



*Literary Research*

*Year18, NO. 74*

*Winter 2021*

 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2634/Lire.18.74.1>

 DOR: 20.1001.1.17352932.1400.18.74.1.6

## Comparative analysis of the same capacities of the novel "Tuesdays with Murrie" with Masnavi Molavi

*Seyyed Ali Seraj<sup>1</sup>*

*Recived:3/2/2021*

*Accepted: 15/5/2021*

### **Abstract**

The emergence of epistemological relativism in the form of social anomies and issues such as emotional and identity abnormalities and crises, psychological fluctuations and disappointments are derived from the current of modernity and the governance of the positivist paradigm. Examples of these cases as vital issues of human life are seen in the "Tuesdays with Murrie" and "Masnavi Molavi". The novel of "Tuesdays with Murrie, one of the most remarkable Western works, emphasises humanity's permanent problem in materialism and neglects the self-knowledge trap (love and affection, death, spirituality and consciousness, etc.). These subjects have been emphasised in other ways in the collection of Molavi's works, specifically, the Masnavi Ma'navi. With an analytical-comparative method, the present study aimed to analyse the content of these two works, based on the American school, and provide desirable solutions to get out of the governing situation on human life. The results indicated that the dominant aspect of both works is proposing the crisis of human problems in the material world trap. The distinction between them is in Molavi's emphasis on going beyond material factors and relying on the ontology of Islamic mysticism.

**Keywords:** *Molavi, Mitch Album, Tuesdays with Murrie, alienation, love, death.*

---

<sup>1</sup>. Associate Professor of Persian Language and Literature, Neyshabur University, Neyshabur, Iran. [ORCID ID:0000-0001-5851-0933](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5851-0933) [ali.seraj@neyshabur.ac.ir](mailto:ali.seraj@neyshabur.ac.ir)

*Extended Abstract*

**1. Introduction**

Scientific revolutions and industrial developments of the modern age, despite fundamental signs of progress in science and technology, have caused the modern human to experience mental junctures such as fear, existential insecurity, loneliness, boredom and emptiness, and profound mental anxiety (Sadeghi Fasaei and Erfan Manesh, 1394: 58-60). Modernity, after "disenchanted" from meaning and religion, replaced alternatives to keep the individual in the social system. Initially, Western social thinkers introduced positivist science and thought as the only correct intellectual knowledge to guarantee human salvation and happiness and avoid individual and social suffering (Benton and Craib, 1386: 34-37). Also, the professionalism and division of labour based on a secularist and humanist perspective placed on modern Western human thought (Durkheim, 1392: 238).

The increasing growth of individualism, instrumental rationality, accounting spirit, utilitarianism, profit and pleasure originality caused crises and social anomalies to appear gradually, one after another, in human life (Gardner, 1386). Those caused Georg Simmel to speak of the cultural tragedy of the West. Modernity left the individual to his own devices, gave him freedom of mental and physical movement, and connected the subject and object. Through monetary economics, the qualitative nature of things lost its importance. People ignored values that they could not measure with money. The essence and meaning of life consistently escaped people. It contributed to the rational and calculating nature of modernity. Therefore, multiple objects or qualities were measurable against a single criterion (i.e., money) (Simmel, 1373: 164-168). The novel "Tuesdays with Murrie" by Mitch Albom is one of the leading mystical-educational novels that has been translated into various languages. The set of thoughts and structure of Molavi's thought also constitutes a critique of human life processes and emphasises mystical categories. The main issue of the present study is the discovery and unveiling of those common categories between the literary products of the two cultures and the nation.

**Research Question(s)**

How have they subconsciously achieved similar versions by sharing institutional needs such as the desire for truth-seeking, understanding the existence mystery, discovering who, human status and mission, finding ways to reduce the suffering of life, and so on?

## **2. Literature Review**

Despite the similar capacities between the novels of Tuesdays with Morrie and Molavi's Masnavi, they have not been criticised with a comparative approach. However, the subject of mystical manner and inner human needs has been considered by the following articles:

Hashemian and Neisi (1396: 297-325) in "Redefining the subject of the manner in fiction in the book Tuesdays with Murrie by Mitch Album" with a descriptive-library method, have investigated the manner in the fiction of the classical and modern period. While describing and analysing the words old age, awakening, manner and awareness, the authors concluded that mystical manner in the contemporary world does not occur in monastery, convents and priory. Anyone anywhere in the universe can identify with the story's main character and accept the course of the event while being united with his soul. The basis of analysis in this study is only manner and old age.

Moradi and Chalak (1394) in "Unknown Valley: A Study of the King and the Maid Story Symbols through its Adaptation to the Stories of Sheikh Sanan and Siddhartha and the Molana Life Story," have studied the manner in traditional and modern mysticism. They believe that one must endure the hardships and sufferings of the world to unite with the beloved.

Hatami and Nasr Esfahani (1389) in "Language of Signs: A Study of the Symbolic Ideas of the Alchemist and Comparison with the Manifestations of Islamic Mysticism and Sufism" have compared issues such as self-knowledge, manner, ontology, etc., in Alchemist with Islamic mysticism. They concluded that the teachings of Islamic mysticism had influenced the Alchemist novel in the mystical stages and manner.

It is noteworthy that no comparative study has been conducted on comparing the novel Tuesdays with Morrie and Molavi's Masnavi. According to the preliminaries mentioned above, this research seeks a comparative analysis of these two works with an innovative aspect.

## **3. Methodology**

Comparative analysis as a qualitative approach is one of the insight sources in all branches of humanities studies. Its philosophy is that truth is manifested in the whole world, history, society and nature. With the descriptive-comparative method, the present study has chosen the novel Tuesdays with Morrie and Molavi's Masnavi. Find and hide are common aspects of human existential and epistemological philosophy in the two works. It should be noted that the purpose of this study is not

to prove the effectiveness of *Mitch Album* by Molavi. Unlike researchers who introduce adaptation and direct effectiveness as the basis and criteria in comparative research, these criteria belong to the adaptive literature and are not comparative.

Such criteria caused limitations and prohibitions, which, for example, make the primary purpose of the present study, i.e. observation and reminding sources of one's intellectual-cultural resources, leaves incompetent and unsuccessful in the mirror of the achievements of the other.

#### **4. Results**

The present study aimed to identify the content and thematic analysis of “*Tuesdays with Murrie*” and “*Manavi's Masnavi Ma'navi*” according to the current crisis-making contexts in human life. Affected by the spread of despair, frustration, lack of purpose, paying to fleeting desires, etc., the crisis-making situation has been strengthened in different dimensions and levels of human beings. Each of the scholars, writers and philosophers have tried to offer a way out of the current situation. In two works, *Tuesdays with Murrie* and *Masnavi Manavi*, these issues have been proposed severely, and solutions have been presented to free human beings from life crises until they reach peace. The central theme of *Tuesdays with Murrie* is understanding the meaning of life and not missing opportunities. During the fourteen Tuesdays that Mitch meets Murrie, he learns many lessons about life. While taking a critical stance, he emphasises with a liberating view in various places in his work that modern man has neglected spirituality and self-knowledge regarding the many problems in material issues. A human with his self-awareness and knowledge reaches peace. Paying attention to death and death-thinking is one of the most important ways to achieve peace and understand life's meaning. Death-thinking makes life meaningful. Molavi in *Masnavi Manavi*, using the capacity of narrative expression and in symbolic and allegorical forms, has proposed the mentioned issues in the totality of his thoughts and works. He believes that human beings, considering the distance from the inherent identity of their existence, have anxiety and constant restlessness in different areas of life. The way out of the current situation is to return to the original essence of human beings through mystical attitudes.

Interestingly, despite the differences in worldview and time and place position of (*Tuesdays with Murrie* and the *Masnavi Ma'navi*), the themes of the two works had much contextual and cultural similarity.

We can go beyond the anxious state and restlessness of meaning in human life with their teachings. The following are the most critical commonalities of these two important mystical-educational works:

1. Emphasis on mystical manner and efforts to optimally change the negative situation in life;
2. Emphasis on the fate and occurrence of the status quo as a result of human action;
3. Explore the past and present to understand the meaning of life and emphasise the principle that death is not just the end of life; instead, it is the beginning of eternal life and the immortality of the human soul;
4. Emphasis on cosmic human-oriented correspondence and interaction, the love-oriented of creation, the universal language of signs, to make the most of time and the necessity of the follower and the traveller, the need of old age and guidance, the being journey of life and the condition of harmony with destiny;
5. Denial of over-reliance on human intellect, over-drowning of human beings in the trap of the material world and their inability to solve their spiritual crises;
6. The distance of human beings from love and spiritual peace regarding the being caught in the trap of materialism;
7. Emphasis on the role of love in the immortality of life;
8. Emphasis on equilibrium and contentment as the most critical missing links of modern man;
9. Focus on heartfelt faith and belief in God; Sincerity and oneness and purification of the heart from the pollutions of this unstable world and liberation from attachments, happiness, spouse and family, trust, companionship with righteousness, truth, good fiction and focus on good life phenomena, forgiveness, Satisfaction and travel.

### References

- Album, Mitch.(1393) Tuesdays with Murrie; Translated by Mandana Ghahramanlou; Thirteenth edition; Tehran: Ghatreh Publishing.
- Ali Hosseini, Ali; Ghaemi, Fahimeh; Ebrahimi, Ali.(1396) "Study of Comparative Method in Philosophical-Political Studies." Journal of Epistemological Studies at Islamic University. Vol.21, no.70, pp. 105-126.
- Alston, Pierre and Milton Yinger, and Muhammad Lenghausen.(1379) Religion and New Perspectives. Translated by Gholam Hossein Tavakoli. Qom: Islamic Propaganda Office.
- Benton, Ted and Yan, Craib.(1386) Philosophy of Social Sciences: Philosophical Foundations of Social Thought. Translation: Shahnaz Masmaparast and Mahmoud Mottahed. Tehran: Agah Publishing.
- Durkheim, Emile.(1392) About the division of labour. Translated by Baqir Parham. Tehran: Markaz.

- Ebadi, Karam.(1394) "Study of the causes and contexts of peace in Masnavi." Journal of Literature and Language, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman. Vol.18, no.37, pp. 189-211.
- Felix, Uwe.(1388) Introduction to qualitative research methods. Translated by Hadi Jalili. Tehran: Ney Publishing.
- Forum, Eric.(1380) Revolution of Hope. Translated by Majid Roshangar. Third Edition. Tehran: Morvarid.
- Ghaffari Hashjin, Zahed; Beiginia, Abdolreza; Tasmim Ghatei, Akram.(1389) "Factors affecting the political participation of political science and technical students at the University of Tehran." Political knowledge; Vol.6, no.2, pp.207-24.
- Ghobadi, Hossein Ali; Mostafa Gorji.(1387) "Molavi's universal messages for human beings today." Mystical studies. No. 8, pp. 101-124.
- Giddens, Anthony.(1392) Modernisation of society and personal identity in the new age. Translated by Nasser Movafaghian. Tehran: Ney Publishing.
- Guarder, William.(1386) War against the family. Translated by Masoumeh Mohammadi. Tehran: Office of Women Studies and Research.
- Hafiz, Shamsuddin Muhammad.(1379) Divan of Hafez Shirazi; Edited by Muhammad Qazvini and Qasem Ghani; First Edition; Tehran: Jahan-e-Danesh Publishing Institute.
- Hashemian, Leila; Nasrin Neisi.(1396) "Redefining the Category of Manner in Fiction by Looking at Mitch Album's Tuesdays with Murrie." Journal of Mystical Literature and Mythology. Vol.13, no.48, pp.297-325.
- Hatami, Hafez and Muhammad Reza Nasr Isfahani.(1389) "Language of Signs: A Study of the Symbolic Ideas of the Alchemist and Comparison with the Manifestations of Islamic Mysticism and Sufism." Journal of Mystical Literature and Mythology. Vol.6, no.18, pp. 33-63.
- Little, Daniel;(1385) Explanation in Social Sciences: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Science. Translated by Abdul Karim Soroush. Tehran: Serat Cultural Institute.
- Molavi, Jalaluddin Muhammad.(1363) Kolliyat Shams Tabrizi. Edited by Badi' al-Zaman Forouzanfar. Tenth edition. Tehran: Amirkabir.
- Molavi, Jalaluddin Muhammad.(1374) Masnavi Ma'navi. Edited by Nicholson. Second Edition. Tehran: Pajohesh Publications.
- Moradi, Ayyub; Sara Chalak.(1394) "The Unknown Valley: A Study of the King and Maiden's Story Symbols through its adaptation to the stories of Sheikh Sanan and Siddhartha and the life story of Molana." Old Persian Literature. Vol.6, no.3, pp. 1-20.
- Ragin, Charles C.(1994) Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method. California: Pine Forge Press.
- Saadi, Mosleh Ibn Abdullah.(1389) Kolliyat Saadi; By Muhammad Ali Foroughi. Edition 15, Tehran: Amirkabir.
- Sadeghi Fasaee, Soheila; Erfan Manesh, Iman.(1394) "Representation of the Meaning Crisis and Family in Gonzalez Inarito's Films." World Media Magazine; No. 1, pp. 57-72.
- Simmel, Georg.(1373) "Money in Modern Culture." Arghanoon. Translated by Yousef Abazari. No. 3, pp. 325-338.