

A Literary Comparison between the Canonization and Reckless Butterfly

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the current study is to explore the essence of love from the two fantastic poems named The Canonization and The Reckless Butterfly and to compare the treatments of John Donne and Attar Neishabouri in respect of a same theme. The research is conducted under the supervision of comparative literature which is an academic system of literary scholarship and it owes a relatively great scope in literature, actually a proper subset. On the account of the comparisons and contrasts which are included herein, the chosen school was the American.

As it is obvious, the philosophy of love and its precious insights are of high importance, ergo these works are selected to observe the aforementioned theme through Persian and English literatures. Moreover, the paper explained that why the subject 'love' has been the most debatable and controversial one among the poets of different countries. Thus, you will meet the worthy representation of real findings in these master works which are written by Donne, an English poet, and Attar, an Iranian poet.

Keywords: *comparative literature, American school, poems, love.*

INTRODUCTION

Do you know anything about comparative literature and its related schools?

This study investigates the nature of "love" in two awesome poems, named as canonization and reckless butterfly. It investigates some information based on American school and the limited works or information about the subject of this paper shows the originality of the research. Actually, comparative literature as an independent academic discipline of literary scholarship has undergone three major stages of development so far.

The first is French school concerning with the history of international literary relationships and the origins of literary works based on factualism. The second is American school which is about interdisciplinary and parallel studies. Furthermore, this school advocates artistic interpretation and evaluation and it begins in 20th century. The third is the practice of Chinese scholars who put forward cross-civilization studies (a comparison of two cultures) and variation theory (Cao, 2013).

So, in this paper one will see the presentation of true blue findings in these master pieces of well-known poets who are John Donne from England

and Attar Neishabouri from Iran. Here in, the main focus is on the resemblances and discrepancies of those mentioned poems. The philosophy of love and their delicate treatments are considered too. The two highly passionate poems were selected among all to observe the essence of love through different literatures. Therefore, this theme is compared to arise all curiosities and to set out a collation between two putative works. Then, it would be better to take a look at the essential aim of this research which is summarized in following question:

- What have been the principal similarities of poets' viewpoints and even their specific styles?

So, we are doing this closely inquiry to shed the light for the enthusiasts of literature.

As mentioned previously, the treatment toward one subject can be varied greatly. John Donne (1572-1631) was an English poet and cleric in the church. He is considered the prominent representative of the metaphysical poets.

Throughout articles written about John Donne, an individual can guess the main theme of his poems, which is love. Also his treatment of an issue can be varied from an initial point (simple insights) to a final point (philosophical and

complex insights). There is no doubt that his insights go back to the time in which Donne lived because that period of time was an intellectual cross roads for him.

Later due to the ebb and flow of culture and religion, Donne started working within somewhat Christian frameworks. On the other hand, he has three basic and general categories of poem regardless of time, which later on we will discuss about it respectively.

Furthermore, notions concerning the reasons of Donne mostly writing love poems from different perspectives are not detailed and precise. Therefore, some critics suggest that maybe the love he had mentioned in his works describes the love of God to some extent. Actually he imagined a link between God and man, between body and soul and that love is the key to connect them all together.

Then searching about Attar Neishabouri can help to a better understanding and also to mold a general concept of why these two poets are under the microscope of investigation. Attar can be defined as a creative and sophisticated Iranian mythical poet. Unlike Donne, all of Attar's works are not essentially about love. But when going deeply down among the section of his romantic poems, one can recognize his remarkable and authentic viewpoints. So his collection of lyric poetry contains a treasury of numerous numbers of Ghazals in which love is the only thing that matters greatly. According to a poet, it seems that he was not well known as a poet in his own lifetime, except at his home town, and his greatness as a mystic, a poet and a master of narrative was not discovered until the 15th century. At the same time, the mystic Persian poet Rumi has mentioned that "Attar has traversed the seven cities of love, while we are still at the turn of one street" (Avery & Alizadeh, 2007, p.2).

According to Cao (2013), without the western world being aware of it, the comparative study of literature has been flourishing and expanding in china for several decades. So the comparative literature, as mentioned before, is an academic field dealing with the study of literature and cultural expressions across linguistics, civilizations, and disciplinary boundaries. Comparative literature has various aspects which all of them are of high importance, even it brings the science of translation to its own scope.

While other works are often practiced with different languages, comparative literature may also be performed on works of the same language. Due to its broad and vital scope, this specific sort of literature discusses the historical, philosophical, and aesthetic spheres of literatures whether their similarities or differences. Due to the approximate focus or concentration of French school on positivism and empiricism, American school was established to include aesthetic studies which were completely ignored before. The American school advocated the study of analogy for comparing the common literary aesthetic values between literatures and even other subjects; however, seeking commonness is its actual defect. In addition, the main focus of American school is the study of thematology, typology, stylistics and so on (Cao, 2013).

Keeping the John Donne love poems in mind, we can distinguish three categories out of it:

- Cynical strain
- Conjugal love
- Platonic strain

The first type is cynical strain that explains about the love of women in his early life and shows a negative attitude to women. The next remarks the love toward his wife (Ann More), and eventually the holy passion and devotion to God. It's crystal clear that all other aspects of his experience except for love were only side issues (Naugle, 2006). It seems that love was the sine qua non of his works, somehow a tendency of his heart. Having spent a journey of adventures, Donne found a new lease of life and resumed the existence from the capital of the universe, love city. He managed to apprehend any sign from the window of affection, as the canonization in which theology is obvious. He stated this love will makes him a total saint: "and by these hymns, all shall approve us canonized for love".

Indeed, he had dug way down to deep in love and had tested it in Time's laboratory, similarly as an investigator. John Bennett (1973, p.134) said, Donne's poetry is "the work of one who has tested every fruit in love's orchard". So from this perspective, it's nice to call him a master of love and the complexity of his poems can be observed in the forth stanza: we'll build in sonnets pretty rooms / as well a well-wrought urn becomes

A Literary Comparison between the Canonization and Reckless Butterfly

Then, as Donne, Attar Neishabouri who was Iranian had dealt with theme of love and passion too. Artistically he said: a man whose eyes love opens, risks his soul / his dancing breaks beyond the mind's control

Attar is one of the greatest and most celebrated Persian poets. In the west, he is so much known for his work conference of the birds. "Attar's lyrics are concerned with the matter of divine love in its multifarious aspects, of the incomparable beauty of beloved, the hopes and aspirations of lover and his anguish at not reaching her presence" (Avery & Alizadeh, 2007,p.2). Regarding to Attar, the main source of love is pain: Even if you're of love, seek pain, seek pain and pain.

This pain is the spiritual suffering which actually is not a pain but a remedy.

Nostalgic concepts can be considered as the foundation of mystical poetries, hereupon multitude of mystical poets like Attar have tried to reflect nostalgic feelings such as love, eternal life, past memories, pain of exile of human eternal beloved and origin, personal, social, racial, national and mythical nostalgia and objective hometown in their literary works (Dehghan, Farzi, Amani Astamal, 2013).

From the perspective of Attar, human's soul has been stayed behind from its origin and love as a divinely gifted blessing can cause the growth, transmutation and enrichment of soul, also it helps the soul to return to its real source.

He has stated that love is beyond the two worlds and it has indescribable entity that enlightens the speech without utilizing any word. He believes that a night less day is needed for clarification of the real definition of love. But since there will not be such a day, love will stay undefined forever.

According to Attar, being eternal and boon are two characteristics of love and love's immortality is undeniable. Moreover he considers love as a flame which is radiated from beloved's feature to lover's heart, its nature is fiery that burns everything except beloved and by this causticity the lover can reach perfection. The fervidness of love changes ripsaps to blood let alone human's heart. In one hand he equates love with a sea that lover has drowned in its depth, because only by sinking in the mania's sea the amorous can achieve true love, in the other hand he analogizes it with a treasure in a ruin. Attar dare says that love and heart are like two mirrors in front of each other and there is a

little distance between them. Furthermore, in his attitude, when a lover is unaware of falling in love, he is taking advantage of a profitable love.

Now one should come closer and have a detailed look on the two outstanding poems called *the Canonization* and *the Reckless butterfly*. The Canonization by John Donne is classified under the third category of his love poems, that is, the platonic strain. The poem deals with lots of figures of speech such as simile, metaphor, paradox, irony and hyperbole.

It all starts with an abrupt beginning, jumping to the very situation. The poet uses apostrophe and demands the complainer or perhaps his competitor to leave him alone with his saint love: "for God's sake hold your tongue and let me love / or chide my palsy or my gout". This poem is fraught with rhetorical questions which argue that no one is hurt by his love making: "Alas, alas who's injured by my love?" and also it clarifies Donne's satisfaction of this love.

As it's obvious in the first stanza, we can see the application of colloquial language while later in the next stanzas a shift occurs toward literal and figurative language. Meanwhile, the poet uses hyperbole or exaggeration to emphasize on their harmless love:" what merchant's ships have my sighs drowned? / When did my colds a forward spring remove?" it means that the lovers sighs will never affect the season by prolonging it.

Next, in the third stanza a reader will face a set of complex interpretations and metaphors suggesting that they are unified by love as a fly and they complete each other in spite of their own flaws or paradoxes: "we're tapers too, and at our own cost die / and we in us find the eagle and dove"; that eagle indicates war and rage where as dove proposes peace and health. Donne asserts that his love making with beloved is self- destructive (only hurting themselves) and also not material- oriented (not with in sexual boundaries). Then by inserting a simile, he assembles themselves as a phoenix, a mythical bird, which dies and again comes to life with their ashes. On the other hand, their love is a beautiful example of immortalized, canonized pattern for the world.

He also says that even if they do not enter the history (chronicle) they will definitely make pretty rooms in sonnets which the sonnet describes a conceit and it's a metaphysical symbol. Interestingly, Donne says that if nobody built a memorial monument of us, but that's a sure fire that others will read about us in verses.

A Literary Comparison between the Canonization and Reckless Butterfly

This declaration gives a reference to his unique power of poetry writing. Finally, in the fifth stanza he prepares a conclusion of his best love poem which is highly emotional and has an exclusive power to purify a soul.

As the lover and his beloved are a major source in love, all people around the world from different nations would address them in the most secret conversations with God because they are worthy of respect: “And thus invoke us: you, whom reverend love/ made one another’s hermitage”.

Donne, moreover, adds the fact that he and his beloved watch the world through the lens of one another mostly at the time of an overwhelming gaze. They consider nothing but the reflection arises from their fond hearts as in: “who did the whole world’s soul contract, and drove/ in to the glasses of your eyes”.

Therefore, Donne considers love as a wonderful miracle for hungry hearts, like a gentle rose growing in the hands of water even without the accompaniment of beloved. So from this perspective, love is a journey to a raging river and whosoever wants to try it should fall deeply down to its region not just walking around the love’s pebbly shores.

Accordingly this poem strives to state that no matter one is young or old; love makes him feel fresh and hopeful of future. Hence, there is no importance in being dead or alive while both lover and beloved are together because love is blind. Besides, the first and second stanza can be fairly summarized into the following distich:

*Making a fire out of one self / love, a quarrel,
not hurting any self*

After discussing the Canonization, comes the Reckless butterfly of Attar. For better understanding, Attar is an influential poet who has issued the use of allegory of fire, candle and butterfly in Persian poetry. Although in 6th century poets and writers employed such allegories more or less, Attar used it far wider specifically in *Mantiq-ol-tair* and spread the usage of this kind of allegory among Persian language poets.

In the poem, he expresses that a real adorer is like a butterfly that doesn’t heed the fire and hardships of love.

Actually there are two different points of view in regard to this poetry. Some believe that the accomplishment of cognizance is the main ambition of the butterflies, so one of them burns

out itself and it’s considered as the symbol of a theosophist which discovers the truth. The combustion of the butterfly shows the perfection of union. Some others have a romantic attitude and consider love as the main reason of butterfly’s death.

In the Reckless Butterfly, the butterflies search for the truth of love and cognizance. Butterfly and candle are metaphors of the lover and the beloved. Yet Attar hasn’t mentioned anything about love and tenderness, he even hasn’t utilized this word or its parody’s.

All in all, the poetry begins with the journey of the first butterfly toward the palace in which there is a candle within it: “the first moth went close to the flame / and curled its wings, and said ‘I know love’”. In the light of the above stanza, as soon as the first butterfly observes the candle’s glory it returns. After recursion, the butterfly recounts whatever it has seen. Afterwards, one of the butterflies which is wiser than the others and is called critic, doesn’t accept the first butterfly’s utterances as the cognition of truth and mindfulness. The first butterfly has achieved the wisdom stage of cognizance. So, the second one departs. It encounters with the fire and feels the very fervidness in the burning fire’s entity: “along came the second moth/ closer still to the flame, and burnt its wing”. It becomes fascinated by the candle’s blaze and gains cognizance but the critic states that this stage is not the perfection of perception yet. In contrast to the critic statement, the poor moth thought it knew what loving meant.

Then the third butterfly approaches the flame, embraces it, loses itself in the blaze and eventually burns out in it: “And Lo! Into the flame threw itself”. In fact this time the critic acclaims that this stage is beyond wisdom and cognizance as in: “O Aye! The meaning of true love it knew”.

Accordingly, Attar has attempted to set out the adorer’s tribulation. Moreover, when the ordinary people suffer hardship, their body or soul or both of them will be in torment but lovers suffer in absolutely different ways. When they encounter their beloved they cannot stand the goodliness of the soul mate ergo they annihilate themselves like the butterfly. As a matter of fact, perdition and annihilation can be considered as the gist of Attar’s poetry.

A Literary Comparison between the Canonization and Reckless Butterfly

According to Ghazali (1090), when the truth of love becomes manifest, the adorer will become the beloved's strength. Moreover, some theosophists believe that enthusiasm is the main stimulant of the adorer which propels him toward his soul mate. Essentially, the remoteness of the adorer and darling is the radix of this desire. Some Sufis acclaim that since distance is the reason of this enthusiasm, it will disappear in the beloved's presence but some others like Ghazali believe that this appetence not only remains forever but also becomes severe.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

As cited formerly, the aim of this study is the comparison between the two poems so as to clarify the poets' viewpoints toward the holy word, love. On the basis of the descriptions said up to now, the differences and similarities of works can be recognized; of course it needs a fresh pair of eyes.

First, the two poems have different realizations in their hearts; for example, Donne uses phoenix, tapers and flies as the symbolic form of love, while Attar implies the theme of his poetry within the scope of butterflies. Second, the English poet makes a plot with human characters, a lover and beloved, but the Persian poet forms it with non-human characters as butterflies, signifying a lover, and the candle, representing a beloved. Finally, there is a fusion of emotion and intellect in the *Canonization*; moreover, there lies a paradox between love and wealth. On the contrary to *Canonization*, the *Reckless Butterfly* lacks these fusions.

The compared poems have similarities as well as differences; for instance, in both there could be seen the existence of a lover and beloved. Then, the climax happens in the middle of both poems. After that, John Donne and Attar Neishabouri are famous metaphysical poets indeed, and the tone applied in these superb poems is rather emotional and sentimental. Eventually, the figures of speech are merged to the poems in a way that nobody can pick them out and that's all because of professional and expert poets like Attar and Donne.

CONCLUSION

Although literatures are diverse throughout the world, dealing with a particular subject or a particular field may have numerous correspondences. All over of the inquiry done on *The Canonization* and the *Reckless Butterfly*,

we perceived some similarities between the two foresaid mystical poets. In addition, one main idea of Donne's poem could be summarized in the following distich from Attar: "In love the old and the young are the same/ in love's presence gain and loss are the same" and simultaneously the Attar's poem could be epitomized in this awesome sentence: the lover is like a butterfly who is willing to speak of the departing from life and since no one has ever survived love, don't protect your life if you are a lover.

RECKLESS BUTTERFLY

One night the butterflies were gathered. They decided to search for the candle (beloved)

All said that one must have bring some news of it

The first butterfly led off toward the palace and saw it's flame from distance

It returned and described it's own observation proportionally of it's perception

The critic which was in high position, didn't accept it's expressions as an authentic perception

The second butterfly passed from the door, touched the fire from afar

The candle gained upper hand and the butterfly became beaten

It set out whatever it had been seen too

The critic replied that it's findings are similar to the previous butterfly

So the third one departed sprightly

Embraced the flame and lost itself in it

The fire surrounded all it's essence

The critic after becoming aware if the incident

Stated that it's the only one who has achieved the truth of love

Only the one who has flipped is aware of it

You will never achieve this reality unless you hold of your corporalit

(Attar Neishabouri)

CANONIZATION

For god's sake hold your tongue, and let me love,

Or chide my palsy, or my gout,

My five gray hairs, or ruined fortune flout,

A Literary Comparison between the Canonization and Reckless Butterfly

With wealth your state, your mind with arts
improve,

Take you a course, get you a place,

Observe his honor, or his grace,

Or the king's real, or his stamped face

Contemplate; what you will, approve,

So you will let me love.

Alas, Alas, who's injured by my love?

What merchant's ships have my sighs drowned?

Who says my tears have overflowed his ground?

When did my colds a forward spring remove?

When did the heats which my veins fill?

Add one more to the plaguy bill?

Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find out still

Litigious men, which quarrels move,

Though she and I do love.

Call us what you will, we are made such by
love;

Call her one, me another fly,

We're tapers too, and at our own cost die,

And we in us find the eagle and the dove.

The phoenix riddle hath more wit

By us; we two being one, are it.

So, to one neutral thing both sexes fit.

We die and rise the same, and prove

Mysterious by this love.

We can die by it, if not live by love,

And if unfit for tombs and hearse

Our legend be, it will be fit for verse;

And if no piece of chronicle we prove,

We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms;

As well a well-wrought urn becomes

The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,

And by these hymns, all shall approve

Us canonized for love.

And thus invoke us: "you, whom reverend love

Made one another's hermitage;

You, to whom love was peace, that now is rage;

Who did the whole world's soul contract,

And drove

In to the glasses of your eyes

(So made such mirrors, and such spies,

That they did all to you epitomize)

Countries, towns, courts: beg from above

A pattern of your love!"

(John Donne)

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