Evaluation of Two Cognitive Poetics Concepts of "Figure" and "Ground" and Their Aptitude for the Interpretation and Reading of Hafez's Poetry

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Introduction

In recent decades, a branch of cognitive linguistics called "Cognitive Poetics" has emerged to investigate the mental and linguistic processes of readers of poetry while they are reading a poem. In this new perspective, different linguistic and literary devices that are used in the text to form and direct the focus of the reader's attention are carefully examined.

An interesting example of such new topics can be seen in the Cognitive Poetics by Peter Stockwell. He suggests that in the analysis of human perception of poetry, the relationship between figure and ground must be carefully taken into account. This suggestion is based on one of the laws of perception in Gestalt school, which shows the importance of the relationship between "figure" and "ground" in human visual perception.

The fundamental and constant tendency of the human mind is to perceive a part of the image as the main figure, and to perceive another part of it as the ground. The most famous and amazing example that shows these two visual elements and their amazing impact on human perception is the famous image of the cup and the two profiles that appear successively on both sides of it according to our attention. In describing this perceptual process, Stockwell emphasizes the important point that "equal attention" to both parts of the image at the same time is impossible. Stockwell considers these two concepts and their effectiveness to be very important. Then he has analyzed a short poem of Ted Hughes based on it.

Purpose, Methodology and Review of Literature

The present article seeks to provide a correct understanding and expression of two important elements of "figure" and "ground" from the cognitive poetics point of view; and then, as an experimental study, examine and evaluate these two concepts from micro and macro perspectives in the analysis of Hafez's poetry.

Stockwell has a special emphasis on the role of "attention" in the actualization of the text in the mind of the reader. It is obvious that this dynamic flow of changing and continuous mental attention, which is actually the "reading" or the final actualization of the text, is the result of the effects of four main elements, namely the author, the text, the reader and the context. Based on this definition, the analysis of any literary text [or even non-literary text] will be: 1. giving a kind of detailed description of the movement of the reader's attention; and 2. Finding the causes of these movements in the text.

Discussion

We will try to examine and evaluate the concepts of figure and ground from micro and macro perspectives in the analysis of Hafez's poetry.

A. analyzing a verse of Hafez from the micro point of view: For example, if we analyze the following verse of Hafez from a micro point of view: "The world created an image of your face with the petals of the rose / But hid it in the bud, being ashamed of you;" we will see that "rose" in the first stanza will be the figure, and " your face" will be the ground; but on the contrary, in the second stanza, the concept of "your face" becomes a figure, and "rose" becomes the ground. To have a better understanding of this dynamic image, one should imagine that Hafez, like a skilled and creative cinematographer, by adjusting the camera angle and directing its appropriate movement, has created a scene in which "the world" as a great painter [or sculptor] looks at the face of his beloved, and tries to make beautiful petals, an example of her face, but as soon as he finishes his work, when he looks at his handiwork and compares it with the beautiful face of his beloved, he is very ashamed of his inability and immediately crumples that flower in the form of a bud to hide it. In the first line, Hafez highlights the flower petal first as a "figure" and then gradually fades and hides it in the background, so that in the second line, the mental image of the beloved's face becomes more important little by little and it converts to the main and bold figure of the verse.

B. Analyzing the poems of Hafez from a macro point of view: To analyze Hafez's poetry from a macro perspective, we have chosen a random sonnet beginning with: "When my true Beloved the wine-cup in hand taketh." The first two lines of this sonnet draw a picture of the presence of the beloved as if the poet has clearly seen her in front of him. However, even though the beloved is mentioned throughout Hafez's divan, when we look for similar images that depict the same presence, we see that the number of ghazals that follow the same pattern, in terms of the clear and prominent presence of the beloved, are very limited.

This sudden appearance of the beloved and her sudden disappearance has a strong relation with the commentary that was supposed at the beginning of the article about the verse: "The world created an image of your face with the petals of the rose...". In this verse and in other Hafez' poems, too, we get a special intuition of the eternal presence of an absolute beauty and its appearance, that witnesses silently the word's futile efforts, as well as ours, to achieve an image of her beautiful face.

Conclusion

The most important achievement of cognitive approach is that, in addition to following conventional methods, teachers and literary researchers can pay special attention to what passes in the mind of the readers of the poem. Additionally, they will be able to study the obvious and hidden poetic images and structures from a cognitive point of view. Therefore, one of the benefits of cognitive poetics can be the deepening of literary devices and the description of their aesthetics. This level of cognitive poetics, which Stockwell calls interpretation, is actually a type of micro analysis.

In addition, there is a more important type of macro analysis, which is called "reading" by Stockwell. This kind of analysis creates a new general understanding of poetry that we would not have been able to access without using cognitive poetics which reveals certain internal patterns of the text that are either unconscious or absolutely unnoticeable.

Keywords: language of poetry, figures of speech, Hafez, cognitive poetics, Peter Stockwell.

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