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A Comparative Analysis of Ghazali and Egan's Views on Imagination and Education: the Mythic Understanding and Children Learning

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Abstract

"Naive imagination is like a dark glass that prevent the shining lights entering the heart, but when is ripe enough become a clear glass that points those lights." (Ghazali, the Niche of Lights, P.73)

Iranian philosopher and educator, Abu Hamid Ghazali (1058-1111 A.D.) is the author of more than seventy books and essays on philosophy, education, mysticism, ethics, jurisprudence and dialectical theology. Throughout his works, one can easily observe that among the tools of acquiring knowledge (i.e., the senses, the imagination, and the intellect), imagination has become subject of special attention due to its capacity in recalling, analyzing, and synthesizing pre-acquired images, concepts and meanings and creating new and noble ones. Because of his unequivocal attention to imagination, instead of intellect, and the great impact imaginative thinking has had on Islamic philosophy of his times, some critics have maintained that "Islam has turned against science in twelfth century."

This article consists of two parts. The first part deals about Ghazali's perspective the place of imaginative faculty among the other faculties; the external faculties (i.e. the senses), the internal faculties (i.e. common-sense, imagery, memory, estimation), and the intellect and hence; it is observed that the faculty of imagination itself is a part of the internal faculties and links the external faculties with the intellect as well as comprehensive and continuous interaction with other internal faculties. Upon defining imagination, tasks and types associated with it, its priority and superiority over the intellect, the relationship between (1) the internal senses and the imagination and (2) the imagination and the intellect are addressed. In the second part, the authors

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follow the practical implications of such imaginative thought in Ghazali's teaching approach. To do so, and because of the comparative analysis pursued in the article (i.e., comparing Ghazali with contemporary western educational thinker Kieran Egan) about children's education, we concentrated on the "mythic understanding" that Egan has proposed for these ages and then, contrasted it with Ghazali's works. The results show that as Egan, but not in such a complete and detailed form, Ghazali considered the elements of play, story, binary opposites, rhyme, rhythm, images, gossip, mystery, and metaphor in his approach. But there are no clear and sufficient evidence for other elements (i.e., joke and humor) in Ghazali's teaching approach.

Keywords: Imagination; Children Learning; Mythic Understanding; Abu Hamid Ghazali; Kieran Egan

Prologue

In this article, we first offer a glimpse of Ghazali's life which will serve as a springboard for discussions to follow. Ghazali, like any newborn and curious child, was always searching for truth; for Ghazali, knowing of unknowns needed an open-mind, conscious eyes, and truth is primarily imaginative not systematic and rational. These attributes ultimately led Ghazali to a mystic (Sufi) worldview. We, then, address the key topics in four parts. In the first part, we, through the eyes of Ghazali, examine the role and place of imagination among other internal faculties. In the second part, we emphasize the priority and superiority of imagination on the intellect, from Ghazali's view. In the third part, we try to describe the Egan's mythic understanding and its cognitive tools, in addition to introduction of brief definition for other four kinds of understanding. In the forth part, we trace the cognitive elements of mythic understanding in Ghazali's thoughts and actions, and, then, compare them to those of Egan's.

Research Questions and Method

The main aim of this study is to find answers, through qualitative content analysis, to the following research questions:

1. What is the importance and meaning of imagination in view of Ghazali?
2. How is the relationship between two faculties of imagination and intellect from Ghazali's perspective?
3. What are the signs and traces of Egan's mythic understanding (which includes the elements of story, images, binary opposites, metaphors, jokes & humors, rhyme & rhythm, gossip, mystery, and play) in Ghazali's relevant works?

Content analysis as one of the most extensively employed analytical tools has been used fruitfully in a wide variety of scientific fields and disciplines. It has been primarily used as a quantitative research method. Qualitative content analysis has been defined

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as: "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1277-1288); or "any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings" (Patton, 2002:453).

Here, we use the following step-by-step procedure which includes the components that analysts need to proceed from texts to results (Krippendorff, 2004:83).These components are:

- **Unitizing**: relying on unitizing schemes;
- **Sampling**: relying on sampling plans;
- **Coding/Reducing data to manageable representations**: relying on established statistical techniques or other methods for summarizing or simplifying data;
- **Inferring contextual phenomena**: relying on moving an analysis outside the data. It bridges the gap between descriptive accounts of texts and what they mean, refer to, entail, provoke, or cause
- **Narrating answers to research questions**: relying on narrative traditions or discursive conventions (Krippendorff, 2004: 83-86).

According to the above mentioned procedure, we proceed from step one to step five as explained below:

1) **Unitizing**: generally, units are wholes that analysts distinguish and treat as independent elements. Qualitative content analysis usually uses individual themes as the unit for analysis, rather than the physical linguistic units (e.g., word, sentence, or paragraph) which most often used in quantitative content analysis (Ibid, 107). Individual themes of this research are: Imagination (its meaning, importance, role, boundaries), and Mythic Understanding (its meaning, elements, implications for education).
2) **Sampling**: among the sampling techniques, the relevance sampling has been used. Relevance sampling aims at selecting texts that contribute to answering given research questions (Ibid, 119). So, four relevant works from Kieran Egan and sixteen relevant works from and about Muhammad Ghazali have been selected.
3) **Coding/Reducing data:** the process of coding data has been qualitatively done based on the research questions and analysis units. For reducing data, the technique of summarizing has been used: summaries reduce the diversity of text to what matters.
4) **Inferring contextual phenomena:** Inferences and interpretations of research questions have been cited along with descriptions, where they been needed.
5) **Narrating answers to research questions:** according to this step, researchers made

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their results comprehensible to others in the end of any discussion (e.g. Ghazali on Imagination, Imagination vs. Intellect, Ghazali on Cognitive Tools).

A Glance over Ghazali's Life

Abu Hamid Muhammad Ghazali was born in Toos, Persia, in the year 1058 A.D. Ghazali's father died when he was a kid. Before his death, the father gave his two sons into the charge of a Sufi friend who faithfully cared for them and begin their training. Ghazali studied in a school (Madrasah) in Toos, and later in Jurjan and Nishapour. So, he acquired a broad knowledge of many branches of learning. He was later appointed to teach in the great school [University] of Baghdad (Nezamiyeh), and there he lectured to some three hundred students. But, although he was outwardly successful, he had no peace of heart and the search for finding the answer to the doubts of his soul was his main pursuit of life. In order to reach the truth, he examined all the philosophical, political, and religious thought current in his time. After examining various kinds of knowledge, Ghazali proposed that sense-perception, instead of typical imitation way of that time (Taghlid), is the only kind of knowledge possessing the characteristic of infallibility. However, after examining, he doubted it because of optical illusions, and realized that he could not trust it either. Ghazali rejected sense-perception and proposed the intellectual truths which can be relied on (such as ten is more than three). But again, doubt was cast on intellectual truths. Ghazali skepticism continued and questioned the truth of all the beliefs whether originating from the sense or the intellect. Then, he proposed intuition and revelation that through them we imagine things that can be stable and enduring. So, he turned to the study of mysticism (Sufism), for him, Sufism was not a theoretical science that can simply be studied from books or learnt from a master; it was an activity, a practice, including withdrawal from the world, seclusion and itinerancy. In the year 1095 A.H. he suddenly left position, wealth, and fame and withdrew from the world. He traveled to Damascus, visited Jerusalem and Egypt, and made the Pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. Finally, drawn by the ties of family affection, he returned to Baghdad. This period of retirement was filled with the study and writing of books. Early in this period, he wrote his masterpiece "The Revival of the Religious Sciences" (Ihya Ulum Al-Din) that itself includes forty books, and taught it in Damascus, Baghdad and Nishapour. He remained in his native city of Toos where he established a Sufi School (Khanaghah). There he spent his time in study and meditation until his end came quietly in the year 1111 A.D. (Ghahramani, 2003; Al-Rabe, 1984; Ghazali, 1977; Skellie, 1938).

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Ghazali on Imagination

"People believe that for seeing one must open eyes; but I contend, for seeing one must Close eyes and imagine." (Ghazali, the Revival of the Religious Sciences, p.535)

Ghazali divided the senses into two parts. The external senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch that act through the bodily members: the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and fingers. Sense-perception reaches the individual by means of these external senses, but they are perceived and understood only by means of inner senses. The internal senses are 1) Common Sense (Hiss Moshtarak), 2) Imagery (Khyyal), 3) Estimation (Wahmiyyah), 4) Memory (Hafizah), and 5) Imagination (Takhayyul). These are internal faculties that imagination belongs to. For understanding imagination and its role and place among the internal senses, it will be helpful to define each of these senses (Skellie, 1938: XXX-XXXI):

1. The Common Sense: is that power which receives the impressions which come through the diffe
2. rent external senses and unites them into a harmonious and unified whole.
3. Imagery: is that power which derives images from the sensible objects formerly perceived.
4. Estimation: is that power which derives the meanings and concepts from the sensible objects.
5. Memory: is that power which is the storehouse for the images, meanings, and concepts which come from faculties of imagery and estimation.
6. Imagination: is that power which takes from the faculties of imagery, estimation, and memory the stored and unsorted images, meanings, and concepts and transforms them into noble and new ones.

So, in the process of deriving meaning and construct making, first, the common sense unifies the various aspects of a sensible object which formerly were perceived by the external senses. Then, the faculties of imagery and estimation, respectively, transform the physical sensation into image, meaning and concept. After that, current images, meanings and concepts are fixed and stored in the memory. Finally, the faculty of imagination creates a network that has links with the faculties of imagery, estimation and memory as the figure shows (figure1). These links are both with current and stored images, meanings, and concepts. The imaginative faculty analyses and synthesizes the current and stored perceptions and creates new and noble combinations. That's why the products of imagination, neither like those of imagery and estimation are exactly based on the common sense outputs, nor like those of memory are fixed and belong only to images, meanings, and concepts the past.

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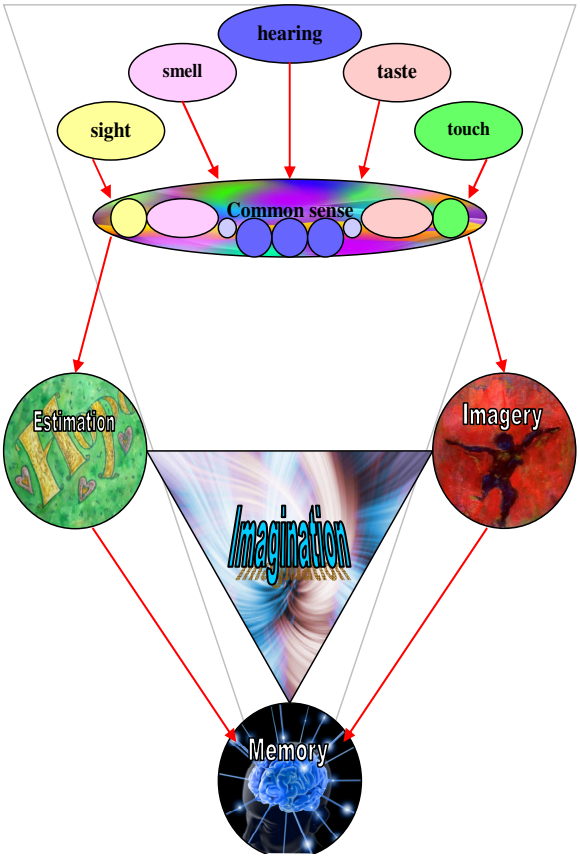


Figure 1 The Network of Internal and External Faculties

Overall, the faculty of imagination plays three main roles that are as follow (Abdull-Karim, 1982: 233-240):

1. Recalling the stored images, meanings, and concepts from the faculty of memory.
2. Analyzing the current and the recalled
3. Synthesizing the analyzed images, meanings, and concepts and creating the new and noble compounds.

According to Ghazali, the above tasks are done by two kinds of imagination. 1) recollective imagination and 2) creative imagination. Recollective imagination, by doing activities like comparing similarities and dissimilarities, helps to recall the necessary or forgotten information (Abdull-Karim, 1982: 230). Creative imagination often does tasks of analysis and synthesis and that is by means of this kind of imagination that we can imagine a black apple (Abdull-Karim, 1982: 235). It is worth noting here that the products of imagination are not necessarily irrational and illogical; when these noble and even strange

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products are purified, refined, polished, and organized, they become parallel to the rational meanings (Moad, 2007).

Imagination vs. Intellect

Before Ghazali, Iran's philosophers paid no or little attention to imagination. Take Farabi, for example, he considers the faculty of imagination as one of the lower faculties, which just stores and reproduces the sensibles that are gathered by the senses. Farabi gives priority to intellect, because it is concerned with the non-sensible affairs (Hughes, 2002). But, Ghazali claims that the imagination is both prior and superior to rational faculty, because it is responsible for the creation of images that enable the individual to perceive the imperceptible and to express the inexpressible. Furthermore, the apprehension of truth is connected to images, for the latter makes the former accessible (Ibid, 2002). It is within this context that imagination becomes so important and provides us with insight and illumination. So, Ghazali defines more roles for imagination (i.e. creation through analysis and synthesis), in addition to recall and reproduction. He reverses their hierarchy; it is now the intellect that has the potential to subvert the truth because of its undue reliance on proofs that fail to fit adequately the world that the embodied human interacts with.

For Ghazali, philosophers have based their theory of the intellect on the notion that "this world is corrupt and that reality is to be found in a higher, immaterial world." Ghazali, on the contrary, claims that we are unable to access immaterial world as embodied creatures. It is the imagination that provides the vehicle by which we mediate between materiality and immateriality (Ibid, 2002). Also, for Ghazali, the imaginative faculty functions as a corrective complement to the intellect and able us to purify it from impurities. Ghazali believes that the answers to life's complex realities do not reside in a single culture of intellectual tradition. He emphasizes on creativity and freedom of mind through imagination. So, whereas the philosophers were highly critical of the creative powers of imagination, Ghazali argued that it is precisely this creativity that makes the imagination the locus of certain knowledge; because the imagination experiences and expresses in sensible form which is essentially inexpressible. Finally, For this new and innovative look of Ghazali at the imagination, instead of the intellect, and thus the great impact of such imaginative thinking on Islamic philosophy and educational thought of that time, some contemporary critics claimed: "Alas, Islam has turned against science in the twelfth century" (Anwar, 2008).

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Kieran Egan's Mythic Understanding

Egan suggests five kinds of understanding. Here, the mythic understanding is selected for our purpose, because the oral language has been the main tool for teaching/learning in ancient Iran which Ghazali belongs to. First, we introduce five kinds of understanding and then, describe the mythic understanding and cognitive tools in detail. Egan's five kinds of understanding are as follows:

1. Somatic understanding: it is pre-linguistic and determined by the kind of body and senses we have. It is prior to language development, but continues through other understandings. In fact, our understanding of the world is profoundly shaped by somatic understanding (Egan, 2009).
2. Mythic Understanding: it is a product of learning to use an oral language. The development of oral language involves a set of cognitive tools like story, metaphor, image… (Ibid, 2009).
3. Romantic Understanding: it is a product of learning literacy within a romantic context. Students gradually accommodate their thinking to the shape of autonomous reality, but the romantic reality. This understanding is lively, energetic, less concerned with systematic structures (Egan, 1997: 102).
4. Philosophic Understanding: it is a product of learning the fluent use of theoretic abstraction and thinking (Ibid, 2009). The philosophic mind focuses on the connections among things, constructing theories, law, ideologies, and metaphysical schemes to tie together the facts available to the student (Egan, 1997: 121).
5. Ironic Understanding: it is a product of learning how to use languages flexibly for complex communicational purpose. Irony involves sufficient mental flexibility to recognize how inadequately flexible are our minds, and the languages we use, to the world we try to represent in them (Egan, 1997: 155).

The Cognitive Tools Associated with Mythic Understanding

Mythic understanding is typically predominated from the time grammatical language develops between the ages of two and three until about six, seven, or eight. Mythic understanding tools are not things we leave behind as we become literate. They will remain in significant degree as transformed constituents of all further kinds of understanding. So, Mythic understanding is a permanent constitutive element of our later understanding (Egan, 1997: 36). The main educational task is to ensure that children learn fluid and flexible language use so that it can become a means of communicating and expressing their unique perceptions and consciousness (Egan, 1997: 67-68). Generally,

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the cognitive elements of mythic understanding are as follows:

1. Story: Whenever we find oral language use, we also find stories (Egan, 2006: 4). Story is a narrative that has a beginning that usually sets up some kind of conflict, a middle that complicated it, and an ending in which the conflict is resolved (Egan, 2006: 5). Overall, stories perform two tasks at the same time. They are, first, very effective at communicating information in a memorable form, and, second, they can orient the hearer's feelings about the information being communicated (Egan, 2005: 10). So, stories can easily shape events into emotionally meaningful patterns.
2. Images: The word image dose not mean picture, instead, it refers to those constructs we form in our mind in response to things we hear or read (Egan, 2006: 16). Images can be the most potent tools for aiding meaningful memorization. Memorization includes the creation of strange and vivid images that encode the knowledge to be remembered (Egan, 2006: 17). So, images are connected with strong emotions.
3. Binary Opposites: These are the most basic and powerful tools for organizing and categorizing knowledge (Egan, 2005: 3). We can use opposites (like good/bad, cold/hot) as a means to get to a deeper level of meaning (Egan, 2006: 28). So, binary opposites can enables us to introduce new topics in dramatic ways that easily grab students' imaginations.
4. Metaphors: Metaphor is the tool that enables us to see one thing in terms of another (Egan, 2005: 3). Most of our language use is metaphoric and metaphor's enormous fluidity allows meanings to expand and slip and slide in all kinds of ways (Egan, 2006: 33). So, metaphor is a powerful cognitive tool in learning literacy.
5. Joke and Humor: These cognitive tools are ways of lightening up lessons. We can use jokes {and humors} to help student with spelling, punctuation, puzzles,… or can use jokes as short stories to help student with understanding any subjects (Egan, 2006: 39-44).
6. Rhyme and Rhythm: People long ago discovered that the various sounds developed for communication could be shaped and patterned for greater impact and memorization and also for pleasure (Egan, 2006: 44). Both rhyme and rhythm are be-products of oral language development. They are potent tools for giving meaningful, memorable, and attractive shape to any content (Egan, 2005: 3).
7. Gossip: It is often thought of as idle pleasure. But it can also play an important

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role in learning (Egan, 2005: 5). In fact, gossip narrative is a kind of story, but it is different in its informality, its casualness, its lack of structuring (Egan, 2005: 29).

8. Play: It helps students free themselves, and can also enlarge their self-control and their understanding of the importance of self-control. In play they learn to follow flexible rules (Egan, 2005: 5), and this is essential in imaginative classroom.
9. Mystery: It is an important tool in developing and engagement with knowledge that is beyond the students' everyday environment (Egan, 2005: 6). So, mystery allows students to recognize that whatever they learn is at least only a tiny fragment of what is to be known (Egan, 2005: 33).

Ghazali on Cognitive Tools

The authors do not claim that Ghazali has produced a comprehensive account of teaching/learning imaginatively. By studying his relevant works, we found that some of the pre-mentioned elements are clearly visible in his thought and action and some are not. Here, we present our findings:

1. **Story**: For Ghazali, some of tales are good to hear while others are harmful. Good stories are those which are about prophets and fairies, and accrue essentially in the Qur'an. Ghazali names them "true stories" (Ghazali, 1988: 83). Ghazali suggested that teachers tell students such true stories. We can also observe that Ghazali, for making topics attractive and understandable, used the story format in his works especially "The Alchemy of Happiness". In contrast to Egan, Ghazali did not support such [true] notion that telling fictional stories for children is appropriate and beneficial. He believed that such kinds of stories may be along with lies and hence harmful for children (Ghazali, 1988: 82). But Egan believes that any teacher can invent a comic character, which has come from another country or another planet (Egan, 2006: 11).
2. **Image**s: For Ghazali, images enable the embodied individual to perceive the imperceptible and to express the inexpressible. Imagination deals with images and such images provide us with insight and illumination (Hughes, 2002). The image (Mithal) does not mean resemblance (Mithl), because resemblance connotes equality (Musawi) in all of the attributes (Sifat). The image does not require such equivalence. We see the undeniable importance of images in Ghazali' thought as he says "it seems to me that knowledge can not be defined in a single way, because of its complexity and

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subtlety. Overall, it can be said that there is no meaning to knowledge except that of its being an image that arrives in the soul (Asari, 1993: 40).

3. **Binary Opposites**: Theoretically, we could not observe any direct statement about binary opposites, but practically, we observed the use of this tool in Ghazali works. For example, in describing the tasks of the senses and making them apprehensible, Ghazali used many binary opposites like cold/hot, wet/dry, tasteless/tasty, smooth/rough, sweet/bitter, dark/bright, far/near, small/large, thin/thick (Ghazali, 1972: 587-8).
4. **Metaphors**: For Ghazali, metaphor is to see facts through the words (Moad, 2007). Ghazali says: "words are powerful and wonderful tool of language, and enable you to describe or interpret a fact or a concept in various ways" (Ghazali, 1979: 65). Ghazali allocated one chapter of his book "The Niche of Lights" to simile, and According to Egan, simile is a kind of metaphor ((Egan, 2006: 34). About the impact of metaphor, Ghazali argues that some things are expressed through metaphor so that its impression on the heart of the listener may be deep. Its value is that it leaves a greater impression on the heart (Ghazali, 1995: chapter 2).
5. **Jokes and Humors**: It is very difficult to see the traces of joke and humor in Ghazali' works. The reason might be the culture of that time, in addition to this fact that Ghazali was a serious man. There is a short sentence by Ghazali that say: "use joke and humor with caution, and those kinds of jokes & humors are acceptable that there is not any insult in them" (Ghazali, 1972: 618).
6. **Rhyme and Rhythm**: The old practice of signing and chanting rounds that Egan suggests for engaging each learn in repeating a sentence in overlapping turns (Egan, 2006: 47), is clearly observable in Ghazali's teaching method, especially in teaching Qur'an and grammar. For Ghazali, in singing there are joined ideas, in it there is hearing of a sound, pleasant, measured, having a meaning to be understood (Ghazali, 1901: 587). When measure is added to rhymed prose, the speech become more affecting to the heart, and when a pleasing voice and measured airs are combined with it, its power of affecting increases; then, if there be added to it movements of rhythm, the effect still increases (Ghazali, 1901: 596). So, Ghazali calls teachers to adorn their speech with rhyme and rhythm. Ghazali also believes that poetry is the source of rhyme & rhythm, so it should be included a moral or a wise saying and should be used either as

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evidence or as example (Ghazali, 1988: 85). It is worth noting here that In Ghazali's view, poetry is among permissible sciences. In Ghazali's classification of sciences, sciences are of three groupings: desired, un-desired, and permissible. The desired sciences are medical science, mathematics and agriculture; the un-desired group includes witchcraft and jugglery; and the permissible group includes poetry and history (Taheri Araghi, 1991).

7. **Gossip**: In Ghazali's works, especially in "The Revival of the Religious Sciences" and "The Alchemy of Happiness", there are many evidences that show he used the language of gossip. For explanation and interpretation of many serious topics (like rules, law, theories), Ghazali refers to lives of various individuals, quotations of notable and famous persons, events occurred during his travels, and short informal stories. According to Egan, gossip involves a series of skills, including the ability to fit events into a narrative (Egan, 2005: 5), coloring our representation of events with emotion (Ibid: 6), and we saw these abilities in Ghazali as a teacher.
8. **Mystery**: Ghazali himself was a Mystic (Sufi), and he believed that Sufi must sit with empty heart and seek the secrets of the great and wonderful world, and for him the main characteristic of the learned man is that he not be impatient to give his opinion…when he is asked about something which he has some doubt about it, he should say, I do not know… and, then, opens eyes and goes to find the answer (Ghazali, 1988: 175). According to Egan, by opening our minds to the wider, stranger, and less easily accessible world, we create the first tool for its exploration (Egan, 2005: 33). In fact, Ghazali did it in practice; after many years of traveling, studying, observation and reflection, he wrote several books on mysteries of purity, worship, charity, and human soul.
9. **Play**: Ghazali argues that play leads to recreation; to prevent play and insist on continuous study leads to dullness and unhappiness in children (Nofal, 1993). He suggested these kinds of play: play with dolls, ball games, polo (Ghazali, 2002: 477); making dolls, and chess (Ghazali, 1972: 600-611). For Ghazali, there is the practice of imagination in play; here we barrow a paragraph from Ghazali: "The Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) said to Aisha one day, "What is this?" She said, "My dolls." He said, "But what is that I see in the middle of them?" She said, "A horse." he said, "What is this on it?" She said, "A pair of wings." He said, "Has a horse a pair of wings?" She said," Have

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you not heard that Solomon had horses with wings." (Ghazali, 1901: 600).

Conclusion

Expanding the understanding of unknown world and reaching the truth, even relative truth, was the ultimate goal of Ghazali's life. Ghazali cast doubt over everything, and slipped and slid from sense-perception to intellection and finally to imagination. That was there, he found peace and satisfaction. For Ghazali, providing answers to the complexities of life did not reside only in a single culture of sense-perception or intellection tradition, it needed something else and more. Acquisition of knowledge and its development acquire freedom of thought and creativeness of mind that are achievable through imagination. And here, the meaning of mythic understanding is to reach imaginative thinking through language. So, if we capsulate the mythic understanding in a word, it would be oral language; and Ghazali says "language is a ladder and a staircase to all the sciences." Oral language has a set of cognitive tools that Ghazali truly used almost all of them: he used well and appropriately the tools of story, metaphor, image, mystery, rhyme and rhythm, play, and gossip; he used binary opposites only practically and for making some topics understandable; but we could see no trace of using joke and humor in Ghazali's works that it might be, generally, because of Ghazali's personality and, especially, because of culture of that time. Unfortunately, we now see no implication of such beautiful and powerful imaginative thinking in children education in Iran, and it can be claimed that this issue gradually has turned into the null aspect of curriculum in primary education (Mehrmohammadi, 2007). However, we hope that, first, by doing more theoretical studies and, then, by designing curricular plans based on Egan' model of imaginative understanding can increase awareness and hence eliminate such neglect.

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مطالعه‌ی تطبیقی دیدگاه غزالی و ایگن در رابطه با تخیل و آموزش: فهم اسطوره‌ای و دلالت‌های آن در یادگیری کودکان

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"تخیل در درجه‌ی نخست، مانند شیشه تاریک است که مانع از ورود انوار به دل می‌شود و لیکن چون تربیت گردد، شیشه روشن شده و هادی نور می‌گردد."
«غزالی، مشکاة الانوار:۷۳»

غزالی فیلسوف و مربی ایرانی (۵۰۵-۴۵۰ ه.ق.) مؤلف بیش از هفتاد کتاب و رساله در زمینه‌ی فلسفه، تعلیم و تربیت، عرفان، اخلاق، فقه و کلام اسلامی است .وی از میان ابزارهای کسب معرفت (قوای حسی پنجگانه، قوه‌ی تخیل و قوه‌ی عقل)، تخیل را به دلیل داشتن قابلیت‌هایی چون بازخوانی، تجزیه و تحلیل، و ترکیب مسبوقات (صور، مفاهیم و معانی) و خلق مصادیق بکر و تازه از آنها، در مرتبتی عالی قرار داده است. به دلیل همین نگاه نو و ویژه‌ی غزالی به تخیل (برخلاف فیلسوفان ماقبل و حتی مابعد وی که عقل را برتر و مقدم بر تخیل می‌گماشتند) و تأثیر عمیق و گسترده‌ی تفکر تخیلی وی بر فلسفه‌ی اسلامی آن دوران بوده که بعضی از منتقدان معاصر اظهار داشتند: " اسلام در قرن ۱۲ میلادی کمر به قتل علم بسته بود." این مقاله در دو بخش تنظیم شده که در بخش نخست آن و از دیدگاه غزالی به تبیین جایگاه قوه‌ی تخیل در میان قوای بیرونی (قوای حسی پنجگانه)، قوای درونی (حس مشترک، خیال، حافظه، ذاکره)، و عقل پرداخته شده که تخیل خود جزو قوای درونی بوده و در عین تعامل مستمر و گسترده با دیگر قوای درونی چه در خواب و چه در بیداری، حلقه‌ی اتصال عالم حواس و عالم عقل است. سپس در حین تعریف تخیل، وظایف و درجات آن، و تشریح تقدم و برتری آن بر عقل، به کیفیتِ (۱) رابطه‌ی حواس با تخیل و (۲) رابطه‌ی تخیل با عقل پرداخته شده است. در بخش بعدی، دلالت‌های عملی این تفکر تخیلی را، در رویکرد تدریس غزالی شناسایی می کنیم. برای

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تحقق این امر و با توجه به علاقه‌ی مشترک غزالی و ایگن (صاحبنظر برجسته تعلیم و تربیت از کانادا) به تعلیم و تربیت کودکان، از میان پنج نوع فهم نظریه‌ی ایگن، فهم اسطوره‌ای را که متناسب سطح یادگیری کودکان است برگزیدیم و عناصر آن را در آثار غزالی ردیابی کردیم. در بررسی این عناصر بدین نتیجه رسیدیم که علیرغم تفاوت‌هایی چند، غزالی نیز همچون ایگن به عناصر بازی، قصه، استعاره، تصاویر، مفاهیم متضاد دوتایی، ریتم، کلمات موزون، راز و رمز توجه داشته است. در آثار و اندیشه‌های غزالی، اثر مشخصی از عناصر مزاح و شوخ‌طبعی به چشم نمی‌خورد.

واژگان کلیدی: غزالی، ایگن، تخیل، یادگیری کودکان، فهم اسطوره‌ای

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