

Political Cinema and its Manifestation in Nezami Khamsa (Quintet)

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ABSTRACT

Cinema and investigation on its categories in the broad scope of literature provide artistic and literary research context. Cinema and its elements are indebted to literature and literature is an integral component of artistic scopes. In this regard, due to possessing of cinema categories and its elements, Nizami's Quintet deserves to investigation. In this Masnavi, Nizami employs setting, visualization and characterization elements and he is able to take benefit of these components. This research tries to explore these elements in Nizami's Quintet and study power and multidimensional knowledge of this great scholar. This study aims to survey on the political cinema categories in Nezami Quintet and explain how they have been reflected in his Nezami. This book deserves to scrutiny due to involving stories on tragedy and drama with political subject.

KEYWORDS: Nizami's Quintet, political cinema, setting, Persian literature.

INTRODUCTION

Although, literature and cinema are two distinct branches of science and art, but generally they have a common root (ability and taste). Nizami, the great Persian literature poet has employed this quality. Investigation on this subject matter leads us to two important points: First, we found similarity of application of description in the illustration and second, the elements of the cinema can be studied in the Nizami Quintet. It is said that Nizami has referred to elements of observation, watch and elegant show in his five poems:

When she looked at herself like Narcissus
She saw herself torn out
She was seen beautiful and colorful
So she demanded to attention and be pleased [1]

In the past centuries when there was no cinema, Nizami could have been closer to this art by his extraordinary power. This prominent feature was able to offer a tangible illustration with materials such as narrative language and music. "Painting might be sister of poetry and music is its shadow but cinema complements poetry, even if it is silent and this kind of film represents reference and reference was source of word".

Illustration and setting are potential elements employed by Nizami. These elements are able to give a cinematic mode by visual scenes found in love stories like Khosrow and Shirin, Leila and Majnoon:

She has worn jewel earnings
She has dressed her hair and tranquiller eyes
Like a bride wearing a wedding garment[2].

Describing of the people in his divan, Nizami has employed setting and characterization as the basics of film and cinema-and expressed the finer points clearly and offered accurate images with all details.

She has put jewelries and gemstone on her hair
And dressed her face and eyes
She is sensual and desirous
Her name is Leila and her hair is dark[3].

By dividing the poetical subjects as movie episodes, Nizami has written scenarios and undoubtedly, this scenario is begun by Leila and Majnoon that describes the Arabs famous tribes and their life styles and the most detailed account of an insane man (Qais bin Amer), his youth and love.

He is recognized among Americans
He is from a famous tribe
Where he was born by praying of his parents

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When he was ten years
 His handsome face was legendary
 He began to learn knowledge and art
 But he suffered day and night [Ibid, 339].
 Even he offers dramatic account on his divan that deserves to visualization.
 If a foreigner contemplates on this valuable work
 He will be pleased by hearing this speech [4].

Among the notable records and contexts, several books and articles can be mentioned in this paper such as Firdausi and cinema, Seyed Mohammad Hashemi and cinema literature, William Jencks, narrative structure in fiction literature, Abolfazl Horri and literature from cinema perspective, Iraj Karimi and etc. But there is no comprehensive study on Nizami Quintet in this area; and because this subject is new so, this thesis has used famous news sites like Tebyan and Cinema.

It is necessary to explain that thirty -nine references have been used directly and ten references have been employed indirectly. In general, the poems are from Nizami quintet book by correction of Parviz Babai.

Political Cinema and reality

“The most common form of political cinema is films that refer to a specific event. Sometimes details of an event and the event elements that should be noted may be very important for a filmmaker. In the film of Oliver Stone (1991) and Nixon (Stone 1995) the historical cases are considered with real characters. However, films such as Land and Freedom (Ken Loach 1995) are also based on a true story of Spain revolution. In the first films, the most important thing that comes to mind is how to compare the reconstructed reality in the story of the film. Important political events have always been a fascinating subject for filmmakers. As Abraham Lincoln or Mahatma Gandhi’s assassination and various political documents are subjected to screenplays at different periods and attention to some confusions of history or mythology narratives that many filmmakers have been tempted to make such films. Two different films of Birth of a Nation (David Vark Griffith: 1916) and The Passion of the Christ (Mel Gibson: 2004) share a common point that indicate the nationality is fixed principle. These principles are the fact that it is not possible to show its different types. For example, nobody could guess the scene of Christ death in the battle field or seek ambiguities and complexities due to making different films about a historical event. Here, the fact acts as a text resulted in different interpretations. For example, according to the U.S. diplomats the nuclear explosions in Hiroshima and Nagasaki was effort to destroy the last vestiges of World War II , but the stories and films that are too large tackled this issue and a few works can be found with such a view on the event. Thus, in films that deal with the political realities of reconstruction, various positions can be viewed, while allowing no deviation from the original story. In the second type films, reality as a whole is involved but the story is not so indebted to the actual events. For example, the American Civil Wars, World Wars or the Vietnam War are contemporary political events which the films made on these subject do not necessarily depend on its details. In this case, they are converted into free narratives of the historical facts and are considered the basic framework of reality.

The characterization of American soldiers in Vietnam war may be based upon their courage and brevity (Green Hat Films, John Wayne, Ray Kellogg: 1968) and these individuals may be frustrated and distorted characters shown in the film of Full Metal Jacket (Stanley Kubrick: 1987).

The story of David Gill (Allen Parker: 2003), real role of a professor by this name has little to do with the actual story that this professor was killed strangely and brought difficulty in Juridical system in one of the states of USA then the sentence punishment was abolished. Due to attendance of a journalist woman as the narrator of the story and involves in this case the audience enters to the story. It is obvious that the director has employed miniature narrative for more tension and accounting the element of suspension without relevance on the real story of David Gill.

For example, The Birth of a Nation is a good example of the fact that these two approaches reach to unity. The assassination of the U.S. president is accurate reconstruction of the actual event, while in the relatively long scene of “Chasing of Gus”, we see an imaginary story that the film-maker shows the blacks threat in exaggerated form”.

Generalization range of political films

“As it was pointed out at the beginning most of the films can be analyzed from political perspective. The works that look at the political situations in the margin of the major narrative elegantly and many films can also be noted that they have essentially political function. The temporary show of a scene that a Buddhist

burns himself in *Persona* (Ingmar Bergman: 1966) does not relate to the main event of the films and they only refer to political events. Intellectual and artistic films are confined to political short reference. These references could be the actual show off a disaster” (like *The mirror* archive of Andrei Tarkovsky: 1975 that employed a young cameraman archive who was killed and Tarkovsky used this documentary in the middle episodes) or *Simulation* (that *Mirror* film print house scene is a direct reference to the story of a Russian journalist that in his article name of Stalin was published incorrectly and for this ridiculous and stupid issue he suffered painfully).

Furthermore, there are many films that their logic of events has nothing to do with politics, but they always are used as examples of political Cinema. These films that are formed on a metaphorical foundation of the political realities generally are the product of censorship era.

The scenario of the story of a half day (Fred Zinnemann: 1952), written by Carl Foreman is an eternal film that Fred Zinnemann built it that seemingly nothing to do with political repression during World War in America and McCarthyism story but indeed it is an elegy for the championship that unhelpfully tries to resist against the wishes of the public. Carl Foreman was one of famous figures in the blacklist of Senator Joseph McCarthy. Milos Forman and Andrei Konchalovski in their best works by putting a story seemingly irrelevant indicated their political goals. Jack Nicholson film “*One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*” and John Voight film “*Runaway train*” (1986) are two typical victims of a society where everything is overshadowed by the public values.

The puzzle of the film of *Casablanca* (Michael Curtis: 1942) is solved by politics, in the film of the *Fiddler on the roof* (Norman Jewison: 1971) Jewish immigration is portrayed, war films of Oliver Stone (*Platoon*: 1986), Francis Ford Coppola (*Apocalypse Now*: 1979) and Stanley Kubrick (*Path of Glory*: 1957, *Full Metal Jacket*) though they are loyal to the genre but criticize the hegemonic policies in America, the western adventure *High noon* is a document revealing the dark era of postwar and episode four of sport film *Rocky* (Sylvester Stallone: 1985) praise the U.S. authority in the face of rival powers (one of the first manifestations of Mikhail Gorbachev that was showed after abolishment of Soviet), Charlie Chaplin and his play with map of the world especially in the *Great Dictator* (Chaplin: 1940) are remembered as outstanding images in cinema history that threatening and frightening element of this film was initially purchased in the Iraqi market.

Therefore, in political cinema, voice is considered more than genre. Any film of any genre can be a political voice, though it is so sharp that the audience will forget about watching films in the genre of science-fiction and sometimes by the implicit reference to political realities new interpretations can be offered”.

Figurative and political tone of Nizami

In the author opinion, by knowledge and insight into the experience, Nizami could have visualized the social conditions of his time in different ways, either as symbolic language in the story of Khosrow and Shirin, in the stories of the *Treasury of mysteries* by interpretation of doctor Zarrinkoub, or employing prominent Greek characters in *Iqbalnameh* that lead to awareness of the situation in his own time and it could figure out a way to creativity that can be pointed to a bloodless revolution. It should be mentioned that *Sharafnameh* and *Iqbalnameh* contain this subject. For example, avoiding Alexander’ son from succession of his father can be another interpretation on this subject that the utopia where his father could not construct with wisdom and intelligent of his acquaintances he cannot achieve it so, he transferred the powers to the power seekers.

Nizami and political setting

“By studying the *Treasure of mysteries* involving imaginary images and pious thoughts, I found that the poet, even in his early years was not happy. He suffered his time injustice so he sought an escape way and began to travel. In other works that he fails in love and prosperity, he ignores poverty or richness and disperse and lust though that there is no place for hesitation. He is silent and discontent on the cruelty of the officers and jurists and war on establishing chaotic government and He transfers his beliefs in music, poetry and stories” (5).

“The tale of Anoshiravan, the just minster is narrated that includes blaming oppressors and those who are not taking responsibility where it leads to destruction” (Ibid, 60).

He was accompanier of Khosrow and obeyed his orders

The king found his minster

When he saw that he won in the battle field

They were like two birds
 That they sang together
 The minister said O, the king of the world
 Though that he was instructor of the king
 This is message of happiness and unity
 If you pass these ruined places
 And listen to our advices
 The other said forget this issue
 See the sufferings of the king and never be sad
 If the kingship is like that
 I will give you many kingships
 The king was influenced by this speech
 He was so affected that he began to cry
 And said the result of unjust is nothing except crying [6].

The kings 'cruelty that dates back to king Solomon's seems very unlikely and commanding is required in Nizami's story to this tyrant king goes beyond the limits in the punishment of the rioters and talks on the need for justice and to avoid excessive force in the language of the birds and it is obvious that this narrative form with allegory is appropriate"[5].

"In search of a utopia, Nizami attempts to narrate the story of Alexander and the Kingdom of the ancient world. The poet narrates the story of a ruler that began to find an utopia free from oppression centuries ago and by attainment of wisdom and prophecy he had found the utopia among those who were out of the pledge of any law, by conform to a social contract had achieved an utopia, prosperity and happiness. This utopia was founded based on equality, liberty and fraternity"[5].

The trace of his legendary conquests
 Can be found in any place and country
 He sometimes counseled with his counselors
 He sometimes solved their problems
 He talked with youth and asked about the olds
 He never annoyed somebody and ruled just
 He demanded tax from merchants
 Never received tax from citizens
 He helped the peasants and the poor
 Constructed and decorated the monuments
 Regenerated and reconstructed everywhere[2].

"An image of a philosopher leader and a prophet is offered and sequence of each half, which is unequal in terms of quantity combines a Platonic ruler with a prophet from descendant of Ibrahim in the figure of Great Macedon Conqueror in the existence of a champion and offers a symbol of wisdom and unity between the judge and the prophet, and the government and shows the legend hero that does not have common man's life that goes beyond the scope of the designer of utopia. Thus, Alexander of the story of Nizami is a brave conqueror. For example, the war between Alexander and the King of Iran was happened since he considered paying tribute to him as scorn and he did not want to be under abjectness. His fight with Zanzibar army and later the Russia invasion was to prevent oppression. The fact is that he appears as a hero and champion protecting the innocent in this story. In addition, Nizami has to interpret and justify Aristotelian ethics and politician sanctions and words"[5].

Learned from the instructor what he did not know
 He learned the principles of kingship
 Gained knowledge and wisdom
 He trained his soul and appeared like stars in the sky
 He was aware of secrets
 Every year the smart prince
 Learned new sciences and gained knowledge
 He was accompanied by Aristotle and he was served by him[4].

“An old woman complaining on oppression of the tyrant governor is not investigated in this story and also, Nizami refers to Sanjermalk in attention and visualizes audacity and neglect of some rulers in detail that leads to inevitable collapse of the government in power and extinction”[5].

An old woman was oppressed
She complained to Sanjer
O, the king I have seen your oppression several times
A drunken officer entered to my house
He kicked me and pulled out my hair
And hit me and searched my home
I never bear this oppression
The officer was drunken and hit the old woman
I demand you to punish him
I never see just in you
The kings help inferiors
But we see oppression from you
O king, prevent oppression
And heal our pain [6].

“It seems that the writer of “The treasure of mysteries” as the reader of the book seeks to reform the society beyond the confines and he does not have hope to the continuing impact of preaching and guidance so he searches for other images of an ideal society –utopia- and his search does not seem strange[5].

Sometimes, in explaining of a speech that comes in figurative language, it can be used allegorical and symbolic characters indicting a particular power and thinking (like Greek myths in *Iqbalnameh*). In eternal historical events, Nizami employs unique styles in Quintet.

“In literature, figurative meaning is encoded in symbolic language and literary metaphor. The symbolic language that contains imitation metaphor, personification, paradox, hyperbole and underestimating is important in the terms of the literary experience. It will help the author to convey message better than absolute literary usage. Symbolic language is deviation from the common usage and common language. By using this language an author could create a unique work and offer possibility to the reader to contemplate on a subject with own and new perspective.

Literary allusion or metaphor is non literary usage of language. Robert Frost believes that poetry offers human ability to express his intent implicitly and he refers to an important aspect of language that a person can express his purpose taking credit for something else”[7].

“It is said that figurative meaning is language base. If it could be expressed a picture with figurative language, then is it possible to investigate that is there something as symbolic application of a picture? Can it be found an equivalent for metaphor, simulation, and other literary figures in cinema?

Generally speaking, a picture is symbolic that the filmmaker deflates from most common methods for emphasis and novelty of the scenes. For example if the subject of the film is a group of rich ladies that wear expansive dress and put colorful and decorative hats with feathers probably, the common method will be whole perspective but the director could show scenes of their hats. In this particular view, the viewer sees only colorful feathers and flowers on the hats. This view shows the wealthy women like exotic creatures such as birds [Ibid, 143].

“One of the characters of “AS you like it” by Shakespeare says: “The world is a stage and all men and women are actors, he points out that the world is a great stage and by the help of a metaphor life is performing on this stage. Likening the people to actor Jacques reminds us that actors are born and die and man should play different roles: baby, student, lover, soldier, jurist, adult, old and etc.” [Ibid, 144].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Although, *Khamsa* contains six stories, it is a world full of color photographs and detailed descriptions of the various narrative techniques such as expression. Nizami has adopted particular point of view in this direction for his stories. By this viewpoint, the story is culminated or declined. It is also important to point that climax in the story requires creative thinking and spirit, this point is so critical that Nizami culminated his work. In this work the narrator leads to reader to unknown world. This subject is manifested in movies and

especially in *Sharafanameh*, in states of Alexander; the reader experiences heroic witness of the events (The story of Alexander going back to the darkness).

When he wanted to be an immortal and live long
The officers were distressed
Since the spring of life was in darkness
Alexander said how can I go darkness and drink that water
Try darkness and drink water of spring in darkness
Death is in that dark spring[4].

The main point of the narrative in the stories of Nizami is culmination of identification, the subject that the reader follows in until end of the story since he wants to know how Khosrow becomes successful and Shirin becomes captive of his love:

He touched his beloved hair
Kissed her lips and showed his tendency to her
Forgot the past and began new life[2].

Does Majnoon see Leila? What will happen when he sees her? Indeed, the reader thinks instead of Leila and searches him and sometimes he plays Majnoon role and he is restless. Perhaps, this kind of narrative also affects individuals psychologically like the impact of films like *Titanic* and *Casablanca*.

This trend is not only followed in the text but also the reader is so intimate that it can be said that this is one of the outstanding characteristics of Nizami's *Quintet*. The story of Khosrow and Shirin is one of the old stories that Nizami expanded and offered meaning and by employing his creative mind was able to spend folk narrative aspect and bring other social and moral aspects.

But as explained earlier, Nizami portrayed narrative styles in variety of ways where first-person narrator narrates the story without boring the reader in his poetry. Sometimes by narration by a person other than the characters could visualize all personality aspects of the characters the style that is common in cinema. Sometimes, by narration of moral stories in "Treasure of mysteries" Nizami wishes to teach the reader and wants him to judge holistically or in *Iqbalnameh*, he intends to inform the reader about something. It seems that not only he was skilled in narration but also he was interested in documentation that investigates history, geography or natural life and he tries to inform public about events. He refers to creation of earth in *Iqbalnameh* and other phenomena in his stories like debates between an Indian philosopher and Alexander.

Although film camera fits perfectly in its frame and visualizes what setting are offered according to the director viewpoint, Nizami as a director not only describes the details but also he is able to create a feeling in the reader that grasps the essentials and the subject becomes clearer like where Khosrow and Shirin see each other first time.

It seems that Nizami had understood *mis-en-scene* because he has action scenes in *quintet* that recalls sense of melodrama of an action film (like films like *Gladiator*, *Terminator*).

Although he has narrated romance and love stories in Khosrow and Shirin, but he has employed excitement or melodrama and was able to make a successful story.

By knowledge and insight into the experience and eloquence Nizami could visualize social conditions of his time in different ways, either a symbolic language in the story of Khosrow and Shirin, and stories of *Treasure of mysteries* by correction of professor Zarrinkoub, or employing prominent Greek characters, this symbolism of the famous characters can make the world aware of the causes and purification conditions of his time or can be pointed to a bloodless revolution. It should be pointed to avoiding Alexander's son from succession of his father can be another interpretation on this subject that the utopia where his father could not construct with wisdom and intelligent of his acquaintances he cannot achieve it so, he transferred the powers to the power seekers.

Therefore, Nizami uncovers the authority and incompetency of the kings and narrates stories with political theme. In the story of Death of Hormuz and succession of Khosrow and also runaway of Khosrow from Bahram due to threats he could win him by political marriage and support of Czar and finally, coronate. Evidences show that the existence of cinema as an art in this era indicates ignoring its existence in contemporary art and artistry creation has existed since ancient times that itself implies this fact, the ancient paintings in the caves depict that humans understand life issues that still they are scientific sample of the film and cinema. Although ancient language is pictorial cinema is based on the image and pictorials, so it can be concluded that cinema is not product of new era, but it was a hidden ancient art rose to fame with the invention of the camera. Even Nizami composed lyrics and love stories for the kings and the music was

played in the kings feasts and professor Zarrinkoub has referred to this subject in his book “The old man of Ganje.

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