Common Thoughts of Ahmad Shamlou and Nazem Hekmat: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Ahmad Shamlou (1925 – 2000) and Nazem Hekmat (1902 – 1963) are among the most illustrious contemporary poets who by mainstreaming in the development of Persian and Turkish literature have gained significant position in literary studies. Despite the differences in language, environment and culture, studying their works reveals similarities in their thoughts, some of which are rooted in the same spiritual similarities of humans, while others are the result of the literary communications between them; accordingly, their common thoughts may be reviewed in the fields of both comparative literature and contrastive literature. In addition to the similarity of thought and cultural, social and political parallelism between the two poets, resemblances can be seen in some of their formal and linguistic innovations in Persian and Turkish literature. This research seeks to study the common thoughts of these two poets in the fields of comparative and contrastive literature in five general titles, including: “life and death”, “human”, “poetry and poesy”, “lyrics of regret, nostalgia and captivity”, and “hope”. This study is a descriptive-analytical desk research. The necessity of research in the fields of comparative and contrastive literature of Iran and Turkey reveals the importance of this study. Finally, the results highlight the common thoughts of Shamlou and Hekmat and, for better comparing, present them in the form of diagrams.

Keywords: Common Thoughts, Comparative Literature, Ahmad Shamlou, Nazem Hekmat.

Introduction

Ahmad Shamlou, also known under his pen name as A. Bamdad, (1925-2000), was a contemporary Iranian “creative and influential” poet (Torabi 2008, 5), author, journalist, editor, translator, and lexicographer. He is considered as “one of the most prominent talents of his era” (Shafiei Kadkani 2011, 523), whose poem is “the biography of the society and his own” (Baraheni 1992, 864). “His importance on the one hand is because...”
of creating a type of free verse in modern Persian poetry, and on the other hand, relates to the verbal and social influence of his poetry and speech” (Falaki 2001, 5).

Nazem Hekmat Ran (1902-1963) is one of the most prominent Turkish poets and playwrights who “greatly helped flourishing modern Turkish poetry in terms of political ideology” (Azhand 1985, 131), and under the influence of Mayakovsky and other Russian poets, started a movement in Turkey “which is known as free verse or free poem. The main difference between Nazem Hekmat and other poets who tried using free verse was that he changed not only the form, but also the content of poetry” (Seifi Ala 2004, 45).

Nazem Hekmat is a famous figure among Iranian researchers and poets, as Shamlou says that after listening to three pieces of Hekmat’s poem including Caspian Sea, Orchestra and Fire, he concluded that the music of poetry should emanate from within it (see Hariri 2006, 161). Also Hooshang Ebtehaj has presented him a poem in 1951: “Like a warm kiss / like a red bud / like a bloody flag of victory / I give you my elated heart / Nazem Hekmat! / And not only my heart / everywhere is your home / the heart of every child and woman / the heart of every man / the heart of everyone who knew / your humane melody of hope / in which every night and day / life gets a new color, a new figure…” (Ebtehaj 2006, 79).

These two prominent poets of Persian and Turkish literature have commonalities in their thoughts and ideas and in poetry themes. In addition to the shared life and environmental experiences and intellectual and structural similarities between the two poets, the reason for doing this analysis and comparison is Shamlou’s explicit acknowledgment of influencing from Nazem Hekmat: “One of those who strongly influenced my poem, namely in a moment changed my course 180 degree, was Nazem Hekmat” (Mojabi 2002, 751). Shamlou even believed that “the poetry of Nazem could make another change in Nima, but unfortunately [Nima] did not know Turkish and Nazem’s poetry should be read in Turkish” (Hariri 2006, 161). The two poets’ mainstreaming in the evolution of Persian and Turkish poetry style, and their similar personal style can be added to the mentioned reasons.

Unfortunately, no independent research has been done about the common thoughts of Ahmad Shamlou and Nazem Hekmat, and the only comparative comparison of these two is the article titled “A Comparative Study of Romantic Poems of Ahmad Shamlou and Nazem Hekmat” (Farzi and Taghizadeh 2012).

Highlighting the identical thoughts of Shamlou and Hekmat, and studying the ups and downs of these thoughts, is the main subject of this study, which is presented in five general titles.

1. Life and Death in the Thoughts of Shamlou and Hekmat

From the beginning, life and death have been moving along with mankind in a way that the lack of one has triggered the outbreak of the other; in the words of Rainer Maria Rilke: “In the womb of a pregnant woman / behind her tired but kind face / two fruits were growing / life and death” (Shaygan 1992, 256). Meanwhile, poets have also described life and death based on their individual and social circumstances and world view.
Shamlou has been called the poet of life and death (see Baghinezhad 1997, 26), because in his works “sometimes we see death and life in same size and weight, each one means the other, each one is the other complementary” (Ronagh 2009, 362).

Although Shamlou has considered the death as a tragic experience (see Shamlou 2001, 535) and thinks that life is better than death (ibid, 133), but he is not unaware of death and introduces it as something just fit for the righteous ones (ibid, 904) and calls it the first name of life (ibid, 942), something which cannot be the final point (ibid, 1054) or a frozen moment that a scared and trembling person believes in it (ibid, 905).

Compared to Shamlou, Nazem Hekmat must be called as the poet of life. In addition to considering life as the principle (see Hekmat 2012, 146), he seriously reminds living repeatedly (ibid, 146 and 145) and values the life to the extent that he believes the only way of loving the world is expressing the phrase “I have lived” (ibid, 150). In the battle between life and death, he believes in the victory of the former: “Life is undoubtedly short / but whatever is it, it is stronger than death” (ibid, 438) and perhaps based on this belief he says: “Life is not for die and death / as death is only for life” (Hekmat 2004b, 270). Surprisingly, his dream of death is based on his life style; he wishes to get accustomed to an active death, as he has got used to an active life (ibid 2012, 247).

A deeper investigation reveals that unlike Nazem Hekmat who is less concerned with the motives of life and death, Shamlou has a philosophical viewpoint about this issue: “Oh, whom am I talking about? / we are alive but with no questions / they are conscious of the cause of their death” (Shamlou 2001, 788). Shamlou’s belief of death is to the extent that he consciously chooses the death (ibid, 460) and informs of his living with death: “I have seen the death / in a sorrowful visit, I have rub the death by my hands / I have lived the death / with a sad song / sorrowful / and in a very prolonged and erosive lifetime” (ibid, 534-535). In order to clear the difference between these two viewpoints, we may compare the Shamlou’s belief in living with death with this belief of Hekmat that consider the courage of living as the most marvelous power of man: “Our most amazing power / is the courage to live / when we know we will die / and there is no doubt about it” (Hekmat 2012, 203).

It could be said that the difference between viewpoints of Shamlou and Hekmat in this regard is because of the difference in their mental foundation about life and death; in Hekmat’s thought “living” has the dominant role, while in Shamlou’s thought “how to live and die” is the most prominent idea; hence, Hekmat talks about the burial of man by death (Hekmat 1979, 85) and Shamlou talks about the Emancipating Death (Shamlou 2001, 675) and Redemptive Death (ibid, 532.)

Shamlou and Hekmat have common viewpoints about life and death, too. Here are some examples of these commons:

Life has always had two faces; sometimes tears and sometimes smiles, sometimes bitter and sometimes sweet, and this is also reflected in the poems of Shamlou and Hekmat. Hekmat says: “Life /life is so wired / Taranta Babu/ sometimes is so unbelievably beautiful / and sometimes such hard / such tight / such vulgar” (Hekmat 2012, 373).

Shamlou considers living impeccably or infamously as his way of looking into life: “If I have to live infamously like this /I would be shameless if I do not hang the lantern of
my life, blatantly / on top of the high, dead pine of the blind alley / and if I have to live impeccably like this / I would be impure if I do not use my faith / to make an immortal memorial on the flat level of the mortal soil” (Shamlou 2001, 173).

Fear and death have been concomitant from the beginning: “He is afraid of death very much / always asks will I die? / Why is this kid so afraid of death? / You tell / why don't we all go insane / now that we know we will die?” (Hekmat 2012, 437). And Shamlou believes that fear of death is the cause of degrading deeds: “Now your skull / bare / smiles / at all those philosophical, futile effort and search / laughs at the foolishness that you / for fear of death / complied with / to live / with chained foot and / a leash on the neck” (Shamlou 2001, 485).

Death will come to everyone in turn: “My turn comes / suddenly / I fly to inexistence / ... / I think of death / It seems that my turn is near” (Hekmat 2002, 104).

“We look / At our dead ones / With a mask of laughter / And wait for our turn / With no laugh” (Shamlou 2001, 712).

The will for burial is another common theme of the poets regarding death: “Naked / Tell them to bury me naked / all over naked / as we pray for love / since I want to get mix with soil / amorously / without any veil” (Shamlou 2001, 744).

“Bury me in the cemetery of a village / in Anatolia / if it is proper / let be a plane tree over my head / then I will no longer / would need a tombstone” (Hekmat 2002, 157-158).

2. Humanism

Although throughout the history of poetry we may find references to man and his characteristics, humanism is called “an inseparable innovation of contemporary poetry” (Mokhtari 1993, 21). Human is also one of the main themes in Shamlou and Hekmat poetry, to the extent that it is called the basis of Shamlou’s poetry (See Ronagh 1993, 368). Shamlou considers human as the difficulty of duty (Shamlou 2001, 974) and being human as a problem on the frontier of impossibility (ibid, 950). He reminds that the universe without human is a universe without identity (ibid, 928) and considers the presence of man as prosperity, and believes that ruins are there presentations of the human absence (ibid, 799).

By recalling the thinking of humans and their hope, Hekmat recommends deliberate death for human sake (Hekmat 2012, 446); humans that we have not even seen (ibid, 145-146). Hence when he finished writing “Human Landscapes of My Country”, he wrote in its introduction: “I want something: I want to know when you look a teach of these humans images, do you become depressed or not?” (Hekmat 2004a, Translated by Nobakht, 12).

Sometimes it seems that these two poets have a common sense of humanity. For example, pay attention to the terms “being faithful to human” and “living like human” in Shamlou and Hekmat poetries:

“However, do not forget / that we / -I and you- / had been faithful to human” (Shamlou 2001, 604).
“Summarizing, comrades / even if I die of grief today in Berlin / I can say that I have lived like a human” (Hekmat 2012, 267-268).

On the other hand, having a dual attitude towards human is another common theme of the two, which is the result of relativity of blaming or adoring human. Hekmat says: “People are either enamored of you, or they are your enemy / they either forget you in such a manner / that it seems you haven’t existed even a minute / or never forget you even for a minute” (Hekmat 2012, 171); and Shamlou expresses his dual attitude towards man in this way: “Man... This impartial brutality! This amazing amazed! / Man... This king of the greatest love and the greatest isolation!” (Shamlou 2001, 272).

Of course Shamlou is different from Hekmat in his approaches to the idea of human agency (humanism), which is referred to as the “core of his thought” (Sarkisian 2001, 415) and “his obsession”. (ibid) Look at some examples of this thought in Shamlou’s poems: “Suddenly / love / like a sun / unmasked / and filled / roofs and doors / like a revelation/ The lightening glow / was decreased / and man / rose” (Shamlou 2001, 1004).

And:

“Man is God / this is my word / if this is blasphemy or absolute truth / man is God / yes. This is my word” (ibid, 428).

Shamlou’s revolts against the creator of the universe also confirm this idea: “But you have created me as a human / an inglorious dust / a beggar of wool and dung of animals / to worship you despicably / shuddering with fear of your wrath/ stranger to himself grabs your attention/ till / you be the whole / ... / you created me mortal / So there will never be a friend who fulfill the treaty / don’t be proud that I am the superior of your creatures / with me / no glory is destined for being God…” (ibid, 1028-1029).

Anyway, Shamlou and Hekmat are the poets of human and they speak of mankind in a way that you suppose it is their main duty: “The canary said: Our sphere/ is the sphere of cages with gold bars and china feeders./ The goldfish of Haft-sin interpreted it as an environment / that each spring / introduces./ The vulture said: My planet / is a peerless planet in which / death / creates foodstuffs./ The shark said: The earth / is the blessing table cloth of the oceans. / Man said nothing / he was the only one who had wear cloths / and his sleeves were soaked of tears” (Shamlou 2001, 982).

Hekmat also speaks to his son, Mehmet, like this: “Believe the seed, the soil and the sea / but believe in people more than them / love the clouds, the cars, the books / but love humans more than them / cry for dead branches / setting star / and injured animal / but cry for human more / enjoy what the earth has given you / darkness, brightness / four seasons / but enjoy human more” (Hekmat 2012, 185-186).

3. Poetry and Poesy

In this category, the most eye-catching similarity between Shamlou and Hekmat is some of their formal and linguistic innovations in Persian and Turkish literature. Their first poetic experiences are in the form of verse, and after a while they turn to free verse and employ their artistic creation in this type of poem. “Except a few poems in the form
of prosody that were composed in the second decade of his life, Nazem composed his poems in syllabic form of poetry retrieved from folklore lyrics and songs” (Hekmat 2012, 19); resultantly, he is known as one of those who “distanced from classical forms by introducing a simple language and style, new ideas, social and cultural issues, and increasing freedom through enriching the form and content that were not conceivable in classical poetry” (Azhand 1985, 180).

Distancing from classic poetry is observable in Shamlou’s poems, too. He talks about eliminating the “damn rhymes...that it seems a mad ruler has assigned some drummers on every alley, so when a drowsy passer with some decrepit flimsy ideas crosses, they beat the drum and tore his nap like a starched colico to remind him who is the ruler of the city” (Shamlou 2001, 481), and he talks about the absence of the “bell of prosody” on the neck of the verse mule in order to distinguish it from the prose donkey (ibid, 481).

In addition, the attitude of Shamlou and Hekmat to the form of poetry is noteworthy. Hekmat, about the form, writes: “I think the subject of form became clearer to me in prison, and I concluded that firstly the use of all forms should be allowed. Poetry can be written with or without rhyme, with or without verse metre, full of images or without any image, screaming or whispering” (Hekmat 2004b, 26). Shamlou is likewise. His poem “has the wildest form. Form of poem of Shamlou is made by itself. Shamlou never complies with the form and believes in the form as much as in metre. The destiny of form of his poem is directly dependent on the fate of his content” (Shams Langroudi 1998, v. 4, 335).

Another point is their viewpoints about poetry and poesy. Hekmat believes that the growth of cities depends on the statue of their poets (Hekmat 2012, 208) and considers anything except poetry and poesy as vaunting. (Hekmat 2012, 140). For him poetry is a bowl of honey that is all his possessions: “...I have neither wealth nor property / I have just a bowl of honey / just a bowl of honey / whose color is redder than fire / my honey / is my entire asset” (Hekmat 2002, 139-140).

Shamlou, however, has the following description of poetry: “Poetry / is liberation / is salvation and freedom / is a doubt / that ultimately / tends to certainty / and a bullet / which is shot / to the end / is a sigh of contentment / for relief / and is the certainty of the stool / when finally / falls aside / from under of feet / until the burden of the body / under the pressure of all its mass / breaks...” (Shamlou 2001, 647). Interestingly, both of them consider poesy as a kind of messaging: “At dawns / or in dark midnights / I’ve taken with myself / inside my heart / so much / news of the homeland / of the world and of human / news of the ravening wolf / of the tree and the bird / for all human beings. / I have versified / namely I have somehow delivered letters” (Hekmat 2004b, 216). Shamlou, likewise, says in the poem “Passers”: “...I knew that they would not come back to this way / again / I knew that they would not come back to this way, because their final destination was a vanishing mirage / I knew / I told them that / I will stand here / and when your children pass / I will deliver your message” (Shamlou 2001, 430).

On the other hand, in their poetry they deal with social problems. Nazem’s poem is known as “The contemporary language of social conscience” (Azhand 1985, 133), and he is considered the first person who “introduced social and political issues in the poetry for the first time and, therefore, he is the founder of social realism in Turkish
literature” (Seifi Ala 2004, 45). Shamlou has the same situation: “By reading Shamlou’s poetry, we find that the main themes of his poems are the emotions originating from social sorrows” (Poornamdarian 1995, 83). Notice two examples of these social poems: “repeatedly, in many places / roots were axed / branches died / wings were broken / thoughts were murdered / men were sent into slaughterhouse / that is it. This is one of the facts of our century” (Hekmat 2012, 191).

And:
“What did you say? / The verse metre? / Think about that comrade... / I have always found the metre and vocabulary and rhymes / in streets/ individuals of my poem are all people / from life [that is much of the content of the fragment] / until ‘wording’ and ‘metre’ and ‘rhyme’, I look for all of them / among the people / this way / better give life and soul to poetry” (Shamlou 2001, 143-144).

Comparing the viewpoint of Shamlou and Hekmat towards poetry and poesy shows that Shamlou has a deeper and more detailed attitude, to the point that separates the subject of earlier poem from the modern poetry: “The subject of the poem of previous poet / wasn’t of life / in the empty sky of his dreams/ he just talked with wine and lover...” (ibid, 140). “The subject of poem / today / is another... / today / poetry / is the people’s weapon / because poets / are nothing but branches of people forest/ not the jasmine and hyacinths of someone’s greenhouse / poet of today / is not stranger/ with common pains of people / with people’s lips he smiles / he joins people’s pain and hope / with his bone” (ibid, 142).

4. Lyrics of Regret, Nostalgia and Captivity

Regret is a frequent theme in Shamlou’s and Hekmat’s poetry. Hekmat confesses that he recognizes the name of separation and regrets better than anything else (Hekmat 2012, 265), and Shamlou sees noting beside himself except the sigh of regret (Shamlou 2001, 1049). It is natural that in the poetry of two poets who, in addition to bearing prison, have felt the nostalgia of living abroad for a while, we encounter some poems of regret which reveal their deep sadness: “We did not enjoy the blessings of this world / we came / and we will go in the same way / Istanbul is a very beautiful city. / What can we do when it wasn’t our fate to visit it? / But half of the rooms in this city / have remained devoid of any kilimand felt, why?” (Hekmat 2004b, 354).

Threads of nostalgia are also found in Shamlou’s poem, where he says painfully: “Where is the homeland that your familiar song seems so far?” (Shamlou 2001, 829).

And:
“In my passage / nothing whispers anything / anymore: / neither the breeze nor the tree / and not a flowing water / the sound of an interrupted lamentation moves / alone / darker than night / on the back of the wandering wind / faraway / my city is there / lonely/ on a smooth sunset that passed not so easily. / The dark city / with two gentle hatches / that is waiting for my painful return / in the back of the hidden alley” (ibid, 939-940).

It should be reminded that Hekmat’s nostalgia is different from Shamlou’s; the former is a sadness that he hasn’t even a smallest role in choosing it, because he was
exiled: “Exile, pain, regret, and separation killed me / I just want to return to Istanbul for one hour / I knock on the door, I knock on the door / the door doesn’t open / why?” (Hekmat 2012, 188). This causes a sign of sadness and pain of being away from the homeland can be traceable in most of his poems: “It (my dog) was talking to me about the most painful things: / hunger, being full, love / but it didn’t know anything about being far from the homeland / the regret which his in my heart / a poet was being taken to heaven / he sighed and said: Then what about my country?” (ibid, 195-196).

Even in best cities Hekmat feels the sadness of separation from his city: “Those nights have passed / if I were in Istanbul now / I would miss those nights again / but away from Istanbul / I miss everything... Your maternal town is now my fraternity home / but even in the brother’s house forgetting the homeland is impossible / nostalgia is difficult / indeed” (ibid, 208-209).

Shamlou has the experience of prison too, and some of his poems are signed as “Provisional Prison of Police” (Shamlou 2001, 332) and “Qasr Prison” (ibid, 690): “There are four prison here / many corridors in each prison, several chambers in each corridor, some chained men in each chamber...” (ibid, 333). In spite of mentioning the guilt of his cellmate, he does not know his sin: “But I haven’t killed anyone in a dark and stormy night / but I haven’t closed the way of a usurer / but I haven’t jumped from a roof to another at midnights.” (ibid, 334) and ultimately he thinks his only crime is his freedom and frankness: “If I was not chained here, perhaps in a morning, like a far and vanishing memory, I would pass the flat, cold, mean soil / this is the crime / this is the crime” (ibid, 334).

Nazem Hekmat spent more time of his life in prison, so expectedly he has a particular attitude toward prison, and his prison poems are comparable with those of the greatest poets in this field. The prison is the enemy’s front is in his country (Hekmat 2012, 179), and he is not allowed to see the sky above his head (ibid, 87) or to become a father (ibid, 96). The effect of imprisonment on Hekmat’s thought is so strong that even when he is free, he thinks of being arrested (ibid, 180), and also when he is asleep, he has nightmares about prison (ibid, 291). Here is an example of Hekmat’s descriptions about jail: “Fifteen years in prison is behind / another seventeen years in front / a hoisted flag in my head / red as blood / I love a woman / white as snow / I sing a song / more hopeful than saplings / in my song is battle, sadness and happiness of humans / and my wife hands is in my hands, but I cannot touch them” (ibid, 174).

**Hekmat’s successive imprisonments form two features in his poem:**

A. It inhibits Hekmat to think more about other constraints, and hence, there are less such interpretations and descriptions in his poems. On the contrary, in Shamlou’s poetry we see expressions such as “prison of slavery” and “prison of the skin over the bone”, which are more abstract: “And man / prisoned forever / in prison of slavery/ will stay”(Shamlou 2001, 466), and: “that I wish no fortification for my prison / except the skin on my bones” (ibid, 691).

B. Another point is that Hekmat’s imprisonment occasionally makes him talk about freedom with specific expressions in his poems; for example, when he describes the
spring in prison, mentions a giant called freedom who captures a man from within: “And
then night comes / a night with cloud, a spring night / in the darkest hours of the night / a giant named freedom / with bright wings and fiery eyes / captures a man from within/ especially in the spring / I have experienced this my darling / experienced it”(Hekmat 2012, 91-92).

Deeper inspections reveal that Shamlou and Hekmat, due to their particular life, have
turned to a kind of social-political poetry which has increased the manifestations of
freedom and its idea in their poems: “I have never been afraid of death / though its hands
were more fragile than triviality. / Anyway, all my fear is about dying in a land / where
the wages of a grave digger / is more than the expense of human liberty”(Shamlou 2001,
460).

And:

“When Cubans hear the word of freedom / it makes their mouths water, as if someone
cuts a sweet watermelon, / and its girls hearts weaken when they talk about freedom / and the eyes of its men glitter / and the old ones pull out the sweetest memories out of the well and taste them / Can you imagine happiness Abedin? Can you portrait the lie-free freedom?”(Hekmat 2012, 312).

Interestingly, Hekmat seeks to bring freedom to his country: [The enemies of hope
and tree and life] “soon will die and go forever / yes my love / freedom / while singing/
in the Nowruz clothing / freedom comes with open arms / in this country”(Hekmat 2012, 119); and Shamlou believes that his path goes through freedom too: “Our alley is not narrow / be happy / and our highway / passes through all the freedoms”(Shamlou 2001, 794).

It is also worth noting that in most cases, Shamlou’s interpretation of freedom is
more general than Hekmat interpretation: “Oh, if freedom sung a song / a small one / like a bird’s throat / nowhere would remain any collapsed wall”(ibid, 799).

The poets’ viewpoint about symbols of freedom is also considerable. For example,
as a bird, Hekmat talks about scissoring its wings and Shamlou talks about prohibition
of pigeons flying: “JoodattBeig came back to the radio room / with a stork in his arms / bird’s leg was broken / he dressed that / then scissored its wings / so not to try
flying”(Hekmat 2012, 411).

“In the time of the new moon / I went to the roof / with agate and verdure and
mirror / a cold scythe crossed the sky / implying that flying of pigeons is forbidden / the poplars whispered something / and guardians obstreperously struck the birds with swords / the moon / didn’t rise” (Shamlou 2001, 668).

5. Hope

Shamlou is sometimes so disappointed his poem is devoid of any hope: “We have been pregnant with great hope / alas that in our time / children / are born dead!”(Shamlou 2001, 444).

And:
“The big silver key / is broken / in the cold pond/ the dark gate / is closed / oh, lonely passenger! / with your small fire / in the shadow of the willow / which dawn do you wait for? / The bright moon / in the cold pond /is broken / and the silvered gate / is closed / with seven magical locks” (ibid, 721).

The reason for this disappointment should be sought in the social conditions of those days; the coup of August 19, 1953 made thought of poets accustomed to disappointment and pessimism, so that “one can draw a line among poets and name many of them as disappointed and hopeless poet” (Shafiei Kadkani 2001, 63).

The frequency of despair and negative attitude in Hekmat's poetry is very low, as he himself says: “In you, I love the adventure of a ship traveling to the pole / in you, I love the story of a gambler / in you I lovese paration / in you I love the impossible... / but not disappointments at all” (Hekmat 2012, 156).

And:

“Dose the hope fail? / Ask this question from prisoners’ wives and mothers / it may stagers, stumbles, but it won’t fail” (Hekmat 2004b, Translated by Nobakht, 758).

Shamlou sometimes accompanies Hekmat in this attitude and writes “a few moments of happiness and hope” in his poems (see Poornamdarian 1995, 89): “No! / I never believed the night / because / beyond its vestibule, /on the hope of a hatch /I set my heart” (Shamlou 2001, 444).

In positive attitude to hope and waiting for better days, the two poets are similar: “These people will have better days. /Our son will recover. / His father will come out of prison. / Your golden eyes will smile. /Our destiny is the destiny of the world” (Hekmat 2012, 156).

And:

“One day, we will find our pigeons again / and the kindness will take the hand of beauty / the day when the least song / is kiss / and every man / is a brother / for every man/ the day when they no longer shut the door of their houses; / lock / is a fiction / and heart / is enough for life... / The day when again we spread seeds for our pigeons / And I expect that day / Even if / anymore / I won’t exist” (Shamlou 2001, 207-208).

And, of course, this viewpoint in the poems of Hekmat is more frequent: “Kids! / some beautiful days are waiting for us /we'll see / bright days / we will sail / boats in the blue waters/ we will sail / in the bright blue waters” (Hekmat 1979, 128).

From a poetic perspective, hope and disappointment can also be expressed in the form of symbols, and the window is one of the most prominent ones. Hekmat has the dream of becoming a window with two open wings, to bring the city into his room (Hekmat 2002, 52) and he hates small windows, because it reminds him of guillotine (ibid, 57). But the window in Hekmat's poetry is not always promising: “The wolves stand in front of my window / even if I have drawn the velvet curtains / I know that they are still there/ waiting for me” (ibid 2004a, 418-424).

In the poem “vespertin”–written in Ghasr prison - Shamlou also confabulates with a closed window and is optimistic: “...My look, raised from the murky depth of thought, is
running / toward the window / but / the window / alien to the eagerness of my look /
do not say anything to me / Window! / like the bitterness of a sad smile / become open/
so a branch of light / grows in the slit of the dry soil of my sufferings / from the seed
of my attempts / ... / Window! / become open / like the storybook of sun / so my hope/
in the shells of the mouth of suffer / finds its pearly morning / in the depth of this
deserted hopeless sea / but the window / like that—mind its own business—/ keep its lips
closed / like the unflorished flower of smile... ” (Shamlou 2001, 178-180).

Conclusion

Shamlou and Hekmat are two distinctive poets in the history of Persian and Turkish
literature who accelerated the course of poetic evolution of their respected language.
Getting away from the poetry of their time and modernizing its structure and content,
shows creative minds of these two characters. On the other hand, turning the poetry into
the language of society and a human-centered phenomenon reflects the common human
concerns between Shamlou and Hekmat.

The results of reviewing, analyzing and comparing Shamlou and Hekmat common
thoughts in five general titles including “life and death”, “human”, “poetry and poesy”,
“lyrics of regret, nostalgia and captivity” and “hope” are as follows:

A. Shamlou is “the poet of life and death”, and he cares equally for both categories;
however, Nazem Hekmat should be called “the poet of life”, as the occurrence of death
in his poems is not comparable to life.
B. Shamlou’s philosophical thought has caused him to have a glance at the reason of death and life and the quality of living and dying; something which is not prominent in the poems of Nazem Hekmat.

C. The two poets think almost identical about having a dualistic attitude toward life, concomitance of fear and death, inevitability of death and making a will for burial.

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A. Shamlou and Nazem Hekmat have the same attitude toward human, so the trace of a common humanly sensation and a dualistic attitude toward human are observed in their poetry.

B. The only observed difference in Shamlou and Hekmat thoughts about human is that Shamlou approaches to the idea of humanism.
A. Shamlou and Nazem Hekmat started with the dominant poetry of their era, but later developed innovations in rhyme, radif, metre and form of poetry.

B. Introducing social themes in poetry is another common feature of the poets.

C. Shamlou is in a higher position than Hekmat in terms of having a deep and detailed view.

A. Shamlou and Nazem Hekmat have a fairly similar situation in lyrics of regret, but Nazem Hekmat excels at Shamlou in talking about nostalgia, as he often didn’t have an active role in his nostalgia.

B. Because Nazem Hekmat has spent many years in jail, his prison poems are preferable to those of Shamlou.

C. Considering a general interpretation of freedom (outside the prison), Shamlou thinks about the dynamic freedom, while Nazem Hekmat has a specific interpretation of freedom and therefore his freedom is almost stationary.

D. Considering the use of freedom symbols in poetry, Shamlou and Hekmat are in the same position.
A. In general, Nazem Hekmat is more hopeful than Shamlou, perhaps because Shamlou often takes into account the whole society and Hekmat explores himself.

B. Although Shamlou is also looking forward to improving the situation in the future and uses symbols of hope in his poetry, Nazem Hekmat's poem is superior to him in this term.

The overall result of the research shows the relative superiority of Shamlou in the categories of “life and death”, “human” and “poetry and poesy”, and the absolute
supremacy of Nazem Hekmat in the categories of “lyrics of regret, nostalgia and captivity” and “hope”.

Bibliography


