

Moon in the Poetry of Misak Metsarents and its Lingual-stylistic Features

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Abstract

Celestial bodies, luminaries and phenomena have accompanied mankind since time immemorial. Heavenly luminaries have been an inexhaustible source of inspiration for poets. Creators praised creation, marveled at the beauty of luminaries, perceived man as a part of nature and in inseparable connection with all other elements. Heavenly bodies and phenomena have often served as a way to reveal the inner world of a person, his past path, hopes and expectations for the future. In this sense, Western Armenian lyric poetry of the beginning of XX century is not an exception. The mentioned topic received remarkable comments in the work of Siamanto, Daniel Varoozhan, Ruben Sevak, especially Misak Metsarents. Celestial bodies, luminaries and phenomena are a significant number in Metsarents' poetry have a great stylistic role. One of these the noun moon and its various synonyms, which very often become the core and body of the poetic image, endow the speech with incomparable nuances, beauty and originality, causing the reader the greatest aesthetic pleasure, transporting him to an extraterrestrial light sphere ¹.

Keywords: *Misak Metsarents, celestial body, luminary, moon, full moon, crescent, people, nature, poetry.*

1. Introduction

Celestial bodies, luminaries and phenomena have accompanied mankind since time immemorial. One of the oldest written testimonies about the luminaries is found in the first pages of the Bible, during the history of creation, in the book of "Genesis". "The God made two great lights- the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars" (Bible).

Heavenly luminaries have been an inexhaustible source of inspiration for poets. Creators praised creation, marveled at the beauty of luminaries, perceived man as a part of nature and in inseparable connection with all other elements. The great poet of the Middle Ages, St. Grigor Narekatsi, wrote in "Vardavar Tagh". "They got engaged gradually, The stars come and go, They took the moon in bunches, And all over the arch of the sky They radiated in groups" (Armenian Ancient and Medieval Lyric Poetry, 1987, 114, word for word translation).

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2. Lingual-stylistic Features of Moon and its Synonyms in the Poetry of Misak Metsarents

A lot has been said and written about the famous lyricist Misak Metsarents being a nature-loving author, and it is a fact that a large part of his poems are dedicated to the description of nature. In these descriptions, heavenly luminaries, bodies and phenomena have their special place, and this is not accidental,

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¹<https://www.bible.com/bible/111/GEN.1.NIV>, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sonnet_61

but has a clear purpose. In a letter addressed to his sister's husband, priest Vardan Arslanyan, Metsarents, responding to the latter's request, reveals this very important feature of his work. "I read the letter written on the occasion of "Rainbow" and was even once more touched. You write: "Why don't you talk to the Soul of the universe?", but it can be observed that almost all of my works yearn towards that great conversation, no matter how much it is not a face to face conversation with God, but isn't God everywhere? My prayer in the Clear Winter Night and my prayer to the Sun were for them, therefore also for Him. What a happiness, to see the secret of the cosmic power in the corner of a leaf and from this little detail have a journey to infinity" (Metsarents, 1981, 288, Henceforth, pages of quotations from this book will be indicated in parentheses next to the essay, word for word translation).

Let's turn to the facts, which are more than talkative. The noun "Sun" is one of the most frequently occurring words in Metsarents' lyric poetry: it is used 62 times in the entire verse (Arakelyan, 2008, 28), the word "Star" is used four times, and "Meteor" - twice. The Moon has fourteen uses throughout the verse, in addition to which there are synonyms of the word: full moon, crescent, half-moon, used both literally and figuratively.

Let's recall some of them. In the poem "Song", the author used the trick of animation. Animation arises when "inanimate objects breathe, we attribute to them special characteristics of animals or humans, to inanimate objects and animals - intelligence and the gift of speech" (Poghosyan, 1991, 185).

In the poem, the night luminary is depicted as a beauty whose silvery face reflection brings peace and pleasure: "The moon it's silvery face in the mirror of the gentle stream" (133). But the changing course of the world darkens the idyllic mood, and change leads to sobriety and sadness: "The moon fades in the darkness, the stream loses its voice and disappears" (133).

In another poem, "Irrevocable," the moon is part of a metaphor, again in the context of the respiration and humanization of nature; "The indifferent splash of water falls thread by thread into the mist, a pair of arms of the stream stretched out into the moonlight, and the surrounding area becomes a voluptuous greedy" (91).

Metsarents sketches the image of the moon in the poem "To My Dear Sister Moon". Who, after all, is the night luminary? Is it an unattainable beauty, whose "distant charms" are enough to give the greatest joy, or is it a desired sister, whom you will reach even if she is "hidden behind a cloud"?

The essence of the moon is in the close connection with the theme of the night, which was also in the center of the author's attention. In the article "An attempt of self-criticism as regards "Rainbow"" he wrote: "Isn't it in the night, that dreams have brighter and faster flights? In the night, when the magnificent view opens up, and expectation is so delightfully poignant" (242).

The charm of the night is largely associated with the moon, as: "And I looked at the other side of the flower garden, at the blue lilacs, and the moon was stretching out her beautiful, coquettish, careless wrist ..." (128).

The luminary is not cold and lifeless, but has spirit and soul, taking part in one's emotional state. The moon is a relative, the moon is a sister, its light dispels not only the material darkness, but also the darkness of the soul, it gives happiness, a sense of harmony, inspiration to create. And certainly "nature... serves the poet as a mean to show a fragment of human life, to reveal a line of character, a fold of the soul" (Papoyan, 1970, 252).

In the poem "To my Dear Sister Moon" the crescent is used twice, the full moon - once, the moon - three times, we are actually dealing with a beautiful example of synonymous repetition. "Synonyms always have also non-matching elements, either in objective-logical meaning or in connotation. Therefore, synonymous repetition provides an opportunity to more fully and comprehensively identify and describe the subject" (Arnold, 1973, 130).

In world literature, we find a vivid example of synonymous repetition in Shakespeare's sonnet LXI,

where the poet talks about his love and the insomnia born of that love. Shakespeare used many synonyms to describe insomnia more accurately, such as: keep open my heavy eyelids, my slumbers should be broken, keep mine eye awake, doth my rest defeat, to play the watchman, for thee watch I (Sonnet 61).

In the works of Metsarents, the moon and its synonyms received many epithets. Epithet is a determinant that characterizes an object or phenomenon aesthetically, and its role is great in terms of style. Sometimes the adverbial moon received several epithets that beautified the speech, enriched it with delicacy, tenderness, made it more poetic, as in the poem "Paper". "And the pleasant, sweet, kind, moon sends a ray of light through the curtain, which falls directly into the girl's hands, to light up the paper, which is still whispering..." (171).

The moon has also received voluminous epithets. In the poem "New Year", the old men and children eagerly await the arrival of the new year, full of new hopes and expectations. The moon is consistent with their emotional state, which seems to be a New Year's gift and a sign of the fulfillment of beautiful expectations. "New year's gift bright moon decorated all the mountains in the village. The songs of the old man, the cries of the children echo strongly with stray notes" (16).

The noun Crescent is synonymous with the moon or half moon and is used as such in the author's verse, as: "Golden crescent, tonight I shivered again in your blissful light" (130). In another instance, the moon and the crescent are used side by side as one of the other's attribute: "When the crescent moon gently shades its liquid, rain-like slide of light on the steps..." (72). Reading these and similar lines of masterpiece of art, it is appropriate to remember the words of the famous linguist Charles Bally: "It's more difficult catch and characterize the emotional coloring of the expression rather than its logical content" (Bally, 1961, 185).

Misak Metsarents' lyric poetry has always been considered apolitical, but careful examination shows that especially in recent period, he was extremely concerned about the fate of his homeland and his people. The cozy poem "Song", as well as the fragments preserved from those verses, which for obvious reasons were not published in time and remain unknown to the reader today testify about it. In one of these fragments, the moon is also present, but in a completely different context, with a different coloring, with a different emphasis. "The moon was the suffocated eye of my homeland" (191).

It is interesting that the moon in the context of national pain is also reflected in the works of another Western Armenian poet of the early 20th century, Daniel Varoozhan. In the poem "A Letter of Longing", Varoozhan addresses a very painful and relevant topic of his time and even today: the wandering. As a result of emigration of the masculine population, particularly young men, the Mother land loses defenders and working people, families and parents lose their support, and young girls are left alone. The poem describes the sufferings of a mother, whose son wanders in unknown worlds. The mother is waiting impatiently for her son's return, experiencing the bitter agony of loneliness, and, as surprising as it may seem, only the moon is beside her, full of grief and compassion.

I wait in vain for your return every night,

I watch the brave men pass by our door.

The farmer passes by, so does the shepherd,

Lonely I remain, the moon and I (Markarian, 2015,162).

In the works of Metsarents, the moon is also present in the translations. Metsarents started to make translations from his teenage years, in parallels his first steps in the literary arena. Translated works of popular authors: Chaucer, Kipling, Peacock, Field, Wilde, Mamin-Sibiriyak and others, both in prose and verse. Among the writers mentioned, Eugene Field is an American poet known for his children's poems. Metsarents translated his poems "Little Blue Boy" and "Danish Lullaby". The characters of this lullaby are fairy-tale fishermen sailing in wooden shoe. When asked by the old moon where they are going and what they want, the little fishermen answer that they have come to catch herrings. They add that they have gold

and silver nets. And as an answer to it:

The old moon laughed and sang a song
As they rocked in the wooden shoe,
And the wind that sped them all night long
Ruffled the waves of dew (Field).

3. Conclusions

Of course, the use of the word moon and its synonyms in the poetry of Misak Metsarents is not limited to the mentioned. They are very diverse and multifaceted, and unfortunately we could not cover them all within the scope of one article. It is undeniable, however, that these units very often become the core and body of the poetic image, endow the speech with incomparable nuances, beauty and originality, causing the reader the greatest aesthetic pleasure, transporting him to an extraterrestrial light sphere.

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