



A Comparative Study of Anti-Colonialism in Ma'rif al-Rusafi's and Farokhi Yazdi's Poetry

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Abstract

Colonialism is one of the phenomena that have had a harsh impact on the east. Due to the cruel treatment of the colonized by the colonizers, many classes of the people within the oppressed nations have risen against the oppressors. Among the Arab and Persian freedom fighters, one can refer to the remarkable struggle of such poets as al-Rusafi and Farokhi Yazdi, respectively. These two poets have entered this battlefield with their pens and poems, and have opened a new chapter in the book of struggle against colonialism. The present article attempts to study and highlight the nature of this poetic struggle by comparing the poems of Ma'rif al-Rusafi and Farokhi Yazdi.

Colonizers resort to any accessible tool to incite discord among people, make false promises, stage deceitful agreements, suppress public education and awareness, attempt to obliterate the indigenous identity and national pride and history of the colonized nations, establish dummy parliaments, appoint puppet politicians as members of the parliament and as ministers, and all these devious measures and acts aim at establishing the colonizers' position in their colonies. Al-Rusafi and Farokhi Yazdi defied and condemned these colonial tools and measures and fought the colonizers each in their own distinctive manners. Thumbing their books of poetry, one can catalogue their fight against colonialism as warning the people and inciting them to resist the colonizers by condemning and exposing the useless and imposed colonial agreements; by reminding the people of their glorious national history; by condemning the dummy parliaments and the puppet members and ministers; by calling the people to unity and admonishing them against public discord; by condemning the alien colonizers and exposing their deception.

Keywords: Anti-colonialism, Arabic, Comparative study, Farokhi Yazdi, Ma'rif al-Rusafi, Persian, Poetry

1. Introduction

Literature is one of the richest cultural resources a nation possesses. It resembles a mirror in which a full image of the political and social conditions of a nation is reflected. During the twentieth century, Persian and Arabic literatures have both been directly influenced by the political and social events and developments in the Middle East region. The socio-political conditions of these two countries in the contemporary period have been under the sway of similar events. These political and social similarities have led to similarities in literary ideas and themes. One of the common themes to these two literatures is anti-colonialism.

The present article studies, in a comparative manner, the problem of colonialism and the ways sought in order to fight against it in the poetry of Ma'rif al-Rusafi and Farokhi Yazdi. The reason for choosing these two poets is that they lived at roughly the same era and geographical area, namely the first half of the twentieth century in the Middle East, therefore the needs and concerns of their countries were very similar to each other. Iran and Iraq, being neighboring countries, have enjoyed the highest level of cultural and literary relationships in the course of history, perhaps more than any other two nations have ever had. In these two poets' lifetimes, the most salient concern of the two countries has surely been their struggle with the phenomenon of colonialism.

In the early twentieth century, no sooner had Arab nations got rid of the Ottoman despotism than they were invaded by the foreign colonizers, and their countries in one way or another became dependencies. Iraq, one of these countries, was especially coveted by such a colonialist entity as England. Subsequently, many movements, riots, and protests against the colonizers and their domestic agents arose in this Arab country. In Iran, the state of affairs was somewhat different.

Although Iran was not technically a colony, due to its important strategic position, underground resources, and common borders with the former Soviet Union, colonizers developed a deep interest in it. The presence of colonizers in the aforementioned lands, their oppression of these nations, and the stratagems they resorted to in order to plunder the existing resources gave rise to the adoption of hostile stances by those nations against such tyrannous behavior, and the people of different classes engaged in a war against colonialism. Poets were no exception to this rule. Particularly, the two freedom-fighters, al-Rusafi and Farokhi Yazdi had a very remarkable role in this battle. These two poets entered this battlefield with their pens and poems, and opened a new chapter in the book of struggle against colonialism.

This article aims to reflect the struggle against colonialism in the poems of these two poets and thereby attempts to provide answers to two important questions. First, what methods do al-Rusafi and Farokhi Yazdi propose in their poems for fighting against colonialism? Second, how are these methods similar to or different from each other? In order to obtain an answer to these questions, first, we will supply a brief biography of al-Rusafi and Farokhi Yazdi as well as some information on the similar political and social conditions in Iran and Iraq. Then we will investigate the methods for struggle against colonialism as suggested by these two freedom-seeking and militant poets, and by analyzing their poems as evidence, we will unveil their thoughts and reveal the similarities and differences of the methods proposed by them.

One of the most notable merits of this kind of research is that, besides demonstrating the close correlation between literary works and the political and social conditions, it provides a better understanding of the literary and cultural interaction between Persian literature and the literature(s) of the Arab countries.

2. Review of Literature

The current subject has been the focus of the authors as it adds to the existing literature on the subject of anticolonialism, a subcategory of postcolonialism and orientalism. From among the researches that may well act as a background to the current article, the researchers have surveyed and selectively considered and at the same time taken good care not to repeat the following:

Articles published in 2009 include Features of Resistance Literature in Ahmad Matar's Poetry; Investigating The Symbols of Resistance in Egyptian Poetry (A case study: Amal Donqol); The Martyr and Devotee in the Palestinian Resistance Poetry (A Case Study: Ebrahim Towqan); A Glance at the Formation of Contemporary Persian and Arabic Resistance Literature; Myths of Resistance in the Ezz-Eddeen Manasrah's Poetry; Themes of Resistance Literature in Mahmoud Darwish's Poems; A Study of Political Views in Waeli's and Javaheri's Poems; Features of Resistance Literature in Nazar Qabani's Poetry; Brevity and the Resistance Literature A Comparison of Classic and Modern Anti-Colonialism Approach in Contemporary Iraqi Poetry.

Articles published in 2011 include Resistance Aspects in Abul-Qasim Shabbi's Poetry; Motifs and Themes of Resistance Literature in Adib ul Mamalek e Farahani; Resistance Literature in Joseph Al-Hashim poems; Issues of Resistance in Mohammad Maghout's Poems; A Review of the Elements of "Insight and Time Awareness" in Holy Defence Poetry; The Concept of Freedom in Ahmad Matar's Poetry; The Symbols of Resistance in Omar Abu Risha's Poem; Resistance in the Poem of Toufiq Amin Zayyad.

Articles published in 2012 include The Trial of the Dormant Conscience in Nizar Ghabbani's Poetry; The Function of Epic Poetry in Contemporary Literature; Manifestation of Resistance in Fadva Toghan's Poetry; The Manifestation of Ashura in the Poetry of Holy Defense; Style Characteristics of Holy Defense Poetry; Resistance Literature and the Emergence of Resistance in the Occupied Islamic Countries, A Case Study: Palestine and Iraq; Signs of Dictatorship Related by the Poetry of Nizar Qabbani.

3. The Life and Works of Ma'ruf Al-Rusafi and Farokhi Yazdi

3.1 The Life and Works of Ma'ruf Al-Rusafi

Ma'ruf al-Rusafi, an Iraqi poet, was born in a poor family in Baghdad in 1875. His father, Abdolqani Afandi, was an army officer who was constantly on the road in order to carry out his military missions. Therefore, it was al-Rusafi's mother who had the responsibility of bringing him up. As a child, he started his education at Rusafah elementary school. He memorized the Quran and mastered Arabic. (Beqaei, 1994: 24-26) "Then, he became an instructor of Arabic at Maliki School in Astana and also began to work for a magazine called *Irshad*. For a while, he was an MP in the Ottoman Representative Assembly. In 1918, after the end of World War I, he returned to Iraq and engaged himself in cultural affairs and assumed official positions. From 1928 on, he was a member of the Navab Parliament of Iraq for eight years and five successive parliaments. In the early phase of World War II, corollary to the failure of Rashid 'Aali Keilani's revolution, he crept out of the limelight into a life of solitude. He died in Baghdad in 1945." (Al-Badri, 1951: 47)

Ma'ruf al-Rusafi has a prominent place in modern Arabic literature and especially in Iraq. He is one of the poets of the classical school, a very well-read figure in the old Arabic poetry of the different periods. The poets who influenced him most are those who appeared in the flowering period of Arabic literature, poets such as abu-Nuwas, abu-Tammam, al-Buhturi, ibn Rumi, al-Mtuanabi, and al-Ma'arri. (Al-Khafaji, 1992: 143) Al-Rusafi composed many literary works in prose and verse, the most well-known of which is the *Diwan*, a collection of poems that is divided into the following eleven subject areas: existential poems, social poems, philosophical poems, descriptive poems, women's poems, al-hariqiat, elegies, al-ta'rikhiat, political poems, war poems, and al-moqata'at. Whoever turns the pages of al-Rusafi's *Diwan* will find him in possession of a remarkable talent. The words of his poetry flow like the water of a stream. His

salient feature is that his feelings are so deep, and his poetry is a clear and precise interpretation of what passes within his soul and conscience.

3.1.1 The political conditions at al-Rusafi's time

Ma'rif al-Rusafi lived in a period of history when his people witnessed a lot of political and social events and transformations. He witnessed three different political periods in his lifetime. First, the Ottoman rule and the tyranny and despotism of its rulers. Second, World War I and Sharif Hussein's uprising against the Ottomans, and subsequently the occupation of Iraq by the English. Third, the period of vicereignty. Al-Rusafi has depicted the events of these three periods in his *Diwan*.

The latter part of al-Rusafi's life was marred by the colonization of his native land. Due to its strategic position and its possession of abundant oil resources and other riches, Iraq has always been eye-catching to such foreign countries as Russia and England. "Since the seventeenth century, due to many reasons including Iraq's common border with the Persian Gulf, its being a shortcut for travelling to India, and its possession of large mineral and agricultural sources, the English government has been looking at Iraq as the land of high hopes and great expectations, and finally, by virtue of its deceitful stratagems and the weakness of the Ottoman government, it managed to colonize that land." (Qadurah, 1985: 129-30)

3.2 The Life and Works of Farokhi Yazdi

Mirza Mohammad, whose pen-name was Farokhi, was born in 1888 in Yazd, Iran. His father was Mohammad Ibrahim Semsar Yazdi. He took in the preliminary sciences in Yazd and learned Arabic and Persian. For a while, he studied at an English School, yet, as a result of his freedom-seeking spirit, progressive views, and composing a poem in disparagement of the English teachers of that school, he was expelled from that school. At the same time, he was endowed with a bright poetic gift and immense literary taste. He composed ingenious poems with groundbreaking themes and subjects. At the dawn of the Constitutional Era and the appearance of the Democratic Party in Iran, he became one of the earnest and genuine Democrats of Yazd as well as one of the Liberals of that city.

The custom of those days was that poets composed odes in which they eulogized the government, and on feasts days, they read the poems aloud in the court. In the Norooz of 1909, Farokhi, contrary to the common practice, composed a spiteful poem against the governor of Yazd, which opens with the following couplet:

"It is Jam's Holiday, you should, like Fereydoon, worship and idolize Persia, / Despotism is in Zahak's nature, quit this demonic spirit and manner." (Farokhi Yazdi, 1984: 13-17)

He read these lines to The Congregation of Liberals and Democrats in Yazd. This caused the indignation of Zeiqam al-Dowlah, the governor of Yazd, who had Farokhi's mouth stitched, and put him into prison. This incident caused public wrath in Yazd. They assembled at the telegraph-office and protested to this atrocity. The protest became so vehement that it resulted in the summoning of the then Interior Minister to the Majlis to offer an explanation, and that finally led to Farokhi's freedom from prison. (Hoghooghi, 1990: 2) After obtaining his freedom, this liberal poet set out for Tehran, and in that city, he gained the opportunity to compose inspiring poems about the emancipation of the underprivileged and oppressed strata of the Iranian nation, and published them in various newspapers. (Azhand, 1984: 122) Later, he became an editor to such periodicals of the Communist Party in Iran as the newspaper called *Toofan*, and in the year 1921, he himself published *Toofan* in Tehran. (Sadr Hashemi, 1984: 271) In 1928, Farokhi Yazdi entered the seventh National Consultative Assembly (Majlis) as the representative of the people of Yazd. However, since he belonged to the minority faction in the parliament, he was faced with the opposition of the agents of both foreign colonialism and domestic despotism, therefore he had to leave Iran for the Soviet Union and later for Germany. Ultimately, lured by Teimur Tash's wiles, he returned to Iran to be sent to Reza Khan's prison. After a while, he died at Ghasr Prison in 1939 in a questionable way. (Aaryanpoor, 2003: 516, 519)

4. Anti-Colonialism as the Major Theme in the Poems of Al-Rusafi and Farokhi Yazdi

Since the two poets lived in the Middle East in the same historical period, they confronted identical political and social problems and conflicts. Some of these drawbacks included the existence of authoritarian regimes in these countries, the existence of political weakness and backwardness, diverse social problems such as poverty, the existence of different classes of oppressed and impoverished people in the society, and the direct and indirect interference of western colonizers (particularly England) in the domestic affairs of these countries. These social and political similarities between Iran and Iraq have resulted in similarities between the subjects and themes of the literatures of the two nations, as men of letters and poets in that era tended to talk about the agonizing conditions of their societies. One of the subjects treated by the majority of the poets of that age was anti-colonialism.

Considering the liberal spirit we find in al-Rusafi and Farokhi Yazdi when we read the accounts of their lives, it is natural that they should attack colonialism and the colonizers so vehemently and disclose wiles by communicating political awareness to their readers. Colonizers resort to any accessible tool to establish their position in their colonies; they incite discord among people, make false promises, stage deceitful agreements, suppress public education and awareness, attempt to obliterate the indigenous identity and national pride and history of the colonized nations, establish dummy parliaments, and appoint puppet politicians as members of the parliament and as ministers. Al-Rusafi and Farokhi Yazdi defied and condemned these colonial tools and measures and fought the colonizers in their own distinctive manners. Thumbing their books of poetry, one can catalogue their fight against colonialism as follows:

4.1 Warning the People and Inciting Them to Resist the Colonizers

Al-Rusafi and Farokhi, these two militant and intrepid poets, were very desirous of inciting the people to stand against the colonizers. They tried their best to awaken their fellow countrymen. The method of the two poets in the majority of their poems is that, after depicting the underdeveloped status of their countries, they would reprove the common people and incite them to rise in defiance of their colonial condition. Their tone is sometimes regretful and at other times tearful and mournful. Both of them firmly believe that by shaking off ignorance and promoting public awareness, they can deliver nations from their miserable condition.

Al-Rusafi, like an alert critic, constantly looks at the chaotic situation of his country with a critical eye and depicts the realities of that society. Then he undertakes to warn the masses and awaken them to their condition. It seems that he considers public ignorance as the main cause of foreign interference in the affairs of his country. Consequently, in many of his poems, he encourages the people to acquire knowledge and awareness and rise against the colonizers. He endeavors to apprise the oppressed people of the sordid condition of their country, hoping that, in this way, he can incite them to stand against colonialism and the colonizers, whose selfish dream is not only to plunder the riches of these subdued countries but to enslave their people. Here, we point out and briefly explain a few excerpts from al-Rusafi's poetry in which he has both presented the realities of the society and has dauntlessly warned the people.

In the ode "To the Arab Nation," which is laden with his sincere sentiments, al-Rusafi depicts the colonial condition of his country. This poem is replete with the sighs and lamentations of this sympathetic poet. It begins with the following lines:

"'Tis night and misery tempts dark to last long, / Thus gloom lingers on dropping curtains of sorrow."
(Al-Rusafi, 1957: 394)

In the next lines of the ode, al-Rusafi refers to the ignorance and poverty that have infested the country and suggests that people should take action, sharpen up their blunted mettle and sense of honor, and embark on a scientific movement so as to blow a fresh spirit into this trying experience, and save the country from its colonized state:

"I contemplated the length and depth of my country, / I fancied neither its length nor its depth, // I spotted no abode of glory therein, / I saw nothing but the old remains of a home, // I saw a land where ignorance and poverty, / Do nothing but eat, drink, and slay life, // O, Arabs! Rise and launch a scientific movement, / So that souls and minds would flourish therein." (ibid: 396)

In many of his poems, al-Rusafi reproves those people who remain silent and persist in their ignorance, while English colonialism and oppression still pervade. For instance, in the ode "Freedom in the Colonizers' Politics," al-Rusafi puts the definition of freedom, in ironic terms, in the mouth of the colonizers. Thus, free individuals are those who do not talk; they are in such a deep sleep and refuse to wake up; they are far from progress and lag behind; they are kept in ignorance and do not show any eagerness for learning; they have no political understanding; they are naïve to such an extent that when they are told their land is going to be divided by the foreigners, they would thank the Almighty and chant a happy song. In this poem, the poet tells the utter truth in an ironic manner. He inculcates his audience with the bitter truths and forces them to ponder.

"O, people! Don't speak, / Forsooth, speech is prohibited, // Sleep and don't wake up, / Verily those who sleep win, // O, people! Even if you are told that, / your country will be divided, // Then you shall pray and thank God, / You shall swing while you chant." (ibid: 448-449)

Farokhi Yazdi also, on different occasions and in various ways, undertakes to warn people, incite them to stand against colonialism, and blame the ignorant, for he strongly believes that the only force capable of saving Iran and its people from misery is the Iranian people themselves. Such deliverance is possible only when they have assumed control over their own fates and held fast to the reins of their country's affairs. Hence, in every section of Farokhi Yazdi's *Diwan*, we notice that he is asking the people to stand up and fight for their own rights:

"Real men are those who hold to their swords in action, / Those who seize their right out of a charging lion's mouth, // Until Despotism's head is trampled by Liberty's foot, / They must hold to the sword by its hilt and persist." (Farokhi Yazdi, 1984: 93)

Elsewhere, he compares the enemies of Iran with the tyrannous Zahak, and how beautifully he suggests that we can destroy them with the hammer of the brains, that is, the mind and knowledge among many other means:

"It is possible to hit Zahak, our foe, with the hammer of the brain, / If only you follow the example of Kaveh, the Ironsmith, // Before our freedom is wholly trampled on, / Hold in your hands steel daggers sharpened by vengeance." (ibid: 121)

In another place, like al-Rusafi, Farokhi Yazdi complains about people's ignorance, and after expatiating on the treachery of the members of the National Consultative Assembly and the plunder of the government treasury by them, he says that all these treacherous members must be hanged. In the last couplet, when he does not see any action or move from the people, he writes thus about their ignorance:

"Farokhi! This sleepy crowd is drunk with ignorance, / These words must only be addressed to the vigilant." (ibid: 84)

One of the techniques Farokhi Yazdi utilizes for awakening the people is his recourse to their religious ardor and sentiments. He resorts to religion because he knows that he is dealing with a Muslim nation. In the following poem, in order to rouse the ardor of the Muslim people of Iran to protect their country, he writes thus:

“O, indifferent people, where has your Iranian blood drained? / Our country’s lost. Why has your Muslim creed wavered?” (ibid: 187)

In the subsequent lines of the same ode, after recounting Persia’s glorious past, he speaks about the present condition of Iran. He compares Persia/Iran to a mother who has been undervalued by her children, current Iranians, who have been dishonored by the outsiders:

“Yet her offspring did not recognize her worth, / They left this chaste soil to be trampled on by foreigners.” (ibid: 154)

And ultimately, he sees vanity and ignorance as the main causes of the backwardness of Iran and demands the shunning of these vices in order to make the country prosperous again:

“If we turn our faces away from the air of vanity and the fire of ignorance, / Then perhaps what our land has lost will be regained.” (ibid: 187)

4.2 Condemning and Exposing the Useless and Imposed Colonial Agreements

Since Farokhi Yazdi and al-Rusafi are resolute defenders of the independence and good of their countries, they fight with whatever stands against the welfare of their native lands. One of the ways through which colonizers exploit the resources of the colonized countries is signing agreements with them which are to the utter detriment of the latter party. The only outcome of these agreements for the colonized nations is that their pains and sufferings are aggravated. Hence, one of the other techniques used by al-Rusafi and Farokhi Yazdi in their battle with colonialism is to condemn these kinds of agreements. These two wise and watchful poets tried their best to frustrate the stratagems of colonialism with the weapon of their poetry. In 1930, when al-Rusafi was a member of the parliament in Iraq, he opposed an Iraqi-English agreement and stood against it, because his conscience could not abide silent while an agreement disadvantageous to the Iraqi nation was in the process of conclusion. This opposition was one of the main reasons for his poverty which sustained until his death. (Beqaei, 1994: 32) To al-Rusafi, all of those agreements were artificial and false. In an ode entitled “Upon Issuing Agreements” He bluntly opposed one of the agreements which eclipsed and restricted people’s freedom:

“They made an agreement which placed, / Stinging fetters around the feet of our desires, // And administered the pill of bondage to us, / Which had the seductive appearance of independence, // The agreement between us and England, / Is like the agreement between a ewe and a wolf, // They wrote us an agreement whose contents, / Tightened the fetters we had on us, // May the hands of their signers be cut off, / Who purchased the curse of the generations to come.” (Al-Rusafi, 1957: 510)

In another ode, he directly addresses the Londoners, by whom he means the colonizing English, and says,

“Every day, we have an agreement with you that endangers our country more than before, / But your vows and promises betray nothing but your downright deceit and treachery.” (ibid: 322)

And elsewhere, he does not regard England as the savior of his nation, rather he looks upon the contracts and agreements as chains and fetters placed around the hands and feet of that nation:

“England is not our savior, / No matter how many agreements they tender, // Have the mighty every pitied the weak? / How can a wolf keep its promise with a lamb? // But we are the bondsmen and slaves / for all these imposed agreements.” (ibid: 460)

Farokhi Yazdi also condemned the unfair agreements between the colonizers and the Iranian regime of his time. One of these agreements which extremely intensified the anti-colonial tendencies of Farokhi Yazdi was the so-called Curzon’s ill-fated AngloPersian Agreement of 1919, the agreement whose signing would cause the two main foundation-stones of Iran, namely its finance and army, to fall into the hands of the English. If this agreement had been concluded, Iran would have lost its independence and sovereignty and become a colony. Nevertheless, the people rose in defiance of that scandal, and Farokhi Yazdi, the epitome of liberalism and symbol of campaign for independence and liberty, entered the arena with determination to annihilate and obliterate the agreement. He added fuel to the blazing fire of the nation’s rage by delivering speeches at meetings and congregations and by reciting national and patriotic poems:

“That hand which my beloved shook in friendship at first, / In a hostile manner gave my beloved away at the end, // Did you see that the fickle rebels eventually, / Laid waste several thousands of abodes?” (Farokhi Yazdi, 1984: 173)

And elsewhere he writes thus about the above agreement and its signer, Vosooq al-Dowlah:

“A demon of a man issued a tyrannical command, / He laid waste Jamshid’s realm with his wastefulness, // He signed an agreement that caused the nation’s unrest, / Their clamor and uproar go as high as the heavens.” (ibid: 202)

As a result of such disclosures, Vosough al-Dowlah’s government fell, and the agreement was nullified. However, it is noteworthy that Farokhi’s focus, for the most part, is on the weaknesses, deviations, and the pervasive treason inside the country rather than the machinations and aggressions of the foreign enemies. In fact, he considers domestic agents as the main cause of the destruction of the country and the main force behind foreign intervention and influence. Consequently, when he is voicing his opposition to Curzon’s ill-fated AngloPersian Agreement of 1919, his censure and rebuke are mostly directed at Vosough al-Dowlah, the then prime minister, rather than at England. Nevertheless, his attention to the domestic agents never causes him to overlook the foreign enemies.

4.3 Reminding the People of Their Glorious National History

At the present time, when the colonized nations have lost their self-confidence and their hopes have withered, one of the most effective ways to fight against colonialism, in Farokhi's and al-Rusafi's opinion, is to remind them of their identity, brilliant nobility, and glorious history. These two poets deal with this topic extensively in their poetry. They hope that, by reminding nations of their glorious history, they can stimulate their feelings and motivate them to strive for a better future. They wish to bring the nations out of the dire circumstances in which colonialism has placed them in and aspire to induce them to fight against the colonizers. In the ode "Government of Deputation," when he sees that people are disappointed and consequently do nothing, he reminds them of their glorious past:

"Visit that part of history, when Arabs were highly esteemed and most generous, / Arabs had a great state that caused superpowers to tremble, // Savants, scholars, and philosophers prospered under this state of welfare and comfort, / At that era when Muslims had the highest position." (Al-Rusafi, 1957: 463)

"In al-Rusafi's poetry, the glorification of the past only encompasses two historical periods: First, the early Islamic era, second, the period of the Abbasid caliphate. In his view, the secret behind the power and victory of Muslims in the early Islamic era was their unity. He considers the period of the Abbasid caliphate as the greatest epoch in the history of Islam. During the Abbasids' rule, Iraq was the center of a great and advanced empire and an extraordinarily brilliant civilization; it was, in effect, the founder of the Arabic-Islamic culture. Therefore, in al-Rusafi's poetry, the glorification of the Abbasid caliphate is equivalent to the glorification of Iraq, Islam, and the Arabs as a whole." (Mohseninia & Dashan, 2009: 149)

The invitation of Arabs to recognize their glorious and remarkable identity and nobility has a prominent place in al-Rusafi's mind as a technique convenient for anti-colonialist action. Whenever something happened that could be interpreted as an affront to this identity and nobility, he reacted in the most vitriolic manner. For instance, when Henri Joseph Eugène Gouraud, the French general, delivered an anti-Islamic address in Beirut, he composed the ode "The Epitomes of Fanaticism in the Modern Era" in reply to him. In this poem, he defended the Muslims against this colonial machination by demonstrating the authenticity of Islam and its rich culture. The first line of the ode is presented below:

"Calm down. Gouraud! General! / Your speech and words were hurtful to us." (Al-Rusafi, 1957: 431)

The fact that al-Rusafi has opened his ode with the verb 'calm down' shows the poet's indignation at Gouraud's offensive words. In all of the lines in the ode, he addresses him with imperative verbs:

"And, do not forget the east has been generous, / while paving the path for your people's feats and treats." (ibid: 431)

In another ode, he refers to the magnanimity, unity, and solidarity that characterized Arabs in the bygone days. They overcame their most serious problems because of these virtues:

"Were you not that nation, / amongst whom knowledge dispensed ignorance, // They were sharper than the sharpest of weapons, / Those whose ambition and aspiration blunted all arms." (ibid: 396)

Farokhi Yazdi is fond of the mythological era and the ancient history of Iran, Persia. He is proud of the splendid past of Iran, with which he is perfectly acquainted. He eulogizes its kings and heroes, but, unlike some poets, he does not mourn its real and imaginary past grandeur; rather, he endeavors to link the past with the present and future. He views mythology and history as a means by which he can incite national pride and self-confidence. He hopes that, by reliance on their brilliant past, the people of Iran may gain the necessary courage to stand against the perils that threaten the independence and welfare of their country. In his poetry, he frequently refers to Iran as the homeland of Houshang, Cyrus, Khosro, and Darius; and believes that Iranians are the descendants of Qarun and the grandchildren of Keshvad:

"Make an effort, O, People! You are the descendants of Qarun, / Display your dignity, O, People! You are the grandchildren of Keshvad, // Lest Darius' border becomes like Basra, / And Ardeshir's palace becomes like Baghdad." (Farokhi Yazdi, 1984: 203)

In a *mosamat* called "The Homeland Mosamat," which was composed in the Norooz of 1910 when Zeigham al-Dowlah Ghashghaei was the provincial ruler of Yazd, Farokhi Yazdi not only criticizes the social and political conditions of Iran, but also depicts the backwardness and miserable state of the country, and mentions the hostility of the English and Russian governments toward Iran. He describes Zeigham al-Dowlah, a representative of the despotic regime of Iran, as Zahak, and he represents the colonialist governments of Russia and England as Salm and Toor, whose intention is to kill the Iraj of Iran. After all, the colonialist countries not only plundered the treasures and economic resources of Iran, but also robbed the country of its culture, art, religion, and ancient and venerable traditions, and left the country and its people devoid of anything valuable whatsoever:

"O! It is Norooz. Your King Fereydoon was such a patriot, / Now, a despot like Zahak is ruling this land, // The kingly Iraj of Iran is in chains, fettered. / This is the same Persia that was once the residence of King Keikavous, // Persia was the resting place of Darius and the haven of Cyrus, / Persia was the land of such heroes as Zaal, Rostam, Goodarz, Geev, and Tous, // But now, alas, it is trampled by Russian and English tyrants, / For all this is the dear price of our apathy, our despondency, // We are the living dead. Nay! The dying live, / This land has witnessed a warrior such as Qarun, // It has beheld Garshasp and Tahamtan in battles, / It has witnessed intelligent men like Jaamaas and Pashoutan, // It has seen Goshtasp's majesty and Bahman's treasures, / It has never been so helpless and ignored as it is now, / It has never been so impotent and forlorn as it is now." (ibid: 186-87)

The interesting point is that Farokhi's fascination with and enthusiasm for mythological and national subjects is so immense that he refers to mythology and heroic characters even in such nonpolitical contexts as descriptive passages on nature and love, though, in such cases, a kind of fancy and artificiality is scented in his language. The following extract is from Farokhi's mosamat "On Spring," which is a description of this season. In each line and stanza of the poem, Farokhi Yazdi has made use of mythological and national elements:

"As soon as spring, like Kiomars, came and sat on the throne, / The flowers bloomed, like Siamak, on tree boughs, // The blossoms, like Houshang, have put on garments like emerald, / Tahmores barred and banned devils away from Persia, // Fill Jamshid's cup with wine, because fortune and destiny / Has brought Zahak's rule as passing autumn to its decline." (ibid: 193)

4.4 Condemning the Dummy Parliaments and the Puppet Mps and Ministers

With their acute awareness, the two poets of the present study, Farokhi Yazdi and al-Rusafi, were well conscious of the fact that in a country trodden by the colonizers, whose only concern is their own profits, the parliaments, MPs, and ministers are puppets serving the profits of colonialism. In their poems, they severely criticized these dummy parliaments and puppet MPs and ministers, and regarded all of them as fake and insincere. Al-Rusafi, for instance, considers them as only seemingly eastern, but essentially western:

"This is our government whose grandeur and glory is all fake, / This government is double-faced, // a hidden face belonging to the colonizers, / and another visible face, // The hidden face is despotic to the core, / The visible face is one of arrogance and vainglory, // The flag, the constitution, and national assembly, / Are all deviant and fake in this country." (Al-Rusafi, 1957: 461)

In the ode "Lady Deputation" also al-Rusafi compares the government of his country, which is outwardly Iraqi but inwardly English, to a beautiful woman who has a foul core. After describing the beauty of this woman, who metaphorically stands for that government, al-Rusafi says,

"One day as she was sweeping past us, / My companion asked? Who is this veiled Lady, // I said she were the government, / That has bestowed dependency on us, // Her looks are fine and alluring, / While she is English on the inside, // She seems to be a source of mercy, / But from within she is pure agony and evil, // She is the source of all calamities, / She is indeed worse than the worst." (ibid: 450)

In another ode, al-Rusafi composes the following lines about the ministers who slavishly follow the English:

"These seats of so-called command and ministry, / Are about to break for your shameful subordination, // You are sitting on them with foreigners settling on your shoulders, / All rule and command is theirs and none be yours." (ibid: 463)

Elsewhere, al-Rusafi compares the ministers who obey the English to dogs:

"There are great many a man who are statesmen, / whom you think are masters, whereas they are nothing but slaves, // Though, they are humble and loyal to their lords, / They act as devouring lions and beasts for their fellow countrymen." (ibid: 460)

Farokhi also, by means of his poetry, exposes the statesmen and government officials who are the servile supporters of the foreigners and calls them traitors to their own country. For instance, in the following quatrain, he introduces Vosough al-Dowlah and Ghavam al-Saltanah as English agents, supporters of English policies, and origins of the misery of the Iranian nation:

"Iran's misery continues because of two individuals, / This point is evident to both the elite and the commoners, // Vosough is the trustee of the English, / Whereas Ghavam is the supporter of Colonizers." (Farokhi Yazdi, 1984: 246)

And somewhere in his *Diwan*, Farokhi Yazdi introduces the MPs as traitors, venomous snakes, and hyenas:

"I repeat my words again, though frequently have I said that, / These traitors put burdens on the shoulders of our nation, // Parliament snakes have a deadly venom, / Beware of a parliament infested by snakes, // It's not possible to get rid of these hyenas by speech, / It's by action that we can get rid of these hyenas." (ibid: 84)

In other poems, such as the following *quatrain*, Farokhi Yazdi bitterly, yet constructively, criticizes the dummy elections of the National Privy Council of Reza Khan and also the MPs who entered the fifth parliament through connections and political collusions:

"Those who buy votes don't make me lighthearted, / And those who sell votes don't make my soul blithe, // Indeed, the MPs of our fifth parliament, / Are no less corrupt than those of the historic fourth." (ibid: 217)

4.5 Calling the People to Unity and Admonishing Them against Public Discord

Since the existence of discord among the parties and groups in every country causes backwardness in that country and provides foreigners with a very good opportunity for their domination over that country, al-Rusafi and Farokhi Yazdi in all their poems invite the people to keep their unity and refrain from schism. These two committed poets were both influenced by Seyyed Jamaladdin's thoughts about Islamic unity. They looked upon the uniting of the people as a handy weapon for the nations in their struggle against colonialism. They considered unity as the key to victory. For instance,

when the power of the Allied Party had subsided, and Ahmad Pasha al-Qazi had seized it, and a wide gap had consequently been created between them, al-Rusafi composed an ode entitled "Homeland and the Parties," in which he criticized them for their conflict and accentuated the impossibility of relief from calamities as long as there were a schism in a nation:

"When should we hope for redemption from our agonies, / As we are surrounded with a spinning schism." (Al-Rusafi, 1957: 411)

Then al-Rusafi continues by stating clearly and emphatically that if the people keep their unity, it will be easy for them to attain their goals:

"So keep a safe distance from them, / and beware not to be their host, // They are like a sea that drowns seamen, / The only way to safety is abiding by the shore." (ibid: 411)

By recourse to Islam, Al-Rusafi attempts to call the Arabs to unity:

"Alas! Islam has created amongst us, // a unity so full of mercy, so divine, / Hence, therein is that firm rope, // Of fraternity and faith we should grasp, / and our firm belief in divine unity, / is surely our true and real union." (ibid: 345)

Farokhi Yazdi, everywhere in his *Diwan*, also invites the people to keep their unity. He deems unity as the remedy that heals the wounds of Iran:

"This country is in the throes of death, while her foes are all around her, / Indeed it is such a dire state, for there is no hope for even a last breath, // Her medicine is our unity and diligence and only that, / But when will anyone heed to these cries for help?" (Farokhi Yazdi, 1984: 189)

Farokhi Yazdi, in the majority of cases, calls the Islamic nation to unity and uprising. He is similar to al-Rusafi in that both of them are under the influence of Seyyed Jamaladdin's ideas about Islamic unity. Though the concept of Islamic unity seems to be an old one, that version of it defined by Seyyed Jamaladdin is, in fact, a modern notion. In this regard, Shamim (1996) says,

"What Seyyed Jamal proposes is different from the old conception of unity, for in Seyyed Jamal's thought, fighting against despotism and colonialism is the foundation of Islamic unity. Seyyed Jamal means that a complete unity should be established among the Muslim nations. This unity will be like a dam against the avarice and colonial objectives of England and other colonialist states." (85)

Farokhi Yazdi regards this issue with a broader vision than al-Rusafi. To Farokhi Yazdi, the Islamic homeland includes all of the Muslim nations, while, as Mohseninia and Dashan (2009) put it, "Rusafi's conception of the Islamic homeland and its unity is limited to the Arabic nations and the Turks. In other words, al-Rusafi craves for the unity of the lands occupied by the Ottoman Empire" (151).

In the following poem, Farokhi Yazdi calls for the unity and insurrection of the Islamic nation in order to safeguard the Holy Quran and the other holy entities against the colonizers:

"The Islamic nation's sense of honor should be provoked, / They should all be united, allied, shoulder to shoulder, // To safeguard the Holy Quran, they should attack the foreigners and drive them back, / They will either be successful or will lose their precious lives." (Farokhi Yazdi, 1984: 192)

4.6 Condemning the Foreigners and Unveiling Their Deception

Farokhi Yazdi and al-Rusafi's tongues and pens were like sharp and effective weapons used in their war against the enemies of their great nations. By reading the Diwans of these two freedom-seeking poets, we can find that both of them had an antagonistic attitude towards England, and unveiled the stratagems that this colonialist power resorted to in order to realize its colonial objectives. We know few poets in that era as courageous and intrepid as these two poets; they dauntlessly expressed what they had witnessed and discovered. Al-Rusafi in an ode entitled "England in its Colonial Policy" presents a picture of the colonial nature of England and considers it the essence of all wile, viciousness, dishonesty, transgression, and treachery. He describes the process of the formation of this essence and nature in the following lines:

"The world collected all its stratagems, / In a big cauldron made of absolute malice, // And poured on it from the drain of incidents, / a liquid made of lustrous lies and wrongdoing, // Then it filled one third, / or more of its volume with ruse, // And kindled a fire of deception under it, / Fueled by the live embers of euphoria or log rafts, // Then its contents began to boil, / The rising steam was distilled into an enchanted potion, // Then it made English nature out of that distilled liquid, / Which is, like rainwater, meagre and scant." (Al-Rusafi, 1957: 467)

In another ode, al-Rusafi expressly describes the position of the east toward the west, and displays the colonized state of the east; he represents the westerners as deceitful and treacherous, and recounts their exploitation of the eastern riches:

"The story of the East and the West, / Is the story of the cheated and the cheater, // Look, how the east stands in servitude to the West, / and instead the west overlords it in treachery, // The West digs into the mines of the east, / and Robs all its underground riches relentlessly, // The west sucks all the blood, / The east can afford and has to offer." (ibid: 436)

In another poem, he refers to the falseness of the insincere promises made by the English:

“The English say that they work for your happiness, / Whereas all they have offered is disaster and agony,
// They have incited too many bitter wars in the east, / Each of these wars has been a dire hell-raiser, //
They have robbed Iraq’s best riches, / and have only laid the naught and waste.” (ibid: 468)

Farokhi Yazdi also describes the tactics and norms of the English government in the following way:

“Except for oppression, cruelty, and the butchering of the innocent, / The British court has no other tactic
and norm, // Sedition is in the claws of a House of Lords, / Whose only industry is to instigate disorder.”
(Farokhi Yazdi, 1984: 110)

By the word ‘lord’ in the third line of the above extract, the poet means Lord George Nathaniel Curzon, British foreign secretary, who in an address to the representatives of the House of Commons delivered after the failure of the Anglo-Persian Agreement of 1919, reproved the Iranian government for not succumbing to the conclusion of that agreement. Farokhi Yazdi, in one of his poems entitled “Lord Curzon Has Got Angry,” makes fun of him:

“As long as our precious souls are in our bodies, / We will sacrifice all we have for our country, // After
creating piles of anarchy and disturbance, / For Iran; why has this Londoner, // Lord Curzon got angry, //
He’s begun to chant dirges, // Oh, lord! Leave us alone, / Jamshid’s country won’t be colonized, // Do not
shed tears of compassion for us, / So that I shouldn’t talk about the ill-fated agreement.” (ibid: 196)

While migrating to Mosul, Farokhi Yazdi composed the following poem in which he talked about the pain of exile from one’s homeland and expressed his hatred for the intruding foreigners, and he likewise warned nations against trusting foreign troops:

“O, faithful and intelligent Iranian patriots, / Beware of making a fuss over an impossible cause, // Listen
to my exhortations, as I am an experienced man, / Willing if you are to lend your ears to advice, // If a
foreigner gives you, say, a goblet of nectar, / Don’t drink it, because that nectar is poisoned, // All the
time, try to tire them weary, / As long as you have might and force, // I swear by God that the enemy will
never become a friend even if he be a prophet, / A foreigner is a foreigner, and that’s all.” (ibid: 195)

As it is evident from the extracts above, both poets have made use of irony, satire, and sarcasm in order to condemn the colonizers and shatter their fake splendor.

5. Conclusion

Having investigated the motif of anti-colonialism in the poems of Ma’ruf al-Rusafi and Farokhi Yazdi in a comparative way, we came to the following conclusions:

The first and foremost technique al-Rusafi and Farokhi Yazdi utilize in their fight against colonialism is to warn and incite the people to stand against colonialism. They employ all of their power to awaken their nations to their miserable condition and to encourage them to take action. Both of them believe that by acquiring knowledge and eradicating ignorance, nations may be released from their colonized condition. Their next technique is their opposition to and condemnation of the agreements which are to the utter detriment of the colonized countries. Reminding their nations of their glorious history is another technique employed by these two watchful poets in their struggle against colonialism; after all, the modern nations have lost their self-confidence and consequently have become passive. By reminding nations of their past, both poets have the same goal, namely, stimulating public sentiments and motivating the people for fighting against colonialism. Al-Rusafi refers to the early Islamic era and the period of the Abbasids, which was the age of the flowering of Arabic civilization, and Farokhi Yazdi alludes to ancient Persian history and mythology, mentioning the names of the kings and heroes of that epoch. Of course, Farokhi Yazdi shows much more interest in this area than al-Rusafi. Few poems can be found in Farokhi Yazdi’s *Diwan* in which no mention has been made of the names of the ancient Iranian kings and heroes. Still another technique applied by al-Rusafi and Farokhi Yazdi in their anti-colonialist activity is condemning the dummy parliaments and puppet ministers and MPs who are apparently chosen by their own nations, but are virtually at the service of their English overlords. Since England’s main policy is to aim only for maximum gain through the evil policy of sowing discord and ruling, the two defiant and alert poets of this study call the people to unity and warn them of discord in order to thwart that wicked policy. Both al-Rusafi and Farokhi Yazdi have been influenced by Seyyed Jamaladdin Asadabadi’s thoughts about Islamic unity. Farokhi Yazdi regards this issue with a broader vision than al-Rusafi and calls for the unity of all of the Muslim nations; al-Rusafi, on the other hand, calls for the unity of the Arab nations and the Turks who are both under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. In their battle against colonialism, neither of the two poets contents himself with merely opposing the stratagems of the colonizers; in their poems, they condemn the colonizers themselves (especially the English) and call them devious and oppressive.

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