

## Interpretation and the Critique of Its Nature in *Masnavi* with an Emphasis on Paul Ricoeur's Views

Zahra Saberinia<sup>1</sup>  
Narges Mohammadi Badr<sup>2\*</sup>  
Fatemeh Kouppa<sup>3</sup>  
Farhad Doroudgarian<sup>4</sup>

### Abstract

The present paper aims at a critical study of the interpretive nature of *Masnavi* as a determining and dynamic dimension in literature. To orientate and validate this aim, we have specified Molavi's interpretive approaches based on Paul Ricoeur's philosophy and reflective phenomenology and have, thus, demonstrated how thought and reflection on interpretation have turned *Masnavi* into one of the most influential written texts, which displays the three characteristics of explication, understanding, and application. The authors hold that for the interpretation of any text, it is necessary to study the process of the formation of the text and its relation with oratory, dialectics, and de-application. Therefore, studying the elements of interpretation in *Masnavi*, the authors have shown that this work offers a thick description of understanding, and understanding has made its language dynamic, signifying, and self-sufficient. Consequently, as a classic and a reflection on the textual dimension, *Masnavi* encompasses discourse, rests on interpretation, and, in reading, forms an active and dialectical totality that gives the reader the opportunity for the understanding and reconfiguration of meaning.

**Keywords:** Paul Ricoeur, Critique of Interpretation, *Masnavi*

### Extended Abstract

#### 1. Introduction

The present article aims to examine Molavi's ideas from a phenomenological perspective. Molavi's approach to historical experience, written language,

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1. PhD Candidate in Persian Language and Literature, Payam-e Noor University, Tehran, Iran. (zahrasaberinia@yahoo.com)

\*2. Associate Professor of Persian Language and Literature, Payam-e Noor University, Tehran, Iran.

(Corresponding Author: \* badr@pnu.ac.ir)

3. Professor of Persian Language and Literature, Payam-e Noor University, Tehran, Iran. (f.kouppa@yahoo.com)

4. Associate Professor of Persian Language and Literature, Payam-e Noor University, Tehran, Iran. (f.doroudgarian@yahoo.com)

metaphorical language, connection with the 'other' and moving beyond the limitations of the 'self' have made the interpretation of his works a dynamic process. This has kept dialectics and reading alive through the development of synthesis and discourse. Here, rather than being a form of description or report, narration has turned into a combination of language, metaphor, and development and expansion of language.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

In Paul Ricoeur's phenomenological hermeneutics, readers of a text may adopt different approaches to understanding and interpretation or a combination of them. According to him, reading is always accompanied by interpretation, and hermeneutics connects explanation and understanding in order to allow for interpretation as a problematic phenomenon through cosmological, ontological and epistemological approaches, offering itself as meta-critique.

## **3. Methodology**

The present study is of the descriptive-documentary type. Paul Ricoeur's phenomenological hermeneutics is briefly discussed first, and then Molavi's techniques in creating texts are examined in some of the stories from *Masnavi*.

## **4. Discussion and Analysis**

Interpretation and recreation of meaning in the stories of *Masnavi* are closely connected with Molavi's ontological ideas. In other words, interpretation is an inseparable component of *Masnavi*. Therefore, Molavi's writings are not a collection of linguistic expressions devoid of interpretable themes. It rather welcomes interpretation and, as a classical, work allows readers to decipher meanings and reconfigure them.

## **5. Conclusion**

At the first level, i.e., explication, by adopting an epistemological approach, Molavi tries to understand early texts and employs interpretation techniques similar to those used in the interpretation of religious texts. At the level of understanding, by adopting the problematic approach, Molavi attempts to interpret *The Quran* and some other early texts. Here, he marginalizes himself as the author of *Masnavi* and, inviting the 'other' to get involved in dialogue, sets meaning free from being definite and unique. At the third level, which according to Ricoeur belongs to the hermeneutic arc, Molavi adopts an ontological approach and employs metaphor to recreate meaning and subsequently a new world, as a result of which his writing is intertwined with

discourse and synthesis, making meaning and signification dynamic and flexible in his text.

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