

**A Study of the Functions of Satire in the Works of
Kamal-ol-Din Esmaeil Esfahani**

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Introduction

Satire as a literary genre and as one of the most significant types of poetry, constitutes a great part of the poetic works of most countries. However, despite the special place of satire in Persian poetry, researches have paid less attention to this genre in Persian literature. It is likely that literary researchers have conducted fewer studies on this genre because on the one hand, this genre has been disproved from the ancient times in the Islamic and Iranian culture and literature, and on the other hand, it is viewed as being against the general ethical codes of conduct. Nevertheless, due to its importance and frequency, satire can be considered as having great a role in the studies in the various field of sociology, psychology, literature, etc.

The political, historical and cultural situation of each period have had significant influences on the subject matters of the works of poets in that period. Kamal-ol-Din Esmaeil is one of the poets who has witnessed the terrible period of the Moghol invasion and the ensuing murders, lootings, insecurity and instability; and he has used these as the subject matters of his poetry. He writes:

There is nobody to mourn his own country,
To cry over the terrible fate of his people.
Yesterday, hundreds of people cried over one dead,
Today, there is no one to cry over hundreds.

(Kamal-ol-Din Esmaeil: 964)

Purpose, Methodology and Review of Literature

The aim of this study is to evaluate the influence of such a great poet as Kamal-ol-Din Esmaeil whose poetry has been praised by literary figures and researchers from the time of his life until now. This study aims at analyzing the satiric poems of Kamal-ol-Din Esmaeil in order to identify their artistic characteristics, functions and motivations. The main questions of the study are as follows:

What are the characteristics and functions of Kamal-ol-Din Esmaeil's satire?

What are the factors and motivations for the writing of satire in Kamal-ol-Din Esmaeil's philosophical framework?

To what extent has the use of artistic and rhetorical techniques diminished the ugliness and profanity usually attributed to satire? In what manner has Kamal-ol-Din Esmaeil used the potentials of words to thematically adorn and complete his satiric poems?

The researchers have used descriptive-analytical method and have collected the data using library research. By a meticulous search in the collected poems of the poet, all the instances of satire are selected first, and then analyzed to find the poet's techniques for writing each type of satire, the roots and motivations for writing the poems and also the influence of rhetorical techniques in the poems.

At any rate, satire as a technique and a literary genre has not been overlooked by researchers. There are critical works written about satire such as *A Historical Perspective on Satire* by Aziz-Ollah Kaseb (1985) and *Satire in Persian Literature* by Nasser Nikoobakht (2001). From among the articles written on the subject of satire in Persian literature, one can refer to Mohammad Ghafoori-fard and his colleagues (2018) who have studied the aims and motivations of Khaqani and Hatieh in writing satire in their article, "Stylistic Comparison of Satires of Khaqani and Hatieh"; Mohammad Saeedi Moqaddam and Seyyed Ahmad Parsa (2021) who, in "Artistic Elegance of Satiric Similes of Mojir-ol-Din Baylaqani", have studied the artistic techniques of this poet; and Ali Asghar Baba-Safari and Zeinab Farahnak Jahromi (2008) who have studied the financial and non-financial requests and demands of Kamal-ol-Din Esmaeil in their article "Critical Study of Request and Demand in the Poetry of Kamal-ol-Din Esmaeil" and come to the conclusion that most of his requests are financial.

Discussion

The meaning of the word satire is criticizing, blaming, counting faults, cursing and slandering people (Moein, 2000: 5104 under the word satire). Different definitions have been suggested for satire in Persian

and Arabic languages, some of which are as follows: Firoozabadi defines satire as “slandering in poetry” (nd: 402); Halabi identifies satire as a type of lyrical poetry which is based on biting criticism and sometimes goes toward slander or painful ridicule (1985: 63); in *Anand Raj Dictionary* we read, “slandering in poetry and criticizing in contrast to eulogy, which is also known as zam o qadh [in Persian], and it is when improper traits are expressed with the aim of insult, whether they are real or attributed (Padshah, 2006).

The main drawback of these definitions is that they all limit satire to poetry. A second shortcoming is that all they consider the condition for satire to be the existence of the defect in the one who is satired, while it is also possible that the defects are only attributed by the satirist. Although most satires are in the form of poetry, this is not a general rule as we can find satires in prose, too. The most obvious examples are the satire on Abu-Lahab and his wife in *The Holy Quran* (Masad, 1) and the satire on Jamal-ol-Din Ali Araqi by Kharandzi Zidari (1965: 78). Arguably, the most complete definition of satire is suggested by Shafiei Kadkani: “any type of insistence and emphasis on the existing ugliness of a thing, whether attributed or in truth, is satire” (1993: 51).

Conclusion

Satire as a subgenre of lyrical literature is one of the most frequent and significant subjects in Kamal-ol-Din Esmail’s *Divan*. This study aims at analyzing the functions of the literary device of satire and its various motivations and intentions in the works of this poet. Some of the most important motivations of Kamal-ol-Din for writing satiric poems are social factors, poverty, greed and avarice, cupidity, the delay of the

praised patron in granting money, thriftiness of the patrons, request, and the frustration of the poet for earning a living.

The findings of the research reveal that Kama-ol-Din has been successful in making the best use of artistic and rhetorical techniques in writing his satiric works. Using profane words in many of his poems on the one hand, and political and social factors of his time on the other hand, have obliged him to make much use of poetic and rhetorical techniques. By the use of literary devices such as side music, irony, sarcasm, lampoon, “eftenan” and satire in the guise of praise, Kamal-ol-Din succeeds in reducing the ugliness and the profanity which are characteristics of satirical poetry and enhancing the literary values of his poems. In this way, he creates innovative and unique images and structures which show his power in making delicate imagery and complex meanings. To make his poetry more rhythmic, he creates side music appropriate to his subject matter which has eventually heightened the effect of his satiric works. On the level of thought, Kamal-ol-Din’s satires are intellectual reflections of the cultural, social and moral conditions of the society of the time. He attacks his victims with the harshest satires by the help of apparent and physical elements as well as spiritual elements. It seems that the element of stinginess is more frequent than other satiric elements in the works of Kamal-ol-Din.

Key Words:

Kamal- ol- Din Esmaeil, Motivations, Rhetoric, Satire

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