



A Study of the Original Text of Kalila and Dimna as Compared to Its Rewritten Edition for the Children and Teenagers

Amir Zadnemat*, Sahar Musavi Tabatabaei

MA Student in Persian Language and Literature, University of Gilan, Gilan, Iran.

***Corresponding Author**

Abstract: *The current article deals with the technique of rewriting as one of the most important pillars of story writing. Rewriting refers to scrutiny and meticulous analysis of the text which is grounded in two foundations: on the one hand, all points regarding the appearance of the work (punctuation problems, phrasing, etc.) and on the other hand, those cases which are related to the content of the work (including the main elements of the story, course of events, strength and consistency of themes, its order, etc.) which constitute the content and materials of the story, are closely inspected. Rewriting is not just retelling the story, rather by it the underneath layers of the work are critically analyzed. Rewriting is used where the events have not been inscribed and is of paramount importance in this regard. It is needless to say that by observation of vital points in rewriting, the author will be easily able to turn the work at issue into a readable work. As a result, a precise understanding of the work is basically related to the observation of the aforementioned points in the rewriting. By taking advantage of the technique of rewriting, one can provide a clearer of what has existed.*

Keywords: *Rewriting, Character, Plot, Diction and Dialogue, Point of View*

INTRODUCTION

Lexically speaking, rewriting refers to the act of reproducing a certain text using new phrases and wording. In literature, rewriting is used for producing a modern version of an old story regardless of its being poetic or in prose which is associated with simplification of some sentences by adding or eliminating some phrases. The rewriting of ancient stories is an essential part of the contemporary literature.

After a thorough review of the old original text and its simple writing, the temporal and spatial elements of the occurrence of the story are determined. The plot is widened and this causes the story to be reproduced by a new structure. Today sometimes rewriting and re-creation are taken to be one while they are two distinct categories. Rewriting is the simplification of language and creation of new structure for an old text but re-creation is reproducing the same work in new form. In rewriting, the content is kept intact and the key themes are not changed. Rewriting might be conducted from poetry to prose, from prose to poetry, from prose to prose and from poetry to poetry.

Kalila and Dimna is a work originally written in Sanskrit which was translated into Middle Persian in Sasanid Era. It is a sgacious book which contains stories which are stated in the animals' language. Before Islam, Ibn al-Muqaffa translated it into Arabic and after a while Nasrullah Munshi rendered it into Persian.

Upon a cursory survey, we find out that this book has been translated into Arabic and Persian for several times and in the tenth century of Hijra it was translated by Hossein Kashefi under the title of *Anwar Suhaili* and these frequent translations and rewriting all attest to the importance and effectivity of this work. Rumi was also inspired by *Kalila and Dimna* and the effects of this work can be seen throughout *Masnavi*. The thematic and structural similarities of the stories show the influence of this work on Rumi (Zarinkoob, 1994: 178). The importance of acquaintance of the children and teenagers with *Kalila and Dimna* and also *Marzbannama* lies in the substantial social knowledge that they can transfer.

Aim

The present essay uses *Sweet Stories of Kalila and Dimna for Teenagers* by Davood Lutfullah as the basis of its examples. This work is an example of rewriting. The current research seeks to take a look at the limitations of rewriting of such old texts as *Kalila and Dimna*. Having underlined the need of the age group of children and teenagers for such stories and text as well as the necessity of having an encounter with them, we seek to determine the scope of rewriting in view of the story elements of the original text of *Kalila and Dimna* in order to provide a new structure for the fulfillment of the needs of the mentioned age group.

Research Background

The article entitled *Content of Mystical Stories as Rewritten by Azar Yazdi* by Akram Erfani and Maryam Shabanzadeh is an effort for studying the thematic changes in two rewritings by Azar Yazdi under the titles of "Stories of Masnavi" and "Stories of Attar".

The article "Rise and Fall in Shahnameh" by Mahmoud Mosharraf Tehrani has critically reviewed the rewritings conducted in the past decades and has classified them in two groups of simple and creative rewritings.

The book entitled *Sheikh dar Booteh* in which the author has discussed various types of rewriting from *Kalila and Dimna*, *Shahnameh* and *Masnavi* and also a part of the book is about creative rewriting.

Story Elements

• Character and Its Types:

The character in a story can be a human or any other creature. Even in some cases, it is a real or unreal entity that is created by the writer. The context of creation of the character depends on the type of story as the latter is sometimes for performance of a play or producing a film.

Generally speaking, we have different characters in a story. The first type of character which is known as the protagonist or main character is the person around whom the story revolves and catches the attention of the readership. The antagonist character is the one who is in conflict with the main character or characters. There are also other characters who stand before the antagonist character.

There is also deuteragonist character who is second in command to the protagonist character and shares the secrets with him.

✓ General Review of Character in Original Text of *Kalila and Dimna*

Most of the characters of *Kalila and Dimna* are static. In other words, they are not affected by the events of the story and they do not transform. For example, "Kalila" does not change as a character. However, there are few dynamic characters too. For example, the blood-shedding lioness who decides to leave blood-shedding through her cubs.

Upon reading the stories of *Kalila and Dimna*, we understand that the stories are short and there are few characters and the beginning and the end of stories are close together.

"It is related that a fox went to a jungle and there he found a drum by a tree and when a wind started to blow a branch of the tree struck the drum and a horrible sound was heard. When the fox saw the giant body of the drum and heard its horrible sound thought that there should be a bulk of meat and skin proportionate to the sound and he started to rend the drum and he didn't find anything but a dried piece of skin. The fox became frustrated and told: I learned that the more giant is the body and the more horrible is the sound the less will be the benefit" (Nasrullah Munshi, 2009: 70-71).

The shortness of the story tackles further complications in the story and paves the ground for better understanding by the readership. In such books, simple makeup of the story is supposed to facilitate the faster and better transmission of the message and this is indeed the didactic aspect of the work. When this is associated with diversity of stories, the work becomes more attractive.

- **Plot**

The term plot has been borrowed from the art of painting and it refers to drawing done by the painters on the paper and then complete it; it also is related with the structural design which is normally drawn by the architects and based on it a building is constructed. Plot in the context of story refers to the act of narration of fictional events focusing on their causal relation. The map and pattern of events of a play or poem or fictional work which undertakes the organization of the events and characters is called plot which is supposed to instigate the sense of curiosity of the reader or viewer. M. Forster offers a simple but practical definition of plot: story is the narration of events that have been organized based on temporal continuation. Plot is the narration of events in which the emphasis is placed on the element of chance (Kaden, 2001: 333).

- ✓ **Plot in Kalila and Dimna**

Plot in such works is of different makeup as compared to other works. It is different from the realism found in other stories. Generally speaking, sometimes the events are arranged in causal form while the overall setting of the events is not of logical format.

The characters with which we are acquainted in this book have clear motives for their action. For example, wolf naturally attacks the goat and sheep and this confrontation is totally logical. And sometimes we feel that there should be logical reasons.

In Kalila and Dimna the narration method is "story in story". This method of story telling was first coined in India and then it came to Iran and then it was used in western works. In such ancient works as *One Thousand and One Nights* the same narration method is used.

Sometimes the central story is concerned with just one special character but other marginal stories with other characters enter the scene for more emphasis and further confirmation.

- **Dialogue and Diction**

Dialogue is in fact the actual talk between the characters or in the mind of one of the characters in the context of story. The tone of narration can be considered to be the most important element in the interaction of the reader with the story. It is the tone of narrator that can stimulate the feelings of the reader as to the events and characters of the story and make him interested in the story.

A story might have a good plot and even there would be no grammatical error at all but due to the lack of an appropriate tone the narration will become boring and fail to have the required lively spirit.

The story tone is a main part of the literary creation that can impress the whole adventure. Opening sentences of a story determine its tone and it should enjoy a particular continuation and dynamicity of that tone up to the end of the story. Tone is different and varies from poetry and prose to official and intellectual, satirical, impartial, ridiculation, question and doubt, epic poem, lyrical, etc., and is under the influence of various factors like phonological makeup, wording style, sentences and their structure, various stylistic devices, literary and historical phrases, and style atmosphere (Anusheh, 2002). Various theoreticians and critics have offered different definitions of this literary element. Some have underlined the tone of writer in relation to the work itself: tone refers to the way that the writer is dealing with the work and his general approach to the theme and characters of the story in a way that the reader can conjecture it (Mir Sadeqi, 2009: 521-523).

- ✓ **Dialogue and Diction in Kalila and Dimna**

The tone and language of Kalila and Dimna is literary. Here tone is in the service of contextualization of the stories and making a bridge between them and the real life. In Kalila and Dimna there is no difference between human tone and other creatures. The tone and language of characters are in a form that enjoys an equal power and strength.

Now we turn to the issue of dialogue in Kalila and Dimna. Dialogue as one of the key elements of story is of paramount importance. Here we should allude to the difference and distinction between contemporary stories and the ancient stories like Kalila and Dimna. In ancient stories all characters speak in the same tone. And this is the case with both the ordinary and elite people and dialogue is part of the fictional narration. Of course there are some slight differences. For example, as to the lion and cow in Kalila and Dimna despite this similarity in the aspect of dialogue one can see also the differences.

"The lion sought to hide his sense of fear from Dimna but when Shanzabeh made a horrible moo and the lion lost his control and his secret was revealed" (Nasrullah Munshi, 2000: 79 also cf. Ibn Muqafah, 1992: 81).

Explanation of Rewritten Samples

Rewriting has always been taken into consideration by authors due to its importance. Particularly this has become increasing in contemporary era. Rewriting is vital for cultural rearing of the children and teenagers. In rewriting we are witness to the use of simple language for the presentation of the story with a new structure. Now we turn to the comparison of rewritten excerpts of Kalila and Dimna. Before doing this we need to mention the limitations of rewriting.

- **Limitations of a Rewriter:**

In the article entitled *Review of the Stories of Azar Yazdi* the author quotes Dr. Hassan Habibi.

The evaluation of Professor Habibi is not the same as to all the stories and their sources. The basis of his ideas is the points that I mentioned earlier.

- ✓ **Kalila and Dimna:**

- Many of the stories included in Kalila and Dimna are full of magic, dream and hallucination and they make the adults confused let alone the kids.
- The content of some of the stories is not appropriate for the kids and their age. These can best be appropriate for the adults as there is a talk of love and tricks.
- Another part of Kalila and Dimna includes themes which are priceless and cannot be neglected any time.
- Some of the stories should be regarded irrelevant to the contemporary era.
-

- **Complete Delineation of Plot and Related Factors in Original Text and Its Comparison with Rewritten Version:**

As already mentioned in the ancient text of Kalila and Dimna the stories are based on a set of events and it was also noted that the events are extraordinary and illogical. For example, in the following story:

"It is related that a duck saw light in the water and thought it was a fish and struggled to catch it and she failed. After several failed tries she became disappointed. Since then whenever she saw fish in the water she thought it was light and she did not make any effort" (Nasrullah Munshi, 2005: 102). One cannot see the causal relation normally found in the contemporary stories in the latter story. It is not clear why the duck did confuse light with fish. This story does not have spatial and temporal continuation.

In the rewritten version of this story the title is "imagination". The story is longer and the complicated sentences have been dissected into some simple sentences and this has added to the size of the story. Familiar words have been replaced with old ones. Here we quote part of the rewritten version of the story:

"The duck was lying alongside the water. The night had made the water dark with its color. The picture of two beautiful stars was shining inside the water. The moments were passing very peacefully" (Lutfullah, 2008: 61).

In the rewritten text there is causal relationship and temporal consecution: the duck sees the picture of two stars in the water. The event occurs at night when the stars appear on the sky. And this is why the duck thinks that the fish is inside the water.

Temporal continuity has been retained:

"Moments were peacefully passing one after another. She opened and closed her eyes. She enjoyed her time. All of a sudden when she opened her eyes for once she noticed something..." (ibid: 61). The time of story is chronological. Events take place one after another. Such elements as plot, conflict, peak point, suspension and resolution have been relatively observed in the rewriting. But the story's conflict was soon resolved. For in old original text the author has not been concerned with story telling and its precise elements.

In the rewritten text the duck notices something in the water once she opens and closes her eyes. "It is certainly the fish". Here the conflict takes place. The peak point or climax is seeing the light and the picture of stars and the duck's failure of touching them. "Oh my Gosh! What a strange fish". The resolution of the story is as follows: "She stopped and thought that I should have been dreaming again. It's chasing will be futile".

Then as you see, the language is simple and the principles and elements have been observed as far as possible in order to provide a new construct. Then the rewriting should have a plot. In other words, it should have a start, middle and end and should attract and suspend. All these elements exist in the rewritten version but not in the old original text.

Paying attention to the lack of plot and design in Kalila and Dimna is of vital importance so that anyone who decides to rewrite the story to be able to struggle for creation of a different construct through bringing about some changes in the plot and design.

✓ **Relationship between Plot and Characters in Kalila and Dimna:**

For example, in the original text of Kalila and Dimna the story of hunter and deer and rabbit and wolf the story begins as follows:

"It has been related that once a hunter went for hunting and he hunted a deer and took it home. On his way to home he came across a bore and the bore attacked him and the man wounded the bore with his lance and the bore retaliated and both died" (Munshi, 2005: 172).

In this story the narration has begun with the character without any preliminary remarks of the setting. However, if we compared this story with its rewritten version we detect the effort of the rewriter for creation of a new construct. This story has been rewritten under the title of "hunt in hunt":

"The hunter was crossing the jungle with his arc and arrow at hand and all his face was covered with sweat. He stopped and put his arc and arrows on the ground. He cleaned his face. Then he turned to check the surrounding" (Lutfullah, 2008: 107).

Although even here the rewritten text has soon turned to the environment and place it still has more consistency as compared to the original text of Kalila and Dimna. There is causal relationship which is powerful and there is time continuity and the character is introduced to the readership.

✓ **Conflict in the Service of Plot and Rewriter:**

Every story has one or a number of conflicts. Conflict is nothing but the major and secondary events in the story and this causes the story to become more interesting and rapturous. If a story is of strength we will first be exposed to a situation which could be changed. In the next stage an event occurs and in the third stage a situation appears whose realization or failure is possible.

The story of "friendship of dove, raven, mouse, turtle and deer" has a number of main and secondary events, i.e. conflict.

"A raven had a nest on a huge tree around the meadow. It had perched on a branch and looked left and right (here we are encountered with a situation that can change). All of a sudden an ill hunter in bad mood came to the tree... He put down his arc and took off his cloak and ambushed (an event is occurring that would lead to a change). A flock of doves came led by a dove called wood pigeon... When they saw the seed they hastened for it without paying attention to anything and all of them were entrapped (event). The wood pigeon told the other birds that there is no time for further dispute let's fly together and take the trap off and free ourselves (here another event is born out of the first conflict)" (Nasrullah Munshi, 2005: 158).

Again other events take place and the same triple stages recur. This is seen more in the rewritten stories which are a sign of the consistency of the plot. Consistency creates emotion and curiosity and the child and teenager enjoys it.

The rewriter adds to these conflicts in order to clear room both in time and place for new diverse characters. And this temporal and spatial expansion causes a story to be born that can provide the needs of the child and the teenager.

In rewriting if some dynamic characters are used along with the static characters the story becomes more intriguing and attractive. This is of vital importance for the child and young adults. Dynamic characters who undergo through psychological and intellectual transformations can be an example in the ups and downs of life.

- **Application of Symbolic Characters in Rewriting of Kalila and Dimna**

The characters in rewriting are usually symbolic. The reason for this lies in the fact that the rewriter follows the requirements of allegorical story the category under which Kalila and Dimna is classified. Choosing this type of character is due to its harmony with the story's content. Of course, the didactic concepts of the work require the symbolic characters to be used. In symbol and allegory the intellectual content turns to reality.

Of course, one can find the trace of it in the text of Kalila and Dimna. In the story of "a dog that found a bone beside the river" turns the caprice to an objective feature using an allegorical character despite its being a subjective and intangible reality. Having done this it creates attraction for the audience.

- ✓ **Quality of Character in Rewritten Text:**

The characters are multidimensional in the rewritten text. In original text the characters are either good or bad but in the rewritten version the characters turn gray because the age group of teenagers and child must be observed so that they might not face any doubt by identification with their beloved character in the story. It was already mentioned that in Kalila and Dimna most of the characters are animals. It should be noted here that in the rewritten version the same is the case.

The other point as to rewriting is that sometimes a certain character is eliminated. This character is part of the secondary characters that does not have any significant role. By eliminating this character the room is cleared for a new character.

- ✓ **Rewriter's Use of General and Proper Names for Character**

For example in the story of "a thief who went for theft with his fellows" the character of thief is named in general way:

"One night a villain decided to go for theft by his fellows. The owner of the house woke up hearing their sound and recognized that there are thieves on the roof. He awakened the family" (Munshi, 2005: 51).

In the rewritten text the author has used proper name in order to create a type of intimacy and emotional bond for conveying the message:

"It was night and the stars were shining in the sky and had made the sky and neighborhood bright... Ahmad lay down in the yard and was watching all these beauties ... Jafar and Reza stayed beside the door and took care of the alley. Mehdi was on the roof and watched the yard ... Ahmad hear all their words and tried to awaken his wife: Tayebah, Tayebah, wake up, wake up" (Lutfullah, 2008: 29-30).

- ✓ **Character Presentation Quality:**

Characters are presented to the audience either by the introduction provided by the author or by their actions in the course of story as delineated by the author. Character in story both in the original text and in the rewritten version is introduced via the action. For example, in the story of "raven, jackal and lion":

"It has been narrated that a raven, a wolf and a jackal were serving the lion. They lived in a neighborhood where the camel of the merchant lived ..." (Munshi, 2005: 106).

Here the features are not expressed and just the actions of these characters are described which represent them.

After a while the lion fails to hunt and they all remain hungry and raven presents his character through an idea for saving the life of all hungry animals: "this camel is a stranger among us and does not have any benefit for the king".

The jackal introduced himself by saying: "we cannot kill the camel because the lion has accepted it as part of the group" (ibid: 107). Here one can clearly see the conservatism and caution in jackal.

In the story of "three fish" which has been rewritten under the title of "death pond" the presentation of the characters has been done in the same way. In this story whenever the danger of hunter approaches every fish reveals its character.

"Yellow fish: the hunter is not here yet we will think of a way out when he is here" (Lutfullah, 2008: 49).

This is an example of tactless man.

The black fish says: "Which danger? Which hunter? They said something and left" (ibid).

The black fish is also like the yellow fish. But red fish is different: "My friends! I feel the danger approaching us. Let's escape before being caught" (ibid: 51). Red fish represents is long-sighted.

This method causes the child and teenager to indentify himself with them upon a long contemplation on the essential features of the characters and their comparison.

- **Quality of Point of View:**

It is also important that from which point of view and based on which approach the author has turned to the story. The relationship of the author with the events of the story and the latter with the readership is determined with point of view. Most of the rewritten stories from Kalila and Dimna have been reproduced based on the point of view of the third person or the Great Sage. Even in the original text the stories have been narrated from the point of view of a third person. Just sometimes in the dialogues between the characters the point of view of first person is used. In the story of "friendship of dove, raven, mouse, turtle and deer" first the point of view is for third person:

"The hunter came along and took off his cloak and put the weapon down and ambushed for an hour and finally a flock of the pigeons came..." (Munshi, 2005: 154).

But the story continues with a dialogue between the characters from the point of view of first person: "Raven though that it is better to follow them and see what will finally happen to them as this event would provide a vital lesson and I would myself face the same situation one day" (ibid: 159).

In the rewritten story we are faced with the same method. The story begins with third person point of view and in the course of story the point of view changes in the dialogue between the characters and turns to first person. Changing the point of view is emotionally impressive and paves the ground for conveying the message.

"One of the doves which had a narrow line around her neck and was called wood pigeon said: be quite. Stop quarreling. The hunter comes and takes us all. The only ways to freedom is flying together and take the net with ourselves. If you want to get free you must cooperate (Lutfullah, 2008: 107).

Conclusion

In the text of Kalila and Dimna, the shortness of the stories has caused the characters to be limited. This shortness of the stories has also prevented from further complications in the story and made its understanding easier and be effective in introducing this work as a valuable work.

In the text of Kalila and Dimna there is no sign of realism as it is current today. Of course sometimes there is a causal framework. In rewriting we see that the rewriter struggles to expand the plot and make it more attractive for the child and young adults through replacing the complicated sentences with simpler ones as well as replacing outdated words with the contemporary equivalents and creation of temporal continuity and causal relations.

Conflict, climax and resolution are techniques used for simplification of the text and providing a framework for better understanding.

Finally, this work and the expansion of plot lead to better description and introduction of characters and the totality of story.

Along with plot there is conflict. Rewriting expands the existing conflicts in the original text and this in turn brings about a new construct and creates excitement. With such a construct the rewriter is free to create more characters. He can also change the course of events and create a causal network to present his characters.

By taking advantage of symbolic character which is in line with the didactic content of the work the intellectual theme of the work turns objective.

Rewriter presents the characters in gray and avoids using black and white in the wake of the original text.

The rewriter uses proper names in order to enhance the intimacy and pave the ground for identification with the characters.

In rewriting the characters are introduced to the audience through their actions. Of course, this is also the case with the original text.

As to the issue of point of view the third person point of view prevails as in the original text but also the first person point of view is also used.

References

1. Anusheh, Hassan, Dictionary of Persian Language, Tehran: Ministry of Culture. 2002.
2. Hassan Habibi, Review of Stories of Azar Yazdi, Journal of Anjoman, 2002, no. 6.
3. Ibn Muqafah, Abdullah, Kalila and Dimna, edited by Mohammad al-Morsafi, Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub. 1992.
4. Kaden, J. E., Dictionary of Literary Terms, trans. Kazem Firoozmand, Tehran: Shadegan. 2001.
5. Lutfullah, Davood, Sweet Stories of Kalila and Dimna for Young Adults, Tehran: Pirayesh. 2008.
6. Mir Sadeqi, Jamal, Sweating of Spirit, Tehran: Niloofar. 2009.
7. Nasrullah Munshi, Abu al-Maali, Kalila and Dimna, edited by Mojtaba Minavi, Tehrani. 2000.
8. Nasrullah Munshi, Kalila and Dimna, edited by Minavi, Nashre Thalith. 2009.
9. Nasrullah Munshi, Translation of Kalila and Dimna, Tehran University Press. 2005
10. Zarinkoob, Abdulhossein, Sea in the Pitcher, Tehran: Elmi. 1994.