

DOI: 10.7596/taksad.v6i1.786

Citation: Mahdavi, B. (2017). The Role of Allegory and Symbol in Expressing the Fixed Entities in Araghi and Ibn-e-Arabi's View. Journal of History Culture and Art Research, 6(1), 817-824. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.7596/taksad.v6i1.786>

The Role of Allegory and Symbol in Expressing the Fixed Entities in Araghi and Ibn-e-Arabi's View

Batool Mahdavi*¹

Abstract

In the realm of mysticism, especially in Ibn-e-Arabi's view and his followers including Araghi (1991), allegory and symbol have central and key roles in expressing mystic matters and recognizing the facts of universe; it may be said that sometimes expressing these matters without using the resistant linguistic elements such as allegory and symbol is deficient and inexpressive. Some topics in which Ibn-e-Arabi and Araghi have used some allegories like sea, goblet and wine, and also have used some symbols such as light to the absolute nature of the universe are fixed entities and the other mystic matters related to pantheism and manifestation the multiplicity out of unity. In fact, in their view the universe and creatures which have no existence in the world of divine knowledge or fixed entities are outcropped by emanating God to non-existence mirrors or fixed entities. Considering these matters, this article is aimed at finding the role and function of allegory and symbol in expressing the mystic matters like the theory of fixed entities and its related issues in Araghi's poetry and Loma'at (1992) and Ibn-e-Arabi's works. The results show that Araghi's opinions are influenced by Ibn-e-Arabi's works.

Keywords: Allegory, Symbol, Araghi, Ibn-e-Arabi, Araghi and Ibn-e-Arabi's works.

¹ Corresponding Author, Assistant Professor Dr., in Mazandaran University, Iran.

Introduction

Parable and symbol have a prominent and impressive position in language and literature. They are typically used to transfer the meaning; as language loses its power to reflect the concepts and meaning without these two, it can be said that they are considered among powerful linguistic elements. In the realm of mysticism, especially in Ibn-e-Arabi and his followers including Araghi's (1991) view, using parable and symbol as "bound methods" is necessary in recognizing the rules of existence (Metaphysics of imagination in Shabestari's Golshane Raz, Hekmat, 2007: 219). One of topics in which Ibn-e-Arabi and Araghi use various parables and symbols is the matter of fixed entities and related issues such as pantheism and manifestation of multiplicity out of unity, which its instances as well as general issues are mentioned in the following parts. Generally, the fixed entities are reasonable forms of God's names and the facts of external entities. In other words, the fixed entities are the intermediates between God and tangible world; when God decided to create the universe and creatures, it was emanated at first on the fixed entities, and hence the world and creatures landed on the tangible world. Lack of external manifestation, fixedness, reflection and being intermediate are some of the entities' features.

The writers of this paper are going to answer these questions:

1. What functions do parable and symbol have in explaining the fixed entities and their related issues?
2. How much is Araghi influenced by Ibn-e-Arabi in expressing the discussion?

It's worth mentioning that this paper is aimed at studying the role and function of parable and symbol in expressing the mystic matters including the fixed entities and their related issues in Ibn-e-Arabi and Araghi's works. The instances given are selected from Araghi's poetry and Loma'at and Ibn-e-Arabi's and his expositors' works. Some great individuals as Taghi Pournamdarian (1998) and Mahmud Fotuhi (2007) have studied parable and symbol in details. Pournamdarian (1988), in the book "mystery and Mystic stories in Persian Literature" (1998), has expressed some issues such as parable, the reason of applying symbol in literature and etc. Dr. Fotuhi (2007), in the book "Picture Rhetoric", has developed some useful information about symbol, its functions and features, its origin, available views toward parable, its types based on content, the differences between parable and symbol, and etc. Moreover, although Zaki Najib Mahmud has explained in the book "symbolism in Ibn-e-Arabi's thought" (2008) that Ibn-e-Arabi and his followers including Araghi has created symbolism by sensory pictures in their poems, studying symbol and parable in Ibn-e-Arabi and Araghi's works to show the fixed entities and other mystic matters has not finished.

Parable and Symbol

When “indefinable thoughts and feelings are reflected in human’s inner world” (Symbolism in Ibne-Arabi’s thought, Madkour et al., 2008: 99), one tries to depict them by using tangible elements. Hence, symbol and parable are emanated. These important expressive elements, both show invisible facts and “connect the visible and invisible world.” (Picture Rhetoric, Fotuhi, 2007: 271). Four points of view toward the definition of parable can be remembered: some like Matrzi and Ibn-e-Asir defined parable as a synonym to simile. Jorjani, Sakaki, Ghazvini and most of rhetoric masters have defined parable as a type of simile in which simulating factor is composed of multiple tasks. Ibn-e-Khatib, Razi and Taftazani considered parable as a type of metaphor and figure, and knew it different from simile. But, “the fourth view is recently defined and introduced it as allegory in European rhetoric, which is a story that has a hidden message” (Picture Rhetoric, Fotuhi, 2007: 155). It’s worth noting that most of rhetoric masters accept the second definition about parable, but some like Jorjani have added a condition to the above-mentioned definition; that is, it’s interpretable. In his view, a simile is included in parable. In other words, each parable is a simile but not vice versa, “that simile whose resemblance is recognized without interpretation is not a parable.” (Ibid, P: 256) In Persian and Arabic rhetoric subjects, parable is in the family of simile and metaphor, which goes not beyond one or several sentences, but in Persian literary works, it’s mostly accompanied by narrative and story. “In Persian language, Dr. Shafie Kadkani for the first time in the book “Imagination Pictures”, wrote that parable can be used for what is called allegory in the European rhetoric, and it’s more narrative literature” (Ibid: 258) Fiction parable or allegory in literary terms is an expanded narrative which has at least two semantic layers. The first layer is the form of story (characters and events) and the second one is the secondary deep meaning that can be found beyond the form and is called allegory. “In allegory, mental idea is expressed through sensory means.” (Ibid)

The necessity of using parable

Poets, writers and particularly the mystics use parables with different and various objectives, some are the followings:

Sometimes, it is inevitable for a poet or mystic to express the word figuratively in order to hide his/ her inner and mystic thought and experiences from the indocile. In fact, the form of the text reflects something other than the main objective, while the content is the same as main objective, and so s/he uses parable and other rhetoric elements so as to make the text pleasant or more effective (Mystery and Mystic Stories in Persian Literature, Pournamdarian, 1988: 112). Undoubtedly, some mystics like Ibn-e-Arabi and Araghi are not exceptions and they use parable to express their mystic aims and experiences. It should be added that Ibn-e-

Arabi imitated the word of God to transfer the facts of the world, and believed that this way is the best way of cognition. Using mystic language is that way used in Quran and the prophet Mohammed, and other innocents' narratives. In this context, using parable in Ibn-e-Arabi and his followers' works seems obvious. As in their view, the single fact is multiplied in the form of fractions, and they are manifested as representations; that is, fraction and parable are manifestations of single fact of existence in multiple forms. So, here we deal with manifestation of multiplicity out of unity. The world of multiplicity in ascending curve and mystic ascent is willing to return to its origin and travel toward unity. If the existing fraction is accompanied by parable, human's grace is possible by parable "because understanding the hidden meaning in parables allows us to pass the parables' layers, become familiar with fractions, and be close to the fact of existence" (Metaphysics of imagination in Shabestari's Golshan Raz, Hekmat, 2007: 224). Parable forms the mental consciousness by making tangible abstract matters and fixes it. (Lobes Judgment, 1990).

In addition to this, symbols have influential role in making some of Ibn-e-Arabi and Araghi's parables to express the fixed entities, as parable that typically is "a narrative or a set of different elements reflecting the internal order" (Picture Rhetoric, Fotuhi, 2007: 273) is sometimes a set of symbols. Now, regarding the key role of some symbols in forming different parables, we study this linguistic element and its functions.

Symbol

According to literary rhetoric, symbol is considered among "imagination pictures". Naturally, each picture consists of two parts: medium (simulator and simulated), and intent. "Symbol is the same as medium that its form is in the literary text and the intend is a hidden and invisible idea that is not directly mentioned" (Picture Rhetoric, Fotuhi, 2007: 163). Here, the difference between symbol and other figurative pictures such as metaphor, metonymy and figure seems obvious, as there is a symmetry in these forms, that shows the hidden and omitted pictures, but the literary symbol has no symmetry. In other words, a symbolic picture has two directions or perspectives that are: form and idea. Form is only the tangible and known matter of symbol while the content is so hidden in the word that it's not possible to separate it from the form. Symbol is "material form of poet's inner experiences, and we have nothing but that picture" (Ibid). In fact, "symbol in its origin is the same as picture and hence, is the origin of concepts and thoughts" (Mystic Language of legend, Delashou, 1985: 9).

The functions of symbol

Symbolic pictures play various roles, by which their value and function in thinking, literature and culture is determined. The followings are some of these roles:

Displaying the whole by means of components:

Symbol in a mystic's view is able to display the whole by means of components. That is, a mystic is not involved in multiplicity when s/he sees a drop, wave or stream, but s/he considers the sea that is absolute single symbol. Symbol is the passing way into the inner world, and symbolic picture "is the window to the inner world and the world beyond mind (Picture Rhetoric, Fotuhi, 2007: 180). This important expressive element is stimulus, and directs the audiences toward the world out of five senses and the world beyond body. On the other hand, symbol is "the origin of knowledge, and induces the feelings, and manages the readers' thought and feelings" (Ibid: 178). As it was mentioned, this expressive element has a significant role in reflecting the mystic issues from great individuals like Ibn-e-Arabi and Araghi's view, which is going to be studied in the following. Before that, about the origin of symbol, it can be said that showing a symbolic and mystic picture of natural objects can be observed in all poets' works; poet or even the mystic uses some natural phenomena like "the sea" "to visualize that abstract concept that s/he has in his/ her mind, and makes it visible and understandable" (Picture Rhetoric, Fotuhi, 2007: 190). It can be observed in Ibn-e-Arabi and his follower, Araghi's word, as they sometimes use the symbol of the sea and other natural phenomena in a symbolic form to express the fixed entities and their relation to mystic issues like pantheism. In fact, they show that as components (drops, flood, and stream) return to the whole (the sea), entities and multiplicities return to the true entity. In other words, these symbolic pictures that mostly are called "natural and sensory elements and phenomena, each of which is a mystery of the mystic's unspeakable ideas, and a key to recognize Sufi poet's oracular receptions and meanings" (Ibid: 213).

It's worth noting that although Ibn-e-Arabi has used abstract and non-imaginary language in prose, in poetry he has used symbolized the natural phenomena by applying sensory pictures, and in every part of his works he has explained these symbols to avoid charges; Actually, these sensory pictures have no relation to doctrine and sharia. "The thought of explaining the mystic mysteries may be transferred to others by Mohy-al-din Ibn-e-Arabi's works" (Ibid: 220). Also, it should be said that symbolization in a mystic poem is focused on the other world. Displaying the instances of parables to express the fixed entities in some mystics' words such as Ibn-e-Arabi and Araghi, we may mention the followings:

1- The used parable in their words may be composed of a set of symbols. The instances in Ibn-e-Arabi and Araghi's words are these:

The parable of light behind the colorful mirrors: it reflects this verse of Quran “*الله نور السموات والارض*”². Light is the symbol of God, being manifested to multiplicities and the fixed entities’ colorful mirrors when he was creating the world.

As it’s seen in the latter verse, light is the symbol of God, the absolute fact, and the different colors are its signs and the fixed entities, that has created the tangible world by shining on the fixed entities’ mirrors. Ibn-e-Arabi uses this parable and the symbol of light, and it can be said that light is a symbol “that is the most related to Ibn-e-Arabi’s mystic view toward cognition” (Symbolism in Ibn-E-Arabi’s view, Madkour et al., 2008: 125).

The parable of goblet and wine:

Araghi uses some words such as goblet, wine, and Saki to express the story of creation and its relation to the fixed entities. Saki is the symbol of divine nature, and naught goblet is the dish of the fixed entities: “king of love decided to erect a tent in desert, it opened the door of treasury, and spread treasure on the world, unless the world was static and relaxed in house, suddenly love, restless of being expressed, put aside the hidden screen, and showed itself to the lover. Saki poured as much wine in the naught goblets that in the morning, the sun shone, breeze blew, and the sea of existence surged (Araghi’s Loma’at: 52-55). Araghi, somewhere else, used some words such as naught goblet or the fixed entities, expressed that.

Explaining the above parable, it can be said that in the mystics' words, like Ibn-e-Arabi and Araghi, goblet is considered as essence and its effect is fixed and the elegant wine in different goblets is different and fits with the size and color of the dishes, though it's not the same color as them; so, the fact of existence is not multiplied by changes and multiplicities of works. In other words, it's "fixed and holds its holiness and sublimation" (Mohye-al-Din Ibn-e-Arabi, Jahangiri, 2004: 383) because fact is reflected on it.

2- As mentioned in previous discussion about the definition of parable, some believe that parable is a kind of simile whose simulator is composed of multiple tasks. In this context, one of parables in Ibne-Arabi and Araghi's view, which can be observed in expressing the fixed entities and their relation to other mystic issues, is parable of single manifestation in the form of numbers. Based on this, numbers are considered as multiplicities and results of the fixed entities, but cannot make any deficiency in the true unity, that is God. Studying the elements of this parable it should be said that manifestation of the single self in multiplicities is as emanation of number "one" in other numbers which are created by repetition of number "one". Regarding this parable, Araghi said: "One and uniqueness is flowing in objects as "one" is in numbers, if there is no "one", there is no numeral entities and no names for

² GOD is the light of heavens and the earth

numbers, and if "one" in its form, there is no forms for other numbers." (Araghi's Loma'at, P: 126)

It's clear that he knows multiplicities of number "one" and other numbers, and the divine nature and His names and their entities that are the fixed entities, parallel.

Parable of the sea and its aspects

Another parable used by Ibn-e-Arabi and Araghi in the discussion of the fixed entities and their relation to pantheism and manifestation of multiplicity out of unity is parable of the sea and its aspects. According to this parable, as the water in the sea is single in nature but has different forms of cloud, steam, rain, bubbles, waves, fact that is emanated on the fixed entities and creatures is single and unique. As it's seen, in this parable, there is a compound simile by which we are directed to the inner meaning and the mystic note.

Noting this literature, we may find the poet's full capacity, who characterized a small drop to express deep mystic issues like pantheism and its relation to the fixed entities. Kharazmi, one of the expositors of Ibn-e-Arabi's Fous-al-Hekam implies this parable: "the researcher considers the multiplicities in the world, which is emanated in the absolute unity, as the forms of drops in the sea." (Explanation to Mohye-al-Din Ibn-e-Arabi's Fous-al-Hekam, Kharazmi, 2004: 443)

It's worth mentioning that although in the above-mentioned parable, the expositor of Ibn-e-Arabi and Araghi's works know the sea as a symbol for God, and its aspects as multiplicities, the elements of simile help us to find out the mystic note more than the symbol itself. But, in the parable of goblet and wine, proper understanding of a set of symbols help us to recognize the meaning, and hence, each is separated based on the subject and is studied in the following.

Conclusion

Among four points of view about the definition of parable, the second and the fourth ones are considered by Ibn-e-Arabi and his followers like Araghi. The second one defines parable as "a simile that has multiple simulators" and the fourth one knows it an equivalent to the European word "allegory" and defines it as a fiction allegory. Some used parables in their words, in which there is a compound simile are the parable of number, and the sea and its aspects. Fiction allegory can be seen in Araghi's word, that in this case, he is likely influenced by Ibn-e-Arabi. Parable and symbol are used more in Araghi and Ibn-e-Arabi's works to express important and deep mystic issues like the fixed entities and other related mystic matters including pantheism and manifestation of multiplicity out of unity. They have used some parables such as the parable of number "one", goblet, wine, and light behind the colorful mirrors, and some symbols like the sea, light, and Saki, which are the symbols for God to

express the fixed entities and their relation to pantheism. It should be noted that one of the reasons why they have used different parables is entities' reflection and their intermediate nature, as when God decided to create the world and creatures, there should exist an intermediate with some particular features able to receive God's expression and grace. Most of symbolic pictures in Ibn-e-Arabi and his follower, Araghi's works were natural phenomena like the sea, drop and etc.

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