




Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates: A Faircloughian Reading of Nizami Ganjavi's *Iqbal-Nameh*

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Abstract

A quintessential element in Nizami's oeuvre is the correspondence between the characters' articulation and discursive features. In other words, one can explore different layers of their subjectivity in light of their articulation. In this respect, this study investigates Nizami's *Iqbal-Nameh*. When Alexander instructs his three advisors, Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates, to compile "Kherad-Nameh," their individual formulation echoes their position and personality. This study aims to investigate the three advisors' divergence of discourse in light of Fairclough's 3D model. He analyses the discourse in three levels: description, interpretation, and explanation. The description level is a textual analysis, the interpretation level is a contextual and intertextual analysis, and the explanation level is a socio-cultural analysis. This study concludes that in formulating "Kherad-Nameh," Plato's discourse is informed by his position beneath the king, Aristotle's assertive discourse is informed by equating his position with the king, and Socrates' authoritative/degrading discourse is informed by positioning himself above the king.

Keywords: Kherad-Nameh, Critical Discourse Analysis, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Influenced by ancient Greek philosophers, Nizami's *IskandarNameh* highlights Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle as three advisors. Though historically inaccurate, their importance becomes vivid in light of a change in Alexander's status in contrast with *SharafNameh* and other *IskandarNamehs*. A quintessential element in Nizami's oeuvre is the correspondence between the characters' articulation and discursive features. In other words, one can explore different layers of the advisors' discourse in light of their articulation.

2. Methodology

This descriptive-analytical study employs Fairclough's critical discourse analysis.

3. Theoretical Framework

Fairclough analyses the discourse in three levels: description, interpretation, and explanation. The description level is a textual analysis, the interpretation level is a contextual and intertextual analysis, and the explanation level is a socio-cultural analysis.

4. Discussion and Analysis

Description: The philosophers' perspectival divergence is evident in their positive or negative articulation. There is no praise in Aristotle's discourse. Plato, on the other hand, frequently praises the world and the king. Socrates describes the grotesque side of the world. Aristotle employs contradictions to address obligations, Plato does so to describe generalities, and Socrates encounters two contradicting phenomena to highlight his mindset. Plato is the only advisor who incorporates euphemism. While Plato and Aristotle's rhetoric is formal, Socrates addresses the king informally. Their value system is influenced by their ideological orientation toward the king.

Interpretation: by distancing himself from the court, Socrates becomes more authoritative in formulating "KheradNameh." Their functional language is in writing, and they do not engage the king in a dialogue. Nizami's account of Alexander is affected by the ancient Greek culture. Although Alexander is depicted unfavourably, Nizami defamiliarises his image and gives him a positive one. The incorporation of "which," to extend an explanation, allegory, and explicit denial are points of departure in Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates.

Explanation: As a subject of authority, Plato's account of KheradNameh is formed by power relations. Socrates, on the other hand, aims to dismantle these relations. Regarding individual and social orientations, Aristotle tilts toward the social, Plato toward the individual, and Socrates highlights both. In this respect, what Aristotle and Plato failed to realise was the importance of individual change in social issues.

5. Conclusion

Nizami's unique rhetoric and characterisation create discursive differentiations. The point of departure in the discourse of the three advisors is in their teachings. For Aristotle and Plato, Alexander is the king/prophet, and they formulate their ideologies accordingly. For Socrates, on the other hand, Alexander is only a king. The incorporation of advisors is a powerful/genius tool to re-present Alexander as a benevolent king. While Ferdowsi's account is historically accurate, Plato's account of KheradNameh is affected by power relations; Socrates, on the other hand, aims to dismantle these relations. Regarding individual and social orientations, Aristotle tilts toward the social, Plato toward the individual, and Socrates highlights both.

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