

A Comparative Study of the Manifestations of Resistance in Mohammad Taghi Bahar's and Ma'ruf al-Rusafi's Poetry

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Abstract

Resistance literature is the audible cry of the oppressed nations who have risen up against colonizers and despotic rulers and verbalized their strong demand for freedom and patriotism. In the present article, which is a descriptive-analytical one, the authors, through the review of library sources, have investigated the manifestations of resistance in Mohammad Taghi Bahar's and Ma'ruf al-Rusafi's poetry. They have tried to answer the following two questions: 1) Is it acceptable to regard Mohammad Taghi Bahar and Ma'ruf al-Rusafi as resistance poets? 2) Which common motifs and themes related to the area of resistance can be found in these two poets' poetry? Bahar and Rusafi are two of the most outstanding poets of Iran and Iraq. Both of them are committed poets who have given their poems over to their countries and the cause of resistance. Using a simple and clear language in their poems, these two poets have referred to many of the motifs and themes found in resistance literature. Some of the most important of these themes and motifs are defense of one's homeland, fight against colonialism, calling for unity and warning against discord, complaint about the rulers' tyranny, and call for the awakening of the Islamic nation. These as well as other socio-political issues have been discussed and analyzed in the poetry of the two aforementioned poets.

Keywords: Resistance literature, poetry, Mohammad Taghi Bahar, Ma'ruf al-Rusafi

Introduction

Nowadays, resistance literature has a prominent place among different nations. This kind of literature is, in fact, the cry of the oppressed

people which is echoed by the poets who are familiar with those people's sufferings. Through the channel of this type of literature, poets proclaim the resistance and stamina of their tyrannical nations to the world. In other words, resistance literature voices the pains and sufferings meted out to a nation at a critical juncture of its history; it is a courageous cry against the oppressors; it is an invitation of the oppressed nations to push debasement and servility away from them.

From the days of yore, there have always been poets in Iran and the Arabic countries who have dealt with such themes and motifs as the homeland and the necessity of defending it, national unity and social solidarity, progress and modernization, quarrel with discord and hypocrisy, and the reprimand of tyrannical rulers and despotic lords. Mohammad Taghi Bahar and Ma'ruf al-Rusafi are two of the eminent poets of Iran and Iraq who, in unison with their nations, have undertaken to defend their own countries. In their poems, one can easily detect many instances of the usage of the themes and motifs of resistance. It was the textual and historical importance of the poetry of these two poets that inspired the present authors to investigate the common themes and motifs of resistance in their poems. This article tries to answer the following two questions: 1) Is it correct to call Mohammad Taghi Bahar and Ma'ruf al-Rusafi two poets of resistance literature? 2) Which themes and motifs typical of resistance literature are found in their poems?

The present research hypothesizes that Mohammad Taghi Bahar and Ma'ruf al-Rusafi are two of the most outstanding poets of resistance writing in Persian and Arabic respectively. These two poets have played a significant role in enlightening their nations. In their poems, they have paid a lot of attention to patriotism and explored numerous themes and motifs related to resistance literature such as the freedom of spirit, fight against colonialism, and the importance of unity and solidarity.

Review of Literature

Numerous articles and other research works have been written on Bahar and Rusafi in which their poems have been analyzed through different critical points of view. Below some of these works are introduced briefly:

1. In a 2011 Arabic article entitled "New Classicism and its Common Modern Themes in Contemporary Persian and Arabic Literature with a Special Consideration of Ahmed Shawqi and Mohammad Taghi Bahar," Sadegh Khorsha and Maryam Azizkhani have investigated the modern themes and motifs in the poetry of these two Egyptian and Iranian poets.
2. In another 2011 Arabic article, "Ma'ruf al-Rusafi: the Social Analyzer of Poverty and Distress," Esmaeil Naderi has investigated such

social phenomena as poverty and distress in the poetry of this poet and introduced him as a social poet.

3. In a 2009 Persian article entitled “A Comparative Study of the Homeland Concept in the Poems of Bahar and Rusafi,” Nasser Mohseninia and Fatima Dashan have compared and contrasted the treatment of the motif of the homeland in the poetry of these two poets.

4. In a 2015 English article entitled “A Comparative Study of Anti-Colonialism in Ma’ruf al-Rusafi’s and Farohki Yazdi’s Poetry,” Abbas Ganjali, Asghar Molavi Nafchi, Raziye Maskani, and Seyed Iman Bassir introduce these two Iraqi and Iranian poets as freedom-fighters who used their pens as weapons in their violent battle with the European colonizers and their domestic agents. They enumerate and explicate the various techniques these two poets employed in their poetry in order to awaken their nations and expose the true nature of the colonizers and their agents to them.

Many more articles and research works have already been written on these two poets. However, in their searches, the present authors could not find any comparative study of Mohammad Taghi Bahar’s and Ma’ruf al-Rusafi’s poetry as works of resistance literature. Therefore, it is hoped that this article will shed some new light on the criticism of these two poets’ works.

Resistance Literature

Before we can clarify the meaning of resistance literature, it is helpful to supply a definition for the word “resistance” itself. Ibn Manzur, the well-known Arab lexicographer, has defined resistance as “the confrontation of power by power, standing up against the enemies and not succumbing to their intentions, and opposition to those things which are incompatible and incongruous with justice and human desires” (2010, vol. 12, p. 498). Resistance literature is a category of literature which translates this confrontation and opposition into words; it is a battle which uses words instead of bullets in order to fight off the invading enemies. Al-Hussein (1972, p. 12) defines resistance literature in the following way:

Resistance literature is struggle with all kinds of colonialism and tyranny. In this type of literature, words take the place of weapons and guns. Whereas the effect of weapons and guns is limited to the battlefield, the effect of the words of resistance literature is permanent.

Shukri (1979, pp. 10-11) defines resistance literature in the following way:

Resistance literature refers to a body of works which speak, in a literary language, about the repulsiveness of domestic tyranny and foreign invasion and the calamities caused by them in all of the political, cultural, economic, and social areas. Some of these works talk about the time

before the occurrence of the calamity, some deal with the time of war, and others refer to the time after it.

Some other researchers have argued that resistance literature is a subdivision of political literature and engaged literature. According to this group of researchers, the subject matter of resistance literature is the expression of the efforts, devotions, sacrifices, combats, miseries, and deprivations of a nation which has stood up in order to ward off its enemies' military, cultural, religious, traditional, and national invasions, and on this route has met with a lot of sufferings and tribulations (Najarian, 2009, p. 202). Another point to mention is that this kind of literature perpetually gushes out of people and shouts out their feelings. In other words, it is in line with their moods and conditions and reveals the ups and downs of their lives. Its main goal is to liberate nations from the bonds of colonialism and despotism.

Though resistance literature has always existed in some way or another, its true and widespread emergence in Iran goes back to the period of the Qajar dynasty (1785–1925) and especially the Constitutional Revolution (1905–1907). The most important causes of its appearance in Iran in that era are the extension of communication and hence the growing acquaintance of Iranians with western civilization and its progress, the emergence of the printing industry, the foundation of schools and newspapers, the absence of justice and freedom in the country, the extreme despotism of the Qajar rulers, and their easy acceptance of the colonizers' domination.

In general, some of the grounds for the emergence of resistance literature are as follows: 1) domestic strangulation and despotism and the divestment of personal and social freedom, 2) old and new colonialism and exploitation, 3) the usurpation of power, land, and national resources and riches, 4) trespassing on the precincts of personal, religious, social, historical, and national values, and 5) the lawlessness of the bases of power and their suffocation of the existing rules (Khezr, 1968, p. 45).

A Brief Biography of Mohammad Taghi Bahar

Mohammad Taghi Bahar was born in Mashhad, Iran on November 6, 1884. His father, Mohammad Kazem Sabouri, was a poet who bore the title of the laureateship of the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza (the eighth Imam of the Shiite Moslems) in Mashhad. Since his early youth, Mohammad Taghi attended the circles of the liberals, and it was at that very time when patriotic feelings found their way into his heart. "Since the age of fourteen," explains Nosrati (2000, p. 234), "Bahar had connections with the liberal circles, became familiar with new thoughts, and gave his heart to constitutionalism and freedom." In the prime of his youth, he gained such a proficiency and reputation as a poet that at the age of eighteen, after the death of his father,

he received the order of the laureateship of the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza from the Qajar king, Mozaffar ad-Din Shah (Bahar, 2008, p. 5). He is one of the most outstanding cultural and literary figures of the twentieth-century Iran. With the start of the Constitutional Revolution, he began his political activities. After becoming a member of the Democratic Party of Mashhad, he started a newspaper called *Now-bahar* (early spring), which was frequently suspended due to the publication of his violent essays and poems against the policies of the authoritarian monarchs of the country and the foreign governments as well as his defense of liberty and the true rights of people. "The main voice of constitutionalism," comments Shafiei Kadkani (2008, p. 34), "is mainly that of patriotism or social criticism, and this voice is mostly heard in the poetry of Iraj and Bahar." This brilliant poet found his way into the parliament too, and during the five successive times he served as an MP, he was frequently exiled and jailed. Bahar's last social activity was his chairmanship of the Peace Supporters Society. Finally, he died on April 22, 1951 after a long period of illness (Nosrati, 2000, p. 235).

A Brief Biography of Ma'ruf al-Rusafi

Ma'ruf bin Abdol Ghani Mahmoud al-Baghdadi al-Rusafi was born in the Qara Gul district of the Al-Rusafa region of Baghdad in 1875 (Khorsha, 2002, p. 95). Since his father was frequently absent from home due to his military profession, from the very beginning, the responsibility of his bringing up was with his mother. As a result, he was closer to his mother than to his father, a fact which is well perceptible in his poetry. On various occasions, he speaks about her in a very tender and respectful manner (Al-Otbah, 1992, p. 6). Rusafi began his education at religious schools and studied the religious and Islamic sciences at the school run by the eminent scholar Al-Alusi. These studies formed his early beliefs and thoughts. Furthermore, Rusafi was influenced by the nationalist thoughts of his master Al-Alusi, who was a pioneer of nationalism in that era. Besides, in consequence of the scientific and cultural relationships between the Ottoman Empire (At that time, Iraq was a part of the Ottoman Empire) and the West, during Rusafi's life, newspapers and other kinds of periodicals began to be published in the different provinces of that empire including Iraq (Al-Rusafi, 1999, p. 5). Like all of the other educated people of his time, Rusafi turned to reading the scientific and political articles in such newspapers and magazines as *Al-Moghtataf*, *Al-Helal*, *Al-Jame'ah*, and *Al-Mashregh*. Some of these periodicals published scientific, cultural, and historical material about the bygone heritage of Arabs. Consequently, his information about the past Arabic culture and the thoughts and ideas of the great Arab thinkers and men of letters increased considerably. These studies later on left a conspicuous effect on his poetry and prose. Rusafi reacted to his society, people's lives,

and their problems and sufferings. His social poems portray the sufferings and tribulations of the lower classes of the society. He depicts these problems in a simple language similar to the language of newspapers and other periodicals.

Study of the Manifestations of Resistance in Bahar's and Rusafi's Poetry

Bahar and Rusafi are two of the poets of modern Persian and Arabic literature who are not indifferent to their societies and the pains and sufferings of their people. Both of them use a simple and journalistic language to describe the toils and tribulations of their people and maintain the necessity of struggle against domestic tyranny and foreign colonialism. Some of the most important manifestations of resistance in their poetry include their treatment of such subjects and themes as the defense of the homeland, resistance against oppression and despotism, complaint about the rulers' tyranny, opposition to the colonialist foreigners, calling their nations to keep their unity, and quest for freedom. In the following pages, some of these manifestations are discussed and clarified through the analysis of representative lines from the poetry of these two poets.

Defense of Homeland

From the days of yore, human beings have been spiritually attached to their homelands. Wherever a person is, at home or abroad, his/her heart always beats for his/her country. This attachment becomes particularly strong when a person's country is being ruined by warfare or the unwelcome presence of the ravenous and insatiable colonizers. Many poets living in such circumstances deem it their duty to arouse the patriotic feelings of their nations and incite them to defend their homelands (Masbough, Zamani, & Azizi, 2011, p. 132). Bahar and Rusafi are two poets who, in a simple and emotional language, have dealt with patriotism and the necessity of the defense of one's homeland. The above statement is true of Bahar to the extent that, in the words of Yahaghi (2008) "if we want to catch only two precious pearls out of the sea of Bahar's poetry, those two will not be anything but 'freedom' and 'the homeland'" (p. 166). In an ode which begins with the following line, he undertakes to defend his country and expresses his love for it:

O noble realm of Iran, o my homeland, / My soul and body have been commingled with your love. (Bahar, 1989, vol. 1, p. 208)

In the next lines of the ode, he moans about the weakening of his country and the inattention of its people to his words:

Alas and alas, you've lost so many of your leaves that / You can't make me a shroud out of your fabric. // I have uttered so many words to

mourn your death, / What a pity my words don't move anyone to tears! // People will hear my words only when / My shirt has been smeared with my blood. // And today I say with so much pain, / Alas and alas, my homeland, my homeland. (Ibid, vol. 1, p. 209)

With his liberal thoughts and patriotic feelings, Bahar firmly believed that any interference of the foreigners in the domestic affairs of Iran was contradictory to the independence of that country. In his poetry, we continually notice the marks and reflections of his dissatisfaction with the unpleasant state of his country. He frequently invites the people to awaken and defend their homeland and reminds them of the danger of colonialism and its debilitation of the foundations of the colonized countries:

Till my precious life comes to an end I keep on saying, / I have said many times and once more I say, // That the homeland, ye the homeland, ye the homeland is in danger, / O patriots, I warn you, the homeland is in danger. (Ibid, vol. 1, p. 199)

Ma'ruf al-Rusafi also, similar to Bahar, undertakes to defend his country in his poems. Time and again, he represents himself as a lover of his country and regards the defense of the homeland as a religious obligation. When the Ottoman Empire entered World War I, in his poem "The Homeland and the Holy War," he incited the people to aid the government in its battle against its enemies and asserted that the defense of the homeland and its glory is one of the principal injunctions of Islam. Consequently, if a person is killed while defending his/her country, he/she has died nobly. If, on the other hand, he/she refuses to fulfill this duty, he/she will be damned forever:

Fight for the sake of the defense of your homeland, / For God's religion and His ways are founded on the defense of homeland. // Put on the outfit of war against the enemies with patience, / Make a shield out of true aspirations and kill them off. // Refuse to accept the disgrace of defeat in that war, / Rather put on a shroud than the garb of shame. // If you don't die honorably in your homelands, / Doubtlessly, you'll die the shameful death of cowardly men. (Al-Rusafi, 1999, vol. 3, p 311)

Calling people to Fight against Colonizers (Anti-Colonialism)

One of the salient manifestations of resistance in Mohammad Taghi Bahar's and Ma'ruf al-Rusafi's poetry is anti-colonialism and calling people to fight against the colonizers. In 1942, one year after the invasion and occupation of Iran by the Allied Forces, Bahar composed a poem in which he cursed England and revealed his deep-rooted repugnance toward that country. The following line selected from that poem reflects the intensity of his detestation:

England, may you become wretched and disreputable in the world,
/ May you be driven from Asia and lose ground in Europe. (Bahar, 1989,
vol. 1, p. 752)

In another poem, he refers to the tyranny and oppression Iran and Iranians have received from England. He argues that no historical or mythological enemy of Iran has done that country as much wrong as England has:

The tyranny that England did to this water and land, / Neither
Beevar-Asp nor Afrasiab did the like. // It went beyond the cruelty of the
Arab and the Tartar, / The tyranny that England did to this water and land.
(Ibid, vol. 1, p. 112)

In the above lines, Bahar has alluded to two mythological enemies of Iran and Iranians and two instances of the occupation of that country by foreigners. "Beevar-Asp" literally means "(he who has) ten thousand horses." It is one of the names by which Zahhak, the mythological tyrant of Iran, is called. The reason for this denomination is that he had ten thousand horses in his large army. Afrasiab is the name of one of the mythological kings of Turan, a northern neighbor of Iran. He was the arch-enemy of Iran who was finally defeated and killed. The mention of Arabs and Tartars makes an allusion to the occupation of Iran by the Moslem Arabs and Mongols in the 7th and 13th centuries respectively.

After the signing of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 – an agreement based on which Iran would be divided into two parts, one under the control of Russia and the other one under the control of Britain – enraged by this decision, Bahar composed a poem in which he ironically congratulated Sir Edward Grey, the foreign secretary of Britain, on his success in devastating Iran and the other countries:

Go to London, O pure morning breeze, / Say these my words to Sir
Edward Grey.... // Bravo to your firm, wise mind, bravo! / Well done to your
steady, able wits, well done! // What better name than this? Everywhere in
the world they say, / India and Iran have been ruined by Sir Edward Grey.
(Ibid, vol.1, pp. 205 & 207)

Bahar's hostility is not directed at England alone. He also displays great antipathy toward the Russians and protests at their insatiable aggressiveness. Toward the end of World War I, when the Russian army attacked Tehran, he composed a poem in which he virulently remarked that it was the duty of Iranians to fight with their enemy with all their might and not allow him to destroy them:

The foe has arrived, find a solution. / Seek divine guidance from
the hilts of your swords. // At this last gasp, friends, seize the writ of your
murder, / Out of the hands of the enemy and tear it to pieces. (Ibid, vol. 2.
p. 1314)

In the next lines of the poem, he declares that he will fight with this enemy until his last breath and ultimately wrap him in his blood, or else his own blood will be spilled by that foe:

Either I will dye his mattress in his blood, / Or he will dye my body in p my blood. // I won't let go of the sword I have in my hand, / As long as the foe hasn't let gone of me. (Ibid, vol.2., 1315)

Ma'ruf al-Rusafi also, in a similar way to Bahar, rebelled against colonialism in his poetry and expressed his wish for the expulsion of the colonizers from his country and their destruction. It should be mentioned that when Iraq fell into the hands of the colonizers, Rusafi stood up against them and in numerous poems declared his enmity with them. On the other hand, the poet's reputation and popularity prompted the colonizers to endeavor to attract him to themselves, but they did not succeed (Al-Rusafi, 1999, vol. 3, p. 177). Inspired by Seyed Jamaledin Asadabadi's thoughts, he called the Arabs to keep their unity and resist against the English colonizers, and when Iraq was captured by the colonizers, he made every effort for its emancipation and strongly opposed the 1930 Treaty between Iraq and the English colonialists (Al-Otbah, 1992, p. 21). In the poem "Madam Mandate," he rises up against the colonizers and compares them with a woman who has a beautiful appearance but an ugly and filthy inside:

We see her [i.e. England] in the guise of a beautiful woman, / Who has nothing beneath her clothes save vice. // In her appearance, it is compassion we descry, / But inside her, tyranny and torment lie. // Our suffering increases as long as she lives, / O God, how painful this suffering is! (Ibid, vol. 3, p. 177)

In his poetry, Ma'ruf al-Rusafi sometimes exploits a sardonic language and expressions indicative of contempt and derision in order to depict the oppressive atmosphere caused by the colonialist policies of England in Iraq (Nemati Ghazvini, Roushan Fekr, Parvini, & Niazi, 2010, p. 320). In one of his poems, "The Mandate Government," Rusafi once more expresses his strong animosity against the English colonizers and their puppet regime in Iraq. In this poem, the poet points out that everything done by the Iraqi government is a deception, and the parliament and the constitution of that country are mere formalities and hence ineffective. He, moreover, accuses the government of dissipating the riches and natural resources of the country and claims that these riches flow into the pockets of the English colonizers. Finally, he declares that this regime is not suitable for Iraq and wishes for its removal:

The flag, the constitution, and the parliament of Iraq, / All have their true meaning distorted. // These names are not for us save mere words, / Their meanings are, alas, no more noted. // Whoever reads the

constitution realizes that, / It's nothing but the mandate deed of Iraq.
(Ibid, vol. 3, p. 311)

Urging People to Keep their Unity and Warning them against Schism

Urging people to keep their unity and warning them against schism is another manifestation of resistance in the poetry of Bahar and Rusafi. Bahar, who is equaled by none in his treatment of the theme of liberty (Zarrinkoob, 1998, p. 309), considers “warning against religious discord” and “calling to unity” as two of his most important poetic missions and urges all Muslims to relinquish their sectarian and religious conflicts and to be united with each other:

Wealth, estate, honor, and religion / Are four things compounded
in us. // Our wealth and estate and honor / have been destroyed due to
religious strife. // Our dignity is but in two things, / First unity and then
creed. // For these two lead us to the way of decency. / Today's the day of
sincerity and unity. // India and Turkey and Egypt and Iran, / Tus, Fas,
Caucasus, and Afghanistan, // Two in identity, but one in religion, /
Different bodies, yet united souls. // If a Muslim groans in Tangier, / A
faithful one groans in Badakhshan. // Aye, this is the way and custom of
worshippers. / Today's the day of sincerity and unity. (Bahar, 1989, vol. 1,
p. 314)

In the above excerpt, the names of several places have been mentioned. Tus is the name of a city in the north-east of Iran near Mashhad, the site of Firdausi's tomb. Fas is either a city in Morocco or a region near Kashan, a central city of Iran. Tangier is the name of another city in Morocco. Badakhshan is a historic region comprising parts of what now is northeastern Afghanistan and southeastern Tajikistan. The idea of the lines is that wherever they live, even if they live thousands of leagues away from each other, all Muslims ought to keep their unity, because they have one and the same religion.

In another ode called “Mozaffar's Justice” [The reference of the poem is to Mozaffar ad-Din Shah (1853-1907), the fifth king of the Qajar dynasty, who ordered the establishment of constitutionalism in Iran for the first time.], Bahar sees the king, the government, and the people as the members of one body and considers their cooperation and solidarity as a prerequisite for defeating the enemies of the country:

The government and the nation are the two hands and arms of the
king. / The king is like the esteemed body holding these two. // Working
together they can do many a thing, / If one forbears not to help the others.
// The moment the government and the nation join hands, / The light-
headed foe takes to its heels. (Ibid, vol. 2, p. 34)

Ma'ruf al-Rusafi also, the same as Bahar, believes that the only thing which can make a nation powerful is the existence of unity among its people and sects. He deems it necessary for his people to abandon all their religious differences and become a united whole. In one of his poems, "In the Way of Homeland," he addresses Christians and reminds them of the fact that the Gospel and the Quran both have the same aim and give the same instructions. In this poem, he asks the Arab Christians and Muslims to unite with each other in order to defend their country against their common enemies:

Why should difference in religion enmity arouse? / Enmity in religion is, indeed, a gross vice. // When three things: language, land, and faith in God, / Do unite the nation with strong bonds, // Which belief, then, inhibits the type of brotherhood, / Emphasized by the Gospel and the Quran both? // These two books the Lord God did not send, / To his prophets save for the salvation of men. (Al-Rusafi, 1999, vol. 2, p. 237)

In the same ode, Ma'ruf al-Rusafi addresses those who, with their out-of-place fanaticism and wrong-headedness, hinder the realization of unity among the believers of different religions and puts the following logical question to them: "Is it possible for religion, which was initially sent down for the bliss and salvation of human beings, to seek to cause schism among nations and, in this way, bring about their ruin?" He goes on to say that the people who beat the drum for schism do such a thing out of ignorance:

He who in the name of religion calls people to divide, / His invitation misrepresents genuine religion. // Does religion cause our misery, while it was meant for our bliss? / Then practicing religion is nothing except loss! // It is the ignorance of the unwise that leads them, / To say words incompatible with logic and good sense. (Ibid, vol. 2, p. 238)

Call for the Awakening of the Islamic Nation

One of the other manifestations of resistance in Bahar's and Rusafi's poems is their awakening of people to the socio-political condition of their countries. In the words of Aryanpur (2003), "the notable merit of Bahar is that in spite of his affiliation with the old school of Persian poetry, he has managed to attune his poetry to his nation's demands and raise the issues of his day and the events which had made his compatriots worried and excited" (vol. 2, p. 127). In his poetry, Bahar frequently addresses Iranians, and while inviting them to awaken, he alludes to the corruption done by Russia and England in Iran and their pillage of that country. He puts the responsibility for this unpleasant condition on the feebleness and slackness of Iranians and

rebukes them for it. He goes on to urge them to wake up and underlines that Iran belongs to Iranians:

O Iranians, I see that you are captives, / Caught in the talons of England and the Russian claws. // It seems that a nightmarish sleep has seized you. / From two sides they're taking your wealth and your honor away. // It is lawful to strive for the sake of one's wealth and honor. / Iran belongs to you! Iran belongs to you! (Bahar, 1989, vol. 2, p. 215)

In many of his poems, Ma'ruf al-Rusafi also calls people to be awakened. He proclaims that his country is not in a desirable state and invites everyone to wake out of the sleep of ignorance. Reminding the people of their brilliant past, he encourages them to endeavor to regain their bygone glory. For example, in his poem, "To the Arabic Nation," he says:

When shall your night, O people, be replaced by the light of morning, / And ignorance and bewilderment depart from you and your life? // When shall your effort revive your past glory, / And silence the voice of the reproachful? // You want to find the way to nobleness, and yet, / How can you when you're ignorant of the ways? // Please tell me where are the schools in which, / There are signs of your existence and life? // Where is that rich person and source of hope in your land, / Who will contribute to their erection and never cease? (Al-Rusafi, 1999, vol. 3, p. 16)

In the poem "Caution to Sleepers," he asks the people to shake off their ignorance and make every possible effort to liberate their country:

Is it not time bliss turned his face to this country, / And slumber packed his bags and retired? // When will awakening find his way into hearts, / And backwardness and stasis dissipate? // Isn't there a brave lion to protect the country, / Against the oppression of her wolfish rulers? (Ibid, vol. 3, p. 19)

Opposition to Despotic Rulers

"The first seed of resistance literature," argue Mostafavinia, Tavakoli Mohammadi, and Ebrahimi (2011, p. 569), "germinates out of the tyranny and oppression existing in the society." Consequently, opposition to despotism and despotic rulers is one of the other themes featuring in the works of contemporary resistance poets such as Mohammad Taghi Bahar and Ma'ruf al-Rusafi.

After the death of Mozaffar ad-Din Shah in 1906, his son Mohammad Ali Shah ascended the throne. A few months after his accession, he publicly announced his antagonism to Constitutionalism and the liberals. This circumstance occasioned the composition of a poem by Bahar entitled "One Hundred Thanks and One Hundred Pities" in which he, after acknowledging

the new king as the rightful monarch of Iran, admonished him to follow the way of his late father:

A king entered the stage and a king made his exit, / One hundred thanks for this entrance and one hundred pities for that exit! (Bahar, 1989, vol. 1, p. 42)

However, as no change took place in Mohammad Ali Shah's authoritarian method, in a long poem entitled "The Warning Mirror," which was published in *Now-bahar*, Bahar advised the king to learn a lesson from history and not make himself liable to the horrible fate of tyrants:

O watchman, how long will you lie in torpor and sound sleep? / Watchmen are not to sleep. Yourself rouse! (Ibid, vol. 1, p. 56)

But Mohammad Ali Shah would not listen to these words, because instead of relying on his own nation, he looked forward to the support and direction of the Russian state. This time, Bahar addressed the king in a poem entitled "Sa'di's Exhortation" thus:

O king, what advantage do you gain by dictatorship? / For nothing comes out of it but adversity. // Be bounteous to Constitutionalism so that you are worshiped, / A man's dignity is in bounty and his greatness in being adored. (Ibid, vol. 1, p. 126)

Considering the so many instances of willfulness and obstinacy displayed by the king in the past and his notoriety for not heeding others' advice, Bahar did not hope his poem could reform that man's ways. Therefore, he ended the poem with the following hopeless line:

Except for wrong-doing nothing might be expected from this king, / For what we see in him is wrong from sole to crown. (Ibid, vol. 1, p. 128)

Ma'ruf al-Rusafi also launches violent attacks on the despotic rulers of his country. During the reign of the Ottomans, under the influence of the liberal thoughts recently sprouting in the Arab world, he waged war on the tyrannous rulers and protested against their injustice. In some of his poems, he went as far as to ask for the removal of the Ottoman Sultan. In his poem "The Testament of the Fallen," he boldly objects to the tyrannies of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, his contemporary Ottoman Sultan, and says,

O Justice, we've been waiting too long. Make haste! / O Justice, our patience has run out. Come here! // O Justice, you are our only hope and prop. / Why are you indifferent to the oppressed ones' groan? // How do you repose when the state affairs / Have deviated from their proper course? // In this land horrible acts of injustice are done / Of which the state does not say a word, // While what it pledges itself to do, / One never lives to see it done. (Al-Rusafi, 1999, vol. 3, p. 218)

Conclusion

The careful study and analysis of Mohammad Taghi Bahar's and Ma'ruf al-Rusafi's poetry as well as the critical works written on resistance literature in general and the poetry of the two aforementioned poets in particular led the present authors to the following conclusions:

1. Resistance literature makes its appearance among free-spirited nations afflicted by tyranny and injustice.
2. Mohammad Taghi Bahar and Ma'ruf al-Rusafi are two of the most outstanding poets of Iran and Iraq who have dealt with the themes and motifs related to resistance in their poems.
3. In their national and social poems, these two poets have reflected the backward political structure of their countries (autocracies ruled by self-willed dictators).
4. Taking the particular conditions of their countries and the exigencies of their era into account, these two poets chose to address such resistance themes and topics as patriotism and the necessity of the defense of one's country, anticolonialism, call for the awakening of the Islamic nation, restoration of the rights of the oppressed, and the rampant and ubiquitous social disorder.
5. Other manifestations of resistance in the poetry of these two poets include their call for national unity and social solidarity and their fight against the authority of dictators.
6. Both of them have written their resistance poems in traditional forms.
7. Their poems, which have been written in a simple and lucid style, serve as an outlet for their most sincere feelings and thoughts.
8. Both of them are outspoken in their treatment of the themes of resistance. Their courage in attacking the authorities of their countries is, indeed, praiseworthy.

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