Parvin’s verbal techniques in inciting people against tyranny

Mohammad Bager Bahdori
Assistant Professor, Department of Persian Language and Literature, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran

Abstract

Parvin Etesami is one of the Iranian female contemporary famous poets. Thanks to her poetical power and richness, her divan has been investigated several times and this article is one of these studies. In this fundamental documentary research, Parvin’s verbal techniques and the secrets of influence of her speech have been researched. The results reveal that she has used different devices including identification, debate, allegory, religious expression and addressing directly to incite people against tyranny and invite them to awakening and protesting against tyrants. Thus she has succeeded in persuasion and satisfaction of the readers.

Keywords: Parvin, poetry, cruelty, people incitement.
Introduction

People have been oppressed by the tyrants and experienced painful destiny. No nation has ever experienced oppressions in any period; since the desires of ambitious men have led to exploitation of fellow human beings and usurping their rights. In this regard, many people were killed and many properties were plundered. The incidents in the histories and the lives of Pharoses, Nimrods and human rights violators are witnesses of these oppressions. The tyrant rulers ruled out tyrannically and the history never forgets their cruelty. Hence the wars between the tyrants and oppressed people never end. In the meantime, different classes are involved in their fights. The committed poets emerge in these battlefields and attack with their poems and awaken people with their poems and speeches.

Parvin is one of these committed poets. She is familiar with cruelty and although she does not fight in the battlefield, but she warns on social disorders and chaos and points to poverty, dictatorship, foreign threats, illiteracy, illness and pains. According to Nadushan “Her poetical domain does not confine to specific time, place and event and she writes about the pain and sorrow of the deprived and poor people”(Dehbashi, 1991, p. 50). “She expresses the people’s sorrow and writes about the deprived and oppressed people and claims about their rights”(Zarrinkob, 1986, p. 9). She talks about tyranny and chaos and attacks on the ruling body and “she criticizes the speech and deeds of the rulers bravely and uncovers secrets and decry their purposes. In the poem of the “Tears of an orphan” she criticizes the ruler and if we assume that her target was not Reza Shah in this fragment, but it can be said that in the fragment of “The safe treasure”, her intent was Reza Shah. In addition to these poems, in the pomes of “The thief and judge”, “Two courts”, “Clumsy” and “Head and stone” she criticizes judges and refers to social justice issues and socialism’(Etesami,2006, pp.21-22) and “This is the first time that in such as a suffocating environment, a female poet writes such poems and it has no precedence in Iran literature”(Aryanpoor, 1997, p. 543).

1- Parvin Etesami

Parvin was born in 16 March 1907 in Tabriz. His father was Mirza Yusef Khan Ashtiyani Etesam, the famous figure and poet of Persian literature. She was trained by her father and learned Arabic literature, Philosophy, Theology and also, four inscriptions of Nastalique, Naskh, Shekaste and Siyaq. Also she learned Turkish, French and Arabic and she was a great translator and writer. She wrote thirty books and translated some books. It is obvious that training at the school of her father raised her as a learned and pious woman. She was graduated from Tehran American girl school and then he taught there.
Her divan was published by an introduction of the poet laureate Bahar in her thirtieth and it gained the attention of the great poets. Bahar wrote: “Parvin adds on advice and moral teachings and exploring the truth from the perspective of the philosophers and mystics are condolences for the poor and the world is valueless gift and the same time, it is the path of prosperity and happiness and she expresses the necessity of learning knowledge and making effort so elegantly and writes that the life waving sea should be surfed by the ship of knowledge and ambition and fly in the sky of hope”(Golbon, 1992, p. 210).

In a letter to the father of Parvin, Mohammad Qazvini praises her and writes: “how is it possible that in such conditions a female poet begins to write such elegant and eloquent poems which her odes are comparable with the odes of Naser Khosrow”(Etesami, 1974,p.10). “Parvin Etesami can be considered as a great poet, writer and learned woman emerged in the Iranian literature”(Khanlari, 1990, p. 273).

Golam Hussein Yusefi as one of the eminent scholars of literature writes on the poetical position of Parvin and her poems content: “In Persian literature, Parvin Etesami is a unique orator and she has exalted place superior to some male poets”(Yusefi, 1990, p. 413). Dehkhoda writes: “Parvin Etesami position is as valuable as the old masters of verse and she has an outstanding place among contemporary poets”(Etesami, 2006, p. 46).

Shahriyar has written the following poems on the place of Parvin:
Parvin is a star in the sky of speech
A world looking at this star
The composers of the literature
Are the artists and Parvin is star
She is the bride in the bridal chamber of eloquence
The imperial bride that the world
Is her infant nurse and the galaxy is its cradle
The divan of Parvin is so dignified
Its prosperities are unlimited
She deserves to culmination
The commentators to point her poems (Shahriyar, 1998, v, 2, pp. 597-598)

2- The importance and necessity of research

The great literary men adornments are witnesses of the greatness of her thoughts and poetry. So it is worthwhile to investigate her covert and overt personality aspects and her poetical characteristics. This article studies her verbal techniques in inciting people against tyranny and her exalted place in poetry along with her eloquent rhetoric in composing moral and
philosophical poems; since “her mind discovers mysteries and hidden facts and this pretentious world and her perception which Parvin represents in her poems have an outstanding position in Persian poetry” (Yusefi, 1990, p. 423).

3- Research Background

One of the main aspects of Persian literature is the deep and thoughtful reflection of humanities and social sciences on their various dimensions and the people pains and needs. The sensible characteristic is manifested in the poems of Parvin; since “her speech is accompanied by novel content and sympathy with the poor. She is a defender of the poor and oppressed people rights and she is the advocate of the oppressed one” (Aryanpoor, 1997, p. 541). These characteristics have led many researchers and scholars to investigate her divan and write various books and articles on her poems contents and concepts and publish articles on her memorial such as “Parvin Eteasmi memorial” by Ali Dehbashi, “Articles, poems of Abulfath Etesami”, “Meeting poets” by Golam Hussein Yusefi, “One hundred articles of Poet Laurent Bahar” by Mohammad Golbon, “Articles of Parvin memorial” by Manuchehr Akbari, “Theological ideology in Parvin poetry” by Seyed Mohammad Borhani, “The poet lady of Persian poetry” by Chavush Akbari, “Education from Parvin Etesami” by Mohammad Tagi Topchi, “Parvin criticisms” by Saeid Hamidiyan” and “Life” by Abdul Hussein Zarrinkob and etc. In none of these articles the topic of this article has been investigated. Thus this research seems necessary.

4- Parvin verbal techniques

As said above, Parvin poems contain social and moral thoughts, religious ideologies and political perception. She is interested in improving society and eliminating of chaos and oppressions. She dislikes womanly show off and debauchery of some women. She takes an action as a man and protests with the weapon of thought and writes poems on prevention of oppression. In her viewpoint, any man in any period is obliged to fight against tyrants, violations and denial of rights and defend the oppressed people. By choosing the correct way of fighting, she announces that the humans especially woman’s value lies in the light of raising pure humanly talents and capabilities and wise defense of oppressed people right. She pays attention to the society’s problems and expresses the people’s pains, sufferings and concerns. In her opinion, woman’s duty is not pleasing others but her mission is teaching humanly thoughts, guidance to right path and respect to people rights. There are no inhumanly notions, corruption, immoral issues and praising tyrants in her divan. She tries to write about truth and prevents her readers from being caught in the traps of moral and mental disorders and abnormalities. Hence using her poetical skill and also effective literary devices and rhetoric helped composing great poems and nobody can claim that her words are repetitions of the obsolete words. She has tried to attract her readers and immerse them in her speech and message.
She was aware of violence, oppression, denial of rights and homelessness in the human history. She experienced the tyrant rulers’ oppression on her people and she was familiar with insecurity, plundering, poverty, illness, homelessness and helplessness. Hence awareness on one hand and consciousness and beliefs on other hand led her to disclose the realities and criticize social decline and blame the tyrant rulers. In order to depict the distance in social classes and the pains and sorrows of the people, she has tried to employ different devices and styles. In this article we try to represent these techniques.

4-1-Identification

Parvin has written about the oppression and dictatorship in the couplet poems, odes and syllabic poems. She lived a in period when the people suffered from injustice, cruelty, chaos and insecurity and “Reza Shah had been coronated by dethronement of Ahmad Shah and the people lived in suffocation and dictatorship”(Dehbashi, 1991, p. 473). To incite the people to fight against cruelty, she entered to the battlefield of thoughts firmly as a champion with the sword of pen and speech”(Chavush Akbari, 1999, p. 71) and “She thinks about the oppression to the people in the world without considering race and religion”(ibid, p.76). “She praises human and humanity and prioritizes all humans and their pains and needs”(Dehbashi, 1991, p.93. She seeks to incite the people against dictatorship, hence likens the tyrants to insidious and harmful creatures.

4-1-1- Scorpion and dragon

She is a poet and she does not want to blame tyrants in common language. Since she knows that she should write about cruelty so her speech has great influence and the reader with her words. Thus, she likens tyrants to scorpions and dragons that their nature is biting and irritating. She considers the reader from the perspective of psychology. She is aware of the fact that nobody welcomes scorpions and dragons and everybody them.

By this identification technique, Parvin tries to reveal the nature of the tyrants; those who kill and oppress the people. Whenever there is a tyrant there is no security.
Whenever deceiving innocents
Whenever killing as the dragon (Parvin, 2010, p. 248)
If you do not like oppression on yourself
Do not choose the nature of scorpion and dragon (ibid, p. 235)
4-1-2- Wolf

She does not consider this simile sufficient. She is afraid of ignoring such important issues and in other poem she likens tyrants to wolves whose nature is attacking and killing. In other words, she tries to show that the tyrant is as a wolf in the garment of a man and his nature is tearing and killing. Indeed, Parvin asks the people indirectly about the fact that cruelty is the result of accepting oppression.

Whenever attack on the people as a wolf
Whenever tear by tooth and nail (ibid, p. 235)

4-1-3-Arrow and dagger

Parvin knows that cruelty causes destruction and misery. Cruelty is as fire that burns society and she likens oppressor to an arrow and a dagger and also to wolf, scorpion and dragon which tears out and kills others. She suggests that the people can live in peace and security when there is no tyrant ruler.

Why hit the poor with arrow
Why wound the miserable people with dagger (ibid, p. 235)

These identifications reveal that “the anti-dictatorship and anti-tyrannical contents constitute the backbone of the Parvin poems” (Dehbashi, 1991, p.8) and they depict that her purpose is the elimination of oppression and the establishment of peace and security and observance of each other rights.

4-2-Debate

One of the effective verbal techniques employed by Parvin is various debates. She speaks by the language of plants, animals and objects and expresses the people problems, needs and demands in these debates to teach the readers. debates include debates of the “tulip and narcissi”, “comb and mirror”, “cloud and withered flower”, “bird and seed”, “nightingale and flower”, “lentil and bean”, “snow and garden”, “treasure and dervish”, “ant and elephant”, “base and wall”, “nightingale and moon”, “string and needle”, “bow and arrow”, “fish and heron”, “spider and lazy man”, “poplar and ax”, and “dog and cat” and etc.

In Parvin’s debates, different characters attend. In some debates, we find a dialogue between sometimes two flowers, two animals or two men and even two parts of a body and two trees and sometimes a man and an animal and a man and a tree, an animal and a plant and a man
and an object are characters. Parvin expresses her ideas by such debates and tries to inform people on humanly and social issue. She knows that she can announce social problems via stories. Hence by correct recognition and psychological power, she employs this device to incite and persuade people. For instance, for inciting people against cruel rulers, she writes the debate of the tear of orphan eloquently and reflects issues artistically by the couplets without involving the reader’s mind in various problems. She narrates this story to visualize the oppression of the tyrants and writes the dialogue between an old woman and an orphan in verse and “attacks on the destruction of values in the society and advises and uncovers truths” (Dehbashi, 1991, p. 434).

In this fragment, she depicts a tyrant ruler who plunders the people and his plundering nature is obvious by the shining crown on his head. The people are unaware of the oppression of this wolf disguised in the figure of a shepherded. So, they look at him and even they do not know the origin of the crown on his head. Only two persons are aware: one an orphan and the other is the old woman who had experienced the cruelty of the rulers. They find the response of the orphan question in the shining crown of the ruler and she can convince the child:

At that moment an orphan asked
What is that shining thing on the crown of the king?
One replied that we do not know what that is
It is obvious that it is an expensive thing (Parvin, 2010, p. 126)

An old woman tired of cruelty of the rulers walks to the child and says: “that is the product of my tear and your affliction”. She does not consider beautiful the signet on the crown since it is the product of the people’s pain and sufferings:

He has deceived us by the garment of the shepherded
He is the wolf who is familiar with the herd several years (ibid, p. 126)
This couplet reveals the secret of shining of the signet of the king crown:
Look at the tear of the orphans
To know the origin of the shining of that signet (ibid, p.126)

By this debate, she emphasizes that the rulers make luxurious places and possess treasuries and put golden crown on their heads and suppress the people by collecting wealth and denial of the people rights and ignoring their pains and needs. Through narrating an allegory, she depicts the poor and their problems and misery on one hand and discloses the plundering of the rulers on the other hand. She reveals the cause and effect of social issues and distance in social classes and tries to sentimentalize the people to determine their destiny. Undoubtedly, her purpose is not silence and entertainment, but to protest against cruelty.
4-3-Religious expression

Parvin knows that writing an ode or a fragment is sufficient to inform about oppression and cruelty. She employs the most beautiful and effective aspects of speech and uses verbal techniques like religious expressions. By these techniques, she tries to prove her claim by reasoning and mentioning undeniable facts to gain approval of the reader so that the reader can perceive the message of the writer and pays attention to the ugliness and consequences of cruelty and oppression:

When you put fire the people  
That fire will fire you (ibid, p.214)  
In the ship that was intrigue  
Sailed day and night without stoppage (ibid, p. 216)  
Everybody who annoyed others became annoyed  
Everybody who dug the well fell down in it  
If you want to become safe and secure  
Do not incise other hearts without reason (ibid, p. 224)  
The building that you construct is made of sigh  
You will be fired by that sigh (ibid, p. 250)  
You torment the people and hit them with hammer  
Without thinking that one day  
You will see the world is hammer and your are a stake  
When the divine light shines  
Every hidden becomes clear  
You never cover your defect  
This meanness and animalistic behavior has no result  
Except than evilness and meanness (ibid, p. 253)

She threatens the tyrants on their end and informs the oppressed people that the oppressors will be punished and also emphasizes that indifference to cruelty is a kind of oppression.

4-4-Direct addressing

The poet employs other techniques in her speech. She uses direct addressing. In the labor ode, she narrates the story of a worker that his master has plundered his properties. She wants him to defend his right. In “Parvin period, most people worked for the aristocrats who were owners of lands and plundered the products of the peasants: peasants who had not food and money in the winter”(Chavush Akbari, 2001, p. 90). In this addressing, she refers to calamity and
misery of the peasants. Of course, the poet warns all humans since her pain is the pain of all humans. In these couplets, she cries on the gaps in social classes, discrimination and denial of rights and she criticizes the ruling body since “Her poetry is poetry of the weak and oppressed people, the orphans and sufferers of the history; the complaint of the poor” (Akbari, 2007, p.160).

Whenever making effort under the sun ray
Whenever humiliation for a loaf of bread
What is your wage of ignominy?
Under the sun, soil and wind
Except blaming and reproofing
Ask about your denied right
Why you are afraid of khans and master
Attack on whom draws your blood as leech
They are afraid of that your children have no food at night
They eat full at night
They and their children learn knowledge
O, peasant how you can understand knowledge
They are people since they are aware of law and politics
The job of worker is suffering pain and anxiety
What he wears is good and worthy
O, peasant you have hundreds patches on your garment
What the rulers write in this court is enforced
O, peasant nobody pursues them (ibid, p. 222)

4-5- Reproofing

Parvin logical vision on the social conditions and her sociological recognition clarify her perception of the events and the problems. She considers various aspects and attacks on the tyrants and oppressions and employs different techniques including debate, reasoning, disclosing truth and other devices to express her ideas and uncover injustice and cruelty in the society. She blames the rulers and believes that their decline is the result of their conducts. She protests against oppression in a debate between two blood droplets which one of them has fallen from the hand of a merchant and the other one has fallen from the foot of worker writes:

You were released from the chain
If you flied for the sake of liberty
The orphan and the old woman did not suffer from pain
If the house of the plunderer became destructed
No innocent was killed unjustly
If the son asked about the murder of his father
The tree of oppression and cruelty had no fruit
If it was punished by the ax
The old world did not wear the garment of injustice
If it had no lining of patience and silence (Parvin, 2006, p. 297)

5-Conclusion

The results of this research reveal that Parvin was a great poet who considered herself obliged to express the people’s pains and visualize social chaos and ill-organization due to her religious and moral beliefs. Hence, she wrote about her people’s sufferings and attacked oppression. By employing eloquent words, she criticized the cruel rulers and tried to incite the people against oppression. She employed various techniques including identification, debate, religious expression, direct addressing and reproofing to inform her readers about cruelty. She has likened the tyrants to scorpion, dragon, snake, wolf, dagger and arrow and invited the people to battlefields. She has written about the language of animals, plants, trees, flowers, objects, human body parts and expressed the social and humanly facts in the form of question and reply. Since she knew that employing only one technique is not influential, she used a cluster of them. She has introduced silence as one of the causes of oppression. She believed that the tyrants are like snakes and dragons and wolves since oppression is the inherent nature of cruel people. She has attacked inclemency of the oppressors and silence of the oppressed people.
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