

A Reflection on Ahmad Fardid and Walter Benyamin's Views on the Language

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Abstract

From the philosophical traditions of the West and the East to the present era, different perspectives on language, and its nature have been proposed in various fields. Some have examined the nature of language from an ontological perspective and some from an instrumental perspective. In the meantime, thinkers such as Fardid among contemporary Iranian philosophers and Benjamin from the Frankfurt School theorists have explained language from an ontological perspective. Under the influence of the three intellectual streams of Anas's wisdom, Ibn Arabi's mysticism, and Heidegger's thoughts, Fardid divides history into five periods: the day before yesterday, yesterday, today, tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow. The days before yesterday and the day after tomorrow are considered Fardid's ideal period due to their divine origin and purpose. In Fardid's thought, due to the distance from the history of the day before yesterday, language has been removed from its divine origin and reduced to an instrumental nature; therefore, Fardid, through etymology and poetry adorned with allusive language, seeks to provide the possibility of reaching the pre-modern history and reviving the language that was created by God. Benjamin also believes that language has a theological nature. Considering the myth of the Tower of Babel, he believes that in existing language, the direct relationship between names and things has been lost and "signification" and "meaning" have emerged; thus, Benjamin, with

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the help of poetry and translation, tries to open a way to revive the original level and divine origin of language. This research aims to reread the linguistic views of Fardid and Benjamin using a descriptive-analytical method and show their points of commonality and difference.

Keywords: Fardid, Benjamin, etymology, language, poetry, translation

Extended Abstract

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

The discussion of language and its understanding has long been the focus of philosophical attention in the West and the East. The first attempt to understand the concept of language was made by Greek philosophers, great figures such as Heraclitus, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, etc. In our tradition, philosophers and thinkers such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Nasser Khosrow, etc. have presented thoughtful discussions about the nature of language and its vocabulary. On the other hand, in the twentieth century, in addition to linguists, thinking about language has also occupied the minds and languages of continental philosophers, analytical philosophers, philosophers of language, etc.; so that thinking about language is at the center of the twentieth century's reflections. Fardid (1996-2000), an Iranian philosopher, and Benjamin (1892-1940), one of the great theorists of the Frankfurt School, are among those in whose intellectual project language has had a special place. Undoubtedly, rereading the opinions of these two thinkers in dialogue with each other will open new horizons in the genealogy of linguistic reflections, especially in the contemporary Iranian tradition, and will reveal the perspectives of one of the important contemporary Iranian intellectual movements in dealing with language. Also, the level of thoughtfulness of our thinkers will be better and more accurately assessed compared to Western thinkers. It is worth noting that the linguistic reflections of these two philosophers are linked to various fields of the humanities, including Jewish theology, continental philosophy, Islamic mysticism, and the philosophy of language.

Research Method and Background

According to the studies we have conducted, no independent research has been conducted in the form of a book or article on the comparative comparison between

Ahmad Fardid and Walter Benjamin. This research has been published using a descriptive-analytical method.

Result

What emerges from the overall outcome of reflecting on the thoughts and views of Fardid and Benjamin on language is their awareness of the break between language and its original origin and their concern for the revival of the original language. Following Heidegger and the teachings of the mystical tradition, Fardid conceives language from an ontological perspective as beyond its system of signs and communication. He believes that in the history of the single nation, language was inspired to man with its divine nature; but after the history of the single nation, language has departed from its divine status by moving away from the divine sphere. Benjamin also believes in the divine status of language and distances himself from language in the conventional semiotic and marked sense. In Benjamin's view, pure language is the language of names, through which divine knowledge of things was achieved by naming them to man. Fardid's view of modern human language, which is in turmoil and confusion (signifiers do not lead to true signifieds), compared to the language of the past, which was a single language for all human beings and a way to reach the truths of things, has considerable overlap with Benjamin's threefold distinction of language. Fardid and Benjamin, each with differences in providing solutions to overcome the constraints of existing language, seek an approach to make the revival of the latter language possible; hence, Fardid considers etymology and classical poetry, due to their reliance on the language of reference, and Benjamin considers literal translation and poetry as translation, as ways to achieve the revival of the latter language.

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