PHILOSOPHER'S VIEWPOINTS ON POETRY (UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ARISTOTLE)

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ABSTRACT

Defining poetry, the building blocks of poems, the components of fine poems and the philosophy of poetry in general are the major issues in literary criticism that made the scholars and critics voice their opinions throughout history. In addition to scholars, philosophers (from Plato's age up to now) have also tried their hands in this field and expressed their viewpoints. In ancient Rome, Aristotle, as the most stylist philosopher who addressed poetry, influenced his later literary critics considerably. This influence involved Muslim philosophers as well; Ibn Rushd, Khaje Nasir Al-Din Tusi and Avicenna are among the philosophers who attempted to summarize or interpret Aristotle's Poetics (Latin: De Poetica). In doing so, they applied their personal viewpoint too. Discussion on the root causes of creating poetry in human nature, the aim of representation in poems, factors creating representation and literary types are among similar topics prevailing in the viewpoints of the three afore-mentioned philosophers.

Keywords: Ibn Rushd, Khaje Nasir Al-Din Tusi, Avicenna, Aristotle.

INTRODUCTION

during history of literature, scholars, philosophers, literati and many poets have given theories about what the poem is, and what are the criteria and samples of a good poetry? By examining the history of poetry criticism, one can consider different approaches to poetry. Among these approaches is the approach that M. H. Abrams refers to it. He believes that despite of the existence of the theories diversity about literature, it is possible to identify four theories that had comprehension criticism in the history. These theories have been shaped by the emphasis on one of the four main elements in the phenomenon of poetry and have studied three other elements in the light of that one. It can be considered these four elements in relation to any artwork:

1. The artist who creates the artwork.
2. The artwork that is created by the artist.
3. The world that becomes apparent in the artwok.
4. The audience that this artwork affects him or her.

The emphasis on the world, which the artwork reveals it, creates the theory of imitation that Plato, was it's founder and Aristotle was it's advocate. The second theory emphasizes the audience, which relies on the educational aspect of poetry and it's usefulness, because poetry leads the audience toward goodness, virtue, and justice through the universal image on which poetic justice dominates. During the eighteenth century, the third approach, was shaped which

gradually oriented from the educational aspect towards the pleasure and joy resulted of poetry. This tendency was in fact a transition from the audience of art to it's creator, who was able to create a work in order to create pleasure in the reader. In the fourth theory about poetry, there is neither a poet that is important, nor a poet's audience, and nor a world that the poet creates and reveals it, but rather, it is a certain work of a poet that is considered noble. The main tendency of this theory is the consideration of literary works as an independent entity, that specific quality of their existence is perceived in terms of their intrinsic components. The most prominent word in this orientation is objectivity. The objectivity of the work, actually relates to the language in which the artwork has been created in it (Poornamadarian, 2002: p.15-18).

Another well-known approach to poetry, which of course is a simple and general approach to the subject of poetry, is an approach in which the "meaning" or "objectivity of the work" is placed as a the gravity center of division. These two criteria have led the poetry to be viewed from the point of view of classical theories or from the perspective of new theories.

The "classical" approach to poetry begins from Plato. He sees the poem as the product of inspiration and intuition in of Aioon and Fedrus treatises (Plato, 1955: p.105-106 and Plato, 1957: p.125). He also proscribs poets because of incitement of inferior feelings in humans and the mismatch of poetry with moral values in Tenth Jomhoori book (Plato, 2004: p.574). The student of Plato, namely, Aristotle sees the imitation as an original element of any literary work; of course not like his master, as imitation of imitation, but "his intended imitation was more observer in the creation and universe than the peremptory adherence and obedience of the principle " (Zeimran, 2009: p. 56-57). During attention to "meaning" in poetry, Sir Philip Sydney, the famous English poet and critic, also emphasizes highly on the subject of "teaching", at the end of the sixteenth century and he writes the book "The Defense of Poetry" in this regard. In the Middle East, also one of the most influential semantic currents in poetry was the flow that was built up by the Quran and the religion of Islam. The Qur'an does not oppose the nature of poetry, but stands against poets who promote erotica, sensuality and ethnic and tribal prejudices, and likes and encourages poems that express ethical and wise points (for a detailed explanation of this field, see: Bostany and Hashemi shiri, 2013).

Against the "classical" flow that is based on the "meaning", there is the flow of "new" theories, in which we face the gradual disappearance of meaning and emphasis on the objectivity of the work. Roland Barthes has said: classical literature is nothing but a systematic expression of ideas. This speach can be seen as the boundary between the new and the old Buoyage (Bootigha) (Hosseini Moakhar, 2003: p. 78). The "new" theories, that are based on the "objectivity" of the work, include schools such as formality, structuralism, semiotics, text interpretations and deconstruction.

Considering the important approaches that are in the history of poetry criticism (and we have talked briefly about them it in the above), Aristotle's theories have always been a principle of poetic theories, which has attracted the attention of experts, either at that time, and many centuries after that time. In fact, Aristotle is known as the literary criticism creator in ancient Greece because, he was decided to find the criterion and rule of creation, and invention of poetry and literacy, and to obtain a criterion and measure for criticism and knowledge of the works of the poets. (Zarrinkoub, 2003: p. 289). He enjoyed such a high position in criticizing poetry and presentation of poetic theories, that he was introduced as the flow of poetry and literary leader,

from the point of view of Muslim philosophers (who spoke about poetry), and also from the perspective of Western philosophers and literary critics, until centuries after him.

Although Muslim literary propagandists and poets, were somewhat careless and neglect to Aristotle's poetic ideas, but on the contrary, the Muslim philosophers that were followed the Masha-school, explained Aristotle's theories, and even summarized his poetry technique.

Muslim philosophers had been encountered two heterogeneous phenomena in the editing of philosophical Buoyage (Bootigha): on the one hand, Greek poetry theory that penetrated the deep layers of their minds and languages, and on the other hand, literary researches and Islamic field poetries. Hence, there were three mental states facing them: authentication to Greek methods; authentication to native poetry and tradition; create adaptation, and integration and combination between the two sides of this phenomena. Although neither of them could keep away the heavy shadow of Plato and Aristotle completely of their discourse and Bootigha philosophy, but as we approach the end of the sixth century, the aspect and appearance of their theory becomes more and their Greek identity becomes less than before.

Aristotle's Bootigha philosophy, was translated from Syriac to Arabic for the first time by Abubashar Mattha ibn Younes, that was from the Nestorians of Baghdad. Which "of course, this translation may have been an unclear translation and with inappropriate equivalents, due to unfamiliarity of Muslims with topics such as tragedy, comedy, epic and ... (Rabiei, 2012: p.8). Yahya Ibn Ada translated it again, and after that, Jacob Ibn Ishaq Kendy, summarized it for the first time. After Kendy, Abu Nasr Farabi, that also was a student of Abu Bashar Mattha, took the next step in this regard. He was a creative thinker that achieved to an accurate and rigorous understanding of Aristotle's ideas from the beginning;

So, he entered his extract of ideas into the Arabic language region, carefully and elegantly, in order to provide the edition basis of Arabian Islamic of Bootigha philosophy. The Farabi's goal, was to put forward the ideas that had not been spoken about it, in Arabic literature until that time: "We are going to point out the rules, examples, and useful words in this art that our contemporaries have not paid attention to them" (Farabi, ٢٠١٤: p. 499).

After Farabi, this is Avicenna who, deals with Aristotle's Bootigha philosophy, in more complete and precise form. "According to some scholars' opinions, it should be trusted the words of Avicenna more than Farabi and others in understanding of Aristotle's Speech about poetry" (Afnan, 1948: p.73). He did not adhere to Aristotle's book chapters, in his summarization of Aristotle's Bootigha, and modified Aristotle's interpreting comments about poetry, and sometimes expressed his views on Greek poetry (for example, after describing some genres).

After Avicenna, Ibn Rushd (Averroes) summarized Aristotle's Poetics (Latin: De Poetica) using his own style. In doing so, not only he interpreted and explained Aristotle's viewpoint but also he added his own thoughts. Khajeh Nasir al-Din Tusi in the ninth article of the book Asas Al-Eghtebas, addressed the subject of poetry in three chapters briefly too. He was under the influence of Aristotle's viewpoints on poetry in this book. It could be concluded that not only Ibn Rushd, Khaje Nasir Al-Din Tusi and Avicenna were the interpreters of Aristotle's Poetics, but also they attempted to localize it to some extent and they applied their creativity to this aim. This study was an attempt to investigate these three philosophers' viewpoint on poetry comparatively and highlight their common and distinctive points.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research on Muslim philosophers' viewpoint (including Ibn Rushd, Khaje Nasir Al-Din Tusi and Avicenna) on poetry is scarce. Among them are these two papers, "Muslim philosophers' stance on the functions of poetry" by Zarhgani (Mahdi, PHD) and "thoughts on Avicenna's Poetics" by Rabi'ee (Haadi). Therefore, this study tried to investigate these three philosophers' viewpoint (Ibn Rushd, Khaje Nasir Al-Din Tusi and Avicenna) on poetry and its nature comparatively.

FACTORS CREATING POETRY IN HUMANS

Aristotle believed there are two reasons for creation of poetry:
1. Imitations; it is human instinct and is developed from early childhood
2. The taste of tone and rhythm, as well as the meter: these are all the components of the rhythm. (Zarinkoub, 2008: 117-118).

These two reasons have been enumerated by Avicenna on the factors creating poetry:
A. humans enjoy representation; the human self takes great delight in representation. One of the signs of representation-based happiness is when people look at colorful pictures of ugly and hideous animals and enjoy it, while seeing those animals in person will not be much delightful and pleasant for them. It should be noted that what brings happiness is not the colorful pictures but the representation hidden under them (Avicenna, 2014:75).
B. humans' natural desire for tones and harmonized constructs

Based on this desire, melodious meters and tones have been created and the human self inclined to the meters and enrich them (Avicenna, 2014: 75-76). Like Aristotle and Avicenna, Ibn Rushd also believed these two reasons create poetry in human nature and wrote; "the first reason, the power of simile and representation in human nature develops from early childhood and makes him/her enjoy those simile and representation".

Humans enjoy representation and simile because the phenomenon felt directly is not desirable, whereas it will be enjoyable if felt and perceived through representation like what master painter do on animal drawings. The second reason is humans' enjoyment of meter and rhythm. Studying the rhythm shows that there is an association between the meters and rhythms and these are understood by people who detect them clearly (Ibn Rashid, 2014: 175-176). Khaje Nasir al-Din followed the above philosophers (Aristotle, Avicenna and Ibn Rushd) on the root causes of poetry. He wrote; "there are two reasons for poetry; sacrificing the joy of representation and happiness to compiling united which is hidden under the nature of the self and cultivation of the technique takes it from the lowest rank to the highest one in terms of beauty and construct (Khaje Nasir al-Din Tusi, 593: 1976)".

PURPOSE OF REPRESENTATIONS

The three Muslim philosophers (Avicenna, Ibn Rushd and Khaje Nasir al-Din Tusi) expressed similar viewpoints on the purposes of representations under the influence of Aristotle; Avicenna believes there are three purposes for representations: admiration, denunciation, and pure simile (Avicenna, 2014: 72). The aim of admiration is to motivate the readers to take voluntary actions (approved by the society); the purpose of denunciation is to dissuade them against taking voluntary actions (not approved by the society). The pure simile is an independent type that has the capability of biasing towards either the admiration or denunciation. Thus, it can be called

the underlying representation. For instance, when the facial expression of an angry person is liked to a lion roaring based on the pure simile, this will be interpreted using two aspects: either the "cruel" lion roared and attacked, which is the basis of denunciation (the underlying representation) or the "brave" lion roared and attacked which is the basis of admiration (the underlying representation). The pure simile is turned into admiration and denunciation if it is accompanied by other elements along with the simile (Avicenna, 2014: 72-73). However, Ibn Rushd, who expressed similar belief on the purposes of the representations as Avicenna wrote; "it is necessary to include admiration and denunciation into each simile and representation and these two are found not only in verbal representation and simile but also in the tone and rhythm. Besides, there is another type in simile, which its ultimate aim is pure simile not admiration and denunciation. Nevertheless, this type of simile is capable of representing the functions of either admiration or denunciation by adding and inserting some more elements (Ibn Rushd, 2014: 172-173)."

In this regard, Khaje Nasir al-Din Tusi wrote; "the purpose of representation is conformity of three elements: either the abstract, approximate admiration, or approximate denunciation and conformity of the abstract. Like the representations of a painter who represents a tangible face. In terms of admiration, it is represented as an angel, but as a demon in terms of denunciation. Or animal representation of a none-animal being that sometimes lead to strange representations like Mani followers who depict the nature of mercy and wrath as the most beautiful and the most hideous faces as majority of poets do. For instance, poets in the past depicted the good as a robust and fine man in their story (the contrary applies to the evil). Poetic representations are more delightful through admirations and denunciations like what happen in eulogy and invective; the good selves are biased more towards admirative representations and the evil ones towards denunciation (Khoja Nasir al-Din Tusi, 1976: 292)". Nevertheless, Aristotle, whose thoughts are borrowed by Avicenna, Ibn Rushd and Khaje Nasir al-Din Tusi, did not addressed this purposes directly; he pinpoints these purposes in poetry indirectly. "people who imitate often explain the individuals' behavior and these individuals are necessarily either good or evil because the difference of character almost always goes back to this dualism and the difference of people is doing good and evil" (Zarinkoub; 2008;114-115). The eulogy and vilification that Aristotle talked about are the basis of admirations and denunciations that are the ultimate aim of poetry. Aristotle also believed that "those who describe poets either describe them more than they were (or are) truly in terms of the character or less than their true character, or between; in this regard the poets are like painters (ibid; 115).

FACTORS CREATING REPRESENTATIONS IN POETRY

Aristotle believed that some factors create imagination and representations in poetry including rhythm, words, and tone. He explains them in detail: "all arts imitate things by rhythm, words, and tone. These elements are used sometimes collectively and sometimes separately. For instance, in playing flute or harp or other woodwind musical instruments having several pipes, imitation is done through rhythm, and tone; however, dancing is performed using rhythm without tone because dancers use rhythm (that are the expressions of dance type) to imitate individuals' nature or character whether they enjoy doing or suffer from. Among the arts and techniques, some use all the above-mentioned elements like the poetry by Dithyramb, Nomus, tragedy and

comedy" (Zarinkoub, 2008: 113-114). Avicenna believed poetry applies three factors to exercise imaginations and representors:

- First: using the tone to sing
- Second: using the words if they are imaginative and representative
- Third: using the meter that sometimes enrich the text and sometimes tarnish it

These elements are often used collectively; the meter and imaginative words are usually used without tone; occasionally, they are used separately as well. Like Aristotle and Avicenna, Ibn Rushd also believed that poetic imaginations and representations are made by the skillfulness of the tone, meter, and representative words (simile). However, he seemingly believed the meter and representations are the two wings of poetry and wrote; "some of the texts that are called poetry negligently are nothing but mere meters; texts that are built upon meter and representation should be called poetry and others lacking these elements are just speech or statement (ibid: 171). Following his precedent three philosophers and applying his unique style, Khajeh Nasir-o-din Tusi listed the factors creating representations in poetry:

1. The number of times, the words represent rhythm thoroughly or in half that creates the meter
2. What could be audible out of the words namely utterance
3. What could be comprehensible out of the words namely meaning
4. What that are interconnected and intertwined (Khajeh Nasir-o-din Tusi, 1976: 588).

LITERARY TYPES

When Aristotle comments on literary types, he refers to types like: Dithyramb, Nomy, Dramata, Phalic, Narrative plays but put more emphasis on tragedy, comedy and epic. In contrast to Aristotle, Avicenna listed a wide range of literary types in Greek poetry and wrote; "the Greek had special intentions that address these intentions in their poetry. They designated a distinct meter for each intention and called a meter by a special given name including: Tragedy, Dithyramb, comedy, Iamba, Drama, Dyghra, Anthyi, Afighi, Rhetorica, Satory, Fyomota, Ifha pasardes, Otosteghy.

Avicenna did not mention his source in this regard but it is likely that he followed Al-Farabi views. Slight differences of them could be assigned to their distinct philosophical styles or the errors of historians. In contrast to Avicenna, Ibn Rushd did not pay considerable attention to literary types, especially Greek ones. He only mentioned some literary types including the techniques of eulogy, and invective and poetic stories and simply ignored other types.

However, Khajeh Nasir-o-din Tusi took the medium path; not addressing the literary types like Avicenna in details nor ignoring them like Ibn Rushd. He argued; "the Greek had limited intentions in poetry and designated a separate meter for each intention. For instance, some types included addressing the goodness, and this was the top type and had a very melodious meter. Another type included addressing the evil and vulgarity and vilification. Still another type dealt with fights, dispute, provocation, and wrath. Some types focused on the hereafter and improving the concupiscent self and some on proper happiness and jollification; some other on politics, women, and territorial news and updates; each type had its own special and organized components for the target intentions including proper meters and imaginations applied suitably to influenced the reader more (Khajeh Nasir-o-din Tusi, 1976; 590, 591). It could be generally

said that these three Muslim philosophers did not comment on literacy types similarly, but it is obvious that they were indirectly under the influence of Aristotle (who commented on literary types first); since they were not mere imitators, they modified or added some remarks to Aristotle's original comments. These three Muslim philosophers believed that two literary types namely comedy and tragedy are more important than other types; they are addressed in the following section;

Tragedy

Aristotle believed that "tragedy is an imitation of a wonderful and perfect action; it has its designated width and dimension; this imitation is done through verbal utterance along with various colorful literary decorations. This imitation is finalized by individual's actions and not by storytelling to provoke mercy and fear but to purify human self of these emotions and reactions (Zarinkoub, 2008: 121). In his article on poetry, Avicenna presented two definitions for tragedy; one of these definitions is different from what Aristotle argued about in his poetics. Avicenna wrote, "As I comprehended, tragedy is a kind of eulogy to admire a dead or living person and to sing it with influential music or rhythm. In this type of poetry, first the good deeds and accomplishments are enumerated; then, they will be assigned to someone. If that person is dead, the length of the verse would be prolonged or some tunes would be added to the tone; these tunes implied eulogy and monody (Avicenna, 1993: 72-71). Consistent with another definition of tragedy by Aristotle, Avicenna, in his second definition of tragedy, apparently tries to adapt himself with Aristotle's views. He argues, "Tragedy by definition is the representation of mighty and noble deeds using words that are consistent with tragic utterance and tone. The words are not required to be adapted to all the details depicted in tragedy. The tragedy representations influence human self through fear and mercy. In this type of poetry, the abstract aspects of the ethical deeds are beside the point and the practical facets of the deeds matter for the poets (ibid: 82). These two definitions (by Aristotle and Avicenna) have some common elements including:

1. Imitations (representations)
2. (Noble) amazement
3. Individuals deeds (practical ones)
4. Mercy and fear

In fact, both the philosophers believe that tragedy is the representation of an amazing and noble deed that is finalized and perfected by individuals' deeds and leads to mercy and fear ultimately. Ibn Rushd translated and paraphrased tragedy as "technique of wonder"; he believed that tragedy is perfect, voluntary and virtue-based simile and practical representations that convey the overall meaning of that virtue (not its referent separately). Representations that provoke mercy and fear lead to mild reaction of the self; the cause of this reaction is the purification comprehended by people of virtue (Ibn Rushd; 2014; 178). Contrary to the above philosophers, Khajeh Nasir-o-din Tusi did not elaborate much on tragedy and its definition in his article and took a distinct path in this regard.

Comedy

Commenting on comedy, Aristotle argued in details; "comedy is an imitation of dirty and evil deeds; it is not an imitation of the worst human attributes but an imitation of shameful deeds

that bring about mockery and ridicule. What causes mockery, ridicule is a deed that depicts a defect and awkwardness, and no one is going to get hurt by this defect and awkwardness (Zarinkoub, 2008: 120). Following Aristotle, Avicenna argues; "comedy is those representations that intensify the bad deeds more than that they are truly perceived. Not all bad deeds are represented in comedy but those that uglify humans' deeds for mockery and ridicule; it seems comedy is a type of ridicule (Avicenna; 2014; 79). It seems that the source of Ibn Rushd for Aristotle poetics was the translation by Ghanayi. Like him, Ibn Rushd translated tragedy and comedy as the technique of eulogy and invective. Regarding the technique of invective, he believed that what is meant by the technique of invective is not representing bad deeds and awkwardness but representing deeds that are bad, awkward, and ridiculous; in other words, representing awkward and dastard deeds that do not worth sorrowing over (Ibn Rushd; 2014; 177). The common view of the Muslim philosophers on comedy (under the influence of Aristotle) is the fact that comedy should represent mischiefs that could be ridiculed. In this regards, Khajeh Nasir-o-din Tusi believed that comedian represents three elements: first to uglify the individual to ridicule him/her; second to harass him/her upon insist and inadequate considerations and third to get rid of sorrow (Khajeh Nasir-o-din Tusi; 1976; 593).

CONCLUSIONS

As the pioneer critic of poetry, Aristotle left a lasting effect on the western and eastern philosophers' beliefs and mindset years after his lifetime; this influence is still dominant today. In this regard, Aristotle excelled Muslim philosophers including Al-Kindi, Farabi, Avicenna, Khaje Nasir and Ibn Rushd. Avicenna, Khaje Nasir and Ibn Rushd are the Muslim philosophers who followed Aristotle in terms of the philosophy of poetry and have been influenced by his thoughts greatly. Their viewpoints on the nature of poetry and its characteristics are (almost) similar; these include the argument on factors creating poetry in human nature, the purpose of representation in poetry, the factors creating representations in poetry, and literary types and their common and distinct points.

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