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## **Symbol Attributes in the Allegorical Roles of Animals in Kalila wa Dimna**

**Maryam Mohammadzadeh<sup>1</sup>, Masoume Mahmoudi<sup>2</sup>**

### **Abstract**

Kalila wa Dimna is one of the allegorical works in Persian language in which the author discussed the critical issues involving moral, political, social beliefs with regard to the government and what was inexpressible by a normal way have been indirectly expressed in the form of stories by animal characters. This article by the means of descriptive and analytical methods, studies these allegories, it has analyzed allegorical attributes animal symbols in Kalila wa Dimna and suggests that Nasrallah Monshi in order to express his ideas about political issues, has selected fable narrative allegory.

**Keywords:** Fable, Kalila wa Dimna, Nasrallah Monshi, Allegory.

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<sup>1</sup> Faculty Member of Persian Language and Literature, Ahar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Iran, Email: [ay\\_maryam@yahoo.com](mailto:ay_maryam@yahoo.com)

<sup>2</sup> Ph.D. Student Islamic, Ahar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Iran.

## **1. Introduction**

Most outstanding Iranian poets' and writers' works from past has mirrored the environment and their living era; so that many of them in line with analyzing and explaining the life difficulties, were far more observant and more sensitive than other social scientists; they were from their people and interacted with them and felt themselves responsible toward the issues and problems of the community, and manifested reality by utilizing a variety of ways.

These methods and different ways were subjected to social and political conditions and poet's and writer's position against them. When repression is not dominant on society, critic with courage and intrepidity and by using evident weaknesses and shortcomings in the environment reveals the facts and condemns the inadmissibility of his society. In this regard he may construct his expression with insults and nasty words; at this time a mordant criticism can be formed that it can be called satire (Mohammadzadeh, 2009: 26).

The origin of Persian allegorical stories should be searched in the Kalila wa Dimna book (Zarrinkoub, 1977: 415). This valuable work has been authored in the 6th century HD, and the author, while concealing his thoughts and ideas behind the allegory, has expressed indirectly his thoughts and meanings in the form of criticism and political and social issues. Given that in the Persian language, allegories that lack of reality is due to personification of animals and objects and each of these elements is representative and symbol of a particular group of people in the society and just by scrutinizing and reflecting about meaning of these stories we can find out their hidden meaning, in this study we study the allegorical role and the attributes of animals in the Kalila wa Dimna.

### **1.1. Literature review**

By examining the researches that have been done in the field of allegorical anecdotes and fable, it can be seen that outside the country, researches have been conducted in the field of allegorical anecdotes and fables that in this vain George Orwell's Animal Castle and Vygotsky's allegorical anecdotes and fables can be noted. In Iran also different researches as case studies have been conducted that include: fable in Marzban Nameh, written by Nahid Malek Mohammadi (2009); Parvin E'tesami and Jean de la Fontaine's characters, fables and morals by Reza Irandoost (1992); reviewing Molavi's fables in Shams lyrical poems authored by Gholam Rezaei and Borhani (2013); Reflection on the recognition of the borders of allegory and the symbol, Hossein Ali Ghobadi (1998); Allegory in Persian literature (Sheikh Sanan's anecdotes) by Hassan Lahouti, (1996); The role of allegory in Masnavi stories written

by Mah Nazari (2014), Comparing the two allegorical anecdotes from Molavi's Masnavi and Mosibatnameh by Attar Mohamed, written by Mohammad Barani and Fatemeh Mahmoudi (2007).

## **1.2. Method**

After studying the issues raised in the discussion of allegory and its variants and by studying the Kalila wa Dimna, each animal role will be extracted and examined.

## **2. Discussion**

Undoubtedly, in the scope of human history, allegory that is the best way to understanding and explaining, has had that much inductive special power that sometimes has been substituted by any logical explanation; thus, in the history of Iranian literature writers and poets have selected allegory as the best way for expressing their philosophical, spiritual, religious, moral and political thoughts, so that in line with the Audience's understanding and perception they can express what is on their mind and thought.

### **2.1. Allegory**

Analogy, literally means simile and it used to analogize something to something else (Dehkhoda, 1994: 4/994). In terms of rhetoricians, it has been known as a branch of simile and metaphor. Shams Qais Razi, introduces it as metaphors and believes that allegory "is a metaphor through example, this means that because the poet wants to refer to the meaning he will bring a few words that imply other means and will make it the desired meaning and will use its meaning for other examples" (1998: 34).

Shafiee Kadkani says: "Allegory is the branch of simile and because of that the title of allegorical simile is abound in the rhetoric books" (1991: 78).

Zarrinkoub and Shamisa also consider it as a branch of simile. According to Zarrinkoub, allegory "is a sensory image that it can change something non-sense to sensible elements for the audiences and there is no doubt that every part of this image, never supply a part the invisible issue. The whole of this phenomenon can suggest an overall picture of desired purpose" (1999: 251). Shamisa also believes that

Allegory is the result of a dual relationship between the topic and the image.

In the allegory, it is axiomatic that the image should be mentioned and we

can find the topic based on that image, but sometimes the topic may also be mentioned (such as allegory simile) like those who cling to the world, like those who build homes through flooding, in this case, we can infer extended elements from the tenor and the image, those who are doing inferior and unsustainable affairs and do not see the consequences and cannot be benefited by their work (1991: 205).

## **2.2. Types of allegory in Persian literature**

The definitions that researchers offer about the allegory are mostly related to the concept of allegorical anecdotes. Allegorical anecdote “is a narrative in poem or prose style that its real meaning can be provided by transforming persons and events into elements that are different” (Zolghadri, 1994: 85) and it has also been said that “When a story has been taken from the language of animals, plants, trees and the like that its occurrence is impossible outside, it is called parable or allegory” (Razmjou, 1995: 185).

Allegory has two external and internal layers or symbolic aspects and secondary concepts. “The first layer is the story (characters and events) and the second layer is the deeper or secondary meaning that can be searched beyond the appearance and it is called the spirit of allegory” (Fotoohi, 2004: 142).

Allegory has different forms in Persian literature:

### **a. Descriptive allegories**

This analogy includes allegorical metaphor, representative metaphor, coping methods and proverb, poet or a writer mentions his thought shortly—in a bit, hemistich or one or more sentences.

### **b. Narrative allegories**

These analogies mostly are in the story form they can be studied in three parts:

### ***Fable***

Fable from the Latin root *Fabula* means speech. In literary terms, fable is simple and short story, that usually its characters are animals with the aim of teaching a moral reality. Indeed, fable is sometimes used for stories relating to the natural and supernatural creatures, legends, world myths and false and fictitious stories. The characters in the fable are frequently animals; but sometimes inanimate objects and human beings, or gods are present in fable (Taghavi, 1997: 92).

These anecdotes are present in different works of India, Greece and Iran there are examples from more than two thousand years ago. This form of literature in all cultures and languages is used to express opinions and ideas and sometimes with different objectives and critical education; therefore, “any convenient time and when it was needed, intellectuals and writers have used to express their opinions and social caustic criticism” (Shamisa, 1991: 271).

### ***Parable***

Parable by Greek root *Parabole* “is a story that it is told to explain a religious truth and always the plot of story reveals a religious principle or moral lesson or science truth” (Taghavi, 1977: 86).

Parables imply moral results; hence people use them when they want to give advices but due to the fact that in this kind of anecdotes, advice is not addressed directly; the audience will not be disturbed, also ethical emphasizes in parables, make the mind to pay attention to its critical facts and in spite of the fable where the characters are frequently, animals, characters in parable are frequently humans.

### ***Allegory***

Mystic stories that are called allegory in European languages are those stories that the main intent of the speaker is not stated clearly in them. In this form of analogy “The text appearance act as a veil that the meaning and purpose of the writer or poet is hidden beneath and the author gives us no explicit indication of hidden meaning in the text” (Pour Namdarian, 1996: 229). The time and place ambiguity is the main element of this type of story and from the very beginning reader is confronted with questions that does find not answers to them by following the story, thus, the story remains in the doubt and mystery. In other words, the allegory, moral lesson is not directly mentioned in the speech.

### **2.3. Allegorical characters**

Allegorical characters are those characters that aspects of their personality are beyond the narrator's description. These types of characters are two-dimensional: The intellectual and trait dimension that was the author or speaker's main aim and a dimension in which they are incarnated. Signs of the lack of fact in the story obviously shape by its character. When in a story human personality appears in animals and objects and humans actions can be seen in their actions, a feeling of unreality and a notion that these animals and objects are representatives of any particular person or class of people with different mood and the different social levels is normal. In these stories apart from the form of application that we can see their examples in the *Kalila wa Dimna*, *Masnavi*, *Marzban Nameh* and other works of prose and poem, implicitly will accept that animals and objects are not used in their true meaning. Personification as Arabs has improved is a type of Trope. Animals and objects have figurative (virtual) meanings in these stories and indication of the meaning and purpose is the same acts and actions that have been emerged from human beings. Although in some of the stories as tales of *Kalila wa Dimna*, *Marzban Nameh*, aside from the educational and moral lessons that story can tell; conspiracies and machinations that are present in the mind Hazrat Sultan also can be received, animals can be seen as representative of different people who are around the ruler; but the main purpose is understanding and teaching of moral results which have been discussed in the story. Accordingly, it can be said: "Allegorical characters are substitutable characters, that is character or characters can substitute for thought, mood, temperament, feature and trait" (Mir Sadeghi, 1997: 104). "In today's stories generally allegorical figures have been mixed with symbolic figures, and separating them from one another is impossible. Most of allegorical stories in terms of subject are allegorical, but step by step they are symbolic" (Ibid: 106). These characters in the allegory are divided into two categories:

There are stories that most of their characters are animals.

There are stories that their heroes are human characters.

### **2.4. The allegorical role of animal in the *Kalila wa Dimna***

Allegorical stories of *Kalila wa Dimna* have been written as fables. The heroes of these stories are those animals that are representative of different levels of people such as King, minister, businessman, lawyer and.... that the author by using them as an effective tool, manifests his thoughts indirectly and has portrayed the rulers' ethical features and their behaviors with

people and by considering the animals as the allegorical elements, which explaining the story, has planned political and social criticisms. These animals are allegorical characters that each one as representative of a level of society, accepts special allegorical roles that are as follows:

	<b>Character</b>	<b>Description of attributes</b>	<b>Story</b>
1	Viper	Sharp tongue and biting	Owl and crows
2	Tiger	Grateful	Goldsmith and traveler
3	Duck	<u>Gaby and without thought</u> and will Grateful Caring and compassion	<u>Pond and lighting</u> <u>Goldsmith and traveler</u> Ducks and turtles
4	Ape	<u>The ignorant and follower</u> <u>Wise and experienced</u> Grateful	<u>Lion and cow</u> <u>Apes and tortoises</u> Goldsmith and traveler
5	Panther	Wise and prudent	Search in Dimna's work
6	Owl	Ignorant, presumptuous, spiteful	Owl and crow
7	Donkey	Gullible and deceived	Apes and tortoises
8	Crawfish	Ignorant consultant	Frog and snake
9	Rabbit	Weak and small but wise Smart and clever	Lion and cows Owl and crow
10	Pigs	Humiliated person who is not deserve of respect	King and Balar
11	Mink	Innocent that its blood has been shed unjustly	Zahid and mink
12	Fox	Cunning and crafty	Pigeons and foxes monkeys and turtles

13	Crow	Oppressed experimentation and clever crow and the snake	Collar bearing Pigeon
14	Dogs	Greedy ignoble and not trainable	Borzouyeh physician King and Blogger
15	Phoenix	A great creature, powerful and oppressed supporter	Parrots and sea lawyer
16	Camel	Old, follower simple-minded Naive and deluded	Borzouyeh physician Lion and cow
17	Jackal	Wily wise Ascetic and religious	Lion and cattle The story of crow and snake / shooter and lioness Lion and the Jackal
18	Lion	Ruthless human	Lion and cow
19	Parrot	Ignorant Wise	Search in Dimna's work Wedding with snake's daughter
20	Duck	Opinionated and arrogant	Cow and lion
21	Frog	Ignorant	Snake and toad
22	Elephant	Huge and proud	Owl and crows Peel and skylark
23	Dove	Wise docile and obedient Hasty decision making without thinking	Collar pigeons King and blogger

24	Hyena	A man who is deceived by a lie	Owl and crows
25	Flea	Successful	Archery and lioness
26	Cow	Docile	Lion and cow
27	Cat	Hypocrisy	Owl and crows
28	Wolf	Opportunistic, greedy Wily and cunning	Collar dove Lion and the jackal
29	Sheep	Subdued	Owl and crows
30	Snake	Greedy and opportunistic Ruthless Grateful Generous	Crow and the snake Pigeon collar bearing Goldsmith and traveler Owl and raven
31	Fish	Naive and deluded	Kingfisher and crabs
32	Kingfisher	Cunning and ruthless	Kingfisher and crabs
33	Mice	Nimble, clever and experienced	Collar pigeons Cat and mouse

### 3. Conclusion

In the stories of Kalila wa Dimna, which are fable, each animal is representative of a allegorical roles that Nasr Allah Monshi utilizes them indirectly to design the attributes of each class of society. The interesting point is that the animal characterization and the allegorical roles of animals are variable and according to the story the role of animals are different; for example ape in the story of lion and cow is ignorant and old and in the story of ape and tortoises, is wise and experienced, and in the story of Goldsmith and traveler is grateful. Parrot in the story of Search in Dimna's work is ignorant and in the snake daughter's wedding story is wise.

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