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Similarities Between Sohrab Sepehri and T. S. Eliot Based on Speech

Khodayar Mokhtari  *

Assistant Professor of Lyrical Literature, Department of Persian Language and Literature Education, Farhangian University, Tehran, Iran
drmokhtari@cfu.ac.ir

Amirhossein Janatian 

PhD in Curriculum Planning, Department of Education, Farhangian University, Isfahan, Iran
Amirhoseinjannatian@gmail.com

Fatemeh Sadeghi 

MA Graduate, Department of Education, Farhangian University, Isfahan, Iran
Neginsadqi464@gmail.com

Abstract

Comparative literature, or contrastive literature, is a branch of literary criticism that discusses the literary relationships among nations and different languages and the interaction between the literatures of various peoples. The term "comparative literature" was first used by Wilmann, a French critic and professor at the Sorbonne University. Then, another French critic, Saint-Beuve, promoted it. The works of the contemporary Iranian poet Sohrab Sepehri and T. S. Eliot, an American-British poet and literary critic, can be analyzed in the field of comparative literature. Despite climatic and linguistic differences, these two poets share commonalities in topics such as inclination toward the hidden layers of speech (metaphor), naturalism, dramatic monologue, and poetic language, and differ in other topics. Two examples of differences include the dispersion of adherence to meter and rhyme and the contrast and tension in poetic structure. The authors of the present study aim to analyze the similarities and contrasts of the thoughts of these two poets using a descriptive-analytical method, considering Sohrab Sepehri's familiarity with mysticism and Western literature and his particular attention to T. S. Eliot, which has led to the creation of similar images and motifs.

Keywords: T. S. Eliot, Sohrab Sepehri, Speech, Sameness.

Introduction

The term "comparative literature" in Arabic is al-adab al-muqāran, in English Comparative Literature, in French Compare Littérature, and in German Vergleichende Literaturgeschichte (Ghanimi, 1962, p. 37). Comparative literature examines a literary work from technical aspects, the author's ideas, and the historical and social conditions of its emergence. When it researches literary taste and its evolution, as well as the social conditions and tendencies of nations, it aims to uncover all diverse phenomena and individual talents. The focus of comparative literature at the initial stage is on analyzing the manifestations of the literary movement, its principles, and overall results. Comparative literature reflects the transmission of literary phenomena from one nation to the literatures of other nations.

Furthermore, the goal of comparative studies, aside from expressing influence and interaction, is to understand the real causes and reasons behind literary transformations and the changes that occur in various meanings and styles (Zarrinkoub, 1993, p. 183; Daiches, 1990, p. 409). In comparative literature, thematic similarities in the works of two writers or artists who have lived without knowledge of each other in two or more geographical regions are examined. Two important schools in comparative literature are the French school and the American school, whose theories are completely different. For example, the French school holds that in comparison and

*Corresponding author

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influence, there must be a linguistic difference, comparison should be done strictly within literary fields, and historical connections that ultimately lead to mutual influence in works must exist.

However, the American school believes that the scope of comparative literature should be broader, including comparisons among different literatures without necessarily having historical connections or mutual influence. In this school, linguistic differences are not essential for comparing two works. Some Americans also believe that literature can be compared with other scientific fields. Among them is Remarque, who has a saying illustrating the definition of comparative literature: "The comparison of a particular literature with another literature and comparison with other human expressions" (Khatib, 1999, p. 41). The main purpose of writing this article is to demonstrate the importance of the similarity of ideas in the subject of language and speech. However, for this comparison, there were certain limitations, including restricted access to the original works of T. S. Eliot, which were partially resolved through the use of translated versions.

T. S. Eliot

Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888–1965) was a poet, playwright, and literary critic, the founder of modern poetry, and an American-British editor in the fields of poetry, critical studies, and playwriting. He was one of the leading figures of the modern literary movement. Due to his unique style, Eliot was frequently awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature and consistently received the "Order of Merit" (Eliot, 2024, p. 181).

Eliot's literary career spanned forty-five years. During this period, he wrote numerous poems, plays, and articles while simultaneously working as a newspaper columnist and editor of various publications. T. S. Eliot's activities can be categorized into three main areas: poetry, drama, and critical essays (Eliot, 1995, p. 119).

a) Plays

Eliot wrote several plays. Although his plays are not on par with his poetry, these texts are notable examples of poetic drama. Some of them include:

1. *The Rock* (1939)
2. *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935)
3. *The Family Reunion* (1939)
4. *The Cocktail Party* (1950)
5. *The Confidential Clerk* (1950)
6. *The Elder Statesman* (1959) (Eliot, 2015, p. 102)

b) Critical Essays

Like his predecessors, such as Dryden, Coleridge, Matthew Arnold, Eliot was not only a poet and playwright but also a critic who wrote with fluent and strong prose. Some of his critical works include:

1. *The Frontiers of Criticism* (1949)
2. *The Metaphysical Poets* (1921)
3. *The Function of Criticism* (1923)
4. *Poetry and Drama* (1948)
5. *Tradition and the Individual Talent* (1946)
6. *Criticism* (1965)
7. *On Poetry and Poets* (1975)
8. *Selected Essays* (1951)
9. *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (1948)
10. *The Idea of a Christian Society* (1939)
11. *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (1933) (Sobati, 2002, p. 112)

c) Poetry

T. S. Eliot's poetic career can be divided into four stages:

Stage 1: Prufrock and Other Observations

This stage includes poems written between 1909 and 1917. These poems mainly depict urban life with a humorous tone and generally carry the scent of the decline of humanity and contemporary society. Key poems include:

1. The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock
2. Boston Evening Transcript (Manuscript)
3. Rhapsody on a Windy Night
4. Preludes
5. Portrait of a Lady
6. The Song of the Loved One, J. Alfred Prufrock (Eliot, 2018a, p. 108)

Stage 2: (1918-1925)

Poems in this period clearly express the poet's despair and disillusionment with contemporary European civilization. The scope and depth of Eliot's poems increased during this phase, which is dominated by a dark atmosphere, heavily influenced by World War I. Major poems include:

1. The Cats of Action
2. The Small Old Man
3. The Waste Land
4. Ash Wednesday

5. Sweeney Among the Nightingales
6. Hollow Men (Eliot, 2020, p. 183)

Stage 3: (1925-1935)

Eliot's conversion to the Church of England influenced his poetry in this period. A distinct Christian belief is evident in his works. The poet searches in poetry for a way to solve the mystery of human existence. Some works include *The Journey of the Magi*, *Animula*, *Marina*, *Clytemnestra*, and several short and unfinished poems (Eliot, 2012, p. 190).

Stage 4: (1935-1943)

This stage is marked by the creation of the Four Quartets, including *Burnt Norton* (1936), *East Coker* (1940), *The Dry Salvages* (1941), and *Little Gidding* (1942). These poems reflect the poet's meditations on existence. However, here the poet addresses timeless concerns such as time and place, death and life, and the nature of past, present, and future, without using Christian imagery and references (Eliot, 2018b, p. 48).

"It is certain that Eliot did not write poetry, essays, plays, or books for the mere pleasure of his readers. Rather, through the creation and writing of such works, he offers the profound and exquisite results of the 'sweat of his soul's labor' to readers, or in other words, educates them" (Eliot, 1996, p. 66).

Accordingly, with his death on January 4, 1965, in London, critics of his poetry and literature continue to consider him alive through his immortal poems and works and recognize him as a defender of humanity and a dedicated figure in the realm of literature and culture (Eliot, 2012, p. 39).

Sohrab Sepehri — Iranian Poet

Sohrab Sepehri (1928–1980) was an Iranian poet, writer, and painter. He is one of the most important figures in contemporary Iranian poetry and a pioneer of modern poetry. His poems have been translated into various languages including English, French, Spanish, and Italian (Ashouri, 1992, p. 74).

Sepehri's eight poetry collections—*Death of Color*, *The Life of Dreams*, *The Debris of Sunlight*, *The East of Sorrow*, *The Sound of Water's Footsteps*, *The Traveler*, *The Green Volume*, and *We Are No One, We Are the Gaze*—address diverse themes in a simple and fluent language, sharing some commonalities with works by T. S. Eliot.

In *Death of Color*, Sepehri oscillates between the inner world and the social space of Nimaic poetry, but in *The Life of Dreams*, this oscillation ends in favor of delving into personal emotions and perception.

In *The Debris of Sunlight* and *The East of Sorrow*, he offers a new perspective on existence, humanity, life, and truth, often reflecting the voice and viewpoint of Buddha in his poetry. Yet, the passion, wisdom, and faith of ancient Iranian mystics and the language and tone of Persian Sufi poetry, such as the ghazals of Shams, can also be found.

In *The Sound of Water's Footsteps*, *The Traveler*, and the collection *The Green Volume*, Sepehri achieves great success with clear poems expressed in a sincere manner and pure language.

In *We Are No One, We Are the Gaze*, Sepehri's calm spirit and heart full of assurance never waver or doubt for a moment in his faith and hope. He lived persistently with hope—hope for a paradise of thought to find the truth. In this final work, Sepehri is no longer the same poet of yesterday. It must be acknowledged that Sepehri reached truth in the paradise of thought he sought and rested in the subtlety he pursued; that is, becoming nothingness as he himself says: the whole existence becomes nothing and at the same time the whole existence is observed (Abedi, 2000, p. 206). As Rumi puts it, "I am so immersed in the sea of truth / that I am completely annihilated from my own existence" (Nicholson, 2005, p. 405).

Similarities between Sepehri and T. S. Eliot

Comparison means placing two objects or subjects side by side to examine them in terms of aesthetic content, quantity, quality, and history. Since comparative literature reflects the transfer of concepts from the literature of one nation to another, a comparative study in literature aims to discover connections between concepts and the potential influence of each in terms of artistic beauty, spirituality, content, and more.

Comparative studies, considering climatic and linguistic differences, pay special attention to the structural and content comparison in the works of poets and writers. Based on this, Sepehri's familiarity with mysticism and Western literature, as well as his special attention to T. S. Eliot, caused him to be influenced by this poet in creating images and concepts. One of the topics of comparative literature is to identify the extent of similarities between two poets in ideas and themes. Poets may share the same language and nationality or may come from different languages and cultures, where a kind of exchange and semantic and apparent commonality occurs between them.

Given the contemporaneity of Sohrab Sepehri and T. S. Eliot, a close examination of the layers of hidden and explicit thoughts reveals similar concepts and shared structures. These are categorized under some commonalities and differences. Although there are many similarities between Eliot's notions and the Eastern worldview, fully exploring them requires persistent and patient research; however, even a simple review can uncover some of these similarities.

Research Background

Extensive research in both physical and virtual spaces on the subjects of "T. S. Eliot" and "Sohrab Sepehri" has resulted in many books, which are listed in the references. However, regarding articles written in the field of comparative literature or comparative studies, some notable works include:

- *The Timelessness of Poetry and Hamlet's Wound: The Contrarian Reading of Harold Bloom and T. S. Eliot*, by Mousavi (2021) published in the *Journal of Comparative Literature Research*;

- *A Study of the Reflection of Fertility Myths in 'Let Us Believe in the Beginning of the Cold Season' by Forough Farrokhzad and 'The Waste Land' by T. S. Eliot*, by [Hasanzadeh Dastjerdi \(2020\)](#) published in the Journal of Contemporary Iranian Literature; and
- *A Comparative Study of the Poem 'Let Us Believe in the Beginning of the Cold Season' by Forough Farrokhzad and 'The Waste Land' by T. S. Eliot*, by [Arab Yousef Abadi and Pourgharib \(2017\)](#), published in the Journal of Persian Language and Literature.

However, so far, no study has been found that specifically discusses the similarities between these two poets within the domain of comparative literature or that the authors have addressed this subject explicitly.

Problem Solution

Comparative literature is one of the best methods for examining and expressing the thoughts and ideas of writers and poets. Accordingly, the authors of this study aimed to analyze the points of minimal similarity and contrast between two great poets, T. S. Eliot and Sohrab Sepehri, by closely examining their works.

Based on an in-depth study of the works of these two prominent figures, the authors focused on six features:

1. Tendency towards the hidden layers of speech (metaphor)
2. Naturism
3. Dramatic monologue
4. Poetic language
5. Dispersion or non-adherence to meter and rhyme
6. Tension in poetic structure

They extracted similarities, contrasts, and minimal commonalities, hoping this approach could provide a path for young writers and prominent researchers in the field of comparative literature or literary comparison to recognize shared ideas. The authors seek to answer the main question of this article, which is to identify and explain the similarities between Sohrab Sepehri and T. S. Eliot based on the concept of speech.

Similarities

1. Tendency Toward Hidden Layers of Speech (Metaphor)

The use of metaphor as a hidden layer of speech and as a tool for creating artistic imagery is one of the prominent literary features frequently found in the poetry of Sohrab Sepehri and T. S. Eliot, making a detailed comparison between the two poets possible.

Metaphors in Persian and English exhibit both similarities and differences. In both languages, the classical definition of metaphor as a "simile without the comparative particles" is accepted. However, in English, metaphor also encompasses broader dimensions. In this analysis, metaphors from T. S. Eliot's poetry are interpreted based on the accepted definitions in Persian, which results in a limited set of comparable metaphors but still allows for a meaningful comparative study.

Therefore, the metaphors extracted from the English poet T. S. Eliot were defined based on what is accepted in the Persian language. Considering this, a more limited set of metaphors is available, and based on this, a comparative analysis of the metaphors of these two poets becomes particularly significant.

Since words carry semantic value and can play either a positive or negative role, their application and positioning in discourse are crucial. This awareness enables the speaker to carefully choose words that subtly convey their underlying intentions, drawing the audience into a shared understanding.

The metaphor or hidden allusion in the works of Sohrab Sepehri and T. S. Eliot can be analyzed in terms of three categories: **verbal similarity with semantic overlap**, **verbal similarity with semantic difference**, and **semantic similarity without verbal overlap**. Each category can be examined in detail.

The word "**lantern**" falls under the first category, **verbal similarity with semantic overlap**, and is one of the innovative metaphors present in both Eliot's and Sepehri's poetry. T. S. Eliot uses the term **magic lantern** as a metaphor for the eye, while Sepehri, with a close resemblance, employs **lantern** in his poetry with the same meaning. Moreover, Sepehri extends the metaphor to convey **light and illumination**, demonstrating the expansion of meanings in his work. Despite the novelty in creating metaphors and hidden expressions, Sepehri does not limit the word to a single concept; rather, he applies it across multiple dimensions of meaning, enriching the poetic imagery.

"I see a path in the darkness; I am full of lanterns".

"The door opened / and he breathed into the room with his lantern / all the threads that showed me to myself / burned in the flame of his lantern".

This demonstrates Sepehri's creative expansion of the metaphor across multiple meanings, while Eliot's usage remains more focused, though both maintain metaphorical consistency.

Another metaphor both poets use is "**morning**": ([Sepehri, 2010, p. 105](#))

- **Sepehri:**

"On a morning in pursuit of the sun, what shall we do with the rush of flowers?..." Here, "morning" is a metaphor for **truth or enlightenment**. ([Sepehri, 2010, p. 108](#))

- **Eliot:**

"The morning comes to consciousness / Of faint stale smells of beer" Eliot's "morning" refers to the **sober awakening from intoxication**, a return to reality.

Although used differently, both metaphors contain layered meanings tied to transformation, awareness, and transition.

There are also **semantic similarities with different wordings** in metaphors related to **women, eyes, homeland, sunrise**, etc. For example, in discussing **homeland**:

- **Eliot says:**

"This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms..."

"We returned to our places, these Kingdoms..."

Here, "kingdom" serves as a metaphor for **home or lost civilization**.

- **Sepehri** writes:

"Every pomegranate spread its color all the way to the land of the righteous."

"The land of the pious" is a metaphor for **Iran or his homeland** (Sepehri, 2010, p. 207).

Though the metaphors differ in wording, both reflect deep emotional and symbolic connections to the notion of homeland and cultural identity.

These examples underscore the poetic and metaphorical parallels between the two poets, highlighting their shared literary sensibility despite linguistic and cultural differences.

2. Naturalism and Immersion in the School of Naturalism

The style of Naturalism (1870–1910), as the name suggests, derives from the word *Nature*. In literary terms, it is a movement founded and popularized by the famous French writer Émile Zola and a few others. Essentially, it involves the analysis of human nature and the impact of the natural environment on an individual's moods and temperament. This school of thought gained considerable popularity in the latter half of the 19th century in Europe (Eliot, 1996, p. 280).

The aim of Naturalism in literature is not merely to describe the appearances of nature but rather to focus on issues related to living environments, physical and mental conditions, and most importantly, heredity.

"Naturalist writers and poets analyze human nature by closely examining all the details of a person's behavior and actions, ultimately deriving general scientific conclusions from these small experiments. Moreover, the speech of their characters tends to closely resemble ordinary dialogue" (Eliot, 1996, p. 285).

Nature has a profound reflection in the poetry and language of Sohrab Sepehri, especially in the stage of the "Paradise of Thought", during which he reaches complete unity with nature. This intense tendency toward nature is also seen in the stages of the "Beginning" and the "Purgatory of Thought".

Sepehri's affinity for nature began during his youth. In a letter he wrote at the age of nineteen to his friend Abbas Keymanesh (also known as Moshfegh Kashani), he mentioned:

"I have observed these silent and mysterious scenes from the window of my room, immersed in sweet dreams and fantasies, admiring the marvels and beauties of nature. At times I fix my gaze upon the beauty of nature, and sometimes, by the dim light of a lamp barely penetrating the darkness of the room, I begin to write..." (Moshfegh Kashani, 1986, p. 289).

With reference to his poem *The Sound of the Footsteps of Water*, nature is guided into a more specific realm: a mystic who, like Buddha, turns toward the "East of Sorrow", retreats into nature for spiritual discipline, and eventually attains a state of mystical unveiling and intuition (Abedi, 2000, p. 183).

Sepehri's naturalism is not a descent into the Romantic literary school but rather a reflection of his search for knowledge. It is a living force. His poetic effort represents a deep mental endeavor to discover and understand divine manifestations and metaphysical aspects of life — all of which he attains within the garden of mysticism:

"I went to the feast of the world / I went to the desert of sorrow / I went to the garden of mysticism / I went to the illuminated balcony of knowledge" (Sepehri, 2008, p. 276)

Inspired by nature, Sepehri's poetry is filled with natural imagery that permeates his soul. This collision of images is one of the foundational features of his poetry:

"The sky as wide as the blue / The stone fences, the view, the renewal / The alley-garden extended into nothingness / The gutter adorned with sparrows / The blunt sunlight over the pleased soil" (Sepehri, 2008, p. 448)

Ultimately, in *The Green Volume*, Sepehri reaches such a level of unity between spirituality and nature that the two become inseparable. In his poetry, spirituality and nature often lead to the theme of divine love.

From Sepehri's point of view, God is seen in nature and its beauty, and salvation is found in such a setting:

"My mother picks basil / Bread and basil and cheese, an even sky, more dewy petunias / Salvation is near: among the flowers of the yard" (Sepehri, 2008, p. 336)

It is worth noting that this piece resembles a poem by Federico García Lorca, and in this very poem, Sepehri reaches a stage of unity with nature:

"Lit again / full of trees / full of paths / bridges / rivers / waves and wings..." (Sepehri, 2008, p. 336)

Sometimes, despite Sepehri's total unity with nature, the value of human beings also becomes important. His poetry spreads peace, friendship, and purity, and kindles the desire for human dignity and humane living in our hearts:

"One day I will come and bring a message / I will pour light into the veins / and cry out:

O your sleepy baskets! I've brought apples, the red apples of the sun" (Sepehri, 2008, p. 339)

3. Dramatic Monologue

Monologue is one of the techniques in narrative literature and performing arts, in which a character in a story or the speaker of a poem delivers a speech, narration, or confession alone, addressing either themselves or the audience, and it is the opposite of **dialogue**.

Dramatic monologue is a technique used in both narrative and dramatic literature. It is a narrative method that presents the one-sided speech of a character, directed toward a specific audience, during which the speaker's position and the subject matter become clear.

Dramatic monologue is a literary and theatrical device in which a character speaks alone, either to the audience or themselves. This form of speech is used to reveal inner thoughts, emotions, and perspectives or to advance the narrative.

T. S. Eliot employs dramatic monologue extensively throughout his works—including poetry, plays, and critical essays—in both quantity and depth. He views it as a powerful technique that allows the poet or writer to express hidden emotions and thoughts in a

dramatic form, enriching the narrative. To keep this brief, two notable examples are highlighted.

In *The Journey of the Magi*, T. S. Eliot searches for a true path to solve the mystery of human existence. The poem narrates the journey of the three wise men who travel from the East to Bethlehem to witness the birth of Jesus Christ. Eliot's dramatic monologue in this poem conveys an ambiguous, wondrous, and painful journey toward an "acceptable" faith. It could be interpreted as a reflection of Eliot's own doubts and metaphysical perplexity (Haji Mohammadi, 2009, p. 50)

This poem portrays both a physically arduous and a spiritually transformative journey. Referring to the "ancient dispensation", it is suggested that the birth witnessed by the Magi also signified the death of their old life and worldview:

"We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death."

(Tate, 2001, p. 176)

The Journey of the Magi consists of three stanzas, each presenting a part of the journey and its unique thematic concerns. The first stanza describes the hardships of the voyage, emphasizing suffering and obstacles—like injured and uncooperative camels:

"A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter."

(Tate, 2001, p. 177)

The second stanza presents a contrasting scene, one of renewal and life—perhaps symbolic of a new dawn:

"Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness..."

(Tate, 2001, p. 178)

In the final stanza, it becomes clear that this journey occurred long ago, and Eliot emphasizes the significance of not forgetting that event. Life and death are intertwined; birth itself is a painful death: (1)

"I had seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death." (2)

(Tate, 2001, p. 179)

Eliot also employs dramatic monologue in *Portrait of a Lady* (3), which presents a view of urban life and portrays an ironic love that highlights human decline. In this dramatic monologue, the woman speaks, while the young man is lost in fragmented inner thoughts. Throughout the poem, the woman initiates the conversation and speaks of the man's indifference:

"That is not what I meant at all.
That is not it, at all."

(Tate, 2001, p. 180)

Portrait of a Lady reflects the dullness and monotony of modern life and the woman's attempt to express her deep emotions about the young man and life itself. In the second part, Eliot skillfully uses repeated pronouns such as "you" and "I" to place the man and woman at the center of the conversation:

"You do not know what life is, you who hold it in your hands;
You let it drip through your fingers like a stream."

(Tate, 2001, p. 180)

In most of Eliot's works, dramatic monologue is used, and his characters often struggle with the concept of death, not just physical death, but spiritual and psychological death as well.

Sohrab Sepehri also utilizes various forms of dramatic monologue in his poetry. Inspired by his unique worldview and poetic language—marked by gentleness, mysticism, a deep connection to nature, and humanitarian themes—his monologues reflect his inner vision. For instance, in *The Sound of the Footsteps of Water*, the setting is dark, with a soft light shining down on a solitary man. He wears a thin coat and holds an old notebook and a paintbrush. The sound of a light breeze is heard. Facing the audience, he slowly and thoughtfully says:

"I am from Kashan / My life is not bad / I have a piece of bread / A bit of intelligence, a hint of talent / I am Salman, my qibla is a red flower / I am from Kashan / The breeze might arrive / I saw a train carrying light... Let us taste the light... Perhaps our task / Is to run between the water lily and the century / In search of the voice of truth."

(Sepehri, 2008, pp. 280–285)

Throughout his poetic collection, Sepehri uses dramatic monologue in various contexts. In one such example, he portrays the spiritual solitude of a person in *The Green Volume*:

"There is no cloud / The fish are circling / Me, the flower, water, my mother is picking basil / Salvation is near / Among the flowers of the yard..."

I am full of light and sand / And full of trees and branches...
How alone I am inside."

(Sepehri, 2008, pp. 334–336)

4. Poetic Language

Poetic language is a special form of language used in poetry, different from colloquial or prose language. These differences include the

use of literary devices, meter and rhyme, imagery, and the musicality of words. Poetic language is emotional, imaginative, and artistic, used to convey deeper feelings, experiences, and concepts. It is a specific, purposeful language that uses linguistic and literary elements to provide a unique experience of reading and understanding poetry for the reader.

Sohrab Sepehri's poetic language is simple and fluent, yet full of fresh and original imagery. He used the Nimaic form and tended toward naturalism and Eastern mysticism in his colloquial language. Sohrab Sepehri's poetic language is among the most delicate in contemporary Persian poetry, with several features:

4-1- Simplicity of Language with Deep Meaning

Sepehri uses simple, everyday words, but in the context of his poetry, these words reach levels of mysticism, philosophical reflection, and inner intuition. For example: "And we will not let a fly from the fingertip of nature..." (Sepehri, 2008, p. 141).

4-2- Mystical and Intuitive Language

Sepehri, influenced by Iranian and Eastern mysticism, often uses language with ontological reflections, immediacy with existence, and existential unity that moves beyond "I" to "we", not through slogans but through intuition. For example:

"It is not our task to recognize the secret of the red rose" (Sepehri, 2008, p. 182)

4-3- Use of First-person Plural or Singular Pronouns Generally

Sepehri uses pronouns that involve the reader in the poet's experience, for example: "We are nothing, we look / I feel as much as a cloud" (Sepehri, 2008, p. 188)

T.S. Eliot's poetic language, despite diversity and complexity, has key features such as colloquial language, imagery and symbols, intertextual references, and a mix of free and classical poetry, creating a modern atmosphere, considered one of the most influential in modern Western poetry (Sepehri, 2008, p. 188).

4-4- Combination of Tradition and Modernity (Intertextuality)

Eliot was strongly influenced by classical texts (Bible, Greek myths, Dante, Shakespeare, mystical texts, and ancient Eastern literature), integrating them with modern concerns. In his poetry, one stanza might reference Greek myths, the next Sanskrit prayers, and the following everyday life in London. For example, in "The Waste Land":

"Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.

Shantih shantih shantih" (Eliot, 2020, p. 145)

4-5- Linguistic and Sound Collage

Eliot sometimes juxtaposes different languages and styles (French, Latin, German, Sanskrit) and uses fragmented pieces to create a larger image of the chaos of the modern world: Frisch weht der WindDer Heimat zu, Mein Irisch KindWo weilest du? (Eliot, 2020, p. 180)

4-6- Dark and Melancholic Tone Eliot's language is often heavy, philosophical, and accompanied by feelings of emptiness, alienation, fear, and spiritual crisis in the modern world. He is a poet who talks about "existential doubt", "forgetting God", and "the coldness of contemporary man". For example:

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

I have measured out my life with coffee spoons" (Hajimohammadi, 2009, p. 24).

Differences

1- Dispersion of Adherence or Non-adherence to Meter and Rhyme

One of the main characteristics of poetry is the rhythm of its words. In traditional poetry, the minimum rhythm includes prosodic meter, rhyme, and refrain, and in Nimaic poetry, prosodic meter is used (Shamisa, 2003, p. 78). In music terminology, meter, rhyme, and refrain are called external music and adjacent music.

Sohrab Sepehri, as one of the poets of Nimaic modern poetry, used the four elements of external, internal, spiritual, and adjacent music in his poems. Sepehri chooses soft and gentle meters, which greatly influence the interpretation of his words, following Nima in meter selection. Sepehri was skilled in Persian prosody and usually adhered to meter rules in most lines. He used various meters, but emphasizing his last four books—The Footsteps of Water, Traveler, Green Volume, We Are Nothing, We Look—the frequency of meters in N=41 poems is shown in the Table 1:

Table 1. The Frequency of Sohrab Sepehri's Meters Based on Four Books (Shamisa, 2003, p. 92)

Row	Meter	Number of Poems
1	Ramal Majnun	19
2	Motadarek	7
3	Monsareh	5
4	Ramal	3
5	Mojtath	2
6	Hazaj	1
7	Hazaj Akhreb Maqbood	1
8	Hazaj Akhreb Makfoof	1
9	Motagharreb	1
10	Mozare'	1

Analysis of Sepehri's meters shows Ramal as the most frequently used meter, indicating softness, delicacy, and simplicity of concepts.

T.S. Eliot did not traditionally use meter and rhyme in his works and was inclined towards free verse, conversational language, and

stream of consciousness. However, in some works, he implicitly used meter and rhyme patterns or used them to create special effects (Ellis, 2014, p. 85). Eliot used traditional meters, especially early in his career, but in a free and irregular broken manner. He used a combination of different meters and breaking traditional meters to create a sense of chaos and fragmentation in the reader's mind. He did not use explicit traditional rhyme but implicit rhyme, such as in *The First Prelude*, using homogenous rhymes in different stanzas but not following traditional rhyme patterns overall.

To avoid verbosity, an example is *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, one of the most skillfully crafted contemporary English poems and a type of blank verse. The poet is fully masterful over meter and rhyme yet escapes their framework, using and avoiding meter, free from rhymes yet dependent on them. The absence of rhyme draws the reader's close attention to words and line structures, while rhyme is used to stimulate the reader's attention and create movement within the poem.

One of Eliot's amazing poetic skills is his adherence to meter and rhyme and their subsequent breaking. The poem begins with a calm tone. The first two lines rhyme: "Let us go then, you and I / When the evening is spread out against the sky" (Shamisa, 2003, p. 19).

Then the first stanza becomes weightless and unrhymed; the order of the first two lines, which could have been a pleasant and romantic prelude, breaks down when immediately likened to "an unconscious patient on the operating table".

The colon at the end of this line confronts the reader with rhythmic and rhyming homogeneity ("And sawdust restaurants with oyster shells:").

The sudden change in meter and rhyme causes the reader to feel on the verge of falling, climaxing with an ellipsis at the end of the line ("To lead you to a crushing question....").

Then a rhyme identical to the next line brings the reader calm ("Ah, do not ask what it is / Let us go and make our visit").

The first stanza ends with two lines: "Women come and go / Talking of Michelangelo." In the continuation, rhymes become more regular: "Do I dare / Disturb the universe? / In a minute there is time / For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse".

2- Contrast and Tension in the Poetic Structure

Contrast and tension in the poetic structure of T.S. Eliot and Sohrab Sepehri, although both are influential figures in twentieth-century poetry and both pay attention to poetic language, imagery, and philosophical ideas, differ in their orientation toward the world, language, and existence. One brings tension to the surface of the poem, the other resolves contrast in inner layers. Sohrab Sepehri has no tension but seeks balance and tries to reach peace in an uneasy world, focusing on nature, intuition, and mysticism. In short, Sepehri writes against tension and contrast, for example, in the poem "Flower Mirror":

"Moonlight dew falls / The plain is full of the blue mist of lotus flowers... with the blue dust of lotus flowers... the dream drank the new mist" (Sepehri, 2008, pp. 150-152). Sepehri's poetic contrast space searches for meaning in nature and the human inner self, for example in the poem *The Sound of Water's Footsteps*:

"I am a Muslim / My Qibla is a red rose / My prayer rug is the spring, my kindness is light / The plain is my prayer mat / I perform ablution with...? windows / In my prayer flows the moon / Flows the spectrum... Perhaps our task is to float in the spell of the red rose".

Whereas T.S. Eliot writes with tension about spiritual crisis, modern human alienation, historical rupture, and the collapse of meaning, especially in *The Waste Land*. Eliot writes with tension; for example, in the poem "Portrait of a Lady", he speaks of boredom and monotony in contemporary life:

"Ah, my dear, you do not know, you do not know / What life is... you let it hang on you, you let it hang" (Hajimohammadi, 2009, p. 73).

Unlike Sepehri, Eliot reflects contrast and tension in the industrial city of London, ruined environments, the contrast between city and past, spirituality, and emptiness, the collapse of spirituality in the modern space:

"Ah, my dear, you do not know, you do not know / What life is, you who hold it in your hand / My buried life..." (Hajimohammadi, 2009, p. 75).

Overall, Eliot's poetry is full of modern crisis, polyphony, time disorder, complex allusions, and explicit contradictions, while Sepehri answers tension with silence, intuition, simplicity, and connection with existence; his language is calm, and instead of revealing contrast, it seeks to heal it (Emami, 1986, p. 89).

In this regard, a table of similarities and differences between these two poets is presented.

Table 2. Points of Similarity and Contrast between Sohrab Sepehri and T.S. Eliot's Thoughts

Row	Subject	Sohrab Sepehri	T.S. Eliot	Approximate Degree
1	Inclination to hidden layers in speech (metaphor)	Severe	○ Fairly severe	□
2	Naturalism and immersion in the naturalist school	Severe	○ Severe	□
3	Dramatic monologue	Balanced	Fairly balanced	■
4	Poetic language	Strong	○ Very strong	□
5	Dispersion of adherence or non-adherence to meter and rhyme	Strong belief in meter and rhyme	Disbelief in meter and rhyme	■
6	Contrast and tension in poetic structure	lack of extent	Intense, with contrasts and tension	■

Similarity criteria: Almost complete similarity □

half similarity ■

contrast or minimal similarity ■

Conclusion

In comparing and aligning the poetry of these two great and thoughtful poets, we observed notable similarities that indicate a unity of spirit and thought between them, as well as Sohrab Sepehri's implicit and explicit borrowings from the ideas of T.S. Eliot. Both Sohrab

Sepehri and T.S. Eliot, in their philosophical thinking and poetic expression, are poets who introduced novel perspectives within their respective geographical, historical, and literary contexts.

With their creative minds and skillful pens, they took innovative steps in advancing intellectual movements. Based on the discussion, within the field of comparative literature and literary criticism, these two figures share approximately fifty percent similarity in three major features:

- Tendency toward hidden layers in speech (metaphor),
 - Naturalism and immersion in the naturalist school,
 - Poetic language,
- And they share partial or minimal similarity in two other features:
- Dispersion or adherence to meter and rhyme,
 - Contrast and tension in poetic structure.

It is also worth noting that Sohrab Sepehri, through his familiarity with Western literature and specific attention to the ideas of T.S. Eliot—and Eliot himself—was able to create unique imagery and original poetic veins.

Notes

1. This passage from Eliot emphasizes the birth and death of Jesus Christ.
2. In his dramatic monologues, T.S. Eliot employs synesthesia, symbolism, allusions, paradoxes, and various forms of wordplay.
3. The epigraph of this poem is taken from a play titled *The Jew of Malta* by Christopher Marlowe, an English poet and playwright (1564–1593).

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