



*Research Paper*

## Reflection of Socio-educational Teachings in Iran's Post-constitutional poems: A case study of Shamloo and Bahar

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### Abstract

**Aim:** Sociopolitical conditions of the Persian Constitutional Revolution encouraged and intensified the critical and educational views of poets of this era and the post-Constitutional period. The poems by Mohammad Taghi Bahar and Ahmad Shamloo were selected for analysis because they created social movements as critics of their contemporary social and moral status. The data were collected through the secondary research method, and the verses were chosen purposively. We aimed to investigate the commonalities and differences in the socio-educational teachings of their poems. Using a comparative analytical method, this study sought to examine the attitude of these two poets toward the foundations of social ethics (social justice, women's rights, public ignorance, freedom, poverty, social self-awareness, fighting against oppression, etc.). The dominant political aspect of the poems of this era overshadows other aspects (especially the educational aspect); therefore, researchers must pay attention to the neglected aspects of these poems.

**Keywords:** *Social Education, Comparative Criticism, Persian Constitutional Revolution, Mohammad Taghi Bahar, Ahmad Shamloo*

## Introduction

At times of tyranny, literature and poetry have always indirectly taught moral teachings and helped create social motivations. The Persian Constitutional and Post-Constitutional eras are more important than other historical periods because they coincided with the conflict between modernity and tradition. Since moral issues and educational principles vary during the transition from tradition to modernity (Constitutional and Post-Constitutional eras), it is essential to study the representation of educational and moral principles in the works of artists and poets of this period. For example, the qasida "Heaven and Hell" by Bahar is full of moral themes and educational teachings. "In well-known forms of Persian poetry, Bahar discusses new themes such as the homeland, freedom, democracy, equality, justice, and women's rights, and creates a new atmosphere with an unprecedented perspective in Persian poetry" (Zarrinkoob, 1976: 315). Moreover, Shamloo has always been the voice of social protest with the slogan "the poet should be against, not with, the government." These poets, as the pioneers and founders of the two schools of Return and Free Verse, have always attempted to reflect the sociopolitical situation in their poems. As intellectuals who represented people, they reflected the problems of society to lay the ground for social evolution and represent educational and social teachings such as a battle against ignorance, seeking justice, women's rights, the fight against law evasion and bureaucratic corruption in their poetry. What motivated us to conduct this study is that although the Constitutional era witnessed social changes and the confrontation of tradition and modernity in Iran, we did not find any studies on the educational concepts and moral concerns in the works of poets of this transitional period. The novelty of this study lies in the fact that two poets from two different genres and schools of poetry (one from the school of Return and the other from Free Verse) were compared in terms of their attitudes towards social education. The goal was to investigate the difference between the views of Bahar (as an influential poet of the Constitutional era) and Shamloo (as an influential poet of the post-constitutional era) regarding educational concerns in order to represent social-ethical concepts in their poems. To this end, this study addressed two main questions: 1- What are the ethical and educational motifs in Bahar's and Shamloo's poems? 2- How are the common educational teachings in the poems of these two poets represented?

## Methodology

We adopted an analytical descriptive comparative method to conduct this qualitative study. First, using the secondary research method, we retrieved

books, dissertations, and papers related to Shamloo and Bahar. Then, themes and motifs which were common for both poets and had a high frequency and educational content were selected purposively and classified according to educational paradigms. The unit of qualitative analysis and comparison was the couplet for Bahar's poems (classical form) and episode (stanza) for Shamloo's poems (free verse). Finally, the differences between the two poets were compared using the analytical-descriptive method with reference to in-text excerpts. The main source of in-text excerpts was Bahar's Poetry Book (2001) and the Collection of Works by Ahmad Shamloo (2001).

## Results

The representation of moral concepts in Bahar's and Shamloo's poems was compared from seven perspectives: social justice, social self-awareness, equality, patriotism, battle against ignorance, libertarianism, and protection of women's rights.

A study of the themes of the poems by Bahar (an activist and poet of the Constitutional era) and Ahmad Shamloo (an influential poet and activist of the contemporary era) who shone in the sphere of politics and society within a brief historical period shows that freedom, peace, justice, equality, law, homeland, and other themes appear in both poets' works, both in terms of theme and content and in terms of form and structure, with many similarities and certain differences. The themes of the poems of both poets are almost the same; still, Bahar views themes such as the homeland from an ancient perspective, while Shamloo's poetry entails a cosmopolitan view, whereby he goes beyond his homeland, considers himself to belong to the world, and sees the world as his homeland. Evolution in poetry is a theme of this era. Despite being associated with the spirit of the time in terms of the fluency and eloquence of contemporary themes, Bahar is still a traditionalist, while Shamloo is a supporter of the structure and content of blank verse and the founder of free verse. Bahar's teachings often belong to the realm of didactic and prescriptive literature, with an addressive and, at times, explicit expression, containing some modern specifications and thoughts. Shamloo's teachings, however, include a cryptic, poetic, and at times complex expression. Bahar's teachings are the continuation of the moral and social teachings of the classical didactic texts, whereas Shamloo's poems are adopted from new philosophical ideas and thoughts. Shamloo's poems do not fit into the framework of didactic and moral literature. These patterns are disseminated indirectly in his works. Bahar's teachings are in accordance with the patterns of traditional ethics, while Shamloo's poems are in accordance with modern ethics. In Bahar's poetry, moral teachings are often

deliberately presented to teach morality, but these instances are not intentional in Shamloo's poetry, and the teachings are indirectly reflected within philosophical, social, and humanistic ideas.

## Discussion and conclusion

The results of this comparison reveal that Bahar (as a poet at the heart of the Constitutional movement) follows the manifestations of civilization without any particular ideological view. On the other hand, Shamloo (as a representative of post-constitutional poets) pursues these manifestations from a socialistic ideological perspective. The ideal society in the poems of Bahar is a law-abiding, modern, and free society. He hopes for a return to the era of Iran's greatness and pride under the auspices of modernity, freedom, and law. However, as a representative of modernist poets in the contemporary era, Shamloo depicts a society full of freedom, peace, and tranquility while escaping the failures of life and engaging in political struggles.

## Reference

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