Analyzing the Concept of Home (Nation) in the poems of the Constitutional Period

Abotaleb Pakbaz
Master of Persian Language and Literature, Islamic Azad University Darehshahr, Iran

Dr. Mohammad Reza Sangari
Assistant Professor of Islamic Thought and Culture Research, Iran

Rustam Yousefvand
Department of Persian Language, Islamic Azad University Darehshahr, Iran

Nadia Basati
Department of Persian Language, Islamic Azad University Darehshahr, Iran

Abstract

The principal call of the Constitutional period is either nationalism or social criticism, and the prevalent themes of the poems are freedom, nation, social criticism and etc. the first two of which appear as the basic foundations of the poem written in this period. The poets, in this particular era, laud the past rulers and the glories of culture under their mighty throne and the social justice, jubilations, and victories of these kings and knights once unprecedentedly powerful, nothing of which but the ruins remained for the people of this period. The poets aim at informing the mass of the glories of Ancient Persia and nurture in them the gust for freedom and nationalism.

Keywords: Home, Constitutional Period, nation, poetry.
Introduction

Home and homeland of every nation is crucial for its people and thus attentions have been devoted to the identification of these concepts emerging in the collected poems of the poets of this period. One the first things that hit the minds when talking about the poems of the Constitutional period is home and its pertaining issues. In investigating the collected poems of this period, we found that all poets demand the glory and independence of their ancient land. Therefore, we felt it apt, and necessary, to conduct a related research, however infinitesimal, with the barest hope of doing a moment of justice to the magnificent domain of literature and literary scholars.

Presentation of the Nation’s Glorious Past

Bahar puts it in this way when recounting the honorable past of his ancient land:

Look how the heavenly land since its moment was the cradle of justice and equity, not of ornament

It has been Keyumars’ land and Jamshid’s country the place of Manuchehr and Nozar’s settlement

Tous, the warlord, has arisen the flag there Rustam-e-Dastan has set his legion

Bahar had in mind the once-glorious and honorable past of this nation drawing so many attentions. There had been no trace of cruelty and injustice, and with an ever-expansive justice in the hands of good-natured rulers, the land had been prosperous.

All the bondmen were happy and cheerful Yey, this land’s been long prosperous thanks to them

Past a while the Sasanians made this land like heaven, full of justice, equity, science and mysticism

Bahar is throughout proud of the past rulers takes the textual remnants as an attest to his claim. In different aspects of his poems, Bahar recounts the adventures of Iran’s history along with the glorious powerful thrones expanding justice, jocundity, and victory.

Praising the Nation (Bahar):

He says: Thy Land, O the king, is a fair bride who has no other groom than justice and right

Iran’s territory, a home to heroes whose god has inscribed victory on its every element

In praising the nation, he has always noted the fact that the land once has owned dignity and glory and also heroes living in prosperous soil:
Hail to be on Iran the prosperous  the cradle of the brave men of the Providence

Well to the freshly ornamented castles  and to those towering teenagers hence

Of course these lines bear a sorrowful nostalgia for all the glories of the past are naught by now:

Now, long way has gone the past  dust remained for us at last

Seyyed Sharaffodin: like other poets of this period, he represents laudation of the land at the heart of his poems. An example:

All of its kings have been famous widely  All deserve this fame, don’t they rightly

Avicenna was brought up in this country  isn’t well-known everywhere his philosophy

“The fact that people remember him as the most popular and the most famous national poet of the Revolution period is thanks to his wide audience, especially the mass; a popular poet who chose the language of the ordinary people.”

The aim, for Seyyed, was to inform the people of the greatness and magnificence of ancient land and nurture in them the very spirit of freedom and nationalism.

Love of Nation:

After September 1939, affairs in Iran were heavily transfigured thanks to the invasion of alien forces; and Bahar who was not content with the ancient regime put his advice this way:

Whoever killed for respecting land and nation  like martyrs, has the highest place in heaven

At this time Bahar (when Reza Shah went into exile and the beginning of the monarchy of Mohammadreza Shah) published a series of articles entitled A Brief Account of Political Sects in Iran in Mehr-e-Iran newspaper to awaken the people, especially the young generation. These articles, which focused on the nostalgia of the past, were swiftly acknowledged by the people, to quote Bahar himself: “it inspired me to write a separate volume of those accounts.” After Reza Khan’s exile and his exit from Iran, Bahar felt renovated. Feeling the actual freedom allowed him to engage his combative and active presence freely in the worlds of literature and politics, to publish newspapers, associate with the young, write poems, participate in congresses and communities, and even to become a minister.

“Yes, the poet needs some audience, especially craving for the young generation. He defends the literary schools loved by the young and participates the assemblies where the educated, ambitious and active young take part; like the old days of his own.”

What brave and sage children I enshrine  No one remained to fix the land of mine
It became the den for old lions, where is the cub intending to prepare this den fine?

“The first poem of Bahar, written in the second half of 1939, is a eulogy entitled ‘Love of Nation’ which directly addresses the new king (Mohammadreza Shah). In Bahar’ view, for this young king, one can prescribe the recipe of forward-looking principles of governance. The poet, following its own tradition, begins his poem by “nation”, which like “freedom” is for him a sacred word; “love of Nation is part of the faith” thus said the Holy Prophet and accordingly should regard the kingdom of the golden soil of Iran.”

**Remembering Nation:**

In 1948 Bahar went to Swiss for health problems and was bedridden in Leysin sanatorium, wrote some poems describing the nature and beauties of the home, which nostalgically remembered the honors and glories of Iran’s past opposed with the ruins of the present.

Nothing is left of all those glories this moment hitme home memories

The grieves resurfaced once more out of this dark present and miseries

This trip to Swiss longed for one and a half year and the treatments were effective to some extents. Being out of Iran in addition to illness propelled Bahar to write his most beautiful poems including his widely-known eulogy for home “Leysin”:

The moon dominated the valleys and mounts in Leysin the light fell on the vast fields therein

Being far from Iran affected him to such extent that after the descriptions of nature and its beauties invoke memories of victories and glories of the past, and complaints about the misery of the present.

What went to the justice-expanding Iran which turned the entire universe into heaven

Now that his nation has filled with chaos, he grieves helplessly.

Iran, a clean river which turned all to mud and slush gradually

Who is a brave man with strength to purge the river of impurity

Bahar wishes some brave men from the past who could purify this lively river of its ooze by active thought, endeavor and practice and instantly abolish all the miseries along with their origins tout court.

**Flaunt in being Iranian**

Aref states love of nation in this way: “I am proud of being Iranian.”

I have nothing except the pride of being an Iranian of high side
So be living difficult to its fullest my genes and blood Iranian the best

“In the name of love of Iran, and in spite of all the indifferent people to the nation and its glories, I am proud heartily that my father and his lineage all had pure Iranian blood, the one that run through my veins to my last breath.”

Great and noble is the Iranian’s creed glorious be the Iranian indeed

It is known for its honor and nobility thus hail to Iran and its viability

“What can be inferred from Aref’s poem is that his poems are free of the common ascribed drawbacks; were acknowledged by the people of his age, and the poet has been labeled the “national poet” with hindsight to these poems. Aref is in fact the mouthpiece for the revolutionary and national dreams and the claims of those fighting for freedom and pro-constitutionalists.”

Eshqi is another grave poet who loved his nation and we who in this way not only bought great dangers in telling the truth but inscribed the literary history of Iran in the heraldry of Constitutional Revolution.

“In his clear and fluent poems, Eshqi teaches us love of nation, zeal, chivalry, endeavor, self-sacrifice, self-esteem, and self-dependence. Every true Iranian reading “Iranian Apocalypse Opera” and “Eshqi’s Ideal” or other similar poems, it is as if he/she comes to consciousness and the feels anew the revolutionary spirit inside so as that the poem invite them to a world of cognizance from that of oblivion.”

In 1918 when Hassan Vosugh (Vosugh-o-dowleh) articulated the treaty between Iran and England, Eshqi wrote a protesting collection of poetry and delivered an epilogue to his poems, and excerpt of which follows:

Saying bye to the dead body of the nation angers me since the wealthy is caught by naught

Eshqi condemns England for all the miseries, and shows his critique of the alien forces and Iranian mercenaries, who had given away the country by such a contract, in this way: the shepherd and the flock are both tied alike.

In our native land, they feast out of our source The Anglo-Saxon wolves are in chair, of course

A mercenary assemble serve them in betrayal

Eshqi says: “With love of nation, I inscribe the following, may it outlive me and be a bless on my soul. We must know: these lines merely came out of the treaty of Iran and England, pouring out of my mind, and the treaty, in my view, is not more than a “transaction of Iran for England”. I know this for certain.
O Vosugh-o-dowleh, was not Iran the land of your father? The rent paid to you in childhood rather

The moment you give away, they pay gold in tribute

Eshqi rebukes his people for becoming so indifferent to the fate of their nation, and were in lull against this ignoble treaty which principally questioned the dependence and economics of the country; he accordingly writes:

O God, are these people made out of wood? Are they any different from the dead in mood?

So easy they are to the havoc of the land

Eshqi compares people to some dead bodies which do not have any motion and are in their coffin going to their eternal death:

How weird, they did it away with Iran’s dependence Beware O nation! To the grave is your ascendance

Put your hands out of the coffin, you’re alive Well said that the half-dead persist silent attendance

Eshqi attributes his grieving lines to a grieving heart, if to this moment his heart was torn out and his eyes wept, thence his tongue will reveal the plots and will protest.

If you feel in Eshqi’s lines harsh protest it comes out of his combative chest

Eshqi was so much in love with the nation that he considered it as his beloved, he holds that: I will not die a natural death alone in my bed, throughout I bespeak the love of nation and I’m ready to kill all the enemies before my own death on the battlefield.

“Eshqi has to die honorably, in the cusp of manhood, at the outset of literary development, and at a time when newspapers can publish his obituary and people could mourn for him. Accordingly Eshqi chooses his own death, and it is because of this very fact that in his swiftly-written poems, there always harbors the image of death; a result of his mystic mutative affection for death, he not only wishes death, but also invites anger in this act.” He writes:

Damn me, out of grief, so I damn me what hell I do if of nation will nothing be

Alas, nothing is left when the nation gone I certainly won’t put another hat on

“Eshqi, in an exquisite way, predict his own destiny, a feeling which ids born out of his poetic inspirations, a power of an absent force, though a bit insincere and hypocrite for his time, but real and deep in its own turn. Oftentimes in his collected poems, he predicts his premature death.”

He says:
I’m not the one to die a natural death and waste this jug of blood on the bed

“The abstract concept of nation, for Eshqi, refers to a far-reaching land filled with nobility, humanity, and a general freedom, welfare and security. This concept, of course, is historically documented, meaning that the love of the past and the nostalgia of the poet for the Ancient Persia come out of it. But this love is both helpless and sincere, a love full of self-sacrifice, with no expectation for any reward.”

O the beloved of Eshqi, O the pure love! With your love I pass my days and nights
I drank the death drink to your love it seems fit if I’m proud of this inebriation

Mohammad Ali Sepanlou says of this: “Eshqi was let down of the world and was pessimistic. This hopelessness drove him to a deaf and dangerous outpouring which bears death and failure more than it does life and victory. But the death of a revolutionary is the outset of all humiliations getting banished, and a linkage to the mysterious roots of myths and a return to the ancient origins.”

Life in this misery is indeed an infamy but I’ll run away from death long
I’m the haunted who loves nation and yells I’ll do away with my love for this land

Eshqi, in order to defend nation and not being ransacked by the foreign people, writes a vociferous verse, protesting against the 1919 treaty, synchronous with Eid al-Adha. He is deeply sorrowful for the deployment of this treaty, believing that through this, Iran will be officially supervised by England. Thus, Eshqi sees his feast as self-sacrifice for the love of nation:

I’m sorrowful! What Eid al-Adha? The nation’s child is under the enemy’s blade
O my feast is not now, but when I’ll be dead for nation, that’s Eid al-Adha

**Praising the past**

Mir-Zadeye Eshqi is the poet of the constitutional revolution who had an untimely death. In addition to literary works, he engaged with socio-political activities and journalism. His name entered the canon because of his political protests and martyrdom in the path of strong beliefs. In his poems and other writings, Eshqi praises Iran’s past and laudably remembers them, and says that the name of Iran has been always accompanied by victory, conquest, prosperity, and justice.

Yay in this way our ancestors had lived twin with conquest and victory conceived

Eshqi praises the past rulers, since in Ancient Persia, there has been justice everywhere, and actually the Sasanians were famous for their ever-expansive justice, “Sasan’s equity expansion”.

---

http://www.ijhcs.com/index.php/ijhcs/index
Science and culture had been once present everywhere, but time has changed. Instead of all those art and equity, Iran has become the place of thieves, and if the past rulers were in position, no such situation would come out.

When had been Sasan’s equity expansion in Iran, they say from head to toe, the land was fertile with science and art, nay?

**Conclusion:**

The poem of the Constitutional period revolves around the twin central themes of nationalism and freedom. By nation, it is meant the home consciousness (nationalism) which differs from the understanding of Internationalism. Freedom, to the poets’ eyes, was not a mystic ridding of material life, but freedom from tyranny and dictatorship.

The poets whose works have been studied in this research have no identical understanding of nation. Generally they can be divided into two groups: the first group includes those poets similar to Bahar whose nationalism is not blind to the situation, but cognizant of the context, depending on the tradition as cultural criteria with which one gets more dignified in a sensible love of the nation. The nationalism of Seyyed Sharaf-o-din is similar to Bahar which is based on the love of the nation. In his opinion, nation is intrinsically woven with the Islamic and Shiite customs. The second group includes Aref, Eshqi, and to some extent Farrokhi displayed a kind of chauvinism when dealing with the concept of nation, intending to touch upon the Ancient Persia’s civilization and its glories.
References

Bahar, Mehrdad, 1989, Bahar’ Divan, Tehran, Volumes 1 and 2, Tous Publications

Moshir Salimi, Aliakbar, 1971, Mizede Eshqi’s Illustrated Collection, Sanaie Publications


Sepanlou, Mohammad Ali, 1995, Bahar, Tehran, Tarihe No Publications

Zarghani, Seyyed Mahdi, 2005, The Outlook of Contemporary Poetry in Iran, Tehran, Sales Publications in collaboration with The Secretary of Persian Language and Literature Council Press