

Ibn-Tha'lab and his book of Criticism "Qawaid al-Shi'r": An Analytical Study

Dr. M. Nurul Amin Sheikh Asstt. Professor, Deptt. of Arabic

Halakura College, Dhubri, Assam.

Abstract

Abu'l Abbas Ahmed b. Yahya Ibn Tha'lab was a medieval Arabic critic in Arabic literature. He modified the trends of literary criticism and adopted a new trend of philosophy in Arabic literary criticism. His book was the most excellent and advanced among other books, because it highly estimated the aesthetic attitude towards literature and precisely reached the highest point in the new approach of literary criticism. He also noted and discussed the grounds on which various authorities based his doctrine on his book. He opined his discussion by giving the definition of poetry of merits and demerits of the foremost aspect of poetry on the basis of syntactic, thematic and prosodic characteristics.

Introduction

Ibn Thalab as a critic has been judged and expressed the principles and Arabic literary criticism of figurative language including prosody, simile, syntactical and rhetorical devices. The mimetic aspects of poetry lie as much in the form of the speech as in its sense or meaning. He set aside the bases or roots of poetry; he boldly faces the fundamental objection of poetry: command, prevention, statement and question though it may have a residual theological branches are spring, praise, violent language, lament, expression of regret, equality of value, description women and relation of events. He occasionally also contains an attempt to define a concept. The bases is that of syntax; most defines are characterized by a highly ingenious and often startling combination of several discussion, themes, each complex in itself. Most of the themes are drawn from his contemporary critics.

Objectives

Essentially to study on Ibn Thalab as a critic in Arabic literary criticism.

To trace the genre of principles of Arabic literary criticism to the development of many old and new poetic epics.

To show the principles to advocate new trends as well as his writings in the book "Qawaid al-Shi'r". Data and Methodology

Descriptive method for this study has been imposed. Both primary and secondary sources of data have been collected from the available sources on the medieval Arabic literary critic by different writers. Some writers have been viewed and produced many books on the critic which are popular and acceptable but there is no comprehensive material available on the study.

Hypothesis

The main hypotheses of this study are to judge the principles as

Ibn-Tha'lab described the art of poetry and themes such as praise, elegy, and satire etc. and how he expressed the principles of Arabic literary criticism of figurative language including prosody, simile and syntactical and rhetorical devices. He set aside the bases or roots of poetry; he boldly faces the fundamental objection of poetry. The study attempt to show how such epics and trends derived from Ibn Tha'lab had impact by his principles of criticism on poetry.

Result and Discussion

Tha'lab and his critical book "Qawaid al-Shi'r"

Tha'lab emphatically advises against the use of archaic words for the discussed sinad, iqua and ijaza among the deficiencies of poetry because it leads to intricacy and complexity that his definition of tadmin or enjambment the term which became the usual designation for improper synthetic relationship in poetry. His combination of the rhyme-syllable with the meaning of the rest of the verse whatever term was employed to denote the characteristic of good poetry. He repeatedly upheld this opinion, although

tadmin or enjambment for him refers not to the concept of poetry but merely to the final words which comprise the rhyme.

Tha'lab divided poetry in "Qawaid al-Shi'r" into four type's imperative, prohibition, statement and interrogation. He described the art of poetry as themes such as praise, elegy, satire and simile. Tha'lab did not claim superiority in the knowledge of poetry of the modern in distinguishing the outstanding from the mediocre or worse, in the knowledge of the istiraqat of poets and their appropriation from one to another and those who excelled and those who failed. "Qawaid al-Shi'r" is one of his works that he did not compile "Qawaid al-Shi'r." Tha'lab who was perhaps already established as a scholar by that time, questions concerning poetry. It was not necessarily entailed that Tha'lab had already defined the area of inquiry that would be termed by Qudama as- "Naqd al-Shi'r" which was entirely unknown before his work was written. The broad interests of Tha'lab led him to delve into a large number of different intellectual spheres and he was also much involved in the early efforts aimed at classifying poets and poetry and developing analytical criteria. Tha'lab details the characteristics of another pair of opposites prevalent in Arabic literary criticism: naturalness, a quality of innate talent, artifice and the exercise of craft, something that he associates with the process of revising poetic compositions, his works, in whatever way, the absence, the inventiveness of Ibn Sallam and his consciousness of the urgent issues appropriate to the decisive movement of time, the doubtful of the genuineness of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. He had the opinion that his work predates Tha'lab. Being a contemporary of Qudama, Ibn Sallam esteems Tha'lab who should have been familiar with some of the nations contained in Qudama's work. Yet "Qawaid al-Shi'r" deceives the faithful no trace of such familiarity. Tha'lab makes use of the concept of the poetry to transcend the boundaries and contains, among a list of figure of speech and the single line in order to broach larger units of poetry, the section and even the poem as a whole. He seems determined to plot his own separate course, in that he sets out to describe the craft of poetry and to provide a manual for its description and evaluation. According to Tha'lab the main themes of Arabic poetry are four- "amr (command), nahy (prohibition), khabar (report) and istikhbar (inquiry), which are in turn divided into panegyrics (madih), satire (hija), boasting (fakhr), erotic prelude (tasbib), and elegy (marthiya), as well as apology (i'tidhar)." He recognized only the hemistich break, and he seems to have failed it, vest for the two hemistiches to be syntactically as independent of each other as possible. His evaluation of the relatives merits of the five verse types enumerated in his book "Qawaid al-Shi'r". He wrote the comparison about Hassan bin Thabit, who was representative of schools of poetical art. In his analysis he relied for his methodical criticism on pure Arabic taste and on an essentially practical way of analyzing and criticizing literary texts. The criteria which guided his comparisons were the traditional models, his wide knowledge of Arabic poetry and his cultivated literary taste. He was familiar with the figure of speech. In the information which we have about him, we know that he was closely associated with Ibn al-Mu'tazz and he is said to have been Ibn al-Mu'tazz's teacher. Ibn al-Mu'tazz "was not aware of the existence of Tha'lab's "Qawaid al-Shi'r", he found no reason to take notice of Tha'lab's work because only poets and educated critics who were also poets were competent to deal with badi, even though other might have deal with figure of speech". He discussed issues related to the formal aspect of poetic composition, the actual process of composition, some technical issues including the badi artifices, and the themes deal with in poetry.

Conclusion

His works achieved importance in the history of Arabic literary criticism. Tha'lab, we know, raises some of the criticism that was usually leveled against the poet and tries to show how the various types of criticism can be solved and answered. His "Qawaid al-Shi'r" is an excellent book among the books of literary criticism because it covered some important matters which a man of letters requires for discussion on poetry. He described the basic issues with which Arabic literary criticism was preoccupied and the critical principles it developed. He described principles of composition and arrangement of poem. His approach is very excellent.

References

1. Ashtiany, Julia, T. M. Johnstone, J. D. Latham, R. B. Serjeant and G. Rex Smith: Abbasid Belles Lettres, Cambridge University Press, First published- 1990. P. 106, 386, 390, 405, 407
2. Hussain, M. Iqbal: Classical Arabic Poetics: An Introduction, C I E F L, Hyderabad, 2003. P. 105-106
Cantarino, Vicente: Arabic Poetics in the Golden Age, Leiden E. J. Brill, 1975. P. 134-135
3. Ouyang, Wen-Chin: Literary Criticism in Medieval Arabic-Islamic Culture, Edinburgh University Press, 1997. P. 169
4. Tha'lab, Ibn: Qawaid al-Shi'r. P. 04-05, 09,11