

REL 239 – SUFISM Analytical Paper #2

Due - April 13th 2023 in class

Option 1 – Length - 5-page (1500 words minimum)

Rumi was not an author in any conventional sense. His poetic masterpiece, the *Mathnavi*, was assembled by his students. As Wheeler Thackston, his translator, writes: “Not a systematic thinker himself, and even hostile by and large to methodical philosophers and rationalist theologians, Rumi nowhere organizes his ideas in a structured fashion . . . ever chary of being forced into doctrinal terms, he generally prefers parable and symbol, not only for their elusiveness but more importantly because the symbolic is the only means available to the mystic to express realities beyond the intellect he wants to awaken within his audience.” In this paper, contrary to Rumi’s intellectual temperament, select 1-2 (not more) of the main themes Rumi discusses in the selection of poems in *Swallowing the Sun*: love, language, law, sainthood, the mystical path, and so on, and attempt to offer a coherent overview of them.

Option 2 - Length – (1100-1200 words minimum)

Imagine that you had the opportunity to *talk back* to Rumi. Do so by selecting one (or more than one) specific poem from *Swallowing the Sun* and writing an imitation of that selected poem, but with one catch: your imitation must be written from the point of view of the *presumed listener* of Rumi’s original poem. That is, your imitation of Rumi’s poetry should come from the perspective of the audience or listener of the poem you choose. In doing so, think of how through your poem you can reveal the character of that poem’s composer much like Rumi reveals himself through his poetry. Supplement your poem with a short narrative or discussion about the choices and decisions you made. What character did you adopt? Which rhetorical strategies did you employ to convey that voice? Etc.