The Art of Nezami’s Fiction Narrating in “Khosro and Shirin”

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ABSTRACT: The great poet of Ganjeh, Hakim Nezami Ganjavi, undoubtedly was so creative and innovative in the re-narrating the stories having mostly historical roots that passing the time remove no value of him and his masterpieces. A small contemplation on the imitations taken from his works after Nezami’s death until Return Period, shows the transfusion of his works in the mind and language of Persian speakers and also shows the feature of uniqueness of his works when those who were not expert and genius wanted to imitate them. The analyzing of Nezami’s works, especially Khosro and Shirin to which Nezami was so much attracted and can be considered as the best of his works, reveals the art of his fiction in the field of narrating literature, and provide some scales to evaluate his works. Therefore, after studying the most important elements of the story, the way of using them in Khosro and Shirin is going to be discussed and the Nezami’s weak and strong points are illustrated in this regard. Familiarity with the general features of fiction and story writing in the Iranian old stories is the least issue that we can obtain through analyzing the elements of story in Nezami’s Khosro and Shirin.

Key Words: Nezami Ganjavi, Khosro and Shirin, Narration, Fiction, and Elements of Story

INTRODUCTION

In Ferdausi’s epic collection of poems under the title of Shah-Nameh, there are many discussions about story yelling and narrating. The word “Dastan” meaning story in Farsi has been derived from the word “Datestan” in Pahlavi language and can be defined as a letter which in Persian has the connotation meaning of tale (Kazazi 2004). Mohammad Ali IslamiNedoshen believed that “story in our culture has more the concepts ancient and Aryans issues, while tale has the concept of Islamic and Semitic. For example we say the story (fiction) of Siavash not the tale of Siavash; on the contrary, we say tale of Yousef the Prophet and not and story of Yousef” (1995). Nevertheless, the creator of Leili and Majnoon said that “the narrator of the fiction said so/when he opened up the treasure of these words” (Nezami 2001).

Considering the elements which make the subsequent narrations nearer to each other and also make the distinction between previous ones, and what is considered after and before the Constitutional Revolution, there created a new kind of narrating which is based on European story writing including short short story, short story, long story, romance, and novel.

But Mohammad Jaffar Mahboub gave another definition of story according to the principals of Velademir Prop’s thoughts as “for the first time in the years of 1930s, a Russian professor understood that in spite of the fact that there are thousands of stories around the world within different nations which all different, the elements and fundamental basis of all are not going beyond 50. They are as the same as different building around the world. According to such idea, there might be an imitation from stories in a nation in other nations” (Mahboub 1999).

The analyzing of the story through its elements can be considered as the talent of the critic. If the story writer having known the minute details of story and story narrating create his/her story, it is surprisingly true that in past in the old and ancient stories of Farsi, we had such techniques and the writers seemed to know all these new elements and applied them on their stories and even added them creativity and innovation. Furthermore, studying the elements of the story help us so much in the analysis of Khosro and Shirin by Nezami. Therefore, we pay the attention to the definition and explanations regarding the elements of the story and paved the way for them within Nezami’s Khosro and Shirin.

Employing The Elements Of Story

Plot

We start the analysis by plot. Reza Bohrani called it as structure and plan of the story (Bohrani 1983). Ebrahim Younesi also called it as plan of the story (Younesi 2005) and Jamal Mir Sadeghi called it as founded plot.
Moreover, in his Poetics, Aristotle says, a plot must have a beginning, a middle, and an end, and the events of the plot must causally relate to one another as being either necessary or probable. Therefore, according to what is mentioned, we call it as plot. A plot in a story would be considered according to the following roles:

Plot is not merely the summary of the story,
There is no story without plot, and
The scale for evaluating the plot is its strength and not its existence.

Therefore, considering the past tales and stories as plotless is nonsense because it is impossible for a story to be created without any reason and be dangle. The only strange thing is the cause of the happenings and events. Khosro Parviz as one of the main characters of Nezami’s story, if cannot be considered as the creation of Nezami’s innovative mind, he is not as his created character. Khosro Parviz and his life have their roots in the history of the world. Even Firdausi in his great work impliedly dedicated some parts to him; but what he considered is about his military situation and not affair one. Unlike, Nezami directly refers to the love between Khosro and Shirin and never tries to imitate others. The only important thing is the love-oriented relationship between them:

The wise man who narrated this tale,
He narrated the story of their love,
When he fell into such a life routine,
He lost the time of youth,
When a love became desirable,
There would be no words to be worthy,
I told you that whatever the wise man told,
It is not suitable to be retold,
From what remains of love affair,
My words are of unfaithful man. (Nezami 2001).

Nevertheless, being historical is also important in this story and this is why the relationship between cause and effect is strong. This is logical when the story writer does not changes the historical events by his own will. In this regard, Khosro and Shirin is well-structured enough. But we should mention that the story of Khosro and Shirin is weaker than Firdausi’s Shahnameh in terms of military views of narration in plot.

Moreover we should consider that some reasons leading to the weakness of the story were the cultures of past traditions and in the modern world they are reducing the value of the story. In the narration of Nezami, after the dream that Khosro has and he is promised to Shirin and vice versa, we have such an idea:

When he became sure that he has her,
And he could see her,
He ordered to the others to bring her,
And there would be no way to hide,
They brought her beside,
He gazed and stared at her face for hours,
He could not move his eyes of her,
Nor he could bring her in his arms (Nezami 2001).

Saeed Hamidiyan believes that falling in love through eyes when looked through the lenses of realism, can be considered as a lack covering the literature and refers to the idealism and exaggeration of friendship (Hamidiyan 1993).

In addition, although the description that Nezami made of Shirin, Morning and other beautiful things are great examples of screening, the plot of the story is more breakable. Another example for the lack of plot in this story refers to the first meeting of Khosro and Shirin. Because of the fraud action that Bahram Chubineh performs against Khosro and devalues him in the eyes of his father, Khosro goes to Armaan in search of Shirin and visits her when she is bathing in a spring. The reason here is more powerful for the weakness of the plot and this is because of having no cause for the occurrence of the meeting. In the text we have: By chance his horse became exhausted/He rested in a place where his lover was bathing (Nezami 2001)

**Point Of View**

In ancient period, when Stone Age people gathered together and narrated the story of fighting a panther, they were using first person pint of view. When they were narrating the story at the time of the absence of that person, they were using this person point of view. Similarly, the old tale and stories considered the view point and narrated in the similar vein. The point of view is so important that some story writers make their works unique by a change in view point. Many great authors changed their view point because of its importance. For instance, we can mention Theodor Dostoevsky in “Crime and Punishment” and Jane Austin in “Sense and Sensibility”. This is because of the reason that the matter of point of view has a vital importance in the narration of the story.

Khosro and Shirin, the great work of Nezami, is approximately 5159 couplets. Other issues expect from the story
covers more than 750 couplets and the rest of it belongs to the story of Khosro and Shirin. It is narrated in third person point of view which is told by “the wise old spokesman”: Said so the wise old spokesman/Who learnt by heart all past tales (Nezami 2001), and the story continues on the same routine. Narrating the story in third person gave the opportunity to Nezami to give even the minute details of the characters including their background, and happening around which might be useful during the story. The information given cannot be rejected or neglected by the reader. This is why all the story from the wish of Hormoz to have a son to the murder of Khosro by Shiroyeh is narrated flowingly. Nemazi spoke from the behalf of all the characters in a unique way. In his story, all the characters from the king to the servants are speaking in a very literal and highly qualified manner. There are very long series of questions and following answers which reduce the structure and framework of the story. Because Nezami spoke instead of all the characters, it is said that it reduces the framework and the unity of the work. For instance, we have:
The King by the heavy moments of the days,
Called for instance BahramChoubin,
That when the days are against us,
They were against BahramChoubin,
When the glory of our kingdom rose,
BahramChoubin left to east (Nezami 2001).

Characterization

The genesis of poetry and story in an ancient social and cultural context which is depended upon the thoughts, believes, morals, polices, governments, and the changing of the rules that lead us to the study of characters and characterization in poetry and story. For such a discussion, we put the emphasis on lyrical literature and the characters within. In this kind of literature we mostly have two kinds of characters including lover and beloved. There is no subjectivity for the lover and he/she owns nothing lesser than beloved. But because in Persian literature the scale of beloved is much heavier than the lover, the mind of the critics is mostly dealing with the beloved. In Persian literature it is not 100 percent clear that the beloved is man or women. Nevertheless, the beloved is an unreachable, cruel, and heartless creature than has a kind of sadism who is confronted which a lover who has a kind of masochism. The beloved tortures and the lover enjoys such a torment (ShafieKadkani 2001, p. 23). In order to evaluate such a matter, we should deal with the ideas of Freud and Yung. In this regard we should consider two subjects of individualism and personal identity.

The character of Farhad in Khosro and Shirin and his love for the princess of Arman and his unequal challenge with Khosro, especially when they have an argument which forces Khosro to remain silent, and at last his sorrowful death in Bistoon give the book of Khosro and Shirin a very colorful mood. In Khosro and Shirin, like other lyrical stories in Persian literature, the events and happenings are going ahead according to the existence of the lover and beloved. These characters are the main ones in the story of Khosro and Shirin. The characterization used by Nezami is a kind of direct one, but sometimes it is indirect and he brings them out of the conflicts and moods of the story in a way that the characterization of the characters has a transformative principle. In the book we have:
A fairy girl like a beautiful fish,
Having a little hat-scarf under her chin,
As beautiful as the young moon,
Black eyed like the water of life,
Tall enough like a palm tree,
Having two date-objects on her hair
Repeatedly telling her name in lips,
Causes sweetness of the mouth
Having teeth like pearl,
The whiteness of pearl also they have, ... (Nezami 2001).

Although the description here is colorful and unique, it is the ultimate of miracle that the poet can create by means of words. It is completely typical. It means that the description does not only belong to Shirin and many other princesses own such a glorification. Surprisingly, Nezami also describes a Bedouin girl that is very similar to Shirin. It means that the description is the same as what is used in Liely and Majnoon and vice versa. Sometimes, through direct characterization Nezami goes to indirect characterization. Majority of the characters in Nezami’s work are flat and one-sided. For instance, Farhad is a typical one who is absolute lover, the symbol of faith and loyalty, the picture of sacrificing and many other good deeds. Today, creating such characters is against the rules of story writing and reduces the unity and the real existence of the story.

Other minor characters like Omid, Barbod, Nakisa, and others play the important role of highlighting the characters of Khosro and Shirin. Some of them shine in some parts of the story and disappear afterward (Nikobakht, 2005). In this regard, in some parts some minor characters are paid the high attention in a way that go
beyond the major characters.

Setting
The characters of the story must be placed within the events and happenings of the story in a certain time and space. Therefore, the time and space is called as setting. In fact, setting is a framework in which the action take place. The story writer should know the adaptability between the characteristic of the character and the setting he/she should be placed within. For instance, a poor woman cannot be set out in a wealthy and royal situation and vice versa. Each person is dynamic within his/her own adaptable setting and outside of this setting, he/she would lose her/his world of story.

In Khosro and Shirin, the type of setting is very important. There are many settings that only are created because of showing the poetic power or the mood that the poet has. These settings may be considered as very artful elements of the story, but the variety of them regarding each character can be counted as lack. There should be a kind of coherence between them and to have adaptability means unity in terms of setting. For instance, the description of spring at the time of playing polo has not a lot in common with the events of the story:

Flower is joyful knocking the door of knowledge,
The exited troop calling loudly,
Jasmin and gardenia have wine in their hands,
Violet is in lassitude and red rose is drunken’
The earth is covered with lilies,
Clematis is gazed at marjoram
Cedar is tall enough,
Of love, the tulip has torn her wearing (Nezami 2001).

This colorful description of spring has got no role in the development of the story. It can be omitted or transformed to another place in the story without any damage to the story. Other descriptions such as one of the night are so and give the astronomical information in an artistic way. But there are other descriptions like the one of Khosro’s arc which are placed properly in the story. The setting of Nezami’s works are non-sense without the existence of lover. In those nights, there is the sweet smell of perfume and the mornings are shining.

CONCLUSION
Khosro and Shirin, the second literary career of Nezami, beside being valuable in terms of minute details, can be considered in terms of fiction and story elements so far. A study on the art of fiction narrating in Khosro and Shirin provides us the elements of Nezami’s narration and provides a kind of comparison between him and other great authors. There are some issues in the story of Khosro and Shirin that sometimes put the plot in danger. Nevertheless, sometimes, there are some parts that strength the plot. Other weak point are some military thought that must be considered in the analysis of the plot. The story is narrated through the third person point of view, but it does not the narrator to neglect the moral issues. The main characters are Khosro and Shirin and other characters are to highlight their roles. Considering all these elements, we can find out some weak points and strong points in the way of story narrating used by Nezami in his great work, Khosro and Shirin.

REFERENCES