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Revisiting the Role of Artificial Intelligence in the Social Impact of Mystical Texts: A Case Study of Fihi ma Fihi

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Introduction

Artificial intelligence, particularly through advances in the digital humanities, natural language processing (NLP), and machine learning, has become an important methodological force in the transformation of the humanities. From early computational methods of textual searching and indexing to contemporary systems capable of semantic analysis and pattern recognition, computational technologies have created new possibilities for textual research. They enable researchers to identify recurring lexical, thematic, and conceptual patterns across extensive textual corpora, patterns that would be difficult to examine manually on a comparable scale. Nevertheless, this transformation does not eliminate the role of the researcher; rather, it shifts scholarly attention from mechanical text processing toward interpretation and critical evaluation.

This issue is particularly significant in the study of classical mystical literature. Mystical texts frequently employ allegory, metaphor, paradox, symbolism, and culturally specific references, whose meanings cannot be fully apprehended through literal or purely lexical reading. The historical and conceptual distance between such texts and contemporary readers may consequently diminish their accessibility and social impact. *Fihi ma Fihi*, with its reflections on spiritual development, ethical conduct, social relations, power, wealth, justice, and human transformation, provides a significant case for such an inquiry. Its historical and symbolic language, however, may make its social and ethical dimensions difficult for non-specialist readers to discern. The central research question is therefore how AI can mediate between the conceptual world of *Fihi ma Fihi* and the practical concerns of contemporary human beings without reducing the complexity of its mystical discourse. The study hypothesizes that AI-assisted analysis can reveal implicit social patterns within the text and facilitate their contextualization for contemporary readers.

Findings

The findings are based on a qualitative content analysis of *Fihi ma Fihi* supported by AI tools, including DeepSeek, ChatGPT, and Gemini, and are organized into five interconnected dimensions.

First, AI-assisted analysis facilitates the identification of latent social and ethical themes, including criticism of rulers and political power, opposition to religious

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formalism and jurisprudential rigidity, condemnation of hypocrisy and excessive attachment to worldly status, and emphasis on justice, fairness, generosity, service, and ethical communication. For example, the allegory of the golden vessels and the guests' refusal to eat raises questions concerning social hierarchy, the display of wealth, and elite behavior. Similarly, Rūmī's treatment of the ascetic who withdraws from society can be understood as a critique of forms of religiosity that separate spiritual development from human interaction. These patterns indicate that Rūmī's mysticism possesses a significant social and ethical dimension.

Second, semantic networking and conceptual classification reveal five principal clusters: political power, represented by the sultan, judge, and minister and associated with tyranny and justice; religious authority, represented by the jurist and ascetic and associated with formalism and intellectual rigidity; people and society, associated with negligence and blind imitation; wealth and material attachment, associated with greed and spiritual decline; and alternative mystical values, including love, truth, justice, generosity, and service. Of particular significance is the collocational relationship between *love* and concepts such as *service*, *generosity*, and *empathy*. This finding challenges interpretations of mystical love as exclusively metaphysical or inward-oriented and suggests that, in Rūmī's discourse, mystical love can acquire concrete ethical and social significance through relationships with others.

Third, AI demonstrates a hermeneutic and mediating function beyond textual extraction. Computational tools can transform mystical concepts into semantic networks, conceptual maps, and visual diagrams. Such multimodal representations can facilitate contemporary audiences' understanding of relationships among complex concepts and create a bridge between the symbolic language of mysticism and contemporary analytical modes of understanding. Nevertheless, they should not be regarded as definitive readings of the text.

Fourth, the study examines the practical application of mystical concepts in contemporary reflective and educational contexts. In a hypothetical case involving a young person experiencing professional failure, AI can identify passages related to adversity, attachment, transformation, patience, and gratitude and translate them into context-sensitive reflective exercises. For example, gratitude practice can provide a contemporary pedagogical form through which readers engage with selected ethical insights from the text. The purpose is not to transform *Fihi ma Fihi* into a self-help book or to equate Rūmī's thought with contemporary psychological theories; rather, AI can facilitate a hermeneutic dialogue between historically situated mystical teachings and present-day concerns.

Fifth, the study also reveals the epistemological and interpretive limitations of AI. Computational systems can identify linguistic patterns and semantic relationships, but they do not have direct access to the experiential dimensions of mystical knowledge, including *kashf* (spiritual unveiling), *ḥāl* (mystical state), and *dhawq* (spiritual taste or direct experiential apprehension). Nor can they fully apprehend the symbolic, existential, and affective dimensions of mystical discourse. AI-generated interpretations may be sophisticated and persuasive, but they remain fundamentally different from lived mystical experience. This distinction establishes an essential boundary between computational analysis and human hermeneutic experience.

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Conclusion

This study demonstrates that AI, particularly through computational hermeneutics and natural language processing, can function as an interpretive interface between classical mystical texts and the contemporary lifeworld. The analysis of *Fihi ma Fihi* reveals a significant social dimension encompassing criticism of political and religious authority, opposition to hypocrisy and formalism, emphasis on justice and service, criticism of social withdrawal, and attention to ethical transformation. From this perspective, Rūmī's mysticism is not merely a project of inward spiritual development but also a form of socially engaged thought capable of engaging with contemporary ethical and social concerns.

At the same time, the role of AI must be understood within its epistemological limitations. Its propositional and statistical nature prevents it from directly accessing *ḥāl*, *kashf*, and other experiential and symbolic dimensions of mysticism. AI can therefore facilitate access, comparison, visualization, and contextual application, but it cannot replace human interpretation or lived mystical experience. Its most appropriate role is that of a facilitator, mediator, and catalyst for contemporary rereading. Responsible use of AI requires human oversight, historical and textual contextualization, and adherence to ethical safeguards. Within such a framework, AI can contribute to the social life of works such as *Fihi ma Fihi* while preserving the irreducible role of human interpretation in the encounter with mystical meaning.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Social Impact, Mystical Texts, *Fihi ma Fihi*, Computational Hermeneutics, Natural Language Processing.