

RESEARCH ARTICLE	The Issue of Truth and Falsehood in Critical Heritage	
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Abstract		
<p>In this study, we will try to examine a number of opinions that theorized truth and falsehood in the Arab critical and rhetorical heritage, by presenting the opinions of ancient Arab critics and rhetoricians such as (Al-Amidi, Al-Jahiz, Qudamah Ibn Jaafar, Ibn Sinan Al-Khafaji, Al-Qadi Al-Jurjani, Abu Hilal Al-Askari, Ibn Tabataba, Ibn Rasheeq, Abdul Qaher Al-Jurjani, and others) and presenting their different positions on truth and falsehood in poetry and prose, analyzing, evaluating and judging them based on our critics' view of this issue. Through our research, we will try to uncover the veil and remove the ambiguity on this subject, by re-reading this heritage anew in light of what modern studies have reached.</p>		
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The Issue of Truth and Falsehood:

The issue of truth and falsehood is one of the most ancient topics and one of the most important features of ancient Arabic criticism. This subject has been popular since ancient times and has sparked great controversy in the critical community, and that is why it has received the attention of critics and researchers, both ancient and modern. However, critics did not agree on the topic; rather, they were divided between supporters and opponents of the idea of truth and falsehood in Arabic poetry. Among them were those who believed that the poet must be committed to truthfulness in his creativity, conveying speech with-

out lying or exaggeration, which is what Al-Amidi called for in his book *Al-Mouazana*: "His speech must be truthful, and it must be in a position of benefit, with the quality of its formulation and good composition, and he (the poet) should not add anything to it beyond what is needed, for the correctness of composition in poetry and in every craft is its strongest pillar after the correctness of meaning, so whoever is more correct in composition is more upright in that craft than whoever is disturbed in composition."⁽¹⁾ Their argument for good poetry and high-level creativity is honesty in speech, and they thus consider that "the best poetry is the most honest,". Another trend opposing the first considers lying to be the most re-

finer language of poetry, because the latter depends on imagination, which is a basic feature of poetry and through which its artistic value is achieved. Here's a refined version of your text:

The argument put forth by Qudamah ibn Ja'far and his followers assert that "the best poetry is the falsest." In this context, Qudamah emphasizes the need to explore this idea, stating that he has observed two diverging schools of poetry. One is characterized by exaggeration in meaning, while the other adheres to a more moderate expression. He notes that many supporters of both schools often lack a deep understanding of their own origins and fail to grasp the beliefs of their opponents, leading to persistent contradictions. Qudamah describes proponents of the two schools as "floundering in darkness," illustrating that advocates of exaggeration tend to sway toward moderation, while those who favor moderation often exhibit an extreme approach. He cites examples from the poetry of Abu Nawas and Al-Nabigha to support his observations.⁽²⁾

Critics' opinions on the issue of truth and falsehood:

The first team: Supporters of falsehood and exaggeration

1. Ibn Sinan Al-Khafaji:

Critic Ibn Sinan Al-Khafaji dealt with the subject of truth and falsehood, and after his introduction to this issue, he clarified that people are divided between supporters and opponents of the subject of truth and falsehood, then he indicated the best doctrines in his opinion, saying: "And what I go to is the first doctrine in praising exaggeration and excess, because poetry is built on permissibility and tolerance, but I see that "almost" and what is similar in its meaning should be used so that the speech is closer to the realm of correctness, as Al-Mutanabbi said⁽³⁾:

"The birds are so tempted by their flesh feasts, until they almost descend upon their streets."

(The author's translation)

This is what Al-Khafaji approved of by the occurrence of the word "almost" in the poetic verse, which brought it closer to being correct. The meaning of this verse is that Sayf al-Dawla (an Arab Emir) continued to kill the Romans and strengthened the birds with their flesh in his battles, so he began to feed them from the flesh of the dead, until they almost fell on the living to eat them, because they were accustomed to eating bodies.⁽⁴⁾...a word that almost makes the recipient realize the meaning of the validity of exaggeration, and thanks to it the speech acquires eloquence and beauty. The critic is a supporter of

exaggeration, but he places a restriction on exaggeration by providing the necessary conditions for it.⁽⁵⁾ The critic calls for acceptable exaggeration and hyperbole, far from excess in meanings and words.

2. Ibn al-Athir:

In "Al-Mathal Al-Sa'ir", the critic touched on the great difference between critics since ancient times, focusing on the term "excess", saying: "As for excess, some people in this craft have condemned it, and others have praised it. The doctrine in my opinion is to use it, for the best poetry is the falsest, rather the most truthful is the falsest, but its degrees vary, and some of it is desirable, which is the basis of usage."⁽⁶⁾ Thus, Ibn al-Athir clarifies his position on this issue through his saying, "The best poetry is the falsest." He believes that lying in poetry is permissible, and even excessive lying is permissible. However, it is clear from his opinion that lying is acceptable to the recipient, and this is an indication of not going against the norm, emphasizing that there is no true poetry; rather, there is false poetry, and this characteristic is the secret of its quality, beauty, and meaning.

3. Ibn Al-Banna Al-Marrakushi:

Al-Marrakushi addresses this topic from the perspective of the necessity of distinguishing between poetry and wisdom. He believes that lying and exaggeration are permissible in poetry, unlike wisdom, explaining that poetry is built on imitation and imagination, and this is what exaggeration is required in, citing as evidence for that his statement: "Everything in similes of lying or exaggeration is not in wisdom and is in poetry, because it is built on imitation and imagination, not on facts. Therefore, poetry is distinguished by types that are not from rhetoric according to wisdom, but are from rhetoric according to language, since poetry is from it. However, the poet cannot imitate and imagine something that does not exist originally, because if he does that, he is not an imitator, but rather an inventor, so he fabricates falsehood in his words, and the imitation is invalidated due to its falsehood, and this is the subject matter of poetry."⁽⁷⁾ Ibn al-Banna permits exaggeration in poetry but not in wisdom, and he believes that lying, exaggeration and hyperbole only occur in poetry because it is the language of imagination and imitation, unlike wisdom which depends on argument and persuasion. We find him distinguishing between moral lying related to religious discourse and artistic lying related to poetic discourse, and in doing so he rejects the idea of moral lying related to the Islamic religion. In contrast, he praises artistic lying because it is the foundation upon which poetry is built. In this context, he says: "And with what we have mentioned in this book, the difference in eloquence and fluency is

known, and it is a sufficient amount to understand that in the Book of God and the Sunnah of His Prophet and in all communications. Nothing has deviated from it except what is the subject of the art of prosody and the art of rhymes, and some of what is specific to poetry as it is poetry. As for what is the subject of the art of rhetoric and eloquence and is not specific to poetry as poetry, is not acceptable.⁽⁸⁾ Hence, Al-Marrakushi approves of lying in poetry, or artistic lying, and denies moral lying related to the Islamic religion.

4. Abu Hilal Al-Askari:

This critic has a position on this subject, so he went on to praise everyone who followed the doctrine of exaggeration, and he sees that most poetry is built on exaggeration and lies, saying: "Even though most of it is built on falsehood and the impossibility of impossible qualities, and descriptions outside of customs and false words; such as slandering chaste women, false testimony, and slanderous speech; especially pre-Islamic poetry, which is the strongest and most virtuous poetry, and nothing is intended from it except the beauty of the word and the quality of the meaning; this is what justified the use of falsehood and other things that were mentioned in it, and it was said to some philosophers that someone lies in poetry; so he said that what is intended from the poet is good speech (regardless of truthfulness), and truth is intended from the prophets."⁽⁹⁾ Here, Al-Askari's opinion on this issue becomes clear. He tends towards hyperbole and praiseworthy exaggeration, without insults, slander, falsehood, etc. He believes that most pre-Islamic poetry was built on exaggeration, and the latter is the Arabs' diwan (poetry collection) and its foundation, so it is necessary to follow their footsteps.

This was a set of opinions of the early critics, who tended to give preference to exaggeration, falsehood and exaggeration in poetry over truth, and they considered this to be a foundation in the poetic art, and it cannot be dispensed with. However, there is a class of critics who stood with the trend of truth and economy, and they see that the proponents of the doctrine of exaggeration are incapable of following the doctrine of artistic truth, so they tended towards what is called hyperbole in their poetry. We will deal with some of the opinions of the ancient critics who tended towards artistic truth, and their slogan in this was "The best poetry is the most truthful."

The second team: Supporters of honesty and economy

1. Ibn Tabataba Al-Alawi:

This critic (Ibn Tabataba Al-Alawi) in his book "Ayyar Al-Shi'r", which he made the true scale of poetry, and by which we distinguish between its good and its bad, addressed many issues that concern poetry, the most prominent of which is the issue of truth and falsehood in Arabic poetry. In this context, he mentioned what should be avoided while reciting poetry, saying: "The poet should avoid distant references, obscure stories, and problematic allusions, and deliberately avoid what is contrary to that, and use metaphors that are close to the truth and not far from it, and metaphors that are appropriate to the meanings that he brings."⁽¹⁰⁾ Through this statement, it becomes clear that the critic wanted moderation, gentleness, and avoiding strange words and meanings, and intention should be direct, and all of that falls within the realm of truthfulness in poetic speech avoiding exaggeration and immersion, and he continues to delve into this issue; touching on another meaning of truthfulness, saying: "Especially if it is supported by what brings hearts to truthfulness about the self by revealing the meanings stirred within it, and expressing what was concealed from it, and acknowledging the truth altogether."⁽¹¹⁾ Ibn Tabataba refers to psychological honesty, and acknowledges the multiplication of meanings in their good location, thus trying to oblige the poet to be honest about emotional experience in speech, and to depict the poet's suffering in an accurate and honest manner, without exaggeration so that the meanings do not lose their powerful effect. He also focuses on honesty in similes, and believes that whenever honesty is present in poetry, it is beautiful, moderate, and influential. This is what he confirms in his saying: "He coordinates speech with honesty, without falsehood, and truth, without metaphor."⁽¹²⁾ The critic rejects all types of lies, and does not even accept metaphor. This shows his fanaticism for artistic honesty in all its forms.

2. Al-Amidi:

Al-Amidi took a clear position in his book Al-Mouazana, supporting the idea of artistic truthfulness, saying: "Some narrators used to say: The best poetry is the falsest. By God, the best poetry is the most truthful, if there is someone who can summarize it and present it in the true sense of the word."⁽¹³⁾ Al-Amidi is biased towards truthfulness in speech, and finds exaggeration and falsehood in poetry ugly.

The third team: The middle position between truth and falsehood

We find some critics who took a middle position on this issue, studying the subject well and delving into its depths, and not giving priority to one element over another. Among these are:

1. Qadi Al-Jurjani:

Al-Jurjani in his book *Al-Wasata* dealt with this topic in detail, saying: "As for excess, it is a general doctrine among the modernists, and it is found in abundance among the ancients, and people differ about it. What is good is acceptable, and what is bad is rejected. It has patterns that, whenever the poet stops at them, and the description does not exceed their limits, he combines intention and completeness, and is free from deficiency and aggression."⁽¹⁴⁾ "His position on exaggeration carries a deep understanding of poetry and what it requires in terms of exaggeration at times and sincerity at other times." Qadi Al-Jurjani found that modern poets have spoken at length about exaggeration, and he sees its necessity in order to confirm the meaning, and in order to push the recipient to take an appropriate position. However, he sees that there is a limit to the artistic poetic lie based on exaggeration, which the poet must not exceed, otherwise the artistic image will be lost, and it will contradict the purpose for which it was formulated, due to its aversion and lack of reaction.⁽¹⁵⁾

2. Ibn Rasheeq Al-Qayrawani:

Ibn Rasheeq followed the same path as Qadi Al-Jurjani, and he did not have a decisive opinion on the issue: "He believes that there are many types of exaggeration and people differ in them: some of them favor it, and say that it is preferable, and see it as the ultimate goal in quality, and this is well-known from the doctrine of Nabigha bin Dhibyan, who said: The most eloquent of people is he whose lie is considered good and whose bad is laughed at. This is how I know it, and I saw in the handwriting of a group of people...- Among them are Abdul Karim and Al-Baghani - who approved of its good and appropriate parts and laughed at its bad parts. Some people believe that the virtue of the poet lies in his knowledge of the aspects of exaggeration and excess, and I do not see that as anything but impossible, because it contradicts the truth and deviates from what is required and what is known. Wise people say: The best speech is the truth."⁽¹⁶⁾

3. Abdul Qaher Al-Jurjani:

Abdul Qaher Al-Jurjani did not neglect this issue, as he addressed it in his book "Secrets of Rhetoric," discussing the saying "The best poetry is the falsest or the most truthful," saying: "Through- The best of it is the most truthful - leaving the extravagance and exaggeration, and turning to investigation and correction, and relying on what the mind proceeds from a correct origin, is more favorite to him and preferred by him, because its fruit is sweeter, its effect is more lasting, its benefit is more apparent, and its result is greater. And

whoever said "the falsest of it", went to the fact that the industry extends its arm, spreads its rays, its field expands, and its branches branch out, where expansion and imagination are relied upon, and the truth is claimed in what is originally approximation and representation."⁽¹⁷⁾ Al-Jurjani did not depart from the opinion of his predecessors, who addressed the subject with great interest and high precision, and they excluded the preference of one element over another, which is the doctrine followed by many critics, whether ancient or modern.

Conclusion:

The topic of truth and falsehood is an important topic in Arabic poetry, and perhaps the interest of ancient Arabic criticism in this topic is due to religious roots. The Holy Qur'an described a group of poets as saying what they do not do, in the words of God Almighty:

{ (26:224) As for the poets, they have the erring people to follow them. Do you not see that in every valley they roam? (225) And that they say what they do not do. (226) } .⁽¹⁸⁾

Some of the ancients understood that the poets' commitment to truthfulness in speech negates this Qur'anic blame from them. "Perhaps this concept was deepened in their minds by what was narrated on the authority of Omar ibn al-Khattab, that he said, in the reason for his admiration for Zuhair ibn Abi Salma: He did not hesitate in speech, nor did he follow Wahshi, nor did he praise a man except for what he had. They saw that Omar meant by this statement that the poet should not praise except for those qualities that he sees in the one he is praising, and that he should not claim for him what he does not have. This is what necessitates praise for him for achieving the aspect of truthfulness in his poetry."⁽¹⁹⁾ All of these people's understanding was superficial, meaning that they were influenced by the meanings of the Holy Qur'an, and they followed the literal truth in speech and action without exaggeration, and there was no praiseworthy exaggeration and fanaticism; meaning that all fanaticism is impermissible to them, regardless of its nature, and it is necessary to avoid it.

Al-Marrakshi follows the same path as his predecessor in his *Rawdah*, saying: "The beauty of the meaning of speech, its suitability and correctness, is only by building it on truth and aiming at beauty, and its appearance through proof. The beauty of the word and its suitability is only by aiming at what is used in the time of the speech, and according to the level of the one being addressed, and the clarification in the best way possible of facilitation and approximation. Therefore, he was the most eloquent of creation."

May peace and blessing be upon him - does not say poetry.⁽²⁰⁾ Al-Marrakshi links lying to moral meaning, thereby denying that the Prophet - peace be upon him - said poetry, considering that he does not speak from desire, and that exaggeration or hyperbole is not valid from him.

In short, the topic of truth and falsehood has been present in critical thought, both ancient and modern, and critics have addressed it with great precision, despite their differences in opinion. Some support truth, some advocate falsehood, and some take a middle position between the two groups, leaving judgment according to what the situation or position requires. Through this brief research, we wanted to present to the reader a clear picture of the conflict that has occurred in some issues of literary criticism since ancient times, especially the topic of truth and falsehood in literature in its two aspects, to finally arrive at some of the most important results:

1. Honesty in general means adhering to the limits of morality and social conventions. The writer's honesty is based on custom. For this reason, we find that

some critics have become aware of the danger of this vulgarity and have praised poetry for the amount of moral values it contains.

2. If exaggeration leads to lying, then there is no harm to the poet in the meanings he presents, whether they are high or low, true or false. Rather, meanings are like the material for poetry, and poetry is like the image in them. We see that the ancient Greeks used to say, "The best poetry is the falsest." Therefore, the goal of poetry is eloquence, rhetoric, rhetorical devices, and exaggeration. All of this is from the methods of the most eminent poets. It is necessary for every student to differentiate between eloquence in speech, which obliges its owner to exaggerate, and lying in the starting point, morals, and what deviates from the balance of correctness.

3. Exaggeration is the basis of literary creativity, as it is a fundamental factor in deepening the effectiveness of imagination and imitation. We find no source for these ideas except among Muslim philosophers and Arab critics who were influenced by them.

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