


The Typology and the Structure of Qalandari Sonnet Sequences

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Introduction

In the tradition of Persian mystical poetry, Qalandari poets have invented a type of poetry known as Qalandari poetry to fight against the hypocritical society of their era. This type of poetry has a symbolic language through which everything that is considered sacred according to social customs and norms is made unholy and everything that is considered unholy takes on a sacred form. Qalandari poets have used sonnet as the most effective form of poetry to express their desired concepts, and by giving it a fictional structure, they have expressed their lived experiences or subjective and imaginary experiences. Although the narrative form of Qalandari sonnets is different and encompasses three forms of anecdote, description, and dialogue, the story of the majority of this sub-genre can be reduced to one narrative, i.e., the spiritual transformations of a well-known old man and mentor after meeting a Moghbache (a Magian youth) who brings wine, and his relinquishing of his name and fame after drinking the wine of knowledge and tasting love.

The life story of this old man, which has been taken from the story of Sheikh San'an or Halaj or a combination of these two characters, has been narrated in many sonnet-stories from a first-person point of view. Therefore, this type of sonnet sequence can be considered as a kind of biography and a section of the poet's or mystic's own life. Even the stories that are

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told using an omniscient or third-person point of view about the experience of old mystics are a form of the poet's autobiography.

Methodology

The present study analyzes the fundamental concepts of Qalandarieh mystical movement which are reflected in the sonnet stories and symbolically express the change from ascetic mysticism to romantic mysticism. Afterward, several sonnets representing Qalandari stories were selected through conscious and deliberate sampling. Then, using a comparative-analytical method and qualitative content analysis, the structural and fictional elements of the sonnet stories were analyzed and their artistic aspects were discussed using a descriptive-analytical approach.

Discussion

Persian sonnets show the potential to express the personal experiences of mystics and great poets in the form of stories. Given the poets' conscious use of fictional elements, a sonnet presents a kind of minimal story. Sometimes, they can be considered allegories or dream interpretations as they might lack an element of a story or plot. Qalandari sonnet stories are narrative-oriented sonnets that often begin without a prelude. They have symbolic and dramatic language and a closed ending with a conclusion. Thus, at the end of this type of poetry, the audience encounters an ascetic mystic who turns into an amorist mystic. The stories are typically narrated from a first-person point of view. Their plot follows a chronological order and there is a causal relationship between the plot events, hence it has a linear structure. They have all the elements of a story with full brevity and artistry, and they can be considered examples of minimal fiction.

Conclusion

An analysis of a sample of Qalandari sonnet stories showed that these sonnets represent full stories with the theme of conflict between love and asceticism with complete brevity based on dramatic dialogue. A sonnet story has a closed ending and the mystical theme intended by the poet is expressed at the end. The final part of the Qalandari sonnet stories often expresses the spiritual transformation of an old man or the main hero or expresses his state of astonishment. The time and place setting and the moods of the characters are beautifully described in the story. The language of the sonnets is dramatic, and the narrator usually expresses his spiritual experience and transformation from a first-person point of view and uses dramatic dialogue. The story is narrated in a linear order and with a strong plot, describing events in chronological

order, without the intervention of the narrator, with full brevity and conciseness, and using the symbolic elements of mystical poetry. The action and dialogue between the characters follow a fast rhythm and tempo. Among its two main characters, the narrator has a dynamic personality and the wine server has a static personality.

The vast majority of the sub-genres of this poetic style narrate the story of a well-known old man and mentor who undergoes some spiritual transformations after an incident and meeting a Moghbache (a Magian youth) who serves wine. The main theme in sonnets is the contrast between love/asceticism and holy/unholy by focusing on the experiences of a mystic or a poet. The core event in these stories happens in the past without any exception and the time of the story is expressed as night, midnight, dawn, last night, eternity, morn, etc. These fictional features are repeated in almost all Qalandari sonnet stories with some minor differences.

Keywords:

Qalandarieh, qalandari poetry, mysticism, sonnet-stories

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