A comparative Study on Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Injustice Themes in Poems of Farokhi Yazdi and Those of Besharah al-Khouri

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Abstract
Opposition to discrimination and injustice and expressing love to homeland are constant themes that apparently occur in contemporary nationalist poets. Farokhi Yazdi and Besharah Al Khouri are two contemporary poets who experienced the ordeal of living under constrictions by autocrat rulers, observing how their nations suffered from injustice and discrimination. This article uses descriptive-analytical method with focus on American Literary School which unlike French literary school does not care about influences and effects instead it matters the unity of the world literature. In doing so we look forward to ensuring that: A. anti-discrimination theme in the poems of both as a common ground are well focused B. anti-discrimination and anti-equity themes of both poets are well compared and their dissimilarities are unearthed.

Keywords: comparative study, Farokhi Yazdi, Besharah Al Khouri, anti-discrimination and anti-justice, similarities and dissimilarities.
1- Introduction (theoretical fundamentals)

Comparative literature is currently a most important methods of research in the world literature. Such research are called ‘Al-Adab Al-Moqaren’ in Arabic and ‘Adabiat Tatbighi’ in Persian (Ghezelbash 2006, 38).

On comparative literature there are numerous comments some of which are mentioned here. Dr. Ghanimi Helal believes that comparative literature (Adab Moqaren) deals with very point where literature of different languages meet each other. It covers their complicated links in past and present times and their historical effects on each other (Ghonaymi Helal 1999, 16). Dr. Abdolhossein Zarrinkoub thinks that what which eastern poets adopt from western points or vice-versa is chiefly from a comparative history; comparative literature is a kind of cultural communication among nations (Zarrinkoub 1984, 321). Authors recognize that the principal source of comparative literature is in France and Britain. This new approach to research took form for the first time in western universities particularly in Sorbonne, France where specific rules and principles were created for that (Kafafi, translated by Dr. Seyedi, 2003, 9).

1) French Literary School: being formed in Sorbonne University, this school represents European literature. It deals with comparative literature in a narrow sense. Powel Wan Tigme and Balsenberg were two pioneer characters of this school (Ollush, 1987, 31). Advocates of this school believe two literary works are not possible to be compared with each other unless three requirements are met: 1) the language of the two works are not the same 2) literary interactions do exist in the content of them 3) the two works must have historical ties. In the absence of even one of these three requirements, the study being conducted over these works cannot be claimed to be comparative study (Kafafi, translated by Dr. Seyedi 2003, 18).

2) American Literary School: Rene Welk-a pioneer of this school- comparative literature has a broad range. This school thinks that comparative literature encompasses every sort of comparison between literary and artistic works in every country (Kafafi, translated by Dr. Seyedi, 2003, 34). This school indeed thinks of a world literary unity and does not care about borders and limits that are imposed by languages and history (Ahmad Darwish 1997, 20).

This research seeks to conduct a comparative study based on American Literary School Approach on the poems related to anti-discrimination and anti-injustice composed by two poets. A brief look into contemporary Iranian and Arab poets demonstrates amazing resemblance in poems of for example two poets who have never met each other and have never reach each other’s works. Maybe it can be explained by this fact that they have lived in a same atmosphere while in two different places. This case can precisely be seen about Farokhi Yazdi from Iran and Besharah al-Khuri, also known as Akhtal-o-Saghir, from Lebanon [1].
Both of them experienced the two world wars and lived in the countries suffering from discrimination and injustice imposed from Qajar time up to Pahlavi in Iran and Othmani empire in Lebanon up to Britain and Russian invasion of this country. Such a similar context drove both nationalist poets to rise to discrimination, inequality and injustice through their poems.

In this article, first Farokhi’s and then Besharah al-Khouri’s poems on anti-discrimination and anti-injustice are explored, and then the common grounds and differences in the poems of the two poets are expressed.

1-1 Presentation of the Matter
Both of the poets are liberalist journalists and prerogative characters in movement against discrimination and injustice. They devoted their poems to defend innocent people and campaign against class difference, sympathy with inferior classes of society, fighting autocracy and discrimination etc. these are common grounds of the two poets. This article seeks to answer two main questions: 1- in what these two poets are in common in their efforts against injustice? In what they are similar and in what they are different when it comes to establishment of justice and eradication of discrimination?

2-1 Research Background
Separate researches have already been conducted over both of the poets: about Farokhi the researches are: ‘liberty and compagin against oppression’ by Hossein Razmjou in 2000 which was published in Keyhan magazine. A comparative article titled ‘comparative study on embodiment of nationalism in Farokhi poems and those composed by Marouf Al-Rasafi’. This article was conducted by Mahmoudreza Tavakoli Mohammadi in 2011 which was published by Shahid Bahnoar university press. Also there are some other articles that were published in a festival being held in memory of Farokhi Yazdi. About Besharah Al Khouri there are similarly some researches: “Small Akhtal: a poet of love, beauty and Arabism” by Jihad Fazel and ‘therole of Little Akhtal in Arabic contemporary poetry’ by Ehsan Abbas etc., as well as some letters being presented to festivals being held to his honor. It must be mentioned that no article could be found that particularly focuses on ‘discrimination and injustice’ in the works and poems of both poets, and no comparative research has already been conducted about these poems from discrimination vantage point. So this is the first research that is conducted on these two poets from the vantage point of their devotion to fight discrimination and injustice.

3-1 Background and Significance of Research
Since both of the poets lived in nations that kept suffering from discrimination an inequality and inequity, also considering the national popularity of both of them in their societies, it is important to focus on their efforts to provoke people to rise to inequality and injustice and discrimination. On the other side, knowing the common grounds and differences of these two poets are of great importance in the context of comparative literature. Therefore, it is a fundamental attempt being made by this article.

2- Discussion
2-1 Farokhi Yazdi’s Poems on Combat against Discrimination and Injustice
Basically terms like ‘liberalism’ and ‘socialism’ in literature focus on liberty and justice. This can be best seen in Farokhi Yazdi’s poems which have hardly precedent in the past. He was the first to insist on economic and political aspects of ‘justice’ in Persian poetry. Loving to liberty and to his homeland (Iran) are two integral bases of his sonnets. He keeps expressing hatred to autocracy and class differences and exploitation (by landlords, feudalism and political dominance) and is passionate to express these ideas by using literary devices.

He attacks on exploitation: whether it be by employer against employee, capital against labor, landlord against farmer, rich against poor, war against peace, superstition against enlightenment (Sepanlou 1990, 426).

When it comes to the rights of labor being neglected by employers and the suffering that they are imposed he says: ‘

As long as he considers infinite self-interest
what is the chance of an employer regarding an employee’s right?

Look at the crescent moon with crimson twilight like face
That narrates the story of peasants’ sickle and hands of (Farrokhi, 2011:46)

In this subject, Farokhi leads his focus toward the different lifestyles of labor and capital owner; poor and rich and starts to defend the former blaming the latter for all the suffering that the former class painfully bears. He further declares his opposition to ruling force for its failure to defend inferior classes of society (farmers and workers) by his fierce provocative poems which calls people to rise against such tyranny (Tavakoli Mohammadi 2011, 51).

In one of his odes he describes how rulers spend their time by pleasures and hedonism while neglecting how painfully their people are living their lives. He further points out the capitalism tyrannies and puts forward a solution: rising of labor class:

Our head that drinks from large goblet easily
tramples on the wages of other out of his lust
He who kisses the silver figures of beauties in Paris
Cannot bear in mind a peasant’s bare body
The world looks black due to the stain made by capitalism
We should completely deterge east and west by blood
I wish the vengeance of the worker set a fire

So that this mass of these self-indulgent burns down (Farrokhi, 2011:86)
In another ode which is fair to be named ‘blood flood’ ode, Farokhi reaches his highest peak of passion and it is not unlikely to imagine that he has been in great angry against Pahlavi government and he has been so passionate when writing these lines. In these lines, he makes the Iranian oppressed nations’ shout heard (Tavakoli Mohammadi 2011, 51).

*If God wills, the endless sea of blood will spring*

*These shipmasters drown in the bloodstorm*

*With pride I affiliate myself to the revolution creed*

*As a revolutionary, my hand and clothes will be soaked in blood*

*When I command workers like a brigade to vanquish employees*

*I command with bloody sword point to lead to bloodshed*

*As I imagine the roofless huts belonging to peasants*

*I make the palaces soar to Saturn the porch of blood (Farrokhi, 2011: 91)*

In another ode, he mentions of the injustice in the world for which he puts a solution forward: a firm world revolution. He mentions that only the way for this revolution is devotion of lives.

Until justice and equality in the human become pervasive complete revolution should be staged in the world

*Poverty should be wiped out among the Sheikhandlad*

*Justice should include the king and beggar*

*Farokhi, you cannot start off this journey without sacrificing your life*

*Because in the first step you must devote your life (Ibid, 46)*

In his lifetime, Farokhi has been not only the poet of liberty and nationalism but the poet of democracy and nationality as well. He tends more to ‘justice’ and describes it as a great endorser of nationalism and liberty. So justice is beyond a merely moral concept in his eyes. He sees it as a base for social planning (Sepanlou, 1990, 425).

*It is good that we walk on the justice path*

*with this principle, raise the flag in the world*

*This kind of life is not viable*
It is appropriate to upset this improper streak

Lay dawn more justly law
then cross out all the laws

Give purity hand to the architect of Justice and peace

Then we trample on the heads of all universes of tyranny

Since people fight over dinar and dirham
instead of minting coins, we should hammer at dirham (Farrokhi, 2011:31)

He interprets justice as destroying unfair lifestyle and laying down fair-based laws other than bourgeois conventions and ruining capitalism basis by labor hammer. He repeats this idea frequently to make known the merits of equity and equality and disappearance of class differences. In his mindset, this can be a social plan which stands on the basis of individual liberty (Sepanlou 1990, 426).

In the quest for freedom and justice we have spent lives

We have walked on our heads and marched to perdition domain

Look at the heading of (revolution paper) to see

We have hoisted the flag of equality (Farrokhi, 2011:50)

He also mentions of class differences and inequality existing between landlord and farmer:

The owner has indulged himself in luxury, glory and power
the farmer is still captured by toil and scourge

The era of equality has been heralded but in this ominous country

There is still difference between the king and the poor (Ibid, 89)

He believes a firm revolution in the world is needed to eradicate poverty, inequality and to establish justice and equity.

People should be familiar with the guild war
Conflict over poverty and affluence should be created

The affluent entered the ranks of poverty party
These two lines should be completely separated from each other (Ibid, 45)

In another couplet, he talks of the bitter fact that people who are true owners of national wealth are living in painful suffering and their wealth is constantly being seized by the rich. Why should this be tolerated?

In this universe, decline belongs to every body

Everyone deserves time of delight

Why the poor is disregarded by the affluent

If luxury, glory and power belong to all people (Farrokhi, 2011: 162)

He thinks that poor and rich, king and beggar must enjoy equal rights and privileges.

To our eyes poverty and affluence are the same

The kings and beggars are alike in our manners

In storm-stricken ship of ours

Alas, God and shipmaster are the same (Ibid, 176)

His doctrine about defending labors and also about lack of liberty in his country is:

In a country where there is no guild war

Its freedom is not sufficient and expanded

Why they do not let the worker attend celebration

if the assembly does not belong to the noble (Ibid, 185)

When it comes to apparent thievery and breach of justice in division of profits and loss he says:

In our country thieves do not afraid

so there is no shepherd for herds but wolves

Losses belong to all people

but attainment is just for some citizens (Ibid, 185)

2-2 Besharah al-Khourī’s Poems on combat against Discrimination and Injustice
Besharah criticizes the situation where ordinary people live in absolute poverty and suffering while owners of power and wealth experience sheer joy and pleasure. He describes it as a discrimination and injustice that is a result of tyranny and autocracy in his country. In an ode titled ‘tax collector’ he describes how Lebanese villagers live in poverty and how painful sufferings they experience while people out in Beirut lead their lives in sheer joy and pleasure. He employs village tone of language to provoke a revolution (Abbas 1961, 63).

In this ode titled ‘Al-Arz’ [2], he swears God that he says nothing but right. He states that even animals can live a good life in cities. They receive gentle treatment by urban people. In this sense, villagers are even inferior to animals in cities. He blames owners of power and wealth and also the rulers for all the sufferings that his nation keeps facing. He discerns that the only way to get rid of such harshness is to do something to get rid of rulers that allow it. He speaks from the language of a villager who tells tax collector officer: ‘take from me what you want and just leave us alone and go away for God’s sake’:

I attest you to tell me if it is true that people in Beirut do not live in such misery as we are in. That they treat gently with donkeys and cows
It such is true, is it true that we be even inferior to animals?
Rulers satisfy with destruction of everybody in favor of their own survival
How can it be acceptable that rulers seize and benefit our earnings
Why must we be treated like that. It sounds an exchange of liberty for slavery

Come in and take everything you want away from me. (Al Khouri, 2008, 218)

In an ode titled ‘oh Lebanon, what is seen is feast not misery’ in 1933, poet attacks on rulers’ neglecting towards nation and depicts class difference like this: a group receives pleasure and luxury and other have no share but misery and suffering. In former’s lifestyle people keep giving each other glasses of vine while in latter’s lifestyle tax collectors shout to the destitute people demanding tax. In former’s class of society, breasts are naked for sexual passion while in the latter class breasts are naked for not having cloth to put on.

Tell to king that be aware! If you gained power, wealth and luxurious life while people in your surrounding were in misery, you life will be nothing but a hell.

Is it here that glasses of vines are given to everybody and lions yowl?
It is here that breasts are undressed for sexual kisses, while in other place a helpless woman is wailing while she is undressed.

Here light shines like son, like stars (Ibid, 164)

Besharah Al Khouri continues to mention class differences in his ode titled ‘war disasters and tragedies’ in which he addresses Yielez palace (palace of Abolhamid, autocrat king of Othmanid emperor) cursing it; a palace that has amazingly luxurious appearance while in its base stand innocent bloods and bones. In the following couplet he describes autocrats as having been living in merely luxury and pleasure while their nations only suffering misery. He curses such lifestyle and such palaces and urges God to withhold blessing to them and take convenient away from them:

Oh palace! I beg God to never save your from destruction, to never save you from rain and flood
Because you are standing on your martyrs innocent bloods and bones (Ibid, 89)
3-2 Expression of the common grounds and differences in the poetry of Besharah al-Khour and Farokhi Yazdi

1. Both poets talk in their poems about class differences and discrimination and inequity in their countries. They mention the deep gap between the lifestyle of the rich and that of the poor blaming autocrat rulers for that and devising the solution of rising to such rulers.

2. Besharah Al Khouri deals with the lifestyle of urban people and rural populations depicting the latter as being in misery and suffering while the former constantly enjoying luxurious life. While in cities even animals are being loved and receive sympathy and gentle treatment, people in villages and rural areas keep being neglected as if they are not humans at all. He blames injustice and autocrat rulers for that. But Farokhi looks at the class differences between employer and labor, landlord and farmer etc.

3. Farokhi is firmer in attacking on inequity and injustice than Al Khouri. He says: the only way to get off this harsh situation is a world revolution, is devoting lives and bloods for that. But Al Khouri suffices only to recommend people that they do not tolerate the situation.

4. Farokhi believes that blessing and convenient belongs to all nation and everybody must be allowed to use and enjoy it. The rich have no right to take this right away from the poor. Everybody in society must have the same rights.

5. Besharah Al Khouri has some moderate tone in mentioning inequity and injustice. To show that well, he uses similes to depict what a gap exists between the lifestyle of the rich and that of the poor. For instance, he tells In rich class of society, breasts are naked for sexual passion while in the poor class breasts are naked for not having cloth to put on. This subject is more passionate in Farokhi’s poems by mentioning the gap between employers and labors.

6. Farokhi is more passionate to call people for rising to discrimination, class differences and injustice. He provokes people to rise to reform.

3- Conclusion
This article elaborated on the focus of Farokhi Yazdi- an Iranian contemporary poet- and Besharah Al Khouri- a Lebanese contemporary poet- on anti-discrimination and anti-justice themes. Having looked into their poems, we unearthed a lot in common between these two poets in their approach toward discrimination and inequity. They both experienced the ordeal of world war I and world war II and had personally experienced the suffering and miseries that their rulers imposed upon their nations. They also suffered the ordeal of political constrictions and atrocities by the rulers that were typically players of the colonial and imperial governments such as UK. They could see how authors and writers were constricted, arrested and how they were forced to live in exile, how they were killed only on the crime of defending their nations and defending their nations against atrocity, class difference, discrimination, injustice, encroachment of rights etc. these are themes that both of the poets have in common. Both tended to provoke their
nations to come together and rise against such tragedy and topple the autocrat rulers who are blamed for all these sufferings.

In conclusion, it is noteworthy that this article can be a good source for authors who are interested in studying on the Lebanese contemporary poet, as this is the first comparative study being conducted between him and Farokhi Yazdi.

4- Notes

[1] - Besharah Al Khouri kept triggering people to rise to Othmani empire, so he was constantly afraid that he may be arrested by Othmani rulers. So he used the title ‘Akhtal Saqir’. This title came from ‘Akhtal Omawi’ which was the name of a person in early Islam history who kept calling people to raise against Omawi rulers atrocities (Khalil Joha, 1999, 144). He published sizeable portion of his publications under this title and everybody knew him by it (Bidaj, 2010, 125).

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