

Morphology of Ghazals of Attar's Poetical Works

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Abstract

Mathnavi (Couplet) has been used constantly by poets to express detailed subjects including narratives and stories whereas Ghazal (Ode) has been used to express general and internal emotions briefly. But many poets has used Ghazal (Ode) and qasideh for telling tales and narratives at the beginning of Persian literature formation. Attar Neishaboori is the first poet that has used Ghazal (Ode) for telling tales effectively. These tales are actually the reflection of his mental states and his spiritual observations. Attar is Roomi's predecessor in storytelling. The number of stories in his poems (Ghazals) is more than Roomi's as well. Attar's Poetical works consists of 872 Ghazals in which there are 62 stories (about more than each 14 Ghazals one story) which in comparison to Roomi's Ghazaliyat is a higher percentage (91 stories in 3200 Ghazals meaning each 36 Ghazals one story) but their structure and fundamental elements are rather simpler and less artistically complicated than Roomi's.

In this paper we are going to find out if there is a single story structure in Attar's Ghazaliyat in order to have a general judgment about Attar's storytelling in Ghazaliyat. Are the chain of acts in the stories are following a special template? To which part in Attar's system of thought these templates are guiding us?

Methods of research are descriptive and analytical; Of course the reliance of morphologic and structuralistic analysis is on description of the phenomena in order to reach general judgments about the subjects of the researches. To accomplish this, the outer layer is removed to get to the skeleton and the so-called general plan of the work; this makes this kind of researches look rather descriptive.

In this paper the method of analyzing the stories are mostly similar to Vladimir Propp's style in *The morphology of Russian fairy tales*. In addition to keeping on Propp's style, it has been tried to use the styles of another narrative experts as well.

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It has to be remembered that because of the shortness of the stories in Attar's stories the "actions" in these stories are not exactly the same as Propp's "actions".

To keep on Propp style, firstly an abstract and a result have been written for each action. Then a word or a phrase has been presented as a brief description. Then an arbitrary symbol has been considered for each one. These symbols were chosen according to the order of the alphabet and sequence of the actions; except for the "entrance" because of its twofold nature (going and coming) the symbol of \updownarrow has been used. If an action has been done in many different ways, they are shown using numbers. For example "entrance" (\updownarrow) is shown in this way:

- Arrival of the beloved ($\updownarrow 1$)
- Departure of the lover ($\updownarrow 2$)
- The appearance of the beloved in the sky ($\updownarrow 3$)

To show the morphology of Attar's Ghazals, we can put similar stories in one group and show their common actions and the range of their characters' actions in them. Four common patterns or structures were found in Attar's Ghazals and they are presented as follows:

The first pattern: In this pattern and structure, drinking is the focal point. All in all 23 tales (37% of his stories) go under this category. The structure and pattern of act in these tales is:

Arrival + Visit + Treating wine + Acceptance of wine + Drinking wine + The effect of wine + Arrival of the minor character + Minor character's action + Incremental actions

\updownarrow A B C E F \curvearrowright H I

The second pattern: In these stories, the focal point is seeing or doing an unexpected action which is not possible in reality. There are just 4 of such tales (6.5% of Attar's tales) in Ghazaliat. The structure and pattern of act in these tales is:

Arrival + Visit + Creation context + Surprise action + Reaction against the Surprise

A J K L \updownarrow

The third pattern: These tales are based on conversation. This kind of tale is the most prevalent kind of tale. There are 28 of such tales (55.2% of the stories). The structure and pattern of act in these tales is:

Arrival + visit + Creation context for Dialogue + Dialogue + consequences of the Dialogue

\updownarrow A J M N

The fourth pattern: In these tales, the focal point is seeing or doing ordinary things by the second major character who is the beloved. Seven tales (11.3% of the tales) have this pattern:

Arrival + visit + action + departure + consequences of the action

\updownarrow A O P Q

By pondering on the tales we understand that all of them have mystical atmosphere and they are dealing with death and annihilation, parting and distance, faithfulness, giving up religion, reunion with the beloved, immortality, understanding secrets, losing reason and life, achieving the supreme rank, finding the right path, etc. So it is evident that these stories are all about mystical love and were created in Attar's most intuitive moments. Moreover, the paucity of number of characters in his tales shows his solitary moments when he was alone with his Eternal Love.

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