Signs of Forethought and Conscious Composition in *Masnavi*

Dr. Sousan Jabri[*]

Associate Professor, Department of Persian Literature and Language, Faculty of Humanities, Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran.

Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Is art created consciously or unconsciously? This question always sparks controversies amongst artists, researchers, philosophers, and psychologists. Nonetheless, as an intricate phenomenon, art demands both consciousness and unconsciousness to come into existence, and manifest attributes of both realms.

Poetry is the most prominent artistic form of the ancient world, and to our predecessors, thinkers, Sufis, and poets were educators. Therefore, the vast portion of the ancient literature is didactic, and poetry has been used as a rhetorical devise to effectively convey the poets' beliefs and instructions to the audience or the readers. Needless to say, didactics requires forethought and conscious thoughts of the educators on what they aim to teach.

Masnavi is amongst the greatest Sufist didactic texts. Surprisingly, some believe that *Masnavi* comes from a free stream of consciousness and, as a result, they describe *Masnavi* as a chaotic, disorganized and opaque work.

Chaotically, he delivers an ordinary tale by means of a chain of semantic and sentimental blocks (Abdul-Hakim, 1977). And sometimes researchers have doubts and offer contradictory observations; … Rumi has surrendered himself to inspiration to see where it gets him. However, this does not imply that Rumi does not engage his conscious thoughts. As he has mastered several levels of knowledge simultaneously, 'no task stops Him from doing other tasks'. The proof is that he returns to speech whenever he wants (Zekavati Gharehguzlu, 2007).

2. Theoretical Framework

This research adopts a stance opposing the contradictory views of those who argue that Rumi's poetry comes from the unconscious and, therefore, find it chaotic and disorganized. Hence, this research seeks the signs that can

---

*. Corresponding Author Email: s.jabri@razi.ac.ir

manifest the author's total consciousness in the process of composing his complicated and tatted *Masnavi*. First, the roots of such hasty evaluations such as awareness of Rumi's frenzy, semantic confusion of some terms, blurring the boundary between reality and illusion, and *Masnavi*'s inaccessibility will be reviewed. Then, the signs that signify Rumi's conscious and forethought toted process of composing *Masnavi* will be discussed.

3. Method

The methodology adopted is content analysis. Firstly, the contents of researches are analyzed that – implicitly or explicitly – find *Masnavi* chaotic and the reason is that, they said *Masnavi* was composed in a state of unconsciousnesss. Then, the content is analyzed to find the three types of signs of meditation and conscious composition: 1) poetics of *Masnavi*, 2) narrative elements in the tales of *Masnavi*, and 3) the internal coherence of the structure and content of *Masnavi*.

4. Results and Discussion

In the research conducted on *Masnavi*, there are some arguments which appear to be irrelevant such as the claim that the text is disorganized and chaotic for it was composed in a state of frenzy and unconsciousness. By analyzing these arguments, we realized the researchers' prejudice: prior awareness of researchers of Rumi's frenzy, semantic confusion between association of meanings and free association, ignoring the relation between free association and the stream of consciousness, ignoring the internal monologue and its relation with the stream of consciousness, ignoring the breaking of frontier between reality and illusion in *Masnavi*, attributing unconscious composing to *Masnavi* and supposing that *Masnavi* is surrealist text, ignoring the inability of language in conveying Rumi's deep Sufist ideas, difficult perception of *Masnavi*'s language for today's readers, difficulty of understanding *Masnavi* and the need to be fond of Masnavi, and the necessity of contemplation to the era that *Masnavi* was created.

5. Conclusion

After putting aside such hasty evaluations and scrutinizing the text, findings signify Rumi's conscious and forethoughtated composition of *Masnavi*. The signs found can be divided into three groups:

First; poetics of *Masnavi*: didactics, reciting in public tradition, spending some time alone before preaching, the subjects central to Sufist thought, *Masnavi*'s narrative-article nature, allegorical discursive method, processing

extradiegetic dialogues, dividing a massive thought into smaller parts, repetition, intratextual references, break from and return to the topic, conducting the flow the talks consciously and selection of the tales.

Second; processing narrative elements such as recreating the tales, titling, revealing the story plots, creating suspense, processing diegetic dialogues, autonomy of the tales, internal coherence of the plots, narrative delay, harmony between the subject and the themes, concluding and closing the tales.

Third; structure and content's internal links, keywords, key sentences, key lines, structuring the text, links between the tale and the text.

The conclusion derived from these findings imply the conscious forethoughtated, and logical composition of *Masnavi*. The style of composing the speech elements in *Masnavi* show that this style is influenced by, on the one hand, Rumi's worldview and his intellectual priorities and, on the other hand, the mood of his audience. He has composed *Masnavi* based on a conscious and forethoughtated plan by paying close attention to the diverse aspects of the text and his audience. Therefore, we may say that Rumi, during the fourteen years he spent on composing *Masnavi*, had been conscious and fully aware of both the process of composition and the details of his work and had been keeping a vigilant eye on his audience and the plan of his work.

Keywords: Forethought, Conscious Composition, Stream of Consciousness, Rumi, *Masnavi*

References

Abdul Hakim, C. (1997). عرفان مولوی [Rumi's mysticism]. (A. Mohammadi Trans., 3ʳᵈ ed.). Tehran: Pocket Books.

Bameshki, S. (2013). تداخل درونی در مثنوی [Internal interference in Masnavi]. *Literary Criticism*, 6(21) 9-36.

Bameshki, S. (2014). تداخل سطوح روایی [Interference of narrative levels]. *Literary Essays*, *184*, 1-27.

Bameshki, S., & Qawam, A. (2011). شکست روایی و شیوههای بازگشت به داستان در مثنوی [Narrative failure and methods of returning to the story in Masnavi]. *Literary Techniques*, *3*(1), 29-46.

Bameshki, S., & Zahmatkesh, N. (2014). کارکردهای داستان درونهای. [The functions of internal story]. *Literary Research*, *9*, 9-31.

Baramki, A., & Dabiran, H. (2011). نقش مخاطب در گستهای داستانی مثنوی [The role of the audience in Masnavi narrative fragments]. *Rumi Research*, *15*(10), 1-28.

Bayat, H. (2015). خطاهای رایج در شــناخت شــیوه جریان ســیال ذهن [Common mistakes in recognizing the stream of consciousness technique]. *Literary Criticism*, *8*(3), 209-223.

Behnam, M., Ghavam, A. Taghavi, M., & Hashemi, M. (2013). بررسی چگونگی پردازش زمان در غزلیات شمس با استفاده از شگرد جریان سیال ذهن [Investigating the procession of time in Rumi's lyric poems by using the stream of consciousness technique]. *Persian Language and Literature*, *31*, 83-108.

Dad, S. (1986). فرهنگ اصطلاحات ادبی [Dictionary of literary terms]. Tehran: Morvarid.

Ebrahimi, J. (1995). گســـترۀ رمز در مثنوی مولـانا [The Area of The symbol in Rumi's Masnavi]. *Letter of Culture*, *19*, 139-143.

Emamifar, S. (2005). شـــبکههای تداعی در مثنوی مولانا [Association networks in Rumi's Masnavi]. *The Growth: Education of Persian Language and Literature*, *4*, 26-31.

Forouzanfar, B. (2001). احادیث و قصـــص مثنوی [*Hadiths and stories of Masnavi].* Tehran: Amirkabir.

Fotuhi, M. (2005). تمثیل ماهیت، اقسام، کارکرد [Allegory; Nature, Types, Function]. *Journal of Kharazmi University Faculty of Letters and Humanities, 13-12*(49-47), 141 - 178.

Gholam M. (2003). کیفیت تعلیق در قصهپردازی مولانا [The Quality of Suspension in Rumi's storytelling*]. Journal of the Faculty of Literature and Humanities, 14*, 71-95.

Hobadi, H. A., & Gorgi, M. (2007). تحلیل داسـتان پادشـاه و کنیزک بر مبنای شـیوۀ تداعی آزاد و گفتگوی ســقراطی [Analysis of The Story of King and Slave; Based on The Method of Free Association and Socratic Dialogue]. *Journal of the Faculty of Literature and Humanities, University of Tehran*, *183*, 177-192.

Jaberi Ardakani, N. (2009). بررسی نقش اندیشه در پیوستگی قصّههای مثنوی [*Investigating the role of thought in the continuity of Masnavi's story*] (Unpublished master's thesis) Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran.

Jaberi Ardakani, N. (2016). شـطح و شیوۀ بیان آن در مثنوی [The Shathe and manner of its expression in Masnavi]. *Poetry Research, 8*(1), 41-62.

Jafari, F. (2016). سوررئالیسم در مثنوی معنوی [Surrealism in Masnavi]. *Mystics in Persian Literature*, *62*, 561–481.

Jokar, N. (2009). درآمدی بر پیوند قصـــهها و محور طولی ابیات مثنوی [An introduction to the connection of stories and the longitudinal axis of Masnavi verses]. *Gohar Goya*, *3*(3), 21-40.

Jokar, N., & Jaberi, N. (2010). پیونـد ابیـات مثنوی بر مبنـای تـداعی و تمثیـل [Linking in Masnavi's verses based on association and allegory]. *Literature and language*, *28*, 51-73.

Mahmoudi, A., & Khajavi Nejad, L. (2010). بررسی ساختار تداعی در حکایتی از مثنوی [Study of Structure of Association in Masnavi's Anecdote]. Paper presented at *The 15th Conference on Research in Persian Language and Literature*. Teacher Training University of Sabzevar, Sbazaevar, Iran.

Mahmoudi, M. A., & Sadeghi, H. (2009). تداعی و روایت داستان جریان سیال ذهن [Association and Stream of Consciousness Story's Narration]. *Literary Research*, 6(24), 129-144.

Mehdizadeh Fard, B., & Emami, N. (2009). بررسی چند شگرد روایی در قصه‌های مثنوی [A Study of Some Narrative Techniques in Masnavi Stories]. *Literary Criticism*, 2(8), 141-162.

Mehrabi Biaberi, F. (2014 [*The Patterns of Episode Arrangement and Its Connection with Structure and Content in Rumi's Masnavi*]. (Unpublished master's thesis), Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran.

Mir Sadeghi, J. (1998). واژه‌نامهٔ هنر داستان‌نویسی [Glossary of Fiction Art]. Tehran: Mahnaz Book.

Mohammadi, A., & Baharvand, A. (2013). شیوه‌های پایان‌بندی در داستان‌های مثنوی [Methods OF Finishing in Masnavi Stories]. *Persian Literature, 3*(2), 19-38.

Mozaffari, A. (2003). صورت از بی‌صورتی، نگرشی بر ساختار روائی مثنوی مولوی [The Form of Formless: A View on The Narrative Structure of Rumi's Masnavi]. *Poetry, 33*, 40-43.

Okhovvat, A. (1992). دستور زبان داستان [*Grammar of the story*] Isfahan: Farda.

Parsinejad, I. (2001). روشنگران ایرانی و نقد ادبی [*Iranian enlightenment and literary criticism*]. Tehran: Sokhan.

Rumi, J. (2005). مثنوی معنوی [Masnavi]. Tehran: Hermes.

Safavi, S. (2018). ساختار معنایی مثنوی [*Semantic structure of Masnavi*]. (2nd ed.). Tehran: Center of Heritage Written Research.

Sajjadi, Ali Muhammad. (2001). مولا و مولانا [Moula and Rumi]. *Journal of Humanities*, 29, 37-49.

Seldon, R., & Widowson, P. (1998). راهنمای نظریهٔ ادبی معاصر [*Handbook of Contemporary Literary Theory]*. (A. Mokhber Trans.) Tehran: Tarhe No.

Shiri, G. (2007). شناختی از داستان های مثنوی [Cognition of Masnavi Stories]. *Book of the Month*, 1(7), 28-41.

Shohani, A. (2003). داستان‌پردازی و شخصیت‌پردازی در مثنوی معنوی [Storytelling and Characterization in The Masnavi]. *Literary Research*, 2, 91-106.

Tavakoli, H. (2004). تداعی، قصه و روایت مولانا [Association, story and narration of Rumi]. *Literary Studies and Research*, 1(3–4), 9-37.

Tavakoli, H. (2005). مثنوی و اسـلوب قصّـه در قصّـه [Masnavi and the style of story in story]. *Journal of the Faculty of Literature and Humanities, 47-49,* 45-80.

Vahedi, Z. (2013). تحلیل تأثیرتداعی معانی درساختارگریزی روایت‌های مثنوی *[Analyzing of Associating Meanings Effect on Deconstruction of Masnavi's Narrations*]. (Unpublished master's thesis), Arak University, Arak, Iran.

Wazinpour, N. (2009). آفتـاب معنوی *[The spiritual sun*](10th ed.). Tehran: Amir Kabir.

Yari, M. (1995). سـاختار داسـتانی در درام ایرانی (سـاخت قصـه در قصـه، نمایش در نمایش) [The Stori's Structure in Iranian Drama (Structure of Epizod in Story   and Play]. *Cinema Criticism*, *5*, 31- 35.

Yousefpour, M. (2007). نقش اسـتطراد در حکـایـات مثنوی [The Role of Extortion in Masnavi's Anecdotes]. *Literary Research*, *16*, 271-294.

Zakat Qarah Gozlu, A. (2007). بطن اول مثنوی هنر داسـتان‌پردازی مولوی [The first ventricle of Masnavi: The art of Rumi's storytelling]. *Mystical Studies*, *5*, 54-68.

Zarinkoub Abdoulhossein. (2003). سرّ نی [Mystery of Reed]. Tehran: Elmi.

Zarinkoub, A. (2007). نردبان شکسته [Broken Ladder].Tehran: Sokhan.