

Creating the Imagined in al-Qartajanni's *Minhajul Bulagha' wa Sirajul 'Udaba'*: Response to Schoeler

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Abstract—This research aims at refuting Schoeler's claim that Hazim al-Qartajanni's critical ideas were merely a repetition of Avicenna's perspective on poetry. We attempt to shed light on al-Qartajanni contribution to the concept of poetry, which was not mentioned in a frank manner by Aristotle or his interpreters; al-Farabi, Avicenna, and Averroes. This study aims at providing adequate evidence that al-Qartajanni's concept of imagery has traversed the critical perspectives of Aristotle and his interpreters about the reality of imagery and its role in the creation of poetry.

Index Terms—Theory of Poetry, criticism, poetry, imagery Hazim al-Qartajanni, Aristotle

I. INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, researchers in literary theory reflect on what has been accomplished by philosophers and critics since Plato. It is a reflection that invites scholars and researchers in Arabic heritage and literature to question what Arab philosophers and critics have accomplished in this regard. Therefore, the scientific research must be aware of many areas before making a general ruling which leads to hasty generalized fallacy.

We cite here Abu Amr bin Alala'a who said: "What ended up to you about what the Arabs said is only the minimum; but if there were plenty of what they produced in literature and criticism to reach us, we would have more science and poetry" (al-Jumahi, 2019, p. 12). In this context, we say "what ended up to us today from the Arabic literature and its critical and philosophical achievements are the least, and if it came abundantly we would have much knowledge". As a general fact, the Arabic books, which are indicative of their authors' efforts in theorizing literature and poetry in particular, are too many, and we regret to say that the Arabic library has only preserved many of its titles in the bibliography books (Abbas, 1971, p. 28).

The purpose of this research is to shed light on the features of the theory of literature in Arabic heritage; it charts a way to reveal all these features, based on investigating the research in the concept to its end, rather than making inferences that are not delivered by induction rules and, thus, refuting the claim of Gregor Schoeler (2008) that Hazim al-Qartajanni's theoretical production was merely a repetition of the perspectives of Aristotle and his interpreters on poetry; Avicenna in particular (p. 27).

As a matter of fact, al-Qartajanni's book *Minhajul Bulagha' wa Sirajul 'Udaba'* [Method of Rhetoricians and Lamp of Literarians] is considered one of the most mature and most complete attempts of Arab critics and philosophers in the field of theorizing about Arabic poetry. This is apparent in the big number of books and researches that reference al-Qartajanni's ideas and views on criticism and literature (al-Khatib, 1986, pp. k-n).

This study takes the concept of creating the imagined for al-Qartajanni as a base; it considers creating the imagined as one of the most important concepts in the theory of Arabic literature. We intend to clarify this concept as a pre-condition to clarify the concept of poetry according to al-Qartajanni. Furthermore, the focus on linking this concept with the definition of poetry according to al-Qartajanni is what grants the research its importance and novelty in dealing with this concept, establishing any statement related to the critical and literary theoretical perspectives concerning al-Qartajanni's concept of poetry.

Contrary to Schoeler's (2008) belief that al-Qartajanni considered Avicenna as his main source for forming his literary theory and poetic theory (p. 91), a careful study of al-Qartajanni's *Minhajul Bulagha' wa Sirajul 'Udaba'* reveals that this claim is inaccurate. Apparently, al-Qartajanni benefited from and agreed with the literary theories of his predecessors such as; Al-Jahiz, Abu Al-Qasim Al-Amidi, Ibn Rasheeq Al-Qayrawani, and Ibn Sinan Al-Khafaji (al-Qartajanni, 1966, p. 100). Of course, one cannot ignore the influence of Qudama Bin Jaafar on al-Qartajanni.

al-Qarajanni's agreement with his predecessors does not undermine his contribution to literary and poetic theory, simply, because this is the nature of scientific research; researchers and scholars benefit from each other's ideas and they develop some of them. al-Qartajanni was not a mere imitator of the aforementioned theorists. In fact, he possessed an original view in dealing with issues in Arabic poetry and its concept as he rejected his predecessors' classification of the functions of Arabic poetry. al-Qartajanni refuted and amended the ideas of al-Farabi whose poetic theory was dominantly influenced by Plato and Aristotle. al-Farabi (1953), for example, classified the functions of poetry into seven forms; satire, eulogy, boast, riddle, spinning, comedy, and description (p. 152). And also, al-Qartajanni amended the ideas of some of his predecessors who believed that the theory of Arabic poetry is detached from the influence of Greek and Roman philosophers. To mention one example, he rejected Ibn Rasheeq Al-Qayrawani's (1972) classification of the functions of Arabic poetry into nine forms; kinship, praise, pride, lamentation, admonition, threat, warning, satire, and apology (p. 161).

al-Qaratajanni, on the other hand, provided eight functions of poetry; congratulation, sympathy, regret, condolence, bereavement, praise, satire, and lamentation (1966, p. 337). He also mentioned "four main methods of poetry; congratulation and what accompanies it, condolence and what accompanies it, praise and what accompanies it, and satire and what accompanies it" (1966, p. 341). Prior to al-Qartajanni, none of the classical Arab critics and rhetoricians has ever considered congratulations as a function of poetry.

As for Avicenna, whom Schoeler considered the base on which al-Qartajanni formed his critical ideas, continued to interpret the types of Arabic and Greek poetry by comparing these forms. He reached an erroneous conclusion that the function of praise and satire in Arabic poetry are imitations of Greek tragedy and comedy (2008, p. 35). This erroneous assumption is what al-Qartajanni attempted to refute in his poetic theory. In the following section, this study attempts to discuss al-Qartajanni's perception of the imagined in Arabic poetry.

II. CREATING THE IMAGINED ACCORDING TO AL-QARTAJANNI

The first thing that we discuss here is the concept of creating the imagined according to al-Qartajanni. He says: "creating the imagined is to represent for the person who hears the words of the poet or its sense, style and system, thus creating in his mind an image or images that will provoke his reaction to that particular imagine, or leading him to imagine something else via the image immediately siding with extroversion or to constriction" (1966, p. 89).

It is no secret that al-Qartajanni was influenced by the Arabic interpretations of Aristotle (Asfour, 1983, p. 57). We can see in his book *Minhajul Bulagha' wa Sirajul 'Udaba* that he borrowed from al-Farabi and the interpretation of Avicenna, and that he was influenced by the commentaries of Averroes (Maslouh, 1980, p. 52; Badawi, 1962, p. 87). However, the contemplator of al-Qartajanni's intension realizes that it goes beyond the Aristotelian view of the reality of imagery and its role in the creation of poetry, and it traverses decidedly the philosophical interpretations of that view; al-Qartajanni uses the accusative infinitive "to represent" to prove that creating the imagined is an occurrence, then it is implied or estimated to occur, but we do not know the physiognomy of its appearance, which is the image that is observed in the imagery of the Hearer.

Perhaps this is confirming according to al-Qartajanni that "the image does not refer to the mere shape or drafting only, and no longer hovers over the concept of concrete presentation, but becomes determined in a specific psychological significance that could be a synonym of the mental restoration of a concrete perceived missing the field of direct perception" (Asfour, 1983, pp. 298-299).

We must pause here to indicate the status of creating the imagined and its importance concerning al-Qartajanni's concept of poetry, and then it must be noted that the vision, which eliminates the stature of imagery in poetry, referring to al-Qartajanni's concept of poetry, remains a limited vision unless it accommodates all the attentions included in al-Qartajanni's book, otherwise we would not understand his conception and interpretation of poetry.

Poetry, according to al-Qartajanni (1966), is "rhymed metrical words in order to endear something to oneself or make him hateful to it, so as to long for it or repel it, including the goodness of both creating the imagined and simulating" (p. 71).

Perhaps a quick glance at this definition does not find a preference for it over the definitions of al-Qartajanni's predecessors who determined what exactly poetry is. al-Qartajanni, who lived in a rigor society would not stun the common sense of the interpretative community with a new concept shaking the old one which had been rooted in the collective awareness.

Despite that, al-Qartajanni made a great stride in poetry when he correlated the object of poetry with goodness of both creating the imagined and simulation; he said: "to endear something to oneself, or make him hateful to it, so as to long for it or repel, including the goodness of both creating the imagined and simulating" (1966, p. 71). Both rhyme and meter are in one part which is the nominal constituent of poetry, whereas poetry has an essential constituent which is imagery. In *Theory of Literature*, Wellek and Warren (1985) say: "Like meter, imagery is one component structure of a poem" (p. 220). al-Qartajanni's vision of poetry has traversed his era when making inequality between meter and imagery concerning the conception of poetry; he said about the poetry which is bad in simulating, obviously lying, and free from bizarreness: "it has no capacity to be called poetry, though it is metric and rhymed, because the essence of poetry is non – existent" (1966, p. 72). If the meter and rhyme are present and the essence of poetry is not achieved then

what will achieve it? It is creating the imagined; the component of poetry that al-Qartajanni has mentioned in his definition.

We find another citation confirming this understanding; wherein al-Qartajanni (1966) said: "poetry is not acknowledged owing to the truth or falsity; but its imaginary words" (p. 63). It is remarkable that al-Qartajanni combines between simulation and imagery in his definition of poetry "including the goodness of both creating the imagined and simulating (1966, p. 71).

Aristotle states that the poet had to be a simulator "before being a meters-maker, he is a poet because of the simulation that he makes" (Ayyad, 1967, p. 66). Accordingly, we find the claim that the work of al-Qartajanni has just been adding a word to another, and then replacing 'creating the imagined' with the wording of Aristotle 'simulation'. This unacceptable claim could be refuted depending on negating the equality. The claim is groundless because creating the imagined and simulation are completely different; creating the imagined is general while simulation is included in it; simulation is a method of creating the imagined (al-Khatib, 1986, p. 119).

Unless al-Qartajanni was an expert on the definitions of Islamic jurisprudence and branches of language, it would be possible to get such a pitfall of repetition in his formulation (Suyuti, 1964, pp. 491-492). We think that the mention of simulating came after imagery by way of mentioning the particular word after the general one; and that was rife among the scholars on his time.

al-Qartajanni, the Arabic linguist, critic, and poet recognized that Arabic poetry has ways which differ from the Greek verse, and fully comprehended that simulation is merely a kind of imagery and metaphor (1966, pp. 94-95).

But there is a wide range of imagery methods that does not include simulation, perhaps the widest areas in the Arab poetry is euphemism. Jakobson (1988) said: "It is not by chance at all that the euphemistic structures are less fortunate in studies compared to the domain of metaphor" (p. 57), and we find that Arabic critics have made many analyses and researches for these euphemistic structures. al-Qartajanni comprised a deep Arabic poetic culture, and was able to correlate it with the heritage of Aristotle via the Arabic interpretations.

It was clear that we totally disagree with those who say that the exact critical understanding of al-Qartajanni is confined to the philosophers' books (Maslouh, 1980, p. 50). Indeed, al-Qartajanni realized that Greek poetry has "limited objects by specific meters" (1966, p. 29). He disagrees with Avicenna and Averroes who supported the notion that the poetic meter expresses a particular object (Avicenna, 1966, p. 33; Averroes, 1971, p. 83). He believes that every meter demonstrates one differential object, because that characteristic of Greek poetry is absent from Arabic verse.

al-Qartajanni is superior to Aristotle's elucidators, by discussing the theory of poetry with the insight of the critic, poet, and then the mind of philosophers. Creating the imagined in poetry was the most important feature that al-Qartajanni was able to traverse Aristotle and the three aforementioned interpretations. And also, he divided cognition into two parts; the first was called sensory perception, and the second is mental perception.

Poetry is related to the former and has no relation with latter. It is an exquisite token said by Croce (2009) on his definition of art, when he differentiates "between the intuitive or sensory knowledge, and the conceptual or mental knowledge" (p. 37). Poetry is imagery that conjures up the image, composes and invents it. al-Qartajanni (1966) says: "The intentions of poetry revolve around the meanings that relate to sensory perception which are mentioned for itself, while these intentions do not turn around the meanings regarding the perception of mind" (p. 29).

Thus, al-Qartajanni's doctrine is consistent with the sense that any discourse "is not regarded as poetry in terms of truth, nor in terms of being false, but in terms of imaginative speech" (1966, p. 63). When poets address imagery it is no longer attached to rightousness or corruption; those are the judgments of mental logic, and the mind is unconscious during the imagery work.

Creating the imagined according to al-Qartajanni is a holistic occurrence in which the poem is depicted in the imagery "immediately" (1966, p. 89); with reference to the work of imagery in the subconscious throughout the poem, forming the imaginary unity. He says about the poet: "He should observe what deserves to be in the beginning or exordium of speech, and might note in this case the fountainhead of accessing and digression" (1966, pp. 109-110).

Since the imagery of poetry is one of the ways that leads to knowledge, and its way does not attach to the mind and logic, this vision does not give permission to knowledge to be tested by reason, and does not derive from it in the status of probability nor in the status of acknowledgment, and that is what al-Qartajanni (1966) realized by saying: "Creating the imagined is not contrary to certainty, as denied by suspicion" (p. 62).

So, what is this knowledge that contradicts certainty? It is not suspicion, because suspicion is the contrary to certainty. It is the imaginary poetic knowledge, which in this concept of al-Qartajanni, is a knowledge of a particular type; is not scientific as al-Qartajanni said, because the scientific meanings are "the antithesis of poetry" (1966, p. 30).

Accordingly, imagery unfolds in front of ambiguity to present itself as an aesthetic and palatable presentation as long as it falls in the space of this kind of imaginary poetic knowledge to make ambiguity in poetry intentional for itself. al-Qartajanni (1966) says about the meanings: "although most intentions and fountainheads of speech demand to articulate the meanings, we could go ahead without it inclining to ambiguity in many situation" (p. 172).

Thus, we can accept the inference that while Aristotle did not "mention a word denotes the imagery" (al-Qalamawi, 1973, p. 106), and he "found the first foundations of thinking about this faculty" (al-Qalamawi, 1973, p. 106). al-Qartajanni was the first one who talked about creating the imagined with that virtue which gives imagery its true value

as a component of the poetic essence. al-Qartajanni dealt with the term that was not circulated before and was creative in moving it into the literary criticism.

III. THE DEFINITION OF IMAGERY BY AL-QARTAJANNI AND AVICENNA

A mere glance at the definition of imagery is not enough to comprehend its meaning, especially for the writing approach of al-Qartajanni's 'Minhajul Bulagha' wa Sirajul 'Udaba' that was consistent with the approach of the ancient Arabic critics in formulating definitions. Therefore, it is unfair to consider al-Qartajanni's definition of imagery as equal to Avicenna's definition just because of the similarities between some of the vocabulary used by both (Schoeler, 2008, p. 27). Avicenna said: "Creating the imagined is the speech that the psyche complies with, making the psyche constricted or extroverted" (Avicenna, 1966, p. 161; Schoeler, 2008, p. 27). But al-Qartajanni said that "creating the imagined is to represent for the person who hears the words of the poet, or its sense, style and system, thus playing in his imagery an image or images that he reacts to imagine, or imagine something else" (1966, p. 98).

So, how could we accept Schoeler's (2008) judgment when he said: "al-Qartajanni has quoted this term from al-Farabi and Avicenna literally" (p. 27).

Al-Qartajanni intended to clarify the confusion caused by Avicenna about 'simulation and wonder' and 'the imagined and strangeness' without revealing his attempt to amend the latter's understanding of Aristotle, nor has he explained to what extent he benefited from Aristotle's ideas in forming a special theory concerning Arabic Poetry.

The claims that al-Qartajanni was inspired by Avicenna's interpretations of Aristotle's *Poetics* are unacceptable and simplistic. Unlike Avicenna who adopted Aristotle's poetic ideas, al-Qartajanni's ideas were genuinely and strictly relevant to Arabic traditions in literature and rhetoric. Without doubt, Avicenna's understanding of Aristotle's concept of imitation is inaccurate. The reason of this misunderstanding is due to Avicenna's attempt to explain the form and function of Arabic poetry by adopting Aristotle's definition of tragedy and comedy. Mistakenly, Avicenna interpreted imitation as a visual concept and as a metaphor. Thus, Avicenna provided an inaccurate explanation of the concept of imitation in his summary of Aristotle's *Poetics* when he equated 'metaphor' to 'imitation' in poetry (Al-Farabi, 1953, p. 170). And he also equated the concept of 'strangeness' to the concept of 'wonder' (Al-Farabi, 1953, p. 193).

As for he was so precise in differentiating between the concepts of imitation and metaphor and between 'strangeness' and 'wonder' as he expressed his dissatisfaction with equating 'metaphor' to 'imitation' and 'strangeness' to the concept of 'wonder'. In his discussion of the imagined and wonder, al-Qartajanni (1966) says:

An imagined expression is rarely excluded from wonder; they often coexist. 'Wonder' in 'the imagined' occurs either in creating imitation and imaging it, or takes place in the imitated object and its relevance to the wonderful object. (p. 127)

Commenting on the above statement, Schoeler (2008) claims that "the only difference between what al-Qartajanni's idea and Avicenna's is al-Qartajanni's smooth linguistic expression and simple structure; which is barely considered a difference" (p. 105).

This, of course, is a judgment that we cannot concur with. al-Qartajanni's statement is clear example that he does not equate between imitation and metaphor as Avicenna does. As a matter of fact, al-Qartajanni (1966) contends that he did not equate imitation to metaphor as he says:

It is not the purpose of imitation to reach the maximum level of moving people's emotions; it only has the proper degree of excitement equal to creativity that is created by the form of expression and the readability of people's emotions to react to this excitement. (p. 121)

Furthermore, al-Qartajanni's idea surpassed the concept of 'wonder' as a form of linguistic expression to a different form of art, which is strangeness.

We, hereby, confirm Schoeler's realization that "al-Qartajanni diligently sought to create a criterion for the concept of 'strangeness' in Arabic poetry" (2008, p. 138); a method that was not Avicenna's least concern. Therefore, we need to bring the reader's attention that al-Qartajanni's main concern was to prove that it would be difficult to comprehend these poetic concepts without relating them to each other.

Apparently, speech is equivalent to the occurrence of images in the imagery. And from the perspective of pure syntactic analysis: as long as the accusative infinitive is not equal to the gerund, then we do we accept the equivalence between the noun and the gerund.

We think that making inferences that are not delivered by Induction rules led Schoeler to claim that al-Qartajanni was repeating the perspectives of Aristotle and his interpreters on poetry; Avicenna in particular (2008, p. 27).

IV. CONCLUSION

This research has discussed al-Qartajanni's concept of creating the imagined and revealed the coherent vision of imagery in different axes that al-Qartajanni showed, indicating his cohesive ideas about the concept of imagery in the light of his concept of poetry.

The research has also presented adequate evidence that al-Qartajanni's concept of imagery has traversed the perspectives of both Aristotle and his interpreters about the reality of imagery and its role in the creation of poetry. al-

Qartajanni has dealt with the term 'imagery' that was not circulated before, except by philosophers and was creative in moving it into the literary criticism.

The research has accepted the inference that while Aristotle did not "mention a word denotes the imagery" (al-Qalamawi, 1973, p. 106), and he "found the first foundations of thinking about this faculty" (al-Qalamawi, 1973, p. 106), al-Qartajanni was the first one who talked about creating the imagined with that virtue, which gives the imagery its true value as a component of the poetic essence.

Moreover the research concluded that al-Qartajanni has fully comprehended that imitation is merely a kind of imagery and metaphor (1966, p. 95), and therefore we have refuted Schoeler's claim that al-Qartajanni was repeating Avicenna's perspective on poetry.

This study confirms that al-Qartajanni was exposed to Greek culture and was familiar with Aristotle's *Poetics*, and he also studied Arabic rhetoric and the poetic theories of his predecessors. This knowledge enabled him to form a mixture of genuine Arabic rhetorical and critical theory and Greek culture. With this interesting blend of knowledge, al-Qartajanni managed to form his unique theory of Arabic poetry; a theory with new methodology. It is true that he agreed with some of Avicenna's and other Arab theorist, but he was in not in any form an imitator of these philosophers. His uniqueness is shown in his rejection of his predecessor's classification of the functions and forms of Arabic poetry as he added the function of 'congratulation' for the first time in the history of Arabic literature. He also criticized the confusion that Avicenna created in his discussion of the concepts of 'metaphor,' 'imitation,' 'strangeness,' and 'wonder' and their relation to the concept of 'the imagined' in poetry.

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