



Deciphering the Symbols of Rumi's Spiritual Couplets

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Deciphering the Symbols of Rumi's Spiritual Couplets

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Abstract

Symbol is a means for recognition and presentation of subjective and objective extensions for fast retrieval of an object or a concept in human relations. Any change in linguistic symbols will result in the formation of such concepts as interpretation, allegory, symbol, metaphor and so on and so forth. If the total arrangement of the symbols is in a way that it brings about a covered narrative or text that contains various meanings we can describe that text as allegory. Then exemplification in Persian is something between allegory and irony. In the current research we will analyze the allegories of Rumi's Spiritual Couplets (better known as Masnavi) based on the ideas of formalist researchers and an approach grounded in the modern morphology focusing on the theories of great scholars of Persian literature. This essay seeks to demonstrate that all parables of the Spiritual Couplets are related with Rumi's Song of the Reed (Spiritual Couplets Exordium) and by deciphering these narratives we can near ourselves to the truth of Rumi's worldview.

Key Words: Structuralism, Spiritual Couplets, Allegory, Rumi.



Introduction

Symbol is Symbol is a means for recognition and presentation of subjective and objective extensions for fast retrieval of an object or a concept in human relations. In fact, every language contains a set of conventional symbols and identity marks that are used for understanding of what we see and think. Any change in linguistic symbols will result in the formation of such concepts as interpretation, allegory, symbol, metaphor and so on and so forth. The formation of every one of these terms is hinged upon the way that these symbols are applied. If the total arrangement of the symbols is in a way that it brings about a covered narrative or text that contains various meanings we can describe that text as allegory. Then exemplification or as in Arabic *tamthil* (contextualization of a concept via a series of examples for the ordinary audience) in Persian is something between allegory and irony. Then tamthil or exemplification represents a word under the cover of a set of double or multiple symbols. With this definition, we can consider metaphor as a type of exemplification or allegory. Ibn Rashiq Qirwani in his book entitled *Al-Umdah* argues, “tamthil is a derivation of *mumathilah* that refers to the act of likening one thing to some other thing that implicitly alludes to it” (Aslani, 2006: 85). But interpretation is more general than symbol and tamthil. “Ta’vil or interpretation implies the realization of the external reality to which a phenomenon or a word refers and this means taking a signifier from its superficial meaning to a meaning that lies beyond the surface and is considered to be more important than the superficial meaning.” Then, ta’vil (that literally means bringing something back to its inception; or origin) implies uncovering the origin of the symbols that build tamthil or allegory. Thus conceived, ta’vil or originary interpretation is the path that assists us to know the coverings in the allegorical narratives. Therefore, the goal of a writer or a poet in authoring a text that is susceptible to ta’vil is the expression of a reality that lies covertly behind the symbols used by him. The creator of the interpretable narrative has two objectives: first, the intended news or notion by the poet or writer is so deep and broad that cannot be conveyed but via exemplification and allegorical expressions. Rumi has always complained of the insufficiency of the ordinary framework of the linguistic rules for expression of the truth:



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If the Mathnavi were as the sky in magnitude, not half the portion of this (mystery) would find room in it (Rumi, 2011: 95).

Rumi believes that the meaning of his words is so high and noble the understanding of which requires delivering oneself from the bondages of the symbols and moving towards the inner meanings that are buried under the shell of superficial words:

Let the flood takes all rhythm and sophistry/ the poets deserve only the shells/ I am a mirror I am a mirror I am not an essayist/ I would be seen if your ears turn to eyes (Rumi, 1997: 65).

Most of the great mystics have declared even the partial expression of their intuitions impossible and considered allegory and hermeneutical interpretation to be the only way for expressing parts of the spiritual mysteries and describe their mood as compared to those who have not experienced any intuition as follows:

I am a mute dreamer and the people are all deaf/ I cannot describe my dream and the world is unable to listen (Dehkoda, 1998: Dreamer).

Secondly, indirect expression of the idea under the cover of a series of allegories and metaphors enhances the charm and attraction of the word for the audience and convinces him.

Before turning to the structural analysis of the parables of Spiritual Couplets this point needs to be mentioned that the basic rule of the structural analyses is that firstly, in a first rate text of Spiritual Couplets stature no motif is expendable and secondly, for every motif, a function should be discovered in the narrative and introduced. The importance of this issue is to the extent that the lack of conformity between the number of functions and characters will be tantamount to the failure of the structural semantics of the narrative. This is the point that has been sorely neglected by most of the commentators of the Spiritual Couplets.

In the analysis of the parables of Spiritual Couplets we find two types of narratives:

1- The narratives in which Rumi delicately describes every single detail of the story as well as the behaviors and actions of the characters. In analyzing this group of narratives we should pay attention to the motifs that exist throughout the narratives in order to understand the deep structures that the narrator has in his mind. Rumi's *weltanschauung* and message are reflected in this type of stories; e.g. the parables of



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the king and the maid, lion and the beasts, parrot and the merchant, the old harpist, country man and town man, and so on and so forth.

2- Those narratives in which Rumi is not concerned with the details. In these cases the main body of the parable is expressed in few verses, Rumi only provides the reader with an outlines of the story and avoids further imageries, and the parable serves only as an evidence and document for convincing the readership regarding a fundamental truth as the core of the story. Here we are faced with few actants and we do not see some types of motifs and functions at all.

The authors have adopted parts of Greimas structural semantics for further substantiation of their analyses of the allegories of Spiritual Couplets. Greimas method is indeed a model for moving from simple forms to the complicated ones and from the known to the unknown. This is exactly what we need in explication of the symbolic and mystical parables. In fact, Rumi has sought to introduce his ordinary audience into such noble notions as self-discipline, delivering oneself from worldly bondages and the like, through simpler notions such as a king's love for a loving maid or the parrot in the cage:

This parable is like an intermediary in the discourse: an intermediary is required for the apprehension of the vulgar./ Without an intermediary, how should any one go into the fire, except (one like) the salamander?—for he is independent of the connecting link./ You need the hot bath as an intermediary, so that you may refresh your constitution by (the heat of) the fire (Rumi, 2011: 73).

Our objective in this essay is discovering the abovementioned noble notions and their relation with the narrative form in order to reach a sound understanding of Rumi's intention; an understanding that can uncover Rumi's worldview via the simple parables of the Spiritual Couplets.

Methodology

The authors of the current essay seek to explain the complications of some of the verses of Rumi based on critical study of the greatest commentators of the Spiritual Couplets and focusing on the text and with a comparative approach. Accordingly, a scientific and documented framework is offered for understanding the content of the parables and allegories of Spiritual Couplets and the heart of this great mystical work.

Discussion



1- Spiritual Couplets: An Integrated World

Spiritual Couplets can be understood in two ways. First mode of understanding is based on a superficial narrow-minded vision that is alien to the mystical interpretations and allegorical understanding and of course the outcome of such a shallow understanding is nothing but reducing the noble work of Rumi to a mere novel that contains no moral and spiritual message. It is needless to say that Spiritual Couplets seemingly contains indecent stories that sometimes trespass the boundaries of morality; for example, the story of the king and the maid is an erotic picture of temptations of a capricious king who kills an innocent goldsmith in order to orchestrate his diabolic plan for sexual relationship with a maid. The worse moment of the story is when the king asks a man of God to help him to legitimize his Satanic action and this does not have any social outcome but promotion of carnal affairs and eroticism. While by those who are familiar with the high content of Rumi's noble Spiritual Couplets this work is exactly a guidebook of spiritual morality. This second vision of Rumi and his work is divine and spiritually grounded. Spiritual Couplets in general is the story of a reed that has been casted away from the reed-bed and a parrot who seeks the path back to home India. Not only Spiritual Couplets rather the whole course of Rumi's life is the story of a spirit that is separated from its origin. In Rumi's worldview, every single element in the universe is burning in the first of separation:

If you break timber it crunches/ this crunch is a sigh of the separation.

This sigh out of separation will end up in passionate happiness when the spirit joins its origin:

Everything turns original when it joins its origin/ it is frolicking inside and rejoices outside (Rumi, 1997: 63).

Then the surface of Spiritual Couplets is like a vein, which carries the blood of meanings. Rumi in Spiritual Couplets struggles to inform his audience of his love songs in Divan-e Shams through down to ground parables and allegories.

The underlying motif of the Spiritual Couplets is grounded in four elements: self's death, spirit's freedom, path impediments, the phony pretenders to guidance who are divided into three groups of the deceiving and incapable pretenders (reason), true pretenders to guidance (divine mentors) and virtual pretenders (initiator) according to Spiritual Couplets. Rumi relates the story of separation of the spirit from its origin and



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its attachment to the superficial and transitory appearances and the paths that it can detach from these appearances and return to its origin in the form of various allegorical parables and stories. He takes advantage of various characters and motifs in this path and challenges his heroes in the course of the stories and finally relates the major story in the dramatic exordium of Spiritual Couplets better known as the Reed Song through a variety of collages. It does not matter for Rumi whether the heroes are his own creations or he has borrowed them from such poets and writers as Ali Ibn Rabban, Attar or works like Salaman va Absal. Rumi makes use of every sensible matter to express his own internal passion. Many of the scholars and experts of Rumi studies have offered valuable theories that explain the characters that appear in Rumi's allegorical parables and help us to discover their relationships with the existing functions in the stories. However, none of them has offered a perfect model that would include all functions, actions and their relations with the characters and motifs of the Spiritual Couplets. In this section we will review shortly some of these theories in order to pave the ground for presenting a perfect model of these terms in this chapter. Accordingly, we have tried to analyze the views of the thinkers whose ideas have turned to the basis of the next generation of the commentators.

2- The Commentary of Kamaladdin Hussein Ibn Hassan Kharazmi

One of the most intelligent and polymath thinkers in the field of mysticism who has taken constructive steps in comparative and critical study of the ideas of such great figures as Rumi and Ibn Arabi is Kamaladdin Kharazi. He has two commentaries on Spiritual Couplets entitled "Javahir al-Asrar va Zavahir al-Anwar" and "Knooz al-Haqaeq fi Romooz al-Daqaeq" which are respectively in prose and poetry. Javahir al-Asrar can be regarded as the first critical commentary on the complications and mysteries of Spiritual Couplets due to its continuation and consistency. Unfortunately, this work is incomplete. Since Kharazmi had authored a biographical work of the great masters of mysticism, he was so well-informed of the mystical trends of his time and this is why his work presents a comprehensive picture of the gnostic scene. The most perfect interpretation of the story of king and maid belongs to him. Kharazmi is the first commentator who has detected five functions in the Spiritual Couplets including: Spirit, Carnal soul, World, Reason, and Holy Spirit, and presented a character and motif for everyone. According to Kharazmi, maid (carnal soul) is the



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most pleasant beloved in the path to the higher statures provided that it is purified and it seems that this notion refers to the famous maxim of the mystics that reads: “virtual love is a bridge that leads us to the true love”. Carnal soul is also the worse enemy if it is suffering from deviance and ignorance. Then in the story of maid and the king, the carnal soul maid has been deceived by the goldsmith (worldly attachments). Kharazmi interprets deviance as the result of one's attachment to the terrestrial whose cure is the death of one's love in the colorful world. The only force that can deliver the carnal soul from the worldly vices is the Holy Spirit that brings glad tidings from the spiritual world, according to Kharazmi. Because the pretending physicians (reason) are unable to cure the carnal soul. Spirit (the King) governs the physical domain and needs the assistance of the carnal soul. Then according to the comments of Kharazmi, the Holy Spirit (divine sage) purifies the carnal soul (maid) with killing the worldly attachments (goldsmith) and brings it back to the king (spirit).

Only one critique can be raised against Kharazmi's commentary, which is also totally fair to the effect that Kharazmi believes that human spirit needs the assistance of carnal soul that represents the divine attributes in its path to perfection and knowledge of the exalted Lord. This word would be accepted in the intellectual systems of some of the Islamic mystics with certain conditions; but certainly the carnal soul does not own such high stature in the transcendence of spirit as conceived by Rumi as a mystical thinker. As to the role and place of carnal soul in the story of the maid and king we will present more discussions. The point here is the contradiction between the ideas of Kharazmi as to carnal soul in Spiritual Couplets and Rumi's own views regarding it.

Kharazmi believes that the spirit is in need of carnal soul (of course the purified carnal soul) in its course of transcendence. Now if we assay Rumi's verses we will immediately see that they present an alternative view in this regard. In the concluding part of the story of David and the slayer of the cow, Rumi argues that (carnal) soul is the murderer and he advises us to fight with the carnal soul. In other words, as Kharazmi states, we should not habituate ourselves with it:

Kill your fleshly carnal soul and make the world (spiritually) alive; it (your fleshly carnal soul) has killed its master: make it (your) slave (Rumi, 2011: 447).



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Though delivering oneself from the bondages of carnal soul is not an easy task because it is united with the body that manages human material life:

The fleshly carnal soul says, "How shouldst thou kill my 'cow'?-because the "cow" of the fleshly carnal soul is the (outward) form of the body. (ibid: 448).

In Rumi's worldview the true deliverance from the carnal soul is only possible via physical death due to which the spirit can leave the body; but self-discipline and taming the carnal soul and preventing from its domination over the body and spirit is strongly recommended by Rumi and this advice is for all human generations and times:

The serpent is thy sensual soul: how is it dead? It is (only) frozen by grief and lack of means. (ibid: 384

In the parable of the snake-catcher who had thought that the frozen serpent is dead, Rumi figuratively expresses the same point. Contrary to Kharazmi's view, Rumi recommends the separation from the carnal soul. For, according to Rumi, the carnal soul never becomes fully purified and the only path of spiritual happiness is self-discipline and the battle with the carnal soul:

Keep the dragon in the snow of separation (from its desires); beware, do not carry it into the sun of 'Irâq./ So long as that dragon of thine remains frozen, (well and good); thou art a mouthful for it, when it gains release./ Mortify it and become safe from (spiritual) death; have no mercy: it is not one of them that deserve favours;/ Dost thou hope, without using violence, to keep it bound in quiet and faithfulness? (ibid).

To put the matter in a nutshell, the freedom of divine spirit depends on the deliverance and death of the carnal soul:

You should die you should die, you should die in this love, if you die in this love you'll have all the spirit/ you should die you should die, you should leave this carnal soul, because this soul is like a bondage that has incarcerated you. (Rumi, 1997: 269)

Comparing the definition of carnal soul in Rumi's world with Kharazmi's interpretation of carnal soul in the story of the maid and the king we find the latter interpretation baseless. For according to Kharazmi's commentary, in the end of the story we should expect the king (spirit) to join the maid (purified carnal soul) while it is the other way round and the king decides to join the universal spirit as his true beloved after receiving essential consults from the divine sage:



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The king said, "Thou wert my Beloved (in reality), not she; but in this world deed issues from deed (ibid, 2011: 8).

Accordingly, Rumi shows us that the path that can lead the partial spirit (king) to the kingdom of the heavens and the Lord is the death of worldly affairs and deliverance from the carnal soul. As it was mentioned above, there is no way for killing the carnal soul in this world and we should resist the temptations of the carnal desires until our death.

3- Assaying some common views regarding the interpretation of king as a function of intellect

Some scholars like Sabzewari, Nicholson, and Zarinkoob have interpreted the motif and character of the king in the story of the maid and king as the function of intellect and some other contemporary scholars have sought to demonstrate this idea with certain modifications. Those commentators who have mistaken the king as the intellect share two other mistakes in the interpretation of the remaining parts of the story. First, due to turning a brown eye to the actants involved in the total course of the story (about whom certain explanations will be offered) they face structural confusions in the course of story and are forced to attribute two functions to one character. For example Nicholson has attributed two functions of intellect and spirit to the king and Sabzewari has also done the same and in his commentary has once interpreted the goldsmith as the carnal soul and again as the worldly affairs. Zarinkoob has also committed the same mistake in his interpretation and has interpreted the king as intellect and the royalty of the existence or truth. Second, choosing the king as a motif for the function of intellect is impossible. Because the king is of a key role in the story of the maid and the king and in Rumi's Spiritual Couplets the key role is of the spirit when the intellect is compared with the spirit. In the structural assessment of the stories of an allegorical text there are two maxims that if neglected the basic actants of the narrative will be passed unnoticed and we will be unable to compare the functions with other parables in the same work. This is to say that in the structural examination of a work we should take two points into earnest consideration to the effect that firstly, no motif or character in the overall narrative is superfluous and none of them should be neglected and secondly, for every character there should be only one function that is both in line with the total course of the story



and also appears in certain moments of the next narratives. This is exactly what has not been observed in the theories of Nicholson, Zarinkoob, Zabzewari and their followers. As a result, in their interpretations numerous functions have been defined for one character, e.g. king, and consequently some functions and related motif and character has been neglected. Therefore, in the comparative study of the story of the maid and king and other stories of the Spiritual Couplets the observation of actants becomes impossible.

4- Examination of the ideas of Anqaravi and Tadayyon

Among the interpretations that have been offered of the story of maid and the king, the interpretations of Anqaravi and Tadayyon, as compared to the commentary of Kharazmi and other commentators, are relatively acceptable. However, the criticism that can be raised against the commentary of Anqaravi is that he has sought to make partial modifications in the ideas offered by Kharazmi and as a result the only innovation that can be found in his work is the change in the function of carnal soul and replacing it with the function of animal spirit that is almost one and the same with the carnal soul in the teachings and doctrines of monasterial mysticism. Tadayyon has also struggled to make his own commentary distinct from that of Kharazmi by adding certain details over the marginal events of the story. He has allocated one function with various names for each motif and character in the story. For example, for the character of king, he allocates the functions of man, superfluous spirit and Rumi or he proposes the functions of heavenly friend, perfect man, the master and Shams of Tabriz for the character of divine sage all of which are referring to the same entity and are only different in name. Thus Tadayyon should have accepted the almost seamless view of Kharazmi in this regard without adding any further marginal consideration. He had better tackled the existing flaw, i.e. the quality of the relationship of the spirit and soul, and took a positive step in this direction.

We can conclude that the structure of Spiritual Couplets and in general all texts in Islamic mysticism from Sanaei to Suhrab Sepehri, are full of the words that can be hermeneutically criticized. Of course, this is not to say that these texts are not of a consistent structure and cannot be interpreted in an integrated way; rather in all similar texts there are certain constant actions by relying to which the reader can depict a general scheme of the Islamic mysticism and avoid accepting the personal



comments in this regard. In the upcoming section we will introduce these models, functions and actants in some of the central narratives of Rumi's Spiritual Couplets.

5- Structural interpretation of three parables of the Spiritual Couplets by the intertextual method

The issues that are discussed below are all bases for demonstration of three fundamental notions of actant, function and character (motif). The short definition of these terms is as follows:

a) **Character or Motif:** the heroes of every story along with all the characters who are involved in some way in the total course of the story are called character or motif. The characters are of different names: king, goldsmith, old singer, parrot, etc. They constitute the appearance of the story. The number of motifs of a story is equal to the number of the functions but in certain stories we may find more names as compared to the functions. In the three stories of maid and king, old singer and the parrot and merchant we find 15 characters:

The old singer	The parrot and merchant	King and the Maid
The general public	Cage	Maid
Beautiful songs	Beauty and Eloquence	Goldsmith
The old singer	Caged parrot	King
Cemetery	Merchant	Pretending Physician
Omar Ibn Khatab	Indian parrots	Divine sage

b) **Functions:** the heroes special task and mission is called function. The number of functions regardless of the number of stories is always the same and no change occurs in it following the increase in the number of motifs. There are five functions in our studied stories: carnal soul, worldly attachments, spirit, the master and guide.

c) **Actant:** this element represents the pillar and focus of an allegorical work. In other words, the actants are like the paths towards which the functions and following them the story characters pace. Five actants of Spiritual Couplets consist of the carnal soul's death, the freedom of spirit, the impediments of the perfection, the pretenders of guidance (who are divided into two groups of true and virtual), invisible world.



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These 5 actants do not belong exclusively to Spiritual Couplets rather they are part of the whole body of Islamic mystical thought which are reflected in various forms. All words of the great mystics are founded upon these five actants. The totality of Islamic mysticism with all its vastness and greatness can be summarized in the following word: human spirit is separated from its origin and for returning to its homeland it paces the path of perfection. Undoubtedly, there are impediments in its path that can haunt it and the man should make all his best to deliver himself from them. Depicting the material world as a dungeon in Islamic mysticism has its origin in this very reality and the deliverance from this dungeon needs one to cut all his dependencies on the carnal soul:

You should die, you need die, you have to wean yourself from the carnal soul because this soul is a bondage and you are its slave/ take a hatchet and break the walls of dungeon, and if you manage to break you will be all the kings and commanders (Rumi, 1997: 269).

In the meantime there are disabled pretenders who claim to be able to lead the spirit in the path of truth but they just mislead the spirit and add to the confusions:

Saying, "Begone: we ourselves are better shepherds than thou. How should we become (thy) followers? We are chieftains, every one (of us). (Rumi, 2011: 356).

Each one of us is a learned Messiah: in our hands is a medicine for every pain." (ibid: 7).

These disabled pretenders do not know that the true medicine is in the hands of the Lord and the spiritual shepherds are the messengers of the God who radiates every moment the light of guidance unto us from the Invisible World. The whole stories of the Spiritual Couplets represent our conditions in the world and Rumi expresses this reality in the opening of the book:

O my friends, hearken to this tale: in truth it is the very marrow of our inward state. (ibid: 6)

Here we comparatively study three stories of King and the Maid, the Old Singer, and the Parrot and Merchant in order to show how the fiction elements perform their roles in the course of the divine play in the services of the five basic mystical actants.

a) Spirit

King and the Maid: king



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The parrot and merchant: parrot

The old singer: the old singer

The king (spirit) is like a reed separated from the reed-bed and spiritual realm:

Saying, "Ever since I was parted from the reed-bed, man and woman have moaned in (unison with) my lament. (ibid: 5)

He seeks for his true beloved in order to heal his confusion:

Every one who is left far from his source wishes back the time when he was united with it. (ibid.)

But since he is pacing the path on his own without the guidance of a master and guide he gets lost and mistakes the maid of carnal soul with the true love:

On the king's highway the king espied a handmaiden: the king was enthralled by her. / Forasmuch as the bird, his soul, was fluttering in its cage, he gave money and bought the handmaiden. (ibid: 6)

While the maid of carnal soul is itself in love with the worldly goldsmith.

The parrot (spirit) is also in captivity due to relying on its beauty:

There was a merchant, and he had a parrot imprisoned in a cage, a pretty parrot. (ibid: 72)

But a call from its inside sought to awaken it and lead it to liberation:

She says, "Is it meet that I in yearning (after you) should give up the ghost and die here in separation?/ O ye who consort with your charming and adored one, am I to be drinking cups filled with my own blood? (ibid.)

The old singer (spirit) is deceived by the general public (carnal soul) who encourage his beautiful voice (worldly attachments) as long as he is young. The perplexed spirit has mistakenly got accustomed to the carnal soul's people:

The nightingale would be made beside herself by his voice: by his beautiful voice one rapture would be turned into a hundred./ His breath was an ornament to assembly and congregation, and at his song the dead would arise. (ibid: 87)

b- Carnal Soul

King and the Maid: Maid

Parrot and the Merchant: Cage

The Old Singer: General Public



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The maid of carnal soul has fell in love with the worldly goldsmith and the maid will never see this worldly wish fulfilled and she is sick due to this:

After he had bought her and won to his desire, by Divine destiny she sickened./ Her pain was not from yellow or black bile: the smell of every firewood appears from the smoke.(ibid: 6 and 9)

Carnal soul as conceived in Rumi's thought is the one who imprisons the spirit. Then the parrot is the captive of the cage of carnal soul and until this cage is not broken it will stay in the cage.

The old singer also rejoices at the praises and admirations of the general public and he is so submerged in their praises as if he has touched the true peace neglecting the fact that this rejoice is transitory and the carnal soul (general public) only notices him as long as his voice is clear and beautiful and one day it will pass him in silence. The eternal beloved is somewhere else:

Truly, what sweet one is there that did not become unsweet, or what roof that did not become a carpet?—/ When the minstrel grew older and feeble, through not earning (anything) he became indebted for a single loaf of bread. (ibid: 94)

c) worldly attachments

King and the Maid: goldsmith

Parrot and the Merchant: beauty and eloquence

The Old Singer: nice voice

The goldsmith of the world has imprisoned the maid of spirit and continuously cause her suffer:

From her sore grief he perceived that she was heart-sore; well in body, but stricken in heart. (ibid: 9)

The only way out is her death.

The parrot (spirit) is captivated in the cage of carnal soul and this cage is the result of the parrot's attachment to the beauty and eloquence (worldly attachments). The only way out for the parrot of spirit is the cage's breakdown, the death of superficial beauties:

Because thy voice has brought thee into bondage': she feigned herself dead for the sake of (giving me) this counsel,/ Meaning (to say), 'O thou who hast become a singer to high and low, become dead like me, that thou mayst gain release.' (ibid: 84)



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The old singer (spirit) is haunted by the carnal soul (general public opinion) and the general public is also intrigued with his voice and harp (worldly attachments). The way out of this predicament is the breakdown of the nice voice and harp:

After he had wept long and his grief had gone beyond (all) bounds, he dashed his harp on the earth and broke it to bits. He said, "O thou (harp) that hast been to me a curtain (debarring me) from God, O thou (that hast been) to me a brigand (cutting me off) from the King's highway, / O thou that hast drunk my blood for seventy years, O thou because of whom my face is black (disgraced) before (the Divine) perfection! (ibid: 99).

d- Intellect

King and the Maid: pretender physicians

Parrot and the Merchant: merchant

The Old Singer: cemetery

The superficial physicians claim that they can cure the pain of the maid of carnal soul and sooth the king of spirit:

Each one of us is a learned Messiah: in our hands is a medicine for every pain (ibid: 7).

But in practice they are disabled and their arguments make the situation worse:

The more cures and remedies they applied, the more did the illness increase, and the need was not fulfilled. (ibid)

Finally, the king of spirit saw the superficial physicians' manifest incapability (pretender intellect) he turned as a man of pain to the true healer (the Lord):

When the king saw the powerlessness of those physicians, he ran bare-footed to the mosque. (ibid)

The merchant in the story of Merchant and the Parrot put the parrot of the spirit into the cage of carnal soul due to his wrong choices and thinks that the spirit's parrot will live in peace with the material gifts;

He said to the parrot, "What present would you like me to bring for you from the land of India?" (ibid: 72)

But the spirit's parrot has become disappointed from the cures of the intellect's merchant like the king in the story of the Maid and King and seeks for the true gift in



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the spiritual India the true master and guide and tries to remind the separated spirit its origin:

(O thou who art my beloved), quaff one cup of wine in memory of me, if thou art unwilling to do me justice./ Or (at least), when thou hast drunk, spill one draught on the earth in memory of this fallen one who sifts dust.(ibid)

The parrot like the king is sad and shameful of his sin. His sin is forgetting his origin and attaching himself to the carnal soul. Then it expresses his shame as follows:

If thy having forsaken thy slave is because of (his) ill service (to thee)—when thou doest ill to the ill-doer, then what is the difference (between master and slave)? (ibid: 73)

The cemetery that is always the symbol of the land of thinking in Islamic teachings, has been interpreted in Rumi's thought as the intelligible world in which the old singer takes shelter. The singer like the parrot and the king is sad and regretful regarding his attachment to the transitory affairs and forgetting his origin and he sighs out of shame and expects to be forgiven:

For seventy years I have been committing sin, (yet) not for one day hast Thou withheld Thy bounty from me/ I (can) earn nothing: to-day I am Thy guest, I will play the harp for Thee, I am Thine." (ibid : 94)

e) Master and Guide

King and the Maid: divine sage

Parrot and the Merchant: Indian parrots

The Old Singer: Omar Ibn Khattab

The master and guide in all three stories is a special envoy from the invisible world whose mission is saving the bewildered spirit that is captivated by the carnal soul and introducing it into the primordial God-Truth-seeking nature of humanity. He argues that spirit can only be delivered by means of cutting its carnal bondages that can be achieved through the death of worldly wishes and attachments. The divine guide and master appears on the scene when the incapability of the pretenders is revealed and the spirit is wholly disappointed at the assistance of the others.

Accordingly, in this essay we assayed 5 basic functions that have been portrayed in the form of motifs and characters via comparing three stories from the Spiritual



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Couplets of Rumi. We also raised certain criticisms regarding a number of views of the way that the actants are interpreted in the text.

In the current research we have tried to erase some ambiguities regarding the thought and worldview of Rumi based on a new innovative vision. Of course, it is noteworthy that discovery of the structure of Spiritual Couplets as well as the integrity, order and unity of this noble books' stories is not a work undertaken in this era alone rather it has been pursued since the very inception of Rumi studies. From Kharazmi to Yaqub Charkhi and Anqaravi Rumi scholars have continuously sought to present their own hermeneutical position regarding the Spiritual Couplets and there is still numerous works that can be done as regards a comprehensive interpretation of the Spiritual Couplets.

Conclusion

In the examination of the three allegorical stories from Rumi's Spiritual Couplets it became clarified that all stories of this mystical work are of a determinate framework the elements of which perform their roles as the actors of a divine play. This was followed by the critical assessment of some ideas regarding the symbols used in the story of King and the Maid and a comparative study of this story in relation to two other stories from the Spiritual Couplets. It was discovered that all stories of the Spiritual Couplets are of 5 functions that are expressed in the form of characters and various motifs in a very artistic fashion and they are supposed to represent 5 actants. Of course, it needs to be mentioned that we need yet deeper studies to be conducted regarding the worldview of Rumi as a mystic of global fame and in the words of Professor Shafie Kadkani: "Rumi's Spiritual Couplets is the greatest spiritual epic of humanity that has been endowed by God upon the Persian Language and world people and humanity is now taking the first steps towards knowing this deep unique sea."

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