Comparing the methods of literary criticism in views of Ehsan Tabari and Mustafa Sadiq Al-Rafe'ie

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Abstract

Literary criticism is a major strand of literary science; in the traditional literature it was mostly a hobby. With the arrival of the modern era and creation of changes in the field of literature, criteria of literary criticism were changed and founded by Western scholars. Persian and Arabic literature, like the West, founded the modern literary criticism. In this article we examined the views of Tabari and Rafe'ie and analyzed the effect of the Western literary criticism in the field of literary criticism. In the end, we found that these two literatures, were not affected by each other and both derived the foundations of modern literary criticism from the west.

Keywords: Persian literature, Arabic literature, contemporary, critical views.
1. Biography of Tabari

Ehsan Tabari was born in 1916 in Sari. His father, Sheikh Hussein Tabari was a religious scholar in Sari who served in the administration of justice. When Tabari was six years old, he went to school to learn to read and write the Quran. At the end of the primary season, he and his mother moved to Tehran and he began to study in high school. After the end of secondary education, Tabari, was accepted in Tehran University of Law and studied literature and philosophy in addition to his education. At the School of Sepahsalar, he started reading some Islamic texts, rational and textual science and philosophy. Tabari in 1937, (the Persian date Ordibehesht 1316) along with Taqi Arani and Anwar Khamenei was sentenced to three and a half years in prison, on charges of belonging to and promoting Marxist ideas, translation of communist works and acting against the security and independence of the country. Finally, in 1941, he was released from prison and turned to writing articles about politics and literature. In 1944 he married Azar Biniaz, a member of Tudeh Party of Iran. He had a son and two daughters. Following the shooting incident of Mohammad Reza Shah in January 1948 and illegality of Tudeh party, Tabari left Iran and in 1949 was forced to emigrate and settled in Moscow. He pursued his academic education in the former Soviet Academy of Social Sciences. In the wake of the Iranian revolution, he returned to Tehran and collected his writings and started publishing books. Eventually after a stroke that paralyzed half of his body, and a year after the death of his wife, he died on April, 28, 1989 at the age of 72 in Tehran.

2. Literary works

2.1. Books


2.2. Poetry collection

1. Dreamy song. 2. among the pebbles and diamonds. 3. by whispering autumn (poetic prose in the fourteenth paragraph).

2.3. Translation: Anti-Dühring

3. Tabari’s critical point of views

Tabari asks the critics not to mix criticisms with insults and humiliation and no to associate explicitness with impudence. Those who are being criticized should learn not to be proud of praises and not to be disappointed of curses. Having Marxist orientation and direct communication with Russia and Germany, Ehsan Tabari is a critic that has interesting critical views on poetry and fiction. Although, Tabari’s comments have been expressed from the perspective of Marxist philosophy, his thoughts on transformation and modernization of thought, taste and talent of young people in various fields is undeniable.
4. Literature of Tabari

4.1. Tabari’s Prose

He coined the terms for the Persian language to express the modern concepts. By mastering some European languages and having linguistic knowledge and familiarity with the language of Avesta and Pahlavi and ancient Persian texts, in addition to the poetic taste, Tabari could suggest hundreds of appropriate words for foreign terms in the political and social sciences as well as literature and art.

4.2. Poetry criticism

Tabari in the article "A word about poetry" refers to the history of Poetry criticism in Iran and the Islamic culture and speaks about the books of "Naqd Al- She’r", "Naqd Al- Nasr", " Dalael al Ajaz " and "Asrar Alblaghah" and also " Al mu'jam fi Ma Er Ashar AL jam"; Tabari regards art "and poetry as instruments of political action, and disregards the intrinsic values of art for the sake of political contents. He believes that the expression of minutes and sensual elegance of states reduce universality.

Criticism is a very difficult Practice and if the imagination of the critic is less than that of the poet in terms of the creation a literary work, the art and history of poetry, texture of thought and poetry, he won’t be able to criticize the poetry.

5. Mustafa Sadiq Al-Rafe'ie

5.1. Biography

Mustafa Sadiq Al-Rafe’ie was born in 1881 in Egypt, and in a religious family. He was almost ten when he memorized the Qur’an with the help of his Father and learned about the history of the past. At the age of twelve he entered elementary schools in "Damanhur". When he was Seventeen he could receive his degree in elementary education. He started working as a secretary in one of the Egyptian courts. He married at the age of 24 with Nafisa Barqoqi. He had eleven children. He should be characterized by his tough and decisive defense of Islam and Islamic teachings as well as fluency in Arabic, the language of the Qur’an. At the struggle between old and new, in line with conservatives, Rafe’ie, defended his Arabic - Islamic perspective. He wrote his book "Tahta Rayat Al-Qur’an” in response to the book “Fi al She’r Aljaheli" by Taha Hussein and criticized his views. Finally, his body weekend due to typhoid – he was suffering from it since his youth, and he died in 1937.

5.2 Poetry

5.2.1 Rafe'ie’s poetry book: Rafe'ie was a great contemporary poet; he released his first poetry book along with a beautiful introduction on poem, the meanings, techniques and styles at the age of 23 and very soon, he released its second and third edition as well.

5.2.2 Diwan Al nazarat: after the publication of his first book, he offered his " Diwan Al nazarat " to the Arab world which was welcomed by scholars and literati. His poems in this Diwan, in addition to national poetry, included memoir and nature.

5.3 prose works
After publishing his poems he started writing prose. His books are:

Tahta Rayat Al-Qur'an, jidal-i qadim va jadid, Al Al- Sofoud, Imam men Aemah Al-Adab A-Arabi, yahye al qalam, tarikh Adab Al Arab, Kitab al Masakin. Hadith al Qamar, Resael Al Ahzan, Alsahab Al Ahmar, Oraq al Verd, Resaelak va Resaeleha

6. Distinguishing characteristics of Rafe'ie’s literature

6.1. Islamic teachings

The most outstanding feature of Rafe'ie’s literature is his Islamic and religious character which is represented in his youth until the end of his life. His character is manifested in his criticism, culture and literary works. The reader sees Rafe'ie amidst his writings while seeking God’s pleasure. His belief on the fact that the Quran is an excellent example of literature is the reason for his idealism and inspiration of divine spirit to the body of literature.

6.2. Originality of words and meanings

Deep insight into the meanings of the terms, in the literary works of Rafe'ie creates the impression in the reader that these writings are not literary works of a twentieth century writer but is a contemporary of Jahez, Ibn Muqaffa and Bediuzzaman Hamadani. Among contemporary scholars, no one can be found like him in terms of literary writing style and language.

7. Poetry style

The style of a poet in his view, is the method of interpretation and expression of him from the beauty secrets of the universe. Rafe'ie praises the style of poets like Hafiz Ebrahim. From his perspective, Hafez Ebrahim knows the truth and the theme of the poem he writes so he deals only with the truth cnot the redundancies. There are two kinds of style in his poems: internal style and external style. These are the poetic styles which are present before the expression and within the poet. External style, is a representation of the internal style and poetic expression.

8. Blank verse

There are some signs of Rafe'ie’s inclination towards Blank verse in the introduction of Rasael Al Ahzan. He states: “I want to write letters in which tears and blood are flowing, I want to write about a poet who influences the heart with his writings, letters full of emotions and feelings that only relax in a format of prose and poetry.”

In a letter he wrote to his friend Abou Rieh, he admits that: “Arabic poetry’s weakness is that it doesn’t have the ability to expand the meaning. And if you expand the meanings and explain them, it is not poetry anymore and is similar to the prose. This is the reason that led me to write the Hadith al-Qamar and Masakin. These books, are poetry but not rhythmic poetry.”

Looking at the definitions of Rafe'ie from poetry, it is realized that he believes in the totality of poetry and its link with heart and emotion. But he never stipulate that the rhyme and rhythm should be abandoned. He didn’t openly show his tendency toward blank verse and revealed it only in his private parties. Mustafa Aljozo believes that "the reason [reading Blank verse in private parties] is in the environment which didn’t believe in the idea of blank verse and despite all trends of innovative and intelligent styles, Rafe’ie, in his technical article, committed to the
defend the tradition.” This is why the Arabic article which was published for fifty years in the Journal of Almoqtatef, rejected blank verse in 1926 and believed it is due to the inability of the poet in writing poetry.

Accordingly, he actually believes in blank verse and has demonstrated his ability with literary books in this field but refused it in the form of a theory.

In conclusion, Mustafa Sadiq Rafe’ie is a literary critic whose views are not consistent, but at the beginning of the twentieth century has spoken in most fields of literature and its implications. His literary perspectives reflect his literary experience and ancient Arab theoretical effects are well reflected in his views. However, his compliance with the spirit of modernity is also undeniable; because some of his views are very new and modern and close to European schools.
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