

**Existentialist Analysis of the Poetry of Shamlou and Adonis
(Case Study: *Little Songs of Foreign Land and Songs of Mahyar al-Dimashghi*)**

Dr.Farhad Rajabi ¹

**Associate Professor of Arabic Language and Literature, University of Guilan, Rasht,
Iran**

Received: 28 July 2017 Accepted: 10 July 2018

Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

The connection between literature and philosophy has always been one of the accepted principles in the area of criticism and theorization for a long time. Regardless of the views of those for or against this connection, what is of utmost importance is the role of each in development and meaningfulness of the other. As philosophy contributes particularly to poetry in line with increasing the richness of poems, it offers a novel face to literature whilst attempting to convey its messages through literature so as to diminish the border between literature and philosophy. In this regard, poetry is effective in a simpler, more beautiful transfer of philosophical notions. Consequently, given the new era in which philosophy and literature have been united once more, philosophical awareness has become immensely important for a better understanding of profound literary works.

2. Theoretical Framework

As one of the schools of thought in philosophy, existentialism involves a more tangible connection with arts and literature. This school has integrated philosophy with literature extensively, becoming the focus of many scholars all around the world. The connection between contemporary Arabic and Persian poetry with philosophy, especially given the achievements of existentialism, has turned into a distinguished identity in certain poems. Instances of this claim includes the manifestation of such a philosophy in Ahmad Shamlou's *Little songs of foreign lands* and Adonis's *Songs of Mahyar al-Dimashghi*; both poets have created these works of art by considering the fundamental components of this philosophy. In the examination of these poems, the readers are faced with poets who think, or thinkers who are also poets; such a phenomenon becomes more prominent when accompanied by the existentialist outlook.

Some of the common prominent themes showing the influence of existentialism on both poets include the meaninglessness and exorbitance of existence, human alienation, and humans' contradictions regarding the agency and meaningfulness. In addition to offering an image of the connection between the existentialist philosophy and contemporary literature, the present inquiry aims to examine the instances of this philosophy in two cases.

1. Corresponding Author .Email : farhadrajabi133@yahoo.com

3. Method

The method used in this study is based on analyzing and comparing both poems through the existentialist outlook. Even though Shamlou and Adonis lived in the same era and met each other several times, it is highly unlikely for them to have been influenced by one another; rather, both have been influenced by the same school of thought, that is, Western existentialism. Accordingly, what is offered here in comparing both works is the American comparative literature method of criticism. In this approach, the proposed figures such as Henry Remak (1916-2009) and René Wellek (1903-1995) not only do not consider the basis as essentially the presence of a historical relation or impression and influence, but also accept the connection between literature and other types of sciences and arts in the area by expanding the scope of the discussion (Alkhatib, 1999). On the other hand, the American school considers the presence of intellectual and cultural similarities between two literatures or cultures producing similar works to be inside the scope of studies in the area of comparative literature. In other words, according to the view that states, "Comparative literature involves comparing a literature to other literatures as well as comparing literature to other areas of human tastes and intellects" (Anoushiravani, 2010, p. 15), the origins of *Little songs of foreign lands* and *Songs of Mahyar al-Dimashghi*, which are of the same intellectual and cultural backgrounds, could be a motivation for conducting such a comparison.

4. Results

On one hand, the examination of the presence of existentialism in the poetry of Shamlou and Adonis confirms an interdisciplinary connection between literature and philosophy which is considered as one of the functions of comparative literature in accordance with the American school; on the other hand, it represents the feedback which is observed in the poems of both poets, particularly in *Little songs of foreign lands* and *Songs of Mahyar al-Dimashghi*. Such a consequence often leads to unity between the mutual ontological approach and outlook of both poets while it sometimes shows minor differences in their orientations. Accordingly, the following results were obtained through examining both works:

- When faced with the absurdity of existence, Shamlou portrays an atmosphere full of hopelessness and objection, often being under the influence of realism; however, not only Adonis does not halt amidst absurdity, he moves on and confirms the active role of humans by doing so.
- In the poems of both poets, offering uncertainties regarding human loneliness is of more importance than providing answers to questions related to the subject. This is due to the fact that for an existentialist, discovering evil is of priority over solving it. In this regard, both poets have attempted to portray the present contradictory atmosphere by using antonyms.
- Both poets regard humans as the center of existence. They consider humans as the ones creating meanings and their presence as the beginning of existence. Humans are constantly attempting to provide the means for the presence of another human so as to make pain and suffering more tolerable. They also believe in the agency of humans; however, Shamlou hopelessly regards himself as the agent of the dead,

while Adonis looks forward to his next generation, wishing for humans to restore their own values.

- Riot and rebellion against the terrible contemporary conditions are mutual mechanisms used by both poets; however, Shamlou acts as a warrior, while Adonis manifests himself in such a role by referring to what lies within him.
- On the subject of becoming meaningful, Shamlou initially turns to romanticism followed by the real world, asking his audience to venture beyond themselves. Nevertheless, Adonis portrays this subject by offering a brief trace of romanticism within the surreal world, leading his audience to a vague atmosphere.

Keywords:Existentialism, Shamloo, Adonis, Poetry

References (In Arabic)

- Abd al Mawla, M. A. (2006). *Wahm al-hadasa, mafhoumat ghasida al-nasr* [The illusion of modernity, the understandings of prose poem as a model]. Damascus, Syria: Arab Writers Union.
- Aboujabin, A. M. (2004). *Shoara al-jalil al-qazib* [Poets of the furious generation]. Amman, Jordan: Dar Al Massira.
- Adonis. (2006). *Aghani Mahyar al-Dimashghi* [Songs of the Mahyar al-Dimashghi]. Damascus, Syria: Badayat.
- Al Didi, A. (1985). *Al_ittijahat al-mo'asira fi al-falsifa* [Contemporary trends in philosophy]. Cairo, Egypt: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣrīyah al-‘Āmmah lil-Kitāb.
- Al Khamlichi, H. (2010). *Al-Shi'r al-mansour wa al-tahdis al-shi'ri* [The prose poetry and modern poetry]. Algiers, Algeria: Dar Al Amane.
- Al Khayyir, H. (2006). *Adonis sha'ir al-dahsha va al-kisafa al-kalima* [Adonis, the poet of surprise and intensity of the word]. Damascus, Syria: Dar Ruslan.
- Al Waraḳi, S. (1984). *Lugha al-shi'r al-arabi al-hadis* [The language of modern Arabic poetry]. Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Al Nahda Al Arabeya.
- Al-Khatib, H. (1999). *Afagh al-adab al-mogharin* [Prospects of comparative literature]. Damascus, Syria: Dar Al Fikr
- Davoudi Moghadam, F., & Akhtari, T. (2013). Al-Tajruba al-sufya end Adonis wa Sohrab Sepehri [The reflection of Sufism views in Adonis's and Sohrab Sepehri's poetry]. *The Journal of Iranian Association of Arabic Literature*, 9(26), 73-101.
- Ismail, A. (1966). *Al-Shi'r al-arabi al-mo'asir* [Modern Arabic poetry]. Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Al Thaqafa.
- Jayyusi, S. K. (2007). *Trends and stands in modern Arabic poetry* (A. Lo'Lo'a, Trans.). Beirut, Lebanon: Center for Arab Unity Studies.
- Juha, M. K. (2003). *A'lam al-shi'r al-arabi al-hadis* [A bibliography of modern Arabic poetry]. Beirut, Lebanon: Dar-al-Awda.
- Obaid, M. S. (2007). *Saout al-sha'ir al-hadis* [The voice of the modern poet]. Damascus, Syria: Arab Writers Union.
- Shayya, M. S. (2009). *Fi al-adab al-falsafi* [In the philosophical literature]. Beirut, Lebanon: Al-Mu'assasah al-Jāmi'iyah lil-Dirāsāt wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī'.

Zayed, A. A. (2008). *A'n bina' al-ghasida al-arabiyya al-hadisa* [On the construction of the modern Arabic story]. Cairo, Egypt: Maktab al-Adab

References (In Persian)

- Ahmadi, B. (2011). *Saratre ke minevesht* [Sartre who was writing]. Tehran, Iran: Markaz.
- Anoushiravani, A. R. (2010). Zarurat adabiat tatbighi dar Iran [The necessity of comparative literature in Iran]. *Comparative Literature*, 1(1), 6-36.
- Ashouri, D. (1998). *Sher va andishe* [Poetry and thinking]. Tehran, Iran: Markaz.
- Baghaie, M. (2007). *Shamlou va alam mana* [Shamlou and the world of meaning]. Tehran, Iran: Morvarid.
- Baraheni, R. (1992). *Tala dar mes* [Gold in copper] (Vol. 2). Tehran, Iran: Moalef.
- Blackham, H. J. (2012). *Six existentialist thinkers* (M. Hakimi, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Markaz.
- Bocheński, J. M. (1975). *Contemporary European philosophy* (S. Khorasani, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Melli University of Iran Press.
- Camus, A. (1968). *Four letters to a German friend* (R. Davari, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Nil.
- Camus, A. (2003). *The myth of Sisyphus* (A. Sodughi & M. A. Sepanlou, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Donyaye No.
- Camus, A. (2012). *The fall* (F. Shourangiz, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Niloofar.
- Copleston, F. (1982). *Contemporary philosophy* (A. A. Halabi, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Zaver.
- Cranston, M. (1971). *Jean-Paul Sartre* (M. Bozorgmehr, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Kharazmi.
- Faraji, A. (2010). *Alber camu, nehilisti digar* [Albert Camus, another nihilist]. Tehran, Iran: Maref Dini.
- Farzaneh, S. B., & Ali Mohammadi, A. (2012). Osture dar sher odunis va shamlu [Myths in Adonis's and Shamlou's poetry]. *Journal of Mytho-Mystic Literature*, 8(29), 41-70.
- Foulquié, P. (1968). *General philosophy: Metaphysics* (Y. Mahdavi, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: University of Tehran Press.
- Gary, J. G. (2011). Poets and thinkers: Their position in Martin Heidegger's philosophy (M. S. Hanaie Kashani, Trans.). *Arghanoun*, 4(14.), 81-98.
- Ghiasi, M. R. (1996). *Egzistansializm, falsafe osyan va shouresh* [Existentialism as the philosophy of rebellion and revolt]. Tehran, Iran: Nehzat Qom.
- Hariri, N. (1993). *Darbare honar va adabiat (Goftoshonod ba shamlu)* [On art and literature (In conversation with Shamlou)]. Babol, Iran: Avishan.
- Hollingdale, R. J. (2008). *The history of western philosophy* (A. H. Azarang, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Ghoghnoos.
- Macquarrie, J. (1999). *Twentieth-century religious thought* (B. Salki, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Amirkabir.
- Magee, B. (1999). *Men of ideas: Some creators of contemporary philosophy* (E. Fooladvand, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

- Marcel, G. (2008). *The philosophy of existentialism* (Sh. Eslami, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Negah Moaser.
- Matthews, E. (2012). *Twentieth-century French philosophy* (M. Hakimi, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Ghoghnoos.
- Meshkat, A. R. (2011). *Farhang vajeha* [The dictionary]. Tehran, Iran: SAMT.
- Najafi, A. (2010). *Vazifeye adabiat* [The duty of philosophy]. Tehran, Iran: Nilloofar.
- Navali, M. (2007). *Falsafehaye egzistans va egzistansialism tatbighi* [The philosophy of existentialism and comparative existentialism]. Tabriz, Iran: University of Tabriz Press.
- Parvini, K., Abedi, H., & Gholam Hosseinzadeh, G. (2011). Barasi tatbighi masih da sher odonis va shamlu [The comparative study of Jesus Christ in Adonis's and Ahmad Shamlou's poetry]. *Language Related Research*, 2(3), 25-52.
- Pashaie, A. (2009). *Nam hame sherhaye to* [The title of all your poems]. Tehran, Iran: Sales.
- Saanei, M. (2008). *Mabani andishehaye falsafi* [The foundation of philosophical thinking]. Tehran, Iran: Amirkabir.
- Salajegheh, P. (2008). *Amizadeye kashiha* [The prince of tiles]. Tehran, Iran: Morvarid.
- Sartre, J.P. (1965). *The words* (H. G. Javaherchi, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Kave.
- Sartre, J.P. (1997). *Nausea* (A. J. Alam, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Niloofar.
- Sartre, J.P. (2012). *Existentialism is a humanism* (M. Rahimi, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Niloofar.
- Seyed Hosseini, R. (2010). *Maktabhaye adabi* [Literary schools]. Tehran, Iran: Negah.
- Shamlou, A. (2010). *Majmue asar* [The collection of works]. Tehran, Iran: Negah.
- Skilleas, O. M. (2008). *Philosophy and literature: An introduction* (M. Naderi Dare Shouri, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Akhtaran.
- Taslimi, A. (2014). *Gozarehaie dar adabiat moaser Iran* [Propositions in contemporary Iranian literature]. Tehran, Iran: Akhtaran.
- Unamuno, M. D. (2009). *Tragic sense of life* (B. Khoramshahi, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Nahid.
- Verneaux, R., & Wahl, J. (2013). *The phenomenology and philosophy of existence* (Y. Mahdavi, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Kharazmi.
- White, G. (2011). *Modern European philosophy* (N. Ahmadian, Trans.). Abadan, Iran: Porsesh.
- Zarghani, M. (2012). *Chashmandaz sher moaser Iran* [The horizon of contemporary Persian poetry]. Tehran, Iran: Sales.