.

The many cultural minutiae in Iran that influence language – and in turn language influences them – find many, if not all, of their fledglings in three particular phenomena: religion, history, and literature. As the images which embellish the long, and literary, histories of many cultures are often of major concern to the work of both anthropologists and linguists under the rubric of poetics, poetics is undoubtedly a major study of concern where cultural linguistics is concerned. This volume aimed to seek how expressions are formulated within their societal domain and thereafter influence societal cognizance and literary and societal *modus operandi* once they are first individually and thereafter culturally conceptualized. Cultural

poetics expands upon poetics since “various traditions of such recurrent patternings [poetics] of linguistic forms” cannot be expected to occupy the same heuristic and philological paradigm. Poetics taps into time and place; cultural poetics taps into time and *places* and as such ties in directly with schemas. As such it yields a warranted multi- and inter-disciplinary fervor in its investigations. However, what it does more, and most effectively, is to bring under questioning the relationship between language and its specific perspectivizations, schematizations, and conceptualizations pertinent in each culture. It stresses that no two peoples occupy the same paradigm of social reality as per language, conception, and cognizance. On that note the term poetics should be considered in its broadest definition where pertaining to the essays herein, particularly those dealing with pragmatics and cultural linguistics.

By parsing rhetoric as per theoretical framework and then engaging the folk cognizance and or rather post-rationalized deductions within a culture – and outside of a culture, this latter including diasporic view of idiom – one must first polemicize through discourse the large drift that exists in rationalized and post-rationalized semantics, the latter under the rubric of societal *modus vivendi*. Metaphors work themselves into the syntactic structure of everyday language to better draw the schema and conceptualize for the speaker and spoken-to in accordance with their own take on cultural linguistic reservoirs of the place. The concision of the metaphor in conjunction with prosodic utilizations create a post-rationalized enigmatic juncture, which perhaps make judgment calls in certain schemas erroneous, if not even fictional.

That said, let’s trace the literary history of modern-day conceptualizations and its corresponding imagery from the early twelfth century, under the rubric of penury, servility, and death, until the twenty-first century. Today, there is a special emphasis on the change of conceptualization during and after the Iran-Iraq war. The manifold conceptualized expressions find an unlikely parallel in the prior literary history of Iran and the Persian-speaking world. This contrastive analysis is necessitated by the elusive nature of some of the modern conceptualizations. It is an untold truth, yet agreed upon, that although Cultural Linguistics is a new field, it only behooves speaking to modern phenomena. But in fact, any “current” time in history is a modern phenomenon against the backdrop of a past and that goes without saying. In Iran the epic narratives, the mystical poetry, and the mythology they constitute the literary-philological bearings of modern conceptualizations.

The schizophrenic nature of the context and the conceptualized, especially when put against the backdrop of the metaphors and images that are the kernels of these images, will prove to be baffling though logical. This is an argument of central importance, as life has often imitated art in the history of any nation and Iran is no exception. In many places today myth and its sub-rubrics as *modus vivendi* and *modus operandi* has thoroughly saturated the folk mindset. Perhaps some of the works on the Persian Cultural Linguistics herein will establish the historical underpinnings of misunderstood contemporary conditions that have been constituted by religious, epic, and other texts and their literary and social exegesis, again, mostly post-rationalized.

The advent of the mystical poetry of Iran, which through its pursuit of the divine shuns the earthly, marks the point at which an added element of selflessness and sacrifice began to complement an already vivid sense of heroic nostalgia promulgated by the Iranian epic and its epic heroes. Working with these premises, it becomes clear why an empty fervor for a martyr syndrome grew so vigorously in Iran, especially with the added phenomenon of Shiism. As Shiism finds many of its ideologies and canons in a philosophy that was long based on a sense of selflessness and loyalty, much of which finds its emotional core in the events of Karbala and the martyrdom of Hussein, the parallels between the literary figures of Persian literature and the hermeneutic immersed in Shiite dogma set the stage for an enlightening scholarly investigation into today's Persian-speaking man or woman of Iran—walking contradictions. My analysis reveals a remarkable juncture between both cultural and the linguistic, of literature and religious dogma, and a crossing of paths of substance and vacuousness in societal *modus operandi*. A nexus of selflessness, defined through a historical understanding of bravery (epic literature), anticipation of divine reward (Sufi literature), and religion (Shiism), generates the image of martyrdom that most of the Iranian populace understands. Correspondences with the other primary folk literatures of Iran, such as those of Gilaki, Sorani Kurdish, and Lori, could also make for an essential investigation, as they are as much a part of this tradition as are the Persian sources.

By analyzing the societal cognizance of the embedded poetics under the auspices of understandings of Medieval and modern poetry and poetics of Iran, i.e., conceptualizations of metaphor, Schematization, metonymy, and trope, one can explore, for example, the grammatical subjunctive mood, i.e., always hoping, wanting, wishing, and languishing never trumped by doing as an important component of conceptualization. Persian conceptualizations have a tendency to create a certain spatial Deixis when it concerns the conceptualization and its addressee. This is prompted often by an ulterior understanding of the Celestial Sphere as a powerful decision maker in man's existentialist paradigm. As such, man occupies a space that is often not in close proximity to desired things. There are of course religious-inspired conceptualizations of these poetics past under the rubric of these desires, i.e., *age khodā bekhād mishe* (it will be if God wills it). Further, tone and musicality (prosody in classical sense and rhetorical coordination in modern) become quite important. We see how the speaker removes themselves entirely as one of the variables. Therefore, the individual is no longer in a position of wielding any will power. This also implies, if one fails, one can embrace unapologetically an accepted jargon/narrative of "martyred by universe." As such we see so many instances of self-lowering in the Persian culture, a theme revolutionized in the late eleventh century and early twelfth century and one which conceptualizes one's nonchalance for rank. Often meant to deceive the addressee, the poetic beginnings of this conjecture are marked with brilliant poetics that speak to "other-worldliness," which was built upon thematically post-Safavids and with the onslaught of Shiism and its linguistic load which compounded an already compounded sense of farcical self-estimation linguistically.

So, as can be seen, there is much discourse to be had about why people (here in Iran) say what they say when they said. Above, is merely a drop in the sea as

concerns the complexities and the wonder of cultural linguistics globally. There are practically thousands of macro-engagements that can be had about the intricacies and can be solicited just for Iran alone. That said, here's hoping this very large volume (and still far from large enough) can be cause for new engagements in cultural linguistics and pragmatics. It is also hoped that literature begins to have a heftier presence in such scholarship as it is in literature's unspoken where the spoken is given birth.

Beirut, Lebanon
May 2024

Alireza Korangy

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Every single author in this volume deserves far more than a mere thanks but a standing ovation. Their dedication to this work was beyond compare. This book is dedicated to our friend Farzad Sharifian, and every author herein was either a friend, colleague, or a student of Farzad – sometime both or all three. Upon first request, they responded with care and utmost cordiality and this very large project is indebted to them. Alexandra Campbell has been the force behind this project, and Swetha Varadharajan deserves many thanks, so does Moshika Gaur. Last but not least, as concerns my rigor in this long process, my go-at-it-ness and resilience for this project owes its fuel to my daughter Iran Ghazal Korangy: she is my superhero every day, all day. She is my sun and moon and the reason I live and breathe.

This work is dedicated to Farzad Sharifian: our friend who left too early.

Alireza Korangy