

# The repentance of Nasuh: The traditional or modern story?

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## Abstract

Molana narrates the story of Nasuh repentance in his book five of Masnavi -e- Manavi that it can be considered as modern short story. Thereby, Molana's narrative or tale can be accepted as modern short story based on modern short story definition. According to short story researchers' opinion, Somerset Maugham and Poe are fathers of short story and short story dates back one hundred years ago. In Persian literature, short story in verse and prose form dates back to more than one thousand years. One of the goals of this article is to emphasis on the record and background of short story in Persian literature. Translation of short stories into other languages provides context for familiarity with them and new scope for researchers of this literary genre and uncovers capacity of these stories in transferring of teachings, culture, traditions, folklore and etc. In order to study this subject matter at first, story is defined with its characteristics and the difference between short story and story is identified. Then, the story structural elements and plot structural elements are analyzed in repentance of Nasuh in order to emphasize on the position of Molana in storytelling. Tales and narratives of Manavi-e- Manvi can be considered as a modern story.

**Keywords:** Tale of Nasuh repentance, short story, structural elements.

## Introduction

Nowadays story telling has been replaced by media, movies and computer games. When we lis-

ten to a story we become happy and disappointed with events and follow heroes and characters. Story is manifested in our life and life is a fiction and we are actors. Story reflects human beliefs, attitudes, challenges, ideology and sufferings. Those who want to transfer their thought in better way find story the effect one. Story is a great discovery and discoverer, reflector, custom and it uncovers human soul and indicates his culture, history and existence. Studying fiction in this trend manifests psychological, sociological, and anthropological and in total ideological aspects.

### *Steps of repentance of Nasuh*

Repentance is avoiding sins. Abdul Razag Kashani believes that repentance is accepting what it is rejected by God and repentance of Nasuh is based on three elements: first, punishment, second, pain and third, guidance. Punishment is a state that is done at the beginning of repentance and the sinner awakes from ignorance and recognizes his inferior conduct. Pain or suffering is a state that it causes to seeking guidance and guidance is a state that leads to right way; for example a lost traveler suddenly finds a sign and he is guided toward his destination (Sajadi, 1991).

### *Repentance of Nasuh*

Nasuh was a masseur by face and voice like a woman. He wore women attire and worked in bath where he used to carry on shameful intrigues with some of the kings women and girls who frequented the bath. He decided several times to avoid this conduct but he could not and finally he went to holy

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man to pray for him. The holy man knew his conduct and prayed, saying, "God give the repentance of the sins". The prayer of that holy man was accepted, because the prayers of such man are the same as God's own will, according to the tradition. These events are confirmed by punishment as the first state of repentance steps. Nasuh then returned to the bath as a truly repentant man; but soon afterwards one of the women frequenting the bath lost a valuable jewel, and the king gave order that all persons connected with the bath should be stripped and searched. When the officers came to the bath to execute this order, Nasuh was overwhelmed with fear, for he knew that if his sex were discovered he would certainly be put to death. This event is according to the second state of the repentance as pain. In his fear he called upon God for deliverance, and swooned with fear and became beside himself, so that his natural self was annihilated, and he became a new creature and began new life. Then the third step began as guidance. When he came to himself he found that the lost jewel had been found, and those who had suspected him came and begged his pardon. Shortly afterwards the king's daughter sent for him to come and wash her head; but, in spite of her imperative commands, he refused to place himself again in the way of temptation, lest he might fall again, and God might make easy to him the path to destruction. Guidance is the end of three steps of repentance of Nasuh (Comparative study of couplets 2228-2335, the repentance of Nasuh from book 5 of Masnavi with steps of repentance of Nasuh according to the authors)

## Results and discussion

Story and narration are familiar terms in traditional Persian literature employed in different periods in Persian verse and prose as a common literary genre. In contemporary literature narratives, story, allegory, proverb and fiction connate different meanings; but research on literary works show that in spite of having similarities and differences in the mentioned terms they have been used interchangeably (Anosheh, 1997). According to different definitions of these words, terms like narratives, story, allegory and tale have been used in Masnavi without considering the reason for selection of them. The first step for answer to the main question of the research is definition of essence and structure of the story and narratives and indicating the differ-

ence between short story and conformation of repentance of Nasuh with modern fiction writing perspectives.

### *A-definition of story and its specifications*

Those works by emphasize on the extraordinary events and characterization are called fiction. The plot is based on event and the heroes are relatively fixed and they encounter with events.

Specifications of fiction:

- 1-absoluteness: the heroes are good or bad
- 2-prominence: the characters are extraordinary
- 3-static characters: the hero is static and does not change
- 4-imaginary time and place: usually time and place of fiction are undefined
- 5-homologues characters: the characters show similar behavior and conduct in different stories
- 6-the role of fate: fate plays an important role in hero conduct
- 7-wonderfulness: imaginary events are narrated in the fiction in order to surprise the reader (Bagerzadeh Khales, 2001).

### *b-definition and specifications of short story*

Yunesi in definition of short story writes: "in short story the writer introduces the hero in the story with a defined plot and this effect implies unit effect (Yunesi, 1982).

Short story involves three specifications:

- 1-unity of effect: the story applies unit effect on the reader;
- 2-limitation of the characters: several characters can be employed since short story contains limited space for their description
- 3-defined plot: there is defined beginning and ending for story (Rahmani Kheyavi, 2003).

Some writers suggest that the terms of the tale and short story are synonym; but there is a significant difference between them. The tale is simple narration without plot that it relies on the events and characters but short story is investigation of an event in time and place, tale is event for entertainment (Saeidiyan, 1995). In addition, there is a hero in tale and character in story (Mir Sadegi, 1985). It is obvious that story is distinguished based on unity of effect, limitation of characters and specified plot.

### *C-Structural elements of repentance of Nasuh*

The literary work is affected by special emotional power that it leads to creation of a work. This

principle shapes the structure of work, consequences, order, emphasize and manner of application of elements and constituents elements and finally creates beautiful and effective work (Dad, 1996). In repentance of Nasuh tale, the structure contains overt and covert relations that create desirable narratives of Masnavi with integrated, beautiful and dynamic relations.

#### **c-1- selection of the title of the story:**

Selection of the title is one of the success keys of the story teller in establishing connection with the reader. By selection of title of repentance of Nasuh, Molana introduces the character and points to the end of the story and prepares the setting for reading the story. In this story the main character, Nasuh is a man by face and voice like woman that he wears women attire and enters to woman bath and finally he decides to repentance. The skill of Molana in selection of the name of the character is praising and the reader confronts with implicitness and surprise.

#### **C-2-setting:**

Physical background and space that a story is narrated or a movie is shown is called setting (Mir Sadegi, 1985). In this story setting is a woman bath that secret space creates attractive and proper background for the plot of the story.

#### **c-3- point of view**

It is the style and point of view of the writer in telling of the story. Every style is point of view for offering information (Mastour, 2000). In this story; there are two points of view: 1-third person and 2-first person. Both points of view have been used in this story. Third person has been used for introduction of the character and description of his conduct and behavior and first person has been employed for introduction of excitement and persuasion of the reader to follow the story in order to eliminate the gap between the story and the reader and create intimate atmosphere.

#### **c-4-dialogue**

The speech between characters or speech in mind of a person in a literary work is called dialogue (Mir Sadegi, 1985). Dialogue is the main element of a story. In order to create real atmosphere in the mind of the reader, the writer ought to use dialogue (what was mine stories, 33). The structural element of dialogue in repentance of Nasuh has own special specifications and it is accompanied by irony as in brief and secret way. Nasuh demands holy man to pray for him without announcing his problems:

He went to a holy man and

Besought him to pray for him (Masnavi, book 5, 2236) (Molavi, 1999).

The holy man did not so much as name his sin, but prayed, saying:

God give thee repentance of the

Sin thou knows! (Masnavi, book 5, 2240) (Molavi, 1999).

#### **c-5-characterization**

Character is the main element of fiction. In every fiction characters make changes the static and dynamic states and constitute the main part of the story. Character is a person that his mental state and morality is represented in his conduct and speech. The writer should try to introduce real and dynamic characters and offer reasons for change in behavior and conduct of his characters. A character should not represent absolute piety and meanness but he should indicate combination of goodness and meanness and individuality and socialization (Mir Sadegi, & Mymanat, 1998). Molana introduces his character (Nasuh) directly and he gradually shows his conduct and behavior and personality:

Nasuh in his youth disguised himself in female attire

And obtained employment as attendant at the women's baths,

Where he used to carry on

Shameful intrigues with some of the women

Who frequented the bath?

At last, however, his eyes were opened to the wickedness of his conduct,

And he went to a holy man and

Besought him to pray for him (Molavi, 1999)

#### **C-6-origin of the story**

The origin and source of the short story is story of bitter, unseen and unheard explanation or secret event called life (Saediyan, 1995). The story of repentance of Nasuh is a part of real life of real individuals so that the reader could enter to story atmosphere and keep the peace of the story.

#### **d- Structural elements of plot**

##### **d-1-complication**

From the beginning of the story, it is obvious that Nasuh is a man with face and voice like woman and attends in bath and rubs the king's wives and daughters and complication is began.

##### **d-2-conflict**

The contradiction between two forces and characters in a story is called conflict that establishes the foundation of events. In this story the conflict begins when Nasuh recognizes his mean conduct and this conflict causes to his nuisances and tension in his unpleasant inner desires and he repent

but he return. Nasuh goes to holy man and wants him to pray for him to confront with his inner conflict.

#### **d-3-crisis**

Crisis begins when the forces are in attrition. In this story the crisis is began when the valuable jewel of the king's daughter was lost and all women were searched and when the jewel was not found mouths and ears of the women were searched and all young and old women were ordered to take off their clothes. By increase of fear and continuity of search, the story reaches to its crisis. Nasuh was overwhelmed with fear, for he knew that if his sex were discovered he would certainly be put to death. In his fear he called upon God for deliverance, and swooned with fear and became beside himself.

#### **d-4-doubt and expectation**

Nasuh calls God with fear and crying and wishes that he never be born. He prays and when he is in tension and the reader is in doubt and expectation and finally when somebody is exclaimed the reader is shocked.

#### **d-5-climax**

By announcement of searching everybody and calling of Nasuh, he becomes unconsciousness. At this moment the reader encounters with anxiety and worry and he could not leave the story. By this skillful climax, Molana indicates his genius in short story and provides powerful emotional relationship between his characters and reader.

#### **d-6-resoultion**

"The events happening following climax of a story that specify the phase of organization of story and determine the fate of the main character is called resolution" (Dad, 1996). When the story reaches to its climax resolution is necessary and hesitation hurts the story structure and eliminates its effect. In this story, when Nasuh is overwhelmed and demands God deliverance, God has mercy on him and when he comes to himself he finds that the lost jewel had been found he becomes happy and regains his lost soul and cries:

Thanks God that suddenly I awaked

If every particles of my body gives thanks God  
Gods bless cannot be explained (Molavi, 1999)

## **Conclusions**

Investigation of the tale of repentance of Nasuh from modernistic critic view point shows that the structural elements like title, characterization, setting, dialogue, point of view and the origin of story

are observed in this narration and it contains obvious specifications like unity of effect, limitation of characters and defined plot required for a short story. In this tale in addition to structural elements, other plot elements like complication, conflict, excitement, doubt, expectation, climax and resolutions are seen as the difference between short story and narration that they are conformed by modern story telling. In contrary to false assumption that literacy theory and literary critics can only be applied on the contemporary texts, critic is a scientific tool and it is applicable on traditional and contemporary texts from modernist view point. Investigation of the tale of repentance of Nasuh from modern perspectives proves that what is considered tale in false way can be investigated under the title of modern short story. It can be equal to world short stories. This research indicates that by critic on traditional tales in Persian classic literature it can be found new horizon in this relation and offer new era in international scope by rewriting of the tales in contemporary short story form.

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