
Signs of Forethought and Conscious Composition in *Masnavi*

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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 device 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

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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 unconsciousness. 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 forethoughted, 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 forethoughted 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*

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