

Surrealism Imagery and its Status in Contemporary Persian Poetry

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present paper is to survey briefly on the literary school of Surrealism and contextualize its advent, determine the status of which in Persian contemporary literature. The components of this school, its drawbacks with regard to the ideological and cultural context of Iran have been also discussed. It is suggested that today's poetry in Iran with its unique ideological and cultural properties through its prevalent cultural context has adopted none of all components of world literature and literary schools perfectly. To this end, the core of the present article is to delineate the components of surrealism in Persian literature in concordance with the written works in this context and to explain how and on the basis of what criteria are these features manifested and what are the quality and quantity of them. The main body of the article deals with a description of the influential characteristics of this school in contemporary Persian literature. At the end, it is concluded that in the present poetry of Iran, logical modifications have been experienced to the extent that some extravagant aesthetic concepts (elements) in today's poetry have been modulated.

KEYWORDS: literary schools, Surrealistic Imagery, contemporary literature, today's poetry

INTRODUCTION

Surrealism is defined as an inclination towards metaphysical or super empirical reality. It is the attribute of a school in art and literature; it appeared in the early of twentieth century in France. It was welcomed first by painters and writers who followed its principles of that time. (consult to K. Grant, 1992:39). The founders of surrealism believed that << to create an artistic piece of work, the mind should be free of any logic and wisdom and desire; because the very powers of logic and wisdom limit the conscious of man and mislead him, to this end, the only way to be free of them is to deprive of them in order to enlarge the power of the mind and its imaginary power and help appear the real abilities of man 's nature>> (Mirsadeghi, 1992:139).

There is almost always an interaction among the creator of an artistic work and his/her conscious and unconscious, in other words, this has been the main origin of many challenges. <<the basic tenets of surrealism are based on this principle that there is a superior world other than our inferior one ;that is the unconscious mind actually.>> (Ried, 1970:92)

Surrealism is a school that is against reason, religion and reality .This way of thinking underestimates the ethics, moralities and traditional social norms, it regards them as great obstacles .In the logic of surrealists, there isn't any superiority of wisdom over imaginative and magic elements(consult to Fatemi, 2000:234), from the viewpoint of surrealistic poets, the aesthetic of poetic imagery is the result of heterogeneous elements, the more different and inconsistent the elements, the more magnificent and imaginative would be the imagery, (consult to Foutohi Rood Ma'jani, 2007:297). Surrealists argue that to link between objects (Phenomena) and images, one cannot suppose a definite line and boundary between them, every object can co- occur with others and everything that can be imagined in mind, would be valuable in art, even though the nature of such motion and action of a given object(Phenomenon) is unknown for man.(consult Rouyayei, 2007:164) Therefore, <<images in this school are strange, unprecedented, collage, inconsistent, heterogeneous and full of wonderfulness and amazement ;for this very feature, exaggeration in creating fantastic and imaginative imageries in one hand and excessive use of unprecedented and new themes on the other hand are the core aesthetic criteria (principle) in surrealism>>(Zarrin kob, 1985:44)

In contemporary poetry of Iran and especially in neoclassical period<< the aim of the poet is to give up what the civilization has presented him, whereby reveal his primary nature again and attain his intellectual mind anew. >> (Khanlari, 1973:2)

1- The foundations of Surrealism school

To study what caused the advent of this school, it would be better first to survey the backgrounds of it in Europe. The most significant causes of formation such school are as follow:

The First World War, a vast destruction of culture and civilization. The death of many people, the profoundness of disgust, the destruction of the system of values, skepticism, depression, chaos, the emergence of hopelessness and fear, psychic embarrassment ;insisting on "choice and freedom", the worship of aestheticism and cultural life instead of true religion, the rapid growth of alienation with the advent of industry and production companies, a tendency towards nihilism, the very resultant of which was the formation of an inhumanity of art, the presentation of philosophical views by Henry Bergson and Benito Crèche. The preference and privilege of intuition to wisdom, secularism, appreciating the imagination and imagery, endeavoring to scrutinize the inner nature of human and trying

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to make a relationship between them and especially with outer world phenomena, the viewpoints of Fruide and his endeavor to scrutinize the mind and unconsciousness, to define what he called the “suppressed desires” in man, appreciating the subject of “gender” that was later focused deeply (consult Trout, 2006:215-146)

2-The components of surrealism

The complexity of this school and its ambiguous nature does not allow the scholars to establish priority and present and define its components based on scientific criticism. For this very reason, it has been evaluated differently in various angles as the following:

Indulgence and inclination towards the reality of life, making the mind free of the power of conscious; a tendency to dream and hallucination, considering a dangling situation between dream and wakefulness, the belief that everything except imagination and illusion are only as limiting factors for mind, saying that the more exciting and unrealistic the imaginations, the more intellectual of it, a biased tendency to deprivation of logic, moralities, artistic rules, traditions and social norms, a belief to this fact that human being needs something beyond the present reality for getting new insight that would be more superior than what he possesses now ; a tendency to the world that mad people experience, creation of artistic works in conditions where the mind is free of logic and wisdom, following approaches of free association of meaning, considering the frequency of happenings and events and recalling of the memories as the bases of composing literary works, a belief to intuition in unfolding the secret abilities and new insights of the mind, sanity of mind disasters ;a belief that the artist shouldn't and indeed mustn't make a relation between himself and his outer surrounding world (objective reality)(consult Mirsadeghi, 1994:138-140), focusing on one point of unity in mind, making the mind free to imagine and focus on its elements in a fantastic manner, which are more heterogeneous and exciting; a belief that un consciousness is attained only when we act undecidedly (consult to nooshe, 1997:834-837);, using satire to mock the real world, composing strange images and conform unrelated elements ;the use of unusual and incorrect grammatical structures, a belief that it is not necessary to embed a message in each work of art; a rebellion against(a deprivation) artistic rules; automatic writing system in creating artistic work, writing and recording of dreams and insane words of psychiatric individuals;(consult to Dad, 2003:297-298), the belief that art should be in service of discovering the fate of man and his world, great insistence that man and his world are complementary of one another, and we understand it only when we appreciate both of them simultaneously. For this reason, we should search for better powers, it means paying a special attention to intuition and illusion ;because finding the way of virtue is attained when man considers super powers higher than himself ;Insisting on this principle that man is an imaginative creature and language is a superior mirror (device) beyond him .In surrealism “reality” is virtual, it is the result of free creation, it is a personal and relative phenomenon, it bears with it excitement and wonderfulness that in traditional ways we can call it ”traditional revelation” . In surrealism magic and strange phenomena help us to attain a supper reality, experiencing dream in wakefulness, without any specific purpose as an interface stimulus, inclination from reality, depriving from idealism and intellectualism would be possibility in surrealism. Endeavoring to be better and possess a higher position in the midst of heterogeneous and different images and asymmetrical ones is a great success.(consult Said hosseini, 2008:786-799).The description of man as a societal creature in literary works, searching and scrutinizing the foundations of man behavior in different social conditions, and focusing on problematic themes in works are among other tenets of surrealism: dealing with the problems that are in near contact to man and his societal nature, underestimating the predetermined thoughts is the main tenet in surrealism.(consult zarghani, 2000;357)

3- Surrealistic Imagery

<<Imagery for surrealistic poets is not a definable phenomenon; it is subjective, the surrealistic writer does not reveal something, but more he proposes some inspiration instead .His image is never a reconstruction of any sensitivity and thought., the poet creates and motivates them and stimulates such sensitivity ;it is regarded as a start point, as a destination toward the freedom and at the same time it is an “end” and a” means” >>(Noori Kotnaei, 2006:545).Surrealistic imagery opens up new insights to unconsciousness and forwards it against consciousness whereby flourishing the unconsciousness.(Adonis, 2001:146)

3-1-Theoretical foundations of Imagery in Surrealism:

3-1-1 Surrealism

The poet in this school tries to create his poems beyond reality and un usual imaginations and in an imaginative atmosphere, the poet creates his uncommon, impossible and heterogeneous scenes, as this piece of poem conveys it: swear to looking and /to the inauguration of speech/ and to the fly of bird of thinking from mind, word is captured in cage (sepehri, 2006:274)

3-1-2 limitless unknown

In theoretical foundations of surrealism there is a principle that runs:<<in the mind of man there is a spot where there is no difference between death and life, reality and imagination, past and present, up and down (lower and higher) and..., none of them are in contrast any more>>(Seid Hosseini, 2008:825).<< Andre Breton, one of the prominent proponents of this school believes that God is at the highest point of existence ;where there is no contradictions and the matter and soul are in unity, they are united>>(Adonis, 2001:145)

3-1-3-The world of chaos

Surrealists believe that excitement is the start and basis of man's knowledge; for this reason, to attain to that position we should step to excitements and unknowns; because the secrets and unknowns are the path of entrance to the beyond world of wisdom (ibid; 143);

The only trait (happening) that a surrealist poet is following is indeed flourishing his idiosyncratic, individual dreams of his real life; for this reason, his images are also the result of unconsciousness and the result of the unity of his real and imaginary world, as it is depicted in this piece of Sepehri's poem: My mother situated the knife in water/the moon rattled, (Sepehri in Foutohi Roud Ma'jani, 2007:384)

Permanent /continuous Changing

The imageries that a surrealist poet creates are in many ways related to the limits of his unconsciousness. << unconsciousness is a complex phenomenon that never is captured by human being because in Freudian views this part of man's nature has a personal value in itself.>>(Shaigan, 2535;207); for this reason, it appears differently in anywhere and anytime, it has special form and this is the reason of dynamic character and immortality of it. Therefore, the images of the surrealist poet are always in rehabilitation, because he is always changing his unconsciousness. Thus the readers always encounter with obscurities and unknowns, the reader experiences the unusual traditions and even beyond the standard frameworks of language. To show these continuous challenges of unconsciousness we can survey the images depicted by Fouroghe Farrokhzad. As it is known, Fourogh changed dramatically after she wrote her famous collection of poems titled " a New Birth "as it is indicated by the name, (as it is suggested by the name), by the extension, the poet is always changing anew. This inner challenge is clearly obvious in many of her poems written following "A New Birth". A piece of poem titled <<only Sound remains>> is an outstanding exemplar of such inner challenges that we can observe in Fourogh, this is in fact the depiction of what the poet herself experiences; specially in the following: Why me stop?/the birds have gone toward water blue/the sun is rising /the sun is rising and the movement of it: is spouting/and in its limitation of nature/a lightening planet is orbiting/the earth has reached to its destination, a repetition again/ /and the holes in sky/are changed into the channels of relation/and the day is faraway/that does not contain in the worm's paper thinking/why me stop? The way passes through the vessels of life/why me stop? (Farrokhzad: 2000:339-340)

3-1-5 Exciting Beauty

From the view point of surrealism poet, beauty should be exciting, shocking and deviating from meanness, it should be beyond the world of wisdom and sense, in other words << amazing>>(consult Foutohi RoudM'jani2007:306).From the view point of surrealist poets, <<Beauty is either exciting or cannot exist at all>>(Bigzby, 1996:54). On the other hand <<Aestheticism in surrealism is based on contradiction, it means that an object cannot unfold its inner nature itself; except in a contradiction atmosphere: <<There it is: <<I am delighted of it! What is it, it's eternity actually /that is the sea mingled in the sunshine (Adonis, 2001:268)

Considering the abovementioned discussion, it seems that in the viewpoint of surrealist poets, the more heterogeneous and shocking the imageries, the more evident and considerable the beauty would be .For this very reason, this fact suggests that the foundations of the imagery in a surrealist poet are quite different from others.

4 Backgrounds of Imagery in Surrealism

4-1-4 Unconsciousness

As the main tenet of surrealism is based on this supposition:<< that there is a superior world other than our world which is more realistic ;that is our unconscious mind>>(Reid, 1972;92), the unconscious is the biggest source for epistemology and understanding of that higher reality and is indeed a world beyond the real one.<< Unconscious, is a host of unconscious process that affects the behavior of man in this world .Unconscious is that part of inner man's psyche that is dynamic and psychological processes happen and is free from "choice and knowledge", because moral filters suppress mainly the conscious mind>> (Young, 2006:184)

4-2- Psychological Moment

This kind of psychological moment as the compilers of the article call it<< Memory >> is the time where one experiences sudden high and superior understanding of emotions, soul, and psychological traits. Sepehri defines it as << Great happening >> (Consult Foutohi Roud Ma'jani, 2007:381):

What woke up me?/a flying bird of my mind/or the sparking of a cloud split my drowsy? Then in terrible wakefulness/I heard a loud noise far away the sea, magnificent as the silence of a stone/I got up beside the time/That Great happening/happened in deep silence on my lips...(Sepehri, 2006:170)

4-3 Dream and Sleep

Freud, defined dream as <<the frequency of memory recalling that had not been met during the childhood; they are suppressed in our unconsciousness. Whenever the dream appears, the filter of mind diminishes it and that desire moves from the unconscious to conscious, there the dreams are appreciated ;for this reason, dream in any way and in any form that happens, would be a coded language for man.>> (IEmami, 1998:142).He also believes that << all the suppressed parts of the psyche, become alive anew. The interpretation of dream, is the most direct way to understand the unconsciousness, in Freud's view, dream is the most prevalent phenomenon in psychology>>(GHiasi, 2003: 61).The imageries resulted from this dream, are ambiguous and vague, because they are related to unconscious; the poetic imageries of "Sepehri" in a poem titled as << without reply>>, suggest that the poet has experienced the world of sleep

and dream. There it is: In a darkness of eternity/a door was opened in my dream/ waiting was grown in me/I found myself alone behind the door/I stepped in: /a blocked and empty room cut off my looking./a dark shade over passed me (Sepehri, 2006:127-129)

4-4- Excessive love

Since surrealism is an anti intellectual school, it would be quite clear that it is against such traits as wisdom, morality, tradition and commodity laws .Since love is almost always in challenge with wisdom and at the same time has its unique bravery in reconciling of challenges, it is regarded as one of the biggest sources of knowledge and understanding in surrealism.

<< In surrealism it is believed that” love” paves the way for overcoming the tripartite of being(sadness, dream and writing); love makes possible for the creature to meet its reality and makes it free from all conventional norms;it goes up to the highest level. Love in surrealism is the basis for all our actions; it means that it makes possible the freedom of illusion and it diminishes the feeling of sin and what relates to the personal interpretation, desire and eagerness>> Adonis, 2001:78):

A naked creature, naked, naked/as the silence in between the passionate words, naked/My injuries are all of love /I am the injured of love/of love, love, love/I would pass this wondering Island /from the ocean of rebellion/and the explosion of the mountain(Farrokhzad, 2000:311).

4-5 Automatic Writing:

Surrealists believe that in the inner depth of unconscious, happens different dialogues that are the result and the source of our inner desires; but always the knowledgeable dialogues and daily ones suppress them for their flourishing(consult Said Hoseini, 2008:827); for this reason, the proponents of this school believe that to attain these ideas and thoughts, one should endeavor to write automatically.

In this approach, the person used to sit at table and without any pre thinking wrote whatever came to his mind without any disturbance and programmed actions.(ConsultDad ., 2003:297) In contrast to volitional writing this kind of writing,, is based on a special regularities in the midst of irregularities, it is on the basis of some rules: << the annihilation of predetermined thought, the devastation of every control by consciousness and specially wisdom; the obliteration of any systematic writing in traditional ways that appear this new way of writing, are all based on chaos and irregularities without having any coherence and definite structure ; in fact the demolishing of any endeavor on aesthetic foundations is the core of the surrealist writer. (In traditional and moral sense).

Sudden Flow of thought:

This kind of writing (compiling) is out of sudden unconsciousness absolutely free that “Breton” defines it as” magic dictation”>>(Adonis, 2001:148)

As an example of automatic writing that is observed in surrealist dramas is “William Don Brooder” (born 1951) there it is: “I’m myself the text, what is my body’s story? volunteer or a automatic writing, in many ways it reveals the result of blue words as my left leg sole skinless but covered with the cornea....(Fotohi roud M’jani, 2007;311)”

4-6-Ecstasy, psychosis and Devastation

Surrealists escape from the boundary of wisdom, from new creations and amazing, he selects the ecstasy and regards it as a new gate in attaining super knowledge, from this standpoint and the compiler’s viewpoint of the article, the surrealist views are in many ways similar to the ideas of Persian mystics such as Molavi, Attar, Sanaei, Meanwhile most of surrealist poets use different narcotic drugs to attain a desirable condition of freedom and ecstasy. (Ibid: 380).

Moreover in the early years of the sixties a rather new adaptation developed on the basis of the Indian poets. A group of lyric poets were following the Indian method in literature. These poets are classified into two groups: the first group were the poets who were following Indian method among them are Amiri Firozkohi(1288to, -1974) and Mohammad Gharaman (died in 2013 S.H).They wrote their lyrics decidedly in Indian method and many others were following this approach and their literary studies in literature were mainly focused on the basis of Indian style.

The second group includes the poets that although their works had not the color of Indian method completely, but in their recreational career, they wrote more clearly sonnets on this method. .Ahmad Azizi’s poems and especially his famous book titled “Fetrat village” was written in “Biedel” style (consult; Azizi, 1989; 139).

Also Ali Mo’alem Damghani in his book titled the “The Red Return of the Star “attributes his poetic (literary) language to the pioneers of Indian style to the extent that he himself confessed of it(consult Mo’alem Damghani, 1981;189).Indian method has been followed by other poets like (Aminpoor, 1993:149), (Saidi, 1994:21), (Behbahani, 1998:605), Mahmodi, 1990:25).

<< The purpose of the poet in surrealism is to deviate ironically from what the industry has bestowed to him in order to flourish his inner nature and raise his natural abilities anew.>>(Natel Khanlari, 1974:2)

It deserves to mention that today we observe the surrealism approach and the growing of surrealist tenets in a kind of poetry called “post modern poetry”, it has experienced great exaggerations (consult; Ja’fari Azarmani, 2005:18).

Conclusion:

Analyzing the abovementioned discussion in this article, it could be concluded that although the present poetry of Iran has been influenced greatly by the changes throughout the world, and the surrealistic imageries are depicted in Persian poetry but since nearly three hundred years ago, the Indian method in literature had introduced these imageries and such components had been depicted greatly in Persian literature. The other point is that in contemporary poetry of Iran a mild and logical modification has been occurred in the components of surrealism to the extent that the excessive elements such as exciting aesthetics in poetry are less frequent than before.

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