Investigation of the Semantic Field of "Chess" in Masnavi Molavi from the Viewpoint of "Associative Collocation"

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Abstract

As we know, concepts, objects and phenomena around the poets' mind and eye can be of interest to him and all of these elements can be a platform for presenting his thoughts and emotions. Meanwhile, one of the semantic fields that is considered by the Persian poets is the presence of diverse variety of intellectual and practical games common in Iran's society at various times; among which, "Polo", "Backgammon", "Chess" and … are the ones that can be pointed out. One of the prominent features of Molavi's art in using the vocabulary, images and concepts of this "semantic field", is the careful observance of pillars and key principles, and in a better sense is the structure of chess game; As we know, the presence of at least two opponent, victory or defeat of one of the opponents and a pledge that the loser opponent must submit to the winner, are the essential conditions of this game. This is the fact that Masnavi confirms it.

Keywords: Chess; Masnavi Molavi; Semantic Field

Introduction

This is while other poets have in general just mentioned some of its members both independently and in isolation, with adapting from the components and concepts of this semantic field, and have retained less of its complete structure. Of course, this view does not mean that Molana sees this much enough and not exceeded this level, but rather, as expected, Molavi has transferred actions, concepts, images and other affiliations of the "chess" semantic field to an area that his mind and language was enamored and learned; in such a way that he has paralleled its concepts with the concepts of religion field, its actions with religious behaviors and its actors with believers and hypocrites and other religious representatives. For example, he has changed both the checkmate of chess to success and failure in the field of religious practices, and the back and forth moves of the chessmen to the purity degrees and levels of practices such as Hajj, prayer, fasting and… He has even gone beyond this and used images, actions and tools belonging to this field to convey the key principles and mystical thoughts such as determinism, free will and gain, and ultimately parallels the universe, its elements, beings and events with the chess board, its beings and events.
This subject needs more details to be clarified. At first it must be cleared that who are usually the parties of the chess game in Masnavi, how is the result of the game, what are the places of each player and finally, Molavi uses the chess allegory for explaining what concepts.

**Semantic Field**

One of the topics that has a particular importance in the study of intralinguistic is the semantic fields, which according to the opinions of Herder and Humboldt, was introduced by a group of German and Swiss scholars in particular Ipsen and Portzig in the second and third decades of twentieth century, and was integrated with the Weisgerber’s opinions entitled as semantic filed theory or filed-theory. (Safavi, p.189).

According to the assumptions of this theory "the concept of a word, according to the necessary and sufficient conditions or what is named as the semantic components of a word, fits into different semantic fields."

The necessary and sufficient conditions, that is, the features that make up the concepts of words and show the aspects of concept differentiation and similarities, sharing in a necessary condition, cause the classification of words in a semantic field. For example, "dog", "cat", "horse", "cow" and so on can form a semantic field because of being "mammals". On the other hand, "dog" and "tiger" are considered as members of another semantic field for being a carnivore", which "horse" is not a member of that field.

Thus, the members of a semantic field, form units of a semantic system that are interrelated to one another. Such units are considered as same field due to their common characteristics and are semantically different to each other in their semantic field. (ibid, p.190)

For example, in this passage of the chapter "King and Fanzeh" of the book Kelileh and Demneh from Nasrollah Maneshi " His separation (king) will surely be like an endless desert. Because the Keblah (direction to which Muslims turn in praying) of my happiness for all the years of my life was his palace and taking care of the king and serving him was my real happiness. If there was a replace for my sweet life, I would sacrifice it with pleasure to serve him. It was assumed that I could have a comfortable life under his protection, like a pigeon in Mecca, and fly in its Safa and Marveh (the names of two mountains near Mecca); but now that my son's blood has been considered allowed as the slaughtered in the safe side of the king, (that is, he has been killed), I no longer wish to return. (Minooyi, p. 286).

With a little attention and carefulness in this text, the words and elements such as "desert, Kaaba, Omreh (the smaller pilgrimage), women's labbaik (saying yes), to get Ihram (to wear the pilgrimage garb), pigeon, Mecca, Safa, Marvah, sacrificed animals, privacy and etc." can be considered as members of s semantic field which form units of a semantic system and have an interrelationship to one another, and therefore they are of a same field. These units can be called as members of semantic field of "Hajj".

Professor Minooyee describes this collocation as "observance of good appropriateness". (the same margin as p. 286).

Professor Khatibi also names this category under the title "congeries" and considers the mentioned words and elements belonging to religious terms; (Khatibi, p. 233-234). But as we all know, religion and religious terms have a very broad semantic field that can have many subcategories and one of them can be "Hajj" and its belongings.

But it should be noted that the members of the semantic field of "Hajj" in this text are not limited to elements and vocabulary mentioned above, but the above collection includes only the elements that at first glance readers do not have least doubt about their belonging to this semantic field. However, to any extent that the textual and extratextual information of the audience is or increases, the number of
members and their type of relation to each other will increase. Because the process of reading and interpreting is an ongoing process and depends on the close interaction between the text and the reader and the social and cultural elements.

As they have written: "A poet is a member of a cultural community of a vast society and his mentality is formed of varieties of direct and indirect, with or without intermediate experiential stores, which is the result of his living and growing in this history and society. The value of the interpretation of each interpreter, who is also a member of the same cultural community, has a direct relation with the extent of his enjoyment from the various dimensions of this culture.

The limitation of the stores of the interpreters' mind, also limits the field of actuality and the manifestation of the potential and hidden meanings of the poem. (Pournamdarian, p. 212-213)

Semantic fields can be studied from two perspectives of "synchronic" and "diachronic". While examining the diachronic of semantic fields, the attention is on changes that occur over time in such fields. In such a situation, semantic field that is a system of units that are interrelated to each other, changes, due to the change in the relations between its constituent units and this change creates various possibilities that can be examined in terms of diachronic. (Safavi, p. 203-204)

For a better understanding of the subject, we can exemplify a semantic field of colours. Until about a quarter of a century ago, the semantic field of the compound colours of white and black was composed of "white", "gray", "silver", "dodger blue", "dim gray", and "black". Today, with the addition of the names "pencil colour" and "carbonic" or "coaly" to this collection, the value of the units of this semantic field has been changed and part of the concept of "dim gray" has been allotted to "pencil colour" and "carbonic". (ibid, p.191-192)

The diachronic study of semantic field provides to achieve some sort of historical semantics and examine the change of the concepts of the same units over time. (ibid, p.195)

**The Synchronic Study of Semantic Fields**

Together with Trier Wise Gerber, who has studied more on the diachronic of semantic fields, Portsig has focused his attention on the synchronic study of this field. He introduced his view based on the collocation of a noun with a verb or a noun with an adjective and believed that there is a fundamental semantic relation between words in a semantic field, which leads to their collocation. (Safavi, p. 196)

According to Portsig's point of view, the collocation of a noun with a verb, for example "horse" with "neigh", is because of a common feature that links these two words. This same point is also true about a noun and an adjective, for example "tree" and "old".

**Syntagmatic Collocation**

Placing the words with common fundamental features on the syntagmatic axis leads to some sort of collocation, which we called syntagmatic collocation. In this kind of collocation, a verb or an adjective appears next to a noun on the syntagmatic axis, which is predetermined for linguistics. According to Portsig's statement, certainly, what can "bite" is "teeth" and what can "lick" is "tongue". (Safavi, p.198)

**Associative Collocation**

The collocation of words is called associative collocation according to the features that places them in one semantic field. In this regard, the "moon", "star", "sun" or "apple", "orange", "cucumber" and so on can be known in associative collocation with each other according to the semantic field of celestial bodies or fruits and etc. The use of the words that are in an associative collocation to one another, are called congeries among the figures of speech. (ibid, p.198)
In the synchronic study of semantic field, it was referred to both types of syntagmatic collocation and associative collocation, which were related to syntagmatic units and associations of the same field units. But this question of how one imagination and one meaning, associates other imagination or meaning in mind, is an issue that has been considered from very far times and from the time of Aristotle. Hobbes relates the issue of association with the process of creativity and imagination, as he has discovered that the power and the ability of imagination for relating images and the similar ideas are strengthened and intensified through one of our other mental habits and qualities, and that is association based on contiguity; it means the ability of one image to recall another image that had a link to it before. (R.L.Bert, p.18-19)

According to Hartley's analysis of mind, the contained material and information in the human mind and consciousness consists of: first, senses and second, imaginations or simple images that are the transcripts of the same senses, or the senses that remain, after the deletion of images and sensory issues that caused them to appear. The third thing is the compound and complex imaginations that are created by joining and connecting simple imaginations. This situation corresponds to three stages of sense, memory and thought. The basic principle through which the mind acts is the principle of meanings association that acts according to two points: contiguity in time and place, and the frequency and repetition through which the imaginations were linked to each other in the past. (ibid, p.23)

"Association" in the word, means recalling each other, and in psychology, refers to the relation between a phenomenon and its related thoughts. (Daad, p.123)

One of the most prominent point that is revealed through the carefulness of the quality of Molavi's use from the semantic field of "chess", is the very close relation of this field in the mind and language of Molavi with the semantic field of "devil and its belongings". This relation is in a way as if in Molana's view, there is an associative relationship between these two fields, and speaking about one, is equal to recalling and speaking of another. Of course, this relation has different aspects. One of them is the presence of devil in most cases against "Adam" and humanity as a permanent opponent of this game. As shown in this example:

The devil says to you "my dear" / to entice you with a breath this damned demon.

He used guile with saying "my dear" / this black rook (black face) checkmated human in this way.

This crow is quick on chess / you do not see the game with a half sleep eye.

Because he knows many queen- stops / which will be stuck on your throat like a chip

His chip will stay in throat for years / what is that chip, the love of possessions and wealth (Masnavi Manavi, second volume, p. 186)

A) Here, the devil and "Adam" and humanity are the sides of the chess game. This text also mentions some features for one of the opponents. The characteristics of the devil are as follows:

1) Checkmating human 2) Being quick on the chess 3) Knowing many queen- stops and …; But in this example, there has not been any straightforward descriptions and qualities presented for the other side of the game, that is Adam and humanity, but allusively and with quoting a history from the confrontation of these two opponents together, it constantly recommends to maintain the consciousness of the recent opponent against devil. From these evidences, it can clearly be understood that from Molavi's point of view, human is very weak against the tricks and skills of devil, and since he does not directly refer to the attributes of "Adam" and "humanity", it shows that the opponent of human is so skilled and extraordinary that his opponent is completely overshadowed, as far as it seems it does not exist in this "chess board".
B) The most important elements and terms of chess that are presented in this example are: 1-checkmate 2- chess 3- queen-stop 4- rook, which here, with the help of a literary technique called "appropriateness of ambiguity", can spring one of the special terminology of the chess game to mind: In addition to these elements which directly and without any difference in opinion, belong to the semantic field of chess, according to the text structure and general knowledge of the chess space and its game and its other belongings, the following elements can also be known as the belongings to this field: deception, devil, imposture, being quick, play, game seeing, crow …

This example belongs to the first anecdote of the second volume which is placed after the introduction without interval; that is the anecdote of "the person imagined to have seen the new moon at the time of Omar", in which Molana invites human to cautiousness. Apparently, the elements like infidels, strangers, thorns, wolves and devil are also coming into Molavi's mind and it seems that the word "imposture" has an old link with devil. These elements, concepts and images of the whole of this space, remind the chess space to Molavi.

2) O the children of caliph, plead for justice / judge for the resurrection day

The enemy who took revenge from your father / pulled him down from the highest level of heaven to the prison.

He (the devil) checkmated the king of the heart chess / involved him with plagues from his heaven. (Masnavi Manavi, third volume, p. 462)

A) In this case also, both sides of the game are Adam and human being, which talks about Adam using the word "your father" and uses "people born of caliphs" for human being. He talks about the other side of the game meaning devil using the word "enemy" and … Here also, as in the preceding example, he invites human to prudence and caution against the opponent by mentioning his actions and history, and shows the consequences of entering the game with this opponent. Pulled down from the highest level of heaven to the prison, the checkmate of the chess king, the plagues taunted human being and …

B) The most important elements and terms of chess: 1- checkmate 2- king 3- chess 4- the chess king

He keeps seeing you from ambush / behold, you will not see him

The hunter constantly pours the seeds / the seed is visible and the deceit is hidden

Wherever you see a seed, beware / so that the trap doesn't close your wings

Because the bird that leaves the seed / will eat seed from a desert without deceit

This way, it will be both contented and escape from the trap / no traps can close its wings

This example belongs to the third volume and relates to the topic "the meaning of prudence and the example of the prudent man" of an anecdote in which, Molana invites humans to prudence and caution. Also in this case, Molana remembers devil and devil springs chess and its belongings to his mind. In the course of discussion, he speaks of the subjects of wrestling, champion, imposter, ambush, deceit, livestock and grain, hunting, deception and similar categories, which seems that the category of devil, chess, deceit and deception are jointed together in the mind and language of Molana.

3) For remaining fixed in the memory on this chessboard / you have checkmated hundred thousands of masters

From your difficult queen-stops / many hearts have been afflicted and you have become black-hearted
A) In this case also, the sides of the game are devil and human, and here the devil is the one who is referred to and he is the character of the anecdote and the one who the poet talks about. The qualities and descriptions mentioned for devil are as follows: checkmating a hundred thousand masters, having difficult queen-stops, the ones who are afflicted due to these difficult queen-stops, his own heart becoming black-hearted. One of the remarkable points is that in most of the cases that talk about the consequences of entering into the game with this opponent, it is also referred to the "heart" and its affliction and checkmate. It is interesting that his own heart is also suffering from the same condition. As we can also see in this example, the devil's opponent does not have a direct and strong presence and in comparison with the previous ones, it even has a weaker presence.

If the interpretation of the term "in this chess" refers to the world, universe and ..., the other relation of the chess will be revealed in the mind and language of Molana.

B) The most important terms of chess: checkmate, chess, queen-stop and master, in the next stage terms such as: burning and perhaps getting black.

C) This example belongs to the second volume of Masnavi and is related to the series of debates of Moaviyeh and devil, which this section is titled as "the statements of Moaviyeh about the deceits of devil"

The terms such as banditry, digging a hole and coming to the treasure, the master of all thieves, deceit, telling the allegory of birds, a loud clamor, the bird hunter, is also repeated in this text. In this example also, all the features of the previous text about the relation between devil, chess, deception, deceit, trick, banditry and ... are observed.

Here, in order to avoid verbosity, two other examples are referred to in passing and the quotation of verses are avoided. This example, as in the previous case, belongs to the second volume of Masnavi and is related to the series of Moavieh and devil's debates with the title "Answering back of devil to Moavieh" (Masnavi Manavi, second volume, p. 286-287).

In this example, if we consider the whole text of the anecdote, we can see that human and devil are still the two sides of the game; but if we rely on the content of the considered section, we will find that the word of devil is about himself and the holy truth, which in this text, "the holy truth" is mentioned under the titles "incomparable" or "the creator of six".

One of the remarkable points in this case is the interference that seems to have occurred between the chess elements and the elements of backgammon game.

The most important terms of chess are: chessboard, game, playing, lose, checkmate, six valleys, being in six and maybe "in increase".

It is worth reminding that the presence of elements such as: "six directions", "six", "the creator of six" and "part and whole", all bring the relation of chess to the six directions of the world and its affairs into Molavis' mind and language.

Another example belongs to the second volume of Masnavi, with the title "the Prophet's (pbuh) remainder advice to the patient". (Masnavi Manavi, second volume, p. 281)

1) Also in this example, the sides of the chess game are Adam and devil, which here is described by demon; but there is a significant difference between this sample and the previous ones; as we can see, this is the only example among the presented examples in which the deficiencies of devil, seeing one game and not seeing two hundred games, reversed seeing the queen-stops and finally being unable to win the game from Adam, are referred to.
2) The most important chess terms: "chessboard", "winning the game from", "not seeing a game", "enemies (hostile)", "queen-stops", "reversed seeing the queen-stops", "being checkmated on".

This example belongs to the second volume of Masnavi and its title is as follows: "the Prophet's (pbuh) remainder advice to the patient".

If we consider all the sections of the anecdote that this example belongs to, we will see that, similar to the previous examples, Molana speaks about chess and its belongings only when he is talking about devil and his behaviors and deeds. This example also, as in the previous examples, shows the unbreakable link of devil and chess in the mind and language of Molavi again. However, as it is obvious, this link is by no means limited to the mention of devil and chess and the first degree elements present around these two semantic field and category, but in most cases, there are talks about affairs and elements that can somehow have a relation to this space, as in various parts of the present text such as "slyness and wise behavior like a sorcerer", "to bluff about trick and agility" and "hypocrisy". All those phrases are in some way related to trick and deceit, which is the main connecting ring of devil and chess in the mind and language of Molavi.

The multiplicity of examples of relationship between the two semantic fields of chess and devil in the second volume of Masnavi, is a point which according to the results of Julian Buldíc's research in the comparison of the six volumes of Masnavi with an overall plan of Elahi Nameh, confirms the "devil" as being the subject of the second volume.

"The most valuable achievement of Baldic’s research is to compare the general issue of each volume with one of the six boys in the Elahi Nameh of Attar Neyshabouri. Both Masnavi and Elahi Nameh follow one general plan. The subject of the first volume of Masnavi is "soul", the second volume "devil", the third volume "wisdom", the forth volume "science", the fifth volume "poverty" and the sixth volume is "monotheism"." (Quoted from Safavi, p. 22)

Result

If we look at the major issues, we find that Molana speaks about chess and its belongings only when he is speaking about devil and his behaviors and deeds and the link between devil and chess in the mind and language of Molavi is by no means limited to the mention of devil and chess and the first degree elements present around these two semantic fields, but in most cases, the affairs and elements such as tricks, slyness, sorcerer behavior, deceit and … are all in some way related to trick and deceit, which are the main connecting ring of "devil and chess" in the mind and language of Molavi. In such a way it can be said that in the view of Molavi, there is an associative collocation, so that speaking of one of them is equal to remembering and speaking of another.

Here, for benefiting more, there are references of a number of common and very close belongings between these two semantic fields in Masnavi.

A) Deceit and Deception


B) Banditry and Robbery

1- banditry (2 / 185), (2 / 287) two cases, (2 / 186) // 2- to rob (3 / 462) // 3- to make naked (3 / 462) // 4- digging a hole (2 / 287) // 5- seeing from an ambush (3 / 462) // 6- being the master of all thieves (2 / 287) // 7- deceiving (3 / 462) // 8- to rob property (2 / 186) // 9- to rob (ibid)

C) The Titles Used for Devil and His Followers


D) Verbs and Ironic Phrases


Enjoyment of the Chess Structure

A) The Sides of the Game

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The Pawn

The pawn (third, p. 362) / the pawn becoming a queen (third, 362) / placing the king into the pawn square (forth, 614) / a pawn (sixth, 1055) / the rook of the kings, is just like a pawn to me

To Lose

To lose backgammon (second, 296) / to lose the deceit of backgammon / to lose backgammon (sixth, 940) / will lose backgammon / losing the chess (5, 877)

Backgammon … losing (second, 202) losing the backgammon of good serving / backgammon … losing (forth, 590) losing the serving backgammon / backgammon … losing (fifth, 862) losing the kings' backgammon / backgammon … losing (sixth, 1011) the backgammon of very rare mercy / backgammon … losing (sixth, 1019) losing the backgammon of love / backgammon … losing (sixth, 1025) losing the backgammon of love to each other

Losing the backgammon with (second, 296) losing the backgammon with deceivers from deceit, losing the backgammon of deceits with God / losing the crooked backgammon (forth, 669) losing the backgammon blindly and crooked

Losing (third, 379) / in losing (third, 528) self / in losing (sixth, 1099) king and prince in losing

Reversed losing (third, 378) losing the reversed backgammon / losing honestly (fifth, 862)

Losing (losing love) (4, 662) / (6, 1034) // losing (5, 877) / (6, 1106) / (6, 1107)

Losing another hand (fifth, 877) / loss of gambling (sixth, 1106) / losing six five with (six, 1106)

Game

Playing (second, 281) / seeing game (second, 281) / not playing (second, ) / not playing on chessboard (second, ) / said to play on (second, ) / the one winning and the one losing (second, ) / one playing ( ) / playing on a game (first, 17) / playing with a half-sleeping eye (second, 186) / game (ibid) / game (third, 528) / the chess games (third, 675) / chess player (fifth, 853) you the chess player / your game (ibid) / enemy game (ibid) / a wide and long game (ibid) / not seeing two hundred games (ibid?)

Checkmate

Checkmate: (5, 877) / (6, 919) // (hardships of) checkmate (5,883) / checkmate (6, 1049) is mortal and dead and checkmated and buried / checkmate (6, 940)
To checkmate: (third, 359) / (second, 186) / (third, 462) / (second, 287) / (fifth, 877) / (fifth, 902)  
// to checkmate (6, 1032) to make astonished and helpless /

To be checkmated: (third, 359) / (fifth, 907) / (fifth, 877) / to be checkmated ( ) / checkmated (6, 940) // checkmated (fifth, 808) to be checkmated of suffering / checkmated (fifth, 877) / to be checkmated of the dices of the king (fifth, 907) // to be checkmated in (6, 1031)

Completely checkmated (third, 377) / completely checkmated ( ) // checkmated by checkmated by checkmated by (ibid) / (6, 1000) // checkmated by the king of kings (6, 940)

Checkmate and win (third, 377) // win and checkmate ( ) / win and checkmate (first, 17) / (first, 30) / (fifth, 76) // win and checkmate ( ) / win and checkmate (forth, 675) until reaching to the win and checkmate / in win and checkmate (forth, 687) to become helpless in win and checkmate / win and checkmate (6, 983) win and checkmate of the sea

To be checkmated on him (ibid?) /

Being in winning and checkmating (first, 17) / being checkmated (first, 17) / being in win and checkmate (first, 30) / to checkmate someone (third, 384) / to become secure of checkmate (third, 384) / the checkmate itself (forth, 557) seeing himself as the winner when checkmated / not being checkmated (6, 1031) / checkmated (6, 1095) he was checkmated but it seemed to be the winner

To become checkmated (from) (first, 60) / the combinations becoming checkmated (fifth, 779) /

To become checkmated (6, 923) / to become checkmated (6, 986) to become checkmated of him / to become checkmated (6, 1009) the letters have become checkmated

**Backgammon**

Backgammon (3, 378) / the group of backgammon (4, 676) / the master of backgammon (6, 1079) / straight coming of backgammon (6, 1098)

**Chess**

The chess king (3, 377) / in chess (2, 328) / chess games (4, 675) / the king of the chess (3, 462) / chess king (ibid) / chess (ibid) / the king of heart chess (ibid) / (on this) chess (2, 287) / chess player (5, 853) O the chess player / to beat one by one of chess (5, 877) pieces of chess /

**The King**

King (3, 377) / (5, 877) twice / king (4, 631) the birth of that king

King (4, 687) / (3, 462) / (5, 877) / (5, 877) / (5, 907)

Saying king king (5, 877) twice / the time of saying king king (5, 877) / said: king (5, 877) / said: king king king king (5, 877) / saying king king (5, 877)

The king (6, 1032) / knowing the king (6, 1034)

O the chosen king (5, 877) / the wound of king (5, 877) / the dices of king (5, 907)


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