

Short Communication

Abilities and disabilities of literature

Mohammad Khosravi Shakib

Department of Persian Language and Literature, Human Science Faculty, Lorestan University, I. R. Iran.
E-mail: khosravi_fafa@yahoo.com.

Accepted 25 October, 2009

The present article tries to describe and analysis various roles that have been contributed to the literature as an organic unity for specific instrument. After a brief attempt to define literature, some of its essential characteristics are discussed. It is literature which simultaneously can promote and nourishes several facets of human mind. Literature has this aptitude that satisfies audience with news in chorus, enjoyment of literariness and constructs a bridge between peoples in spite of their distance. It is literature which single-handily makes conciliation of divergent as same as making generalization. At the same time, literature has no direct struggle and contact with occurrence, however, it moves behind or before the event with preserving the distance.

Key words: Literature, reality, conciliation of divergent, generalization.

INTRODUCTION

Surely one of the most important and ambiguous questions in the field of human sciences is what literature do for us? Obviously, talking about human sciences, in fact is too clear that literature has both strong direct and indirect relation with nearly all human sciences. Society and its problems as well as politics are reflected by literary works. Psychology and mythology like history can show themselves in the surface of literature. Ultimately it deserves saying that no science like literature can interplay with other sciences; so that investigating literary works helps to know other sciences too. The importance of question like, "what literature do for us?" can be attributed to the fact that such question raises doubted about the concept of literature as a global and universal concept in humanities.

Before answering the question "what literature do for us?" it is necessary for all readers to fully understand the nature of literature. In fact discussing about the ability and disability of literature is possible after understanding the nature of literature. By attention to this matter the discussion of the essence of the literature is not the topic of this essay. It is possible to say in short way that literature is Tolstoy's "War and Peace", Shakespeare's hamlet, Macbeth and Othello, Servantes's DonQuixote, Dickens's great expectation, Milton's lost paradise, Homer's Iliad and Odiseh, Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, Mowlavi's Masnavi and hundreds of other masterpieces. All these works written in prose or poetry are literature. The function of this sort of literature is one sort of function that authors have created it for human beings. Authors want to

enlighten this secular world through their eyes and minds for readers, and this revealing function is at the same ability (Brooks, 1963: 17).

LITERATURE AND NEWS

Revealing the external world for readers by literature, means that literature can give both information and news. In this context, the world has two means; one is an external world, and the other is an internal world (Daiches, 1956: 133 - 135).

Literature has this ability that regardless of the distance between readers and world that has been shown through literary works, gives them fresh information of expired time; for example, to show people's conditions and customs during Elizabethan time. Habits, religions, politics, myths, history, civilization, culture, and dominant thoughts are unveiled and cleared for later generation completely by literary works. And among that period, Shakespeare's plays are more important than others. But the connection of literature with inner world is much deeper and important. In this paper, inner world means the nature of human being with his goodness and badness. The connection to the psych and soul is one of the ambiguous and mysterious problems that scholars and psychologists as well as poets have faced (Buckley, 1961: 75). Adjectives like greedy, aggression, jealousy, hate, revenge, lie, fear ness, hypocrisy, pride, wrath, covetousness, gluttony, sloth, lechery, disappointment

and etc, by accompany with opposition of this adjective can be the important engineer and agent of literary product. Literary masterpieces have this ability to show obviously the human being's nature, so that readers can select themselves the right way of life. Doctor Faustus is a famous play which has been written by Christopher Marlow which shows the conclusion of ambition even for complete intellectual power. Tragic flaw of this tragedy is ambition. Inner tension and other ethical news are the most important lessons of this play (Greg, 1946: 97 - 99).

Shakespeare wrote plays such as 'Macbeth, Hamlet, Othello and King Lear' in order to show the mental and emotional pressures over their characters. Shakespeare wants to penetrate deep into the hidden side of the characters and show their struggles and tensions of psych. The main idea of this play is to inform readers so that they get information about their intricate interior (Nuttall, 1983: 57 - 62). The destructive ability of ambition has been shown in the play of 'Macbeth' (Spencer, 1994: 193). 'Hamlet' has been created in order to criticize the conclusion of revenge phenomena, so that readers get familiar with its destructives traces (Spencer, 1994: 195). The play 'Othello' draws to the story of Iago's jealousy and how nobility and credulity of Othello's character are responsible for his crime and death. King Lear deals with the error of judgment, moral blindness, and gaining insight through suffering (Spencer, 1994: 203). Ultimately, it must be said that talking about external and internal world is one of literature's main functions.

Here another important question comes out. That is, by increasing penetration of common's communicative instrument such as radio, television, newspaper and comprehensive literature in the field of sociology, psychology, anthropology, comparative history and also other various documents, would it be possible that readers show more interest to literatures masterpieces? If readers have no interest to literature, which one of both literature and readers blame? Does literature have fault, or in the middle of modernism storm there is no respect for literature? This question is unfolded in the face of "what can literature do for us?" Which has been the content of this paper?

LITERATURE AND REALITY

Reality is not a fixed matter, but it is a moveable and changeable one. The world of reality is a rotation of one's personal experience with people that mingle sometimes and detach another time with others. Thus it is impossible to accept that one writer can draw the exterior reality as fixed picture so that the readers can see it as reliability image. Every person can understand and get only one moment of reality that is, trivial of truth. Trivial of truth will be a white lie and unreality when shown as general of truth. But if reality has been shown as same as its actual form, it will be truth, and it would add intellectual

information for readers (Dutton, 1984: 11 - 12)

Today the inclination for rejecting characters and heroes in literary work have grown out, but it is a futile attempt; because whether heroes are in literary works or not, the impressive and direct effects depends on unity of readers with characters of literary work and it is also an entrance to the world that works. This is the main difference between literature and other types of texts. Reading the Willdorant's 'History of civilization' does not cause the reader to separate from his position, his city, his life, his age and his temper. Of course readers will become more interested in the useful information about the French revolution, formation of the English empire, the discovery of America continent and etc. The encyclopedic information gives the reader more pleasure too, but in such books the atmosphere, setting and the world of readers will not change.

In spite of this, during the reading of Macbeth, Hamlet, Paradise Lost Doctor Faustus, and other eminent masterpieces of literature, the souls and spirits of readers will be summoned, and even for a moment settled down in the imaginary world, because this is the miracle of literature. In the literary work, the reader's truth will exchange to another truth, and readers release their ego in order to accept characters' and heroes' ego. By this means, reader can taste the color of another life and take fresh information and experience without trouble. Readers, during the study of literary works will be cast to another world by its merits and colors. By paying attention to this matter, Marcel Prost has said that accurate literature is appropriate location of minds and mentalities, and internal conjunction (Seldon, 1989: 47).

Literary works will be shaped when the almighty author makes public the individual truth, and it is more significant that the author can conceive readers for accepting this truth. Authors can not arouse somebody to show interest to the work, unless they pay actual concern to it. On the other hand, if the author's perspective is narrow and loathed, the exposed world will be narrow and abhorrent necessarily.

LITERATURE AND CONCILIATION OF DIVERGENT

World is a current and expired matter. Experience of mankind is fragmentary and expired too. World continuously breaks away from jurisdiction of human being. The eminent adjective of the mind of human being is persistently tried to go over its aptitude and because of this, it is going to discard the previous position. It must be said that the attempt of mankind for catching the whole of moment will be overwhelmed. Human being constantly resides at the underneath of cheerfulness and misery.

Excitement, sense, emotion, gloominess and cheerfulness may be long-lasting for sometimes, but in every case they will die, and nobody can be capable of keeping in touch with them or preserve them for eternally. From

another way, there is no emotion or conception, which can enclose life, death, sadness, cheerfulness, contrariety and multi-sided human being that it is his destiny, and in addition, it is impossible that attempting the memory could revive the dead moment and bring back their lost total mentality and gathering the diversity of them (Grant, 1982: 33 - 36).

It is literature which single-handedly has this ability that obviously demonstrates emotions, unfortunates, suspensions, demoralizing pleasures, excitements, defeats, victories, bitterness, sweetness and dignity, and then preserves the perpetuity of the freshness of this issue. It is literature which unaccompanied has this ability that gathers juxtaposition death of grandmother and grandfather with happiness and beauty of marriage ceremony in the interior of whole of one literary work and then bestows life to both issues. For instance in Macbeth; Shakespeare by helping of infusion imaginative poetry common sense to Macbeth, arouses reader to pay more attention to his lesson and get pleasure mingled with news, without showing hostility and abhorrence to him and even showing condolence and sympathy to him. It means that reader fails to remember during the study that Macbeth is a murder or driving force for death of some innocent people like Duncan and Banquo.

It is literature which single-handedly has this capacity and ability that brings together the unmixable moment of human being life, so that it conciliates and situates them with each other in one place. And this is a miracle of literature.

LITERATURE AND GENERALIZATION

Literature with its special vocabulary confronts with passing of time. It has this ability that makes battle with death. Literature has this facility that takes challenge and overcomes the parting and separation, because this is literature which can grant oversimplification and generalization to trivial matter of our life, to passing of time, to taste of life, to death, to solitude, to disappointment, to dissatisfaction, to doubt and hesitation. If literature wants to fill the gap between itself and readers, particularly in the case of separation, which is inevitable and irremediable, it must have a discussion about uneasiness and anxiety, lonesomeness, death, disappointment and hesitation, for the reason that these issues cause readers to be captive in their personality. In this serious situation, readers need to help for knowing that this experience is common and it belongs to all people, not to a special one. This is the duty of literature.

Language brings people into society and makes them members of the general public. Every emotion like unfortunate and disappointment, when illustrated itself by helping of word, will hence not be separated and discarded by society. Ailments which want to seek sympathy will be more tolerable. Literature must take discuses of defeat, disgrace, death and transgression, not only for

unmaking reader frustration, but also for delivering them from disappointment.

Mankind consists of another human being; that is, mankind only through others be comprehended entirely, and getting the understanding of other people is not possible, except through exposing their interior condition to others. This is the ability and capacity of literature that enlightens and clears the interior condition of mankind for each other.

LITERATURE AND ITS DISABILITY

Verisimilitude adjective for literature can get readers away from their actual ego, and throw them into the world of literary work. This ability of literature is to unveil and uncover the disability of literature too, because it is impossible that it can be reality.

Readers of literary work are completely acquainted with this matter that they must live and then expire. They know that they can not live in literary work. Thus they must come back to reality. This is a disability of literature that suffers with affliction.

Literature has an immeasurable capacity and ability to... but it has several different aspects. It can open our eyes and close them too. It can unveil and cover the real world simultaneously. It makes us tolerable and endurable in front of difficulties by generalizing the emotion. It has the ability that completes our acknowledgment by giving reports about precedent event so that freshness of them is preserved. From another side, it must be said that the ability of literature is not an instantaneous matter, because it has no direct struggle and contact with occurrence, but moves behind or before the event with preserving the distance.

REFERENCES

- Brooks C, Robert H (1948). *Understanding Drama: Twelve Plays*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston.
- Daiches, Davide (1956) *Critical approach to literature*. N.J. Prentice-Hall Inc, Englewood cliff.
- Buckley Vincent (1961). *Poetry and Morality*. London: Chatto and Windus. pp. 197.
- Dutton Richard (1984). *An introduction to literary criticism*. York Press,
- Grant Michael (1982). *Eliot TS. A critical heritage*. London: Routledge. pp. 210.
- Greg WW (1946) "The Damnation of Faustus in Doctor Faustus" In: *Modern language Rev.* p. 12.
- Nuttall AD (1983). *A new mimesis: Shakespeare and Representation of Reality*; London. Methuen. pp. 180.
- Seldon R (1989). *A reader's guide to Contemporary Literary theory*; London: Harvestor Wheatsheaf. pp. 218.
- Spencer Theodore (1994). *Shakespeare and Nature of man*. New York: Macmillan. pp. 173.