

**Journal of Comparative Literature**

Faculty of Literature and Humanities  
Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman  
Year 12, No. 23, Winter 2021

**Comparison of Resistance and Persistence Ideas in the Poetry  
of Khalil Matran and Shafiei Kadkani\***

shokouh fourjanizade <sup>1</sup>

**1. Introduction**

Resistance and persistence poetry aims to express social problems and apply humanization in the literature. It aims to clarify undesirable conditions in terms of social and political problems and anomalies. Khalil Matran and Shafiei Kadkani are two well-known contemporary Arab and Persian poets, whose poetry is imbued with considerable and valuable concepts of resistance and protest. This study makes an attempt to compare resistance and persistence ideas in the poetry of these two poets, to determine their similarities and differences, and to determine how the same conditions in the two geographical areas have contributed to the thought unity of the two poets. The results of the analysis revealed that, given the same political thoughts, Khalil Matran showed creativity in connecting the historical narratives with the contemporary conditions, while Shafiei Kadkani succeeded in creating and using symbolism in the resistance and persistence literature.

---

\*Date received: 18/11/2018

Date accepted: 02/11/2020

1. Ph.D. student, Department of Persian Language and Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, Isfahan, Iran. E-mail: shokooh\_forjanizade@yahoo.com.

## 2. Methodology

A comparative-descriptive method was used in this study to compare the lines of thought of the two poets. The data was collected from *The book of poems* by Khalil Matran and the book *A mirror for voices* by Shafiei Kadkani. The random sampling method was used for this purpose. The comparative method was used to better understand the poetry of the two poets. This study aimed to determine the similarities, differences, methods of expression, and attitudes of the two poets in the two different time periods and with different languages but with the same idea of the fight tyranny.

## 3. Discussion

The lack of freedom of expressing human concerns led Khalil Matran and Shafiei Kadkani to use the language of poetry to portrait the tyranny dominant in the Iranian and Egyptian societies. The chaotic social, political, and cultural circumstances of the Iranian society and the Arab societies and familiarity with the Western literature are among the most important common themes in the protest literature among Persian and Arab poets. Khalil Matran was a follower of Romanticism, but he developed a tendency toward protest narrative poetry, given social and human concerns and expression of the idea of freedom. He was a freedom-fighter who lived under the dictatorship of Abdol-Hamid in Lebanon, during which time there were clashes among different religious sects. He was fully aware of the important events of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Arab countries (Hussein Mansour, 1977, p. 27). He was one of the first contemporary poets who introduced fictional and epic literature majestically into the Arabic literature and poetry.

He succeeded in connecting material and spiritual matters in many of his stories and in adapting his method based on the requirements of

a given story. He was a freedom-fighter who fought tyranny, submission, neglect, and backwardness.

Shafiei Kadkani was a great Iranian poet who lived after the Constitutional Revolution. His poetry was mainly concerned with social matters. The suppressive political atmosphere at the time led Shafiei Kadkani to use symbolism in his poems to portrait social issues. His main mission was to spread awareness in the society. He obliged himself to represent social events, injustices, and voices of freedom-fighters and their murdering in his poetry. His main motifs include freedom-fighting, fighting for liberation of country, enlightenment, mourning the death of victims, and social criticism. His prolific mind reflected human thoughts differently by focusing on social problems, and such a reflection was his social criticism.

Living under a dictatorship and human concerns have caused poets to express freedom-fighting thoughts. Khalil Matran fought tyranny, submission, neglect, and backwardness and played a major role in his people's political awareness. Shafiei Kadkani was also aware of injustices and tyranny and suppression in his time period and zealously represented people's suffering. The similarities in motifs between the two poets include encouraging to fighting, resistance and persistence, calling for awareness, commemorating fighters, condemning ignorance and unawareness, exalting freedom, and hoping for victory over tyranny.

Khalil Matran speaks indirectly in his historical and political elegies and also makes use of historical and national elements of other countries. He lived in Egypt, hidden from the Ottomans, and their rulers and spies. He represented suffering of freedom-fighters caused by the dictatorship of Sultan Abdol-Hamid by using the historical tools and with reference to Khosro Anushiravan. Therefore, he wrote an elegy called "Murder of Bozorgmehr" to state how this Persian king ruled with absolute authority and how such ruling method

directed him toward oppression and injustice (Zeif, 1707, p. 130). Shafiei Kadkani emphasized the necessity of resistance and persistence by using positive and negative symbols and by portraying the oppressed and oppressors such as the Tatar people, Genghis Khan, Siyavash, and Bijan.

Khalil Matran was a freedom-seeking poet. He despised tyranny, oppression, and imperialism. He was fully aware of history. He portrayed the defeat of the Germans in the best way in The elegy 'Iyana Battle.' By portraying the doom of the Germans, he alluded to the situation of his own country fellows being oppressed by the Ottomans (Zeif, 1707, p. 129). Silence over oppression is also portrayed in different ways in Shafiei Kadkani's poetry. He criticized the chaotic conditions of his society, in that why the people were indifferent to each other and felt no empathy for each other because of the tyranny over the society.

Khalil Matran believed that people's synergy and empathy, which results from their awakening to tyranny, leads to the desirable end. To prove this claim, he referred to the year 1870. In that year, the Germans stood up for their dignity. After calling for the awakening of the society and shifting away from silence, Shafiei Kadkani referred to fighters who did not succumb to tyranny, had enlightened thoughts, fought for their ideals, and had no fear of the coming events.

Khalil Matran attributed the people's contempt to ignorance, which was widely painful. He called for awakening, justice, and national and ethnic awareness and condemned oppression and oppressors. By narrating the history of Anushirvan, he called for awakening. Shafiei Kadkani criticized indifferent and neglectful people, who take no responsibility and seek a wrong peace in their ignorance and neglect. He described a silence and suppression, in which people choose to become neglectful instead of awakening and rising.

Abdol-Hamid's authoritarian regime fell in 1908. Then, Khalil Matran let out deep cries by writing the elegy "Freedom Greetings". Shafiei Kadkani's social thought was mainly constituted by his efforts in fighting for the ideal of freedom. In his poetry, freedom is represented by such symbols as rain, spring, garden, and lightning. In the ideal attitude of Shafiei Kadkani, no force can prohibit freedom, which can be established freely everywhere. Khalil Matran did not call for rising against oppressors explicitly in none of his poems. He only tended to convey his messages implicitly and covertly. Despite tyranny and oppression, Shafiei Kadkani did not lose hope for freedom and victory. And despite suppression, he still wrote poems of freedom and did not lose hope for victory over oppressors.

#### 4. Conclusion

In the comparative analysis of the two poets under study, it was found that they were influenced by the same cultural, social, and political conditions and performed their poetic duty. Khalil Matran's contribution was to write elegies imbued with cries of anger and protest. By using allusions, he showed a prospect of repetition of the people's ignorance and neglect. Therefore, he called for awakening, justice, and national awareness. The main feature of Shafiei Kadkani's poetry is the use of symbolism. His poetry is free from sloganeering and political content, and the artistic use of natural elements makes its poetry more artistic and interpretable. The results of the comparative analysis of the protest poetries of Khalil Matran and Shafiei Kadkani revealed that these two poets played a similar role in awakening the people and fighting tyranny under the influence of the European literature, and that the suppressive atmospheres of the two societies and the lack of freedom of expression, the sense of responsibility, and social and human commitment caused them to use symbolism and narrative poetry.

Both poets used an implicit language and similar themes and contents to criticize tyranny and performed their artistic missions in an appropriate manner for their audiences. Khalil Matran used the historical narratives of other countries and allusions to express his protest to tyranny. And Shafiei Kadkani succeeded in writing narrative protest poetry by using literary devices such as analogies, symbolism, and metaphors under the influence of natural elements. In sum, they were committed poets who did not remain silent over the socio-political events of their time periods and performed their social missions by their arts.

**Keywords:** Resistance and persistence literature, Protest literature, Khalil Matran, Muhammadreza Shafiei Kadkani, Comparative literature.

**References [In Persian]:**

- Al-Fakhoori, H. (2004). *The history of the Arabic literature from the age of ignorance to the current century* (A. Ayati, Trans.). Tehran: Toos.
- Eshghooni, M. (1991). *The Lebanese poets: Khalil Matran*. Beirut: Dar Al-Mashregh.
- Hussein Mansour, S. (1977). *Renewal in Khalil Matran's poetry*. Alexandria: The Egyptian Authority.
- Mandoor, M. (1954). *Lectures on Khalil Matran*. Egypt: Institute of Higher Arab Studies.

- Matran, Kh. (1949). *Book of poems of Khalil Matran*. Cairo: Dar Al-Maaref.
- Osvar, M. (2002). *Pioneers of today's Arabic poetry*. Tehran: Sokhan.
- Poormontaz, A. (1993). *Comprehensive encyclopedia* (Vol. 1). Tehran: Cultural Fairs Institute.
- Poornamdarian, T. (1989). *Symbols and symbolic stories in the Persian literature*. Tehran: Elmi variables Farhangi Institute.
- Razmjou, H. (2011). *All types of literature and their effects in the Persian language*. Mashhad: Ferdowsi University of Mashhad.
- Shafiei Kadkani, M. (1981). *Contemporary Arabic poetry*. Tehran: Toos.
- Shafiei Kadkani, M. (1997). *A mirror for voices*. Tehran: Sokhan.
- Shafiei Kadkani, M. (2006). *Lashes of spiritual progress*. Tehran: Agah.
- Zarghani, M. (2004). *The prospect of the contemporary Persian poetry*. Tehran: Sales.
- Zeif, Sh. (1707). *Research on the contemporary Arabic poetry*. Cairo: Dar Al-Maaref