A Critical Survey of Comparative Studies conducted about Rūmī and Mathnawi

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Abstract

This paper aims to investigate the comparative studies done on Rūmī in the past decade and elaborate on their strengths and weaknesses with use of time-based, journals-status and content-based and journals' specialty sampling as methodology. The findings showed that most of the papers suffered from serious drawbacks such as inadequate coverage and familiarity with subject matter, overgeneralization, superficial analysis and hasty conclusions. Some writers' traditional and subjective approach to the issue was much highlighted in certain journals, whereas few enjoyed scientific precision. Other defects that can be listed include: lack of systematic methodology, false inferences, inappropriate references, selection of insignificant.

Key words: Rūmī, comparative literature, pathology, Mathnawi.

Patología de estudios comparativos realizados sobre Rūmī y Mathnawi

Resumen

Este documento tiene como objetivo investigar los estudios comparativos realizados sobre Rūmī en la última década y detallar sus fortalezas y debilidades con el uso del tiempo, el estado de las revistas y el muestreo de especialidades basado en el contenido y las revistas como metodología. Los hallazgos mostraron que la mayoría de los artículos presentaban serias desventajas, como cobertura inadecuada y familiaridad con el tema, sobre generalización, análisis superficial y conclusiones apresuradas. El enfoque tradicional y subjetivo de algunos escritores al tema fue muy destacado en ciertas revistas, mientras que pocos disfrutaron de precisión científica. Otros defectos que se pueden enumerar incluyen: falta de metodología sistemática, inferencias falsas, referencias inapropiadas, selección de insignificante.

Palabras clave: Rūmī, literatura comparada, patología, Mathnawi.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of comparative studies in Iran about seven decades ago, a large number of articles have been written on the relationship between Persian literary works and other nations' literature. However, due to their unique features, Rūmī's works offer a rich potential for comparative research. The ever-increasing tendency of people towards Rūmī's poetry has also attracted the scholars' and academia's attention to it more than before. The research conducted by well-known foreign scholars such as Reynold Alleyne Nicholson,

Helmut Ritter, Fritz Meier, Arthur John Arberry, William Chittick, Annemarie Schimmel and Kabir Helminsky has made Rūmī a world figure. Meanwhile, comparative studies and research driven by new theoretical studies encouraged the comparison of Rūmī and his works with the works of other poets. Based on the necessity of reviewing the research works performed in this field, the present paper aims to examine such comparative papers (Ahmadi, 1993).

2. METHODOLOGY

This paper aims to investigate the comparative studies done on Rūmī in the past decade and elaborate on their strengths and weaknesses. Sampling has been done on the basis of three criteria:

A) Time-based sampling: The time period chosen for this analysis covered the interval from 2001 to 2011. This was the era when comparative studies in Iranian universities were in their heyday. It was also the period when departments of comparative literature were founded at some universities.

B) Journals-Status Sampling: The papers selected for this research were only published in refereed (peer-reviewed) Journals.

C) Content-Based & Journals' Specialty Sampling: The papers which, according to their key terms, research questions and

hypotheses dealt with Rūmī's views, ideas, poetic style et cetera were chosen for this study. These papers belonged to two different categories, namely interlingual (papers which compared two different languages or cultures) and intralingual comparisons (papers which compared Rūmī's particular subject, issue with other Persian poets).

In the domain of peer-reviewed papers about Rūmī during the above-mentioned period, there was only one paper written by Mohammad Ghafari entitled "two contradictions in the criticism of Aboulfazl-e-Hori on the Book "Sea Hints": Poetic of Narration in Mathnawi In this paper, the author has written a review on the book "Sea Hints: Poetic Narration in Mathnawi" by Hamid Reza Tavakoli. In this brief paper, the author investigates two untapped contradictory accounts in the review of Hori, however, the paper cannot be labeled a complete comparative study either. Therefore, despite the significance of the subject matter, there was no research on the pathology and criticism of comparative studies at that time period. All the above indicate the novelty of this research.

3. RESEARCH QUESTION

The main question of the present paper can be formulated as:

Question. To what extent do the peer-reviewed comparative papers on Rūmī follow the modern article- writing standards?

The case study considers comparative papers on the basis of theoretical and methodological backgrounds. In other words, the above question can be reformulated as: "after several decades of literary research in Iran, do such papers enjoy the necessary scientific methodology and theoretical backgrounds?"

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1. Pathology

In the contemporary world, research which enjoys sound data, robust methodology and precise data analysis is considered a worthy scientific research. Data alone is of no value, the scientific credibility, data analysis and applications of the findings are the essential ingredients for a scientific research. Due to the ever-increasing role of science in the third millennia, the authenticity of a research depends on the extent of its knowledge contribution or the degree it paves the way for knowledge creation. In developed countries, research at academies looks for discovering and expanding new eras and horizons in human knowledge, a knowledge which enjoys precise and well-defined foundation, theory, subject matter, and methodology.

Pathology comes from the Greek roots of the path and pathos meaning "experience" or "suffering" and -logia "study of", but it is used in different meanings in different fields of study. In natural sciences, it refers to the study of abnormalities in human organisms to

treat physical ailments whereas in social science it refers to the study of causes or factors leading to social unrest and conflicts. Pathology in literature and literary sciences refers to the problems affecting literary researches; problems which if not heeded can inflict irreparable damages to literary researches. It has been one main reason why we chose this issue in this paper.

4.2. Comparative Studies

The origin of interlingual comparative studies based on comparative literature goes back to two hundred years ago. These comparative studies were sometimes of intra-lingual type in which different texts in the same language were compared with each other. "Comparative Literature" was first used in Europe by a French author named Francois Villemain in 1827. This term gained popularity by a famous French critic named Sainte-Beuve (Khatib, 2010). A simple definition of comparative literature reads: "it is a kind of literary research which by taking a critical and interdisciplinary approach compares and studies literary relations with works of different languages in fields such as philosophy, history, theology, religion, et cetera" (Khatib, 2010: 32). Comparative literature gradually became an academic field dealing with the study of literature and cultural expression across linguistic, national and disciplinary boundaries.

In addition to the above studies, dealing with intertextual relations and comparing them within a single language or culture has gained significance for the better understanding of literary works.

4.3. Comparative Studies on Rūmī and his Works

The universal message of Rūmī in the domain of ethics, religion, mysticism and his frequent reference to stories and fables belonging to different cultures and languages offer a suitable case for comparative studies, especially when we notice that by relying on religious, literary and mystical discourse, he has managed to create innovations in conceptual and structural areas. 31 papers published in 19 different Peer-reviewed Journals of Iran during 2001-2011 constituted the corpus of this research. 23 of these papers compared Rūmī works with Persian poets and authors while 8 papers compared his works with foreign authors and poets. These 31 papers were examined from 8 different perspectives in order to reveal their strengths and weaknesses.

5. Papers review

5.1. Similarities and differences

Eslami Nodooshan (2007) holds that comparative literature reflects the similarities between two works, whether being accidental

or intentional. Comparison helps better understanding and increases efficiency. However, it should be noted that a comparative study needs to simultaneously compare and contrast a work and mere comparison is not sufficient. For instance, in an article entitled "comparative study of the concept of "image" from the perspective of Ibn Arabi and Rūmī" the author ignores the differences and through examples tries to prove that Ibn Arabi and Rūmī share the same views about "image" (Alavi, 2015). In an article entitled "Conflict of Razi and Rūmī over the Concept of Love and Friendship" its writer compares the views of Rūmī and Razi over these concepts and concludes that: "Razi considers "love" a spiritual abnormality and a mental illness whereas Rūmī not only rejects this view but regards "love" as a healer and medicine". Throughout that article, the author elaborates on the different views of Rūmī and Razi by citing examples from Mathnawi and Razi's works such as "Spiritual Medicine". However, in the conclusion section of the article, the author ends the paper with this sentence. "Rūmī also considers any mundane affiliation to this world as a kind of illness" (Ibid). The author fleetingly examines the similarities, but the main focus is on differences. Unless a close attention is paid to both similarities and differences, the relations between the two texts cannot be identified. In another article entitled "A Comparative Study of Rūmī's Charming Fortress with Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle", without referring to the differences, the author gives examples which show similarities between the two works. The author lists the similarities between the two allegories without giving any reason for them and only mentions their superficial, symbolic or exegetic correspondence without going over their differences or the causes of

such discrepancies. At the end, by writing "there are many similarities in both stories" he gives a general statement and concludes the article. Unlike the above articles, in another paper entitles "A Comparison of Tales Shared in Mathnawi and Attar's "The Conference of the Birds" by means of Structural Narratology", the authors investigate the kind of relationship between the allegories of "Mathnawi" and "The Conference of the Birds". By careful examination of both texts' structures, they have successfully compared and contrasted both works by examining the propositions under different codes. Dealing with similarities and ignoring differences or vice versa would be counter-productive and would yield no reliable and valid result.

5.2. Innovation and contribution

Academic papers are often threatened by repetitive subjects or those subjects which have no new contribution to science. For instance, in an article named "Comparison of the Structure of Two Allegories from Mathnawi and Ilāhī-Nama", the authors have wondered whether Rūmī has manipulated the sources of his allegories and if yes to what extent? As we will see in the following sections (5-3 & 5-4), the presence of inter-textual relationship in the poetry of Rūmī can be attributed to the plethora of allusions, Quranic verses, parodies, quotations, narrations, metaphors, proverbs and allegories which he has adapted from oral folklore and culture or has borrowed from the books and poems of his predecessors. An issue which can be clearly justified by "intertextual theory" which claims that each literary work

reflects the meaning of another text. Therefore, intertextuality rather than showing the relations with another work presents the interconnection between similar or related works of literature that reflect and influence an audience's interpretation of the text. In the article published under the name "An Overview of Common Views of Rūmī and Ibn al-Farịḍ", the author repeats the commonality of Ibn Farid and Rūmī in the domain of "Mystical Thought". The author tries to prove that both poets enjoyed common mystical views by referring to their school of thought. Evidence for such conclusions is given by referring to their common views on "Unity of Being", their description of "spiritual journeys and love stages" and in general their mystical views. The Persian articles of this time period teem with archetypal patterns, love, delight and light, subjects which can be frequently seen in articles published in previous decades as well, and that is why most of these papers offer no new contribution and enjoy no innovation. Needless to say that subjects such as love, delight, light or psychological issues which have been extensively investigated by former researchers can no longer attract contemporary readers.

The authors of research papers who avoid trivial points and adhere to novel subjects deserve the title of true researchers. They are the ones who stick to robust academic methodology, and consider novel, precise, specialized and scientific subjects and theories in their research. A comparative study in which the author investigates the "the process of composition" and carefully examines the similarities and differences deserves its name. In other words, instead of listing an inventory of "cultural debits or credits Wellek (2010), which are self-

evident, the authors should focus on the "literacy" and "literary quality" and literary critics should evaluate such works in terms of their innovation degree.

5.3. Backgrounds and Cause-effect Factors

Comparative literature does not deal with similarities that are either accidental or are based on a superficial understanding of similarities. A mission of such authors concerns the identification of influence type, intertextuality more than anything else reveals and determines the form of the presence and the way a work has affected another one. The way of being affected by a concept or literary school, creates concepts or other literary schools. Comparative Literature traces the mankind's thoughts to one single source and despite the superficial differences, shows that they have originated from the same common origin. For instance, people all around the world fall in love, but they may express their love in different ways (EslamiNodooshan, 2007). In some of the articles, the author(s) take(s) for granted the cause-effect relationship between the variables by giving examples and do(es) not make the least attempt to prove such relations. The same fallacy can be seen in the article entitled "Mystical Analysis of Hansel and Grettel Tale by Means of Quranic Teaching and Mathnawi" in which the author does not examine the way Quran or Mathnawi has affected that story. In fact, the author confines his work to certain examples illustrating the similarities, but he does not offer any reason for such similarities. Giving samples of similar cases without obliging

himself to provide evidence for such claims leads to the offering of a simple list of similarities between Hansel & Grettel story and Mathnawi. The funny part of the story is that despite the title of the article, nowhere in it can the reader see the slightest reference to Quranic teachings! In this article, the author adapts a descriptive approach and regardless of the cause-effect issue between the two texts, provides mere examples without going into the factors affecting influence. The conclusion that the reader may wrongly draw is that Rūmī may have borrowed some concepts from this story. Now the question which can be posed is whether this is a case of chance occurrence or adaptation, or a similar literary genre used in Mathnawi and Hansel & Grettel? All these questions remain unanswered. The author of the article does not even give a short account of the story's writer or his philosophical views. In fact, the reader of the article does not find out whether the writer of the story has mystical tendencies or these similarities are accidental? It is certain that critical comprehension of similarities or differences between two literary works cannot be captured by some general statements like these as Zareenkoub (1990) maintains "Comparative Literature investigates the reproduction of a nation's literary work in the literature of another nation or the kind of adaption performed by a speech community in the literary works of another speech community" (2009). It has to be reminded that the most significant issue in a comparative study concerns the type of this relationship. But in another article entitled "Intertextual Relations between the Baha-e-Valad Teachings and Mathnawi from the Perspective of Story-telling", the author not only mentions the type of influence "Baha-e-Valad Teaching" has had, but

also gives examples of this book which have been adapted in the Mathnawi, he then elaborates on the artistic style Rūmī uses to re-narrate those stories. He maintains that although Rūmī has been greatly under the influence of "Ma'aref" yet he has not been passive and has managed to offer new readings for it (Husseini, 2007). The author of this article has successfully illustrated the adaption of a text into another one by giving sufficient examples.

5.4. Theoretical Background

Theory sets the framework of a given subject matter and determines its research methodology. By choosing an appropriate theory and methodology, the researcher can select his perspective to the subject, challenge his hypotheses and find a plausible answer for his research questions. Sticking to theoretical and methodological frames prevents faulty researches and wrong conclusions. Misconceptions or misunderstanding about the theory inevitably misleads the researcher and makes him commit deplorable mistakes. In an article entitled "Study of the Archetypal Pattern of Anima in Rūmī's Lyrics", the authors try to compare and study the anima in Shams' lyrics by taking a traditional method. Without providing a research model, the authors just list the characteristics of archetypal pattern of anima along with some samples from Shams' lyrics. They have failed to use the extant references in theoretical or applied comparative literature. Despite the fact that the term "comparative" has been

mentioned in the title, interestingly, there is no sign of this term either in the text or in the bibliography of the article.

The author of the article "A Comparative Study on Getting Rid of Vicious Desires and Uniting with Creator in Indian Mysticism and Rūmī's Mathnawi" does not refer to any theory in his paper. Seeing the title of the article, the reader expects to encounter a comparative research based on a popular school of comparative literature, while the author proceeds to define and describe his subject matter without having a theoretical support for his claims. Despite the presence of the term "comparative" in the title, there is no trace of a single comparative reference in this paper either. The framework of comparative literature is also missing in another article published under the name "An Overview of Ibn Farid and Rūmī's Views". The author wrongly assumes that the mere presence of some commonalities suffices for a comparative research paper to materialize, whereas a robust comparative research requires its own methodology and principles. Moreover, the authors of the article "False Assumptions from the Point of Francis Bacon and their Counterparts in Rūmī's Works" aim to investigate philosophical views from the perspective of Bacon and Rūmī. To do so, they start providing a list under the name "False Assumptions Shared by Francis Bacon and Rūmī". After describing the issue from the view of Bacon, they find examples from Rūmī's poetry, and then they conclude that there is a similarity in the philosophical perceptions of Rūmī and Bacon. One immediately can notice that the article lacks theoretical and psychological framework, two essential prerequisites which can prevent erroneous research and

wrong generalizations (Alavi, 2015). The question that is left unanswered here is that the authors of the above-mentioned article have applied which comparative method in their research? The authors have not referred to any comparative school whatsoever, and have contented themselves to provide superficial similarities, whereas in a systematic comparative study, similarities need to be given the same weight as differences, and then based on a systematic method and sound theoretical foundations of a comparative literature, the common or discrepant points should be analyzed. The same shortcoming can be observed in the articles "a Comparative Study of Rūmī's Charming Fortress with Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle" and "The Effect of Mathnawi on Fevzi Mostarac Views and Works about Perfect Human". The authors of these two articles have not examined why a certain text is present in another in terms of theoretical or comparative literature perspective or intertextual considerations. The mere listing of similarities does not create a comparative research. Their only advantage concerns the listing of similarities, though they have not been analyzed on the basis of a comparative literature theory. All the articles used in this study lacked a strong theoretical background and one can easily perceive that their authors were of the opinion that research in comparative literature does not require method or theory. Yves Chevrel in his book "Comparative Literature, Methods and Perspectives" puts emphasis on theoretical and methodological foundations and asserts that comparative literature is the art of utilizing the views and methods.

5.5. Criticism, Literary Influence and Intertextual Relationships

Literary influence is of two types. The first literary influence occurs when the writers or poets of a country like Nezami, Ferdowsi or Saadi affect their contemporary writers or poets or the posterity. Another type of influence refers to the influence of a poet or writer or even the literature of a nation on another poet, writer or literature, the study of which is called comparative literature, for example the influence of Ferdowsi on Matthew Arnold and the impact of Hafiz on Goethe. Comparative literature can be regarded as a kind of cultural bargain, because as world cultures affect each other, their literature – which is a component of culture- affects and is affected by other pieces literature as well. Therefore, research in comparative literature would be useful in several domains: firstly it helps to unravel the cultural relations between nations, and secondly it helps to understand the literary developments related to those relations. The above point being said, a number of articles examined here can be investigated in terms of a comparative literature due to the influence from Rūmī have received from his preceding poets. However, comparison in these articles can be done on the basis of intertextual criteria and standards. According to "intertextuality", every text is the shaping of a text's meaning by another text. Therefore, intertextuality does not just display the influence of a work on another, but it reveals or determines the shape of work in another. Some scholars maintain that even the change of "poetic images" is of no significance in poetry development, because poets do not create images but they perceive them (Husseini,

2007). Intertextual relationships abound in Rūmī's poetry, and this abundance can be attributed to the excess of allusions, parodies, Quranic verses, Islamic Hadiths, proverbs and beliefs which he has adapted from oral folklore and culture or has borrowed from books such as "Divan-e-Motenabbi" and "Ma'aref of Bahā ud-Dīn Walad". Numerous papers have been written on the comparison of poetic or linguistic features of literary figures such as Hafiz and Rūmī, Saeb and Rūmī, Attar and Rūmī, Razi and Rūmī to mention a few. In an article entitled "Narratological Analysis of 12 Stories about Solomon and a Man Running Away from Azrael", the authors have done an intertextual study between this narration and similar stories in "Ilahi Nama" and "Rouz-ol-Jannan" making use of structuralism in modern criticism. In this paper, the authors have meant to provide an analysis of a story from Mathnawi on the basis of a modern theory of criticism, however, they have ignored a comparative study based on a methodological pattern, and have adapted an intertextual approach (imperfect and hasty of course) which has led to a mixed and disorganized result (Farshidvar, 1994).

In the article published under the name "The Origin of Speech from the Perspective of Rūmī along with some Comparative Remarks on Theological Literature", the main theme has been the comparison of Rūmī's speech origin with theological literature. By inserting an ambiguous and unclear term in the title of his article i.e. comparative, the author has attempted to convince the reader that he is dealing with a paper in the field of comparative literature, but the paper not only lacks the methodology and the foundations of comparative literature,

but it also does not contain any comparison of Rūmī's words with mystics, theologians or other scholars' views. The author of the paper has tried to follow a descriptive and analytical method without enjoying any theoretical background. Though this paper pursues research method common in comparative literature- an issue which has led to research error- yet Rūmī's theological views have been examined by means of intertextual method.

It has to be noted that "text is the place in which different texts exist" (Allen, 2005). Assuming the above perspective, the majority of comparative literature writers on Rūmī during the first decade of 2000, instead of conducting a "comparative study" have done an "intertextual" or "paratextual" study of the subject in their papers. They have ignored the fact that no text is created impromptu and no text is presented directly and spontaneously, in fact, there are always preplanning and paratextual factors which affect the creation of a text. "As Ahmadi (1993) maintains: "every credible literary text can only be comprehended by reference to its preceding equivalent works, the texts are constantly engaged in mutual impact on each other". That is why it can be claimed that most of these writers have had little if any insight about the theoretical principles or frameworks of comparative literature. There is overlapping of course between comparative and intertextuality, adaptation or "bilateral influence" may mislead us to confuse intertextuality and comparative literature. As Allen (2005) maintains "the traces of all texts can be found as footprints in other texts, and this concept has led to the formation of literary studies apart from comparative studies".

In the article "The Views of Razi, the Physician, and Rūmī, the Mystic about the Thanatophobia (fear of death)" the writers in the conclusion section of their paper have not even made the slightest reference to the comparison of "fear of death" in the views of Razi and Rum. They have only briefly mentioned the "fear of death" and written: "in this article, thanatophobia will be examined by means of two completely separate approaches" (Gharamolki, 2011: 13). The authors have investigated Razi's psychotherapeutic approach and Rūmī's mystical approach and then have provided a list of similarities and differences without dealing with or analyzing the causes. The process of reading or evaluation of an issue concerns the recovery or retrieval of a text in another text and explaining how it has enriched Rūmī's thoughts, however, a comparative study not only should deal with mutual impact but also should deal with comparative literature not adaption. In another article entitled "Rūmī's adaptation of Quranic Stories in the Story of a Villager and a City Dweller", the writer having an indirect intertextual approach, begins the introduction in this way: "Rūmī has used Quranic stories as a good model…to associate ideas" (Mokhtari and Ebrahimi, 2013: 17). Intertextuality falls into two main categories, indirect intertextuality which includes trope, allusion, irony et cetera and direct intertextuality". This article pays no attention to the foundations of comparative literature, and only describes the Quranic concepts and ideas that can be traced in Rūmī's story. The same research procedure can be seen in two other articles named "Personality Change in Similar Stories by Rūmī and Attar" and "Study of God's Words and Rūmī's Views in Mathnawi". In the above articles, instead of using comparative method, the authors only

examine the extent Rūmī has adapted from the Quran. Attar and Rūmī's themes have been analyzed on the basis of influence he has received from these two sources. Though linguistic boundaries and domestic geography and literary cosmopolitan constitute the realm of comparative literature, yet, it cannot be confined to the study of mere adaptation, bilateral influence based on the intertextual approach (Cheverl, 2007).

Many researchers have overgeneralized their own subjective and personal intertextual-oriented views on comparative literature, by doing so, they have gone astray and been ensnared by similarities and comparison -not of a type "transnational" but of an internal comparative literature sort-. This fallacy can be observed, for instance, in the following articles "The Psychological Analysis of 12 Stories about Solomon and a Man Running Away from Azrael", "A Comparative Study on Getting Rid of Vicious Desires and Uniting with Creator in Indian Mysticism and Rūmī's Mathnawi", "Study of the Archetypal Pattern of Anima in Rūmī's Lyrics", "Rūmī's Impact on Saeb", "The adaptation of Rūmī's Ideas in Saeb Sensational verses", "the Conflict between Rūmī and Saeb over Love and Friendship".

5.6. Robust Research Methodology

After careful analysis of the 31 articles, it was discovered that the lack of a systematic methodology is a major problem manifested in

most of these papers. This blemish affects the data analysis and conclusions too. Lack of research questions / hypotheses or inappropriate hypotheses, the absence of the statement of the problem, and the missing of conclusion section (9 papers out of 31) were the shortcomings which could add to the perplexity of the readers and were counterproductive in such papers. For instance, there was no systematic research procedure in the article "A Comparative Study on the Form and Theme Similarities between Shams Lyrics and Baha-e-Valad Teachings", a flaw which has led to hasty and superficial analysis and conclusion. The same article also lacks clear research question, hypothesis and methodology, all of which deprive the reader to reap clear and logical from it. In the article "Study of God's Words and Rūmī's Views in Mathnawi", the writer does not provide any heading, except "abstract", there is no sign or trace of introduction, statement of the problem, methodology, research questions, et cetera, and the writer immediately after the abstract jumps on the description of "Islamic Scholastic Theology" in Mathnawi. The writer leaves the reader in darkness and does not offer any clear pattern in his article, at the end, he abruptly brings his discussion to an end by some general statements. Another article in which the lack of systematic research procedure is quite obvious is entitled "Love from the Perspective of Rūmī and Mulla Sadrā, a Study Based on Mathnawi and Asfar-e-Arbae". In this article, the authors after the abstract start discussing the main topic under the heading of "introduction" and there is no other heading into it whatsoever. The same introduction also lacks research purpose, methodology, hypothesis, data collection and analysis. It revolves around the collection and comparison of a number of verses

by Rūmī and Mulla Sadra and finishes with a general statement as "love can be regarded as the common theme shared by mystics and illuminationists". The remaining papers suffer from the same problems too. For instance, in an article entitled "The Portrait of Holy Prophet's in Mathnawi and its Comparison with Ibn Arabi's Views", the writer jumps from abstract to introduction and discusses the main subject therein. There is no main or sub headings in the entire article except few enumerations. In short, the article lacks a systematic method, review of related literature and hypothesis. The conclusion part is just three short statements in an outlined form. The abstract of the article is too short and does not give any information about the purpose or results. Instead of using a comparative method, the writer prefers to provide some examples from Mathnawi. If the few comparisons made at the beginning of the article can be ignored, the reader just finds an exclusive account of Rūmī's views about the holy prophet (S), nothing more. The article "Common Views of Ibn Arabi and Rūmī on Mysticism", after the abstract, the writers in a rather lengthy introduction called "review of the related literature" discuss the main topic without telling the reader what the research hypothesis, questions and methodology are!. The writers do not even take the trouble of separating the introduction from the main body of their article and start describing the main topic within that part. Though the writers seem to have tried to follow a systematic procedure in their research, yet they have created a deformed article by integrating the main topic into the introduction section. In another article named "Narration Analysis of 12 Stories about Solomon and a Man Running Away from Azrael", the article contains only abstract and there are no signs of related literature,

purpose or significance of the problem, it begins with the main topic and the writer has sporadic references to the related literature in the introduction section of his paper. The article "Study of the Archetypal Pattern of Anima in Rūmī's Lyrics" also jumps from "abstract" to the main body. This too lengthy article which exceeds the standards of paper composition (it is more than 38 pages) deals with some commonplace topic which make the reader bored. The authors' writing style resembles those of the thesis or classroom projects. This paper also lacks the headings related to the "purpose, significance and related literature". Unlike the majority of articles discussed so far, the article named "A Comparison of Tales Shared in Mathnawi and Attar's Book "The Conference of the Birds" by means of Structural Narratology", can be regarded a truly academic paper in which the writers by means of "structural Narratology" have tried to investigate the relationship between the tales of Mathnawi and "The Conference of the Birds". This kind of relationship has been called "hypertextuality" because by careful analysis of both texts' structures, the similarities and differences can be investigated, and propositions examined under different codes.

5.7. Scientific Scrutiny and Precision

The researcher engaged in comparative literature has to narrow down the scope of his research to make it feasible. For instance, in the article "An Overview of Ibn al-Farid and Rūmī's Common Views", when the author starts comparing the thoughts of Rūmī with those of

Ibn Farid, he does not specify what is the subject matter of this research, and what does he mean by common views, are they mystical, spiritual or ideological? The writer has only dealt with general similarities and has given one or two examples for each main heading. The number of examples given for Ibn Fariḍ is far limited compared with Rūmī's. The writer opens a heading by the name "Aesthetic Views of Rūmī and Ibn Fariḍ", but the explanation provided for it is too brief containing just two verses. This paper, though makes use of a comparative method, yet it lacks sufficient scientific scrutiny both in methodology and conclusion. After comparing Rūmī's mystical thoughts with those of Ibn Fariḍ, the writer concludes that both of these poets share mystical thoughts with Ibn Arabi and they have the same view about "Unity of Being" and "Love", but does not give any details about this commonality, the causes or differences. This article reminds one of the saying of Anoushiravani (2010) who holds that "sometimes comparative literature gets out of comparative domain and falls in a bigger trap called "similarity". In the article "Rūmī and Hafiz, Are They Alter Egos of each other or Just Two Speakers of the Same Language?", the title of the article is too broad and unclear, in the abstract, the writer claims "I have tried to find the answer for this question whether there is any sign in Hafiz poetry indicating that he has been affected by Rūmī". Then the author under the heading "assessment of Hafiz and Rūmī's poetry" begins comparing a lyric of Rūmī with that of Hafiz. Investigating the verses meter and the spiritual journeying and wayfaring of both poets is done by means of some general and yet unclear statements. The author ignores the fact that mere similarity in meter / rhythm or the comparison of one single

lyric is not a sufficient proof for "intertextuality". Since the article des not enjoy accuracy and transparency, the author has to repeat himself in order to prove his point, which appears once on page 22 under the heading "conclusion" and another time implicitly somewhere else. In another article called "The Origin of Speech from the Point of Rūmī along with Some Comparative Remarks on Theology", the writer does not specify the scope of his research and the reader does not comprehend what the writer means by "comparative remarks on theology"! The key terms provided do not shed any light either. It seems that the writer wishes to investigate the concept of "perfect human" and "the day God made his covenant". By adopting a holistic approach, the writer begins discussing issues belonging to "the unseen" and provides some examples from Rūmī's verses. The writer lists nine points as his findings in the conclusion section, but these points look like pre-defined concepts rather than exemplary conclusions. The same problems, i.e. generalization and unsystematic investigation are also apparent in the paper entitled "The Impact of Rūmī on Saeb". The writer of this article states that he intends to show the extent Saeb has been affected by Rūmī's ideology in both "form and content". However, the article as its title shows is unclear and too broad. The writer does not specify the scope of his research question and it seems that he has decided to cover the entire works of these poets by examining their literary, poetic styles and thought the school in his 26 page paper. Moreover, the title of the paper implies that all Saeb's lyrics have been investigated, while, only 23 lyrics have been studied. The article "The Traces of Rūmī's Ideas in Charming Verses of Saeb" has lost its scientific precision due to its all-inclusive approach. The

author tries to prove his point by exemplification, but the scope of his research question is firstly too broad and secondly he has failed to accurately address his point. When he refers to commonalities in poetic meters, rhythm, he does not probe the causes of such similarities, and it is quite probable to find similar metrical occurrences in other poets' poetry. Unlike the above-cited papers, the authors of the article "The Relationship between Cinematic Expression and Literary Allegory in Mathnawi" have followed a precise, detailed and accurate method in their research and by giving examples, have tried to examine the dramatization potentials of Rūmī's works, thus successfully displaying the bondage between literature and cinema and the potentiality of "literary Parody" in general and Mathnawi and Shams Verses in particular for dramatic recreation.

5.8. Authentic and original references

Comparative literature studies can be best realized when they are metalinguistic, intercultural, and interdisciplinary. A researcher who engages in this field is like a person who ambushes at the linguistic border of a community to monitor all the literary and ideological exchanges occurring between it and nearby or distant communities (Zareenkoub, 2009). It is incumbent upon comparative literature researchers to master the source language to have direct access to texts without any cultural misunderstandings. Concerning the accurate and faithful translation, Shafiee-Kadkani (1979) maintains that "without careful study of foreign poems translated into Persian, it

is impossible to investigate the evolution of Persian poetry". A look at the reference section of 8 of the interlingual comparative papers written during that period reveals that some of the papers are the result of investigating two or several translated works without referring to the original text. For instance, the writers of the articles "Comparative Study of "Image" from the Perspective of Ibn-Arabi and Rūmī" and "the Commonalities of Ibn-Arabi and Rūmī in the Domain of Mystical Area" have used few translated references in their paper, an issue which can adversely affect the analysis and conclusion. As Anoushiravani (2010) rightly puts it: "the reflection of translator's ideology on the main text can sometimes mislead the comparative researchers". The only authors who have referred to 8 and 6 original texts in their research are the authors of "The Effect of Mathnawi on Fevzi Mostarac Views and Works about Perfect Human" and "A Comparative Study of Rūmī's Charming Fortress with Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle" respectively, an issue which adds to the validity and scientific credit of these papers.

6. CONCLUSION

The main concern of this paper related to what extent the comparative referred articles written during the first decade of the third millennium about Rūmī are based on sound scientific foundations. The careful analysis of 31 peer-reviewed papers published during 2001-2011 revealed that these papers had major defects, including deficient familiarity with / negligence of modern theories and hasty conclusion

or shallow analysis. Subjective approach and traditional analysis were dominant in some papers whereas few enjoyed robust scientific precision. What is of significance in the pathology of the articles of interest concerns the lack of systematic research procedure, generalizing, inappropriate references, selection of trivial and repetitive subjects, listing superficial similarities with little or no attention to their causes, lack of careful determination of cause-effect relations and the absence of theoretical references.

It can be concluded here that comparative literature on Rūmī in Iran is in need of revision and reform, because most of the research done in this discipline is not based on robust scientific methods and the majority lack suitable statement of the problem and data collection and analysis, procedure et cetera. Historical relationship and intertextual aspects or similarities in theme or structure between the diction / style of two literary figures is not sufficient to make a research a "comparative study". It seems the papers published during this time interval have prematurely entered the applied stage without enjoying strong theoretical foundations. Systematic "methodology" is another missing element which needs to be taken care by comparative literature researchers in their future endeavors.

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