



Femme Fatale Poetry between FLR and Accomplice Arabic and English Delineation (East-West Comparative Study)

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Abstract— *The portrayal of the femme fatale is quite common in the literature: a persona defies all and then finds inevitable choices to die as a master or to live as a slave, to stay as a female-led relation, FLR, or an accomplice for the sake of certain intents. The current paper delimits itself to trace the differences and similarities between three samples from the Arabic and English poetry on the femme fatale to trace five functions in the light of an eclectic model the study creates after applying both the classical literary Arabic theory and feminist literary criticism to the samples in question: Political Function, Societal Function, Moral Function, Authority Function and Elegiac Function. As for the functionality of the femme fatale, it strikes deep roots in various spheres of knowledge; literature and social sciences. Some try to prove it psychological, some political, but in literature in general and poetry in particular it takes hold of five functions and wields panoramic versatile isles in the East and West poems that are respectively Elegy on Imam Al-Hassan, Affinity between Prophethood and Imamate, No Oblivion for Imam al-Hassan, La Belle Dame sans Merci, On the Medusa of Leonardo da Vinci in the Florentine Gallery and Body's Beauty. The statistical part will have so much to say: a/function/s the East or the West employ more than other functions, "how?" and "why?".*



Keywords— *femme fatale poems, FLR, east-west literature, poeticism, classical literary Arabic theory, feminist literary criticism*

INTRODUCTION

Femme Fatale between East and West

The concept of "East and West" never designates an act of separation, division and chasm, rather it implies a culture, its roots and ramification. Probing into other concepts "East is East", or "Never the twain shall meet" (Kipling, line 1), one might think that there is no point of confluence, no culture pollination and no knowledge exchange. In this regard, there is so touching a poem for Rudyard Kipling, "The Ballad of East and West", in which he narrates a storyline with tantalizing narrativity between an Afghan man, Kamal, and colonel's son rivalling for a mare:

Kamal is out with twenty men to raise the Border side,

And he has lifted the Colonel's mare that is the Colonel's pride.

He has lifted her out of the stable-door between the dawn and day

And turned the calkins upon her feet, and ridden her far away. (Kipling, lines 5-8)

At first blush, they are divergent, each holds different principles of possession, valour and decorum. The poem delineates the main qualities of the personas: each believes that there is one Creator, valour is so respected, perseverance is so precious, challenge is so rare when someone becomes alone and encompassed, volition invades every corner when it summons itself. These major human attributes give a sense of convergence between two

bloodthirsty rivals and they were at daggers drawn ! “ Do good to bird and beast”, (Kipling, line 49), invites Kamal to deliberate the personality of the colonel’s son to utter a humanity shout: “We be two strong men,"said Kamal then,"but she loveth the younger best", (Kipling, line 66), so he returns the mare to the son and gifts him his son as a guard : "Thy father has sent his son to me, I'll send my son to him!" . Here is the pinnacle of benevolence and valour that transcend all the cultural and border differences and possession desires, more into sincerity, the father certifies that his be loyal to the colonel’s son at all costs : “Thy life is his - thy fate it is to guard him with thy head”, (Kipling, line 78) . Between both the austere and the colloquial language, the poet broaches that man could find a bond of friendship in the welter of differences and an affinity in the heart of rivalry as much as there are nobility and humanity as a compass to steer man to the right destination :

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,

Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;

But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,

When two strong men stand face to face though they come from the ends of the earth! (Kipling, lines 93-4)

In the paper, on focus, “ Femme Fatale Poetry between FLR and Accomplice Arabic and English Delineation”, there is a target to find a joint platform between the different samples : Differences beget a kind of unanimity . Femm fatale as a persona or a device used in both Arabic and English poetry functions differently, surely, the main role of femm fatale is to convey certain messages, that it is why it is used . In Arabic poetry, it pertains to Ghzal poetry in which the poet laments the loss of his beloved .Yet in English, it is employed to manifest the machinations of a lady used to snare men, so here, the term is much the same

in use, but terminologically is different, if we trace the concept in both kinds of poetry, east and west, it is inferred that they are similar to each other . the ghazel persona runs equal to femm fatale English poems .Quite axiomatic, the femm fatale, first, dominates and then destroys, the ghazel poet shows his agony for her departure, elucidates the time they share together, the ways of leaving and the pretexts, sometimes accuses her of being an entrapment-setter . By the same vein, the west poetry femm fatale uses her beauty and her appeal to entrap the lover, victim, so there are many mutual lines between these two kinds of poetry .

More into the current paper, the portrayal of the femm fatale in the Islamic poetry acts as an accomplice to achieve specific tasks for someone or as a proxy warrior , here the femm fatale is more dovetailed with the role of the accomplice : it is a matter of a task to finish : such a kind of ladies, attractive, pulchritudinous and enigmatic, serves as a proxy soldier to do clandestine tasks for someone in authority, for something in return or for passion . Evidently, the west femm fatale is more traceable as a temptress, narcissist and self-interest than as an accomplice, and tends to give shape to duplicity and fraudulence .

Section One : Explication Tools : Classical Literary Arabic Theory and Feminist Literary Criticism

In explicating two different texts, east and west, there should be certain theories to reveal the difference and similarities in the texts . The current paper wields the Classical Literary Arabic Theory to focus on the main features of the poems in question, *Elegy on Imam Al-Hassan, Affinity between Prophethood and Imamate, No Oblivion for Imam al-Hassan*. As a theory, it centres on the sense of tranquillity and truth, then on poeticism, such a shift is so essential to delve into the text more profoundly : the poetic devices play so essential a role in exposing the aesthetic and artistic aspects, syntactic structures, text particularity, versification and the authenticity in the text :

no	Aestheticism			Syntactic Structures			Particularity		Truth		
	Figurative	Sound	Form	Standard	Standard	Non-Standard	Innovative	Developed	Real	Fictional	Hybrid

CLAT Table (1)

The CLAT table is so instrumental in tracing the main ores of a poem : techniques, themes, messages, persona type, figures of speech and the particularities of the poet . In doing so, the table offers certain parameters to the eclectic model of the present paper : the essential focus of the table

falls substantially on both Aestheticism and Truth that give the theory prominence and applicability .

The second theory, Feminist Literary Criticism, employed in the paper throws light on several features in a text and endeavours to illustrate the feminist angles in the text,

describe the steps and procedure the feminine persona chooses to express herself and lay the hands of the readers on certain societal or individual faults aggravating her entity in the community . As a theory, it experiences several stages to adjust itself to the world development and the feminine role in life .

More into its tenets, the woman objectification, usually, depicts the reality of her struggle for independence, freedom from male dominance and societal captivity : being drawn as a commodity, she is to obey her master, the seller, and his desires to have things in return . To acquire more values, the femm fatale gives force to herself to make use of everything available, in the orbit of the dark triad : Machiavellian, psychopathy, narcissism:

no	Faults		Development		Objectification		Dark Triad		
	Individual	Societal	Education	Vocational	Commodity	Pastime	Machiavellian	Psychopathy	Narcissism

FLC Table (2)

As a theory, Feminist Literary Criticism observes the stages of historical development and the intellectual evolution of the females in general and their role in literature . The poems in questions are, *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, *On the Medusa of Leonardo da Vinci in the Florentine Gallery* and *Body's Beauty*, so versatile to depict a woman as she is and as she feels in the face of societal challenges : a community is used to treating her as a puppet and now it is time to see her shifting from patriarchal ring to matriarchal retaliation.

Section Two :East and West Samples under Explication Tools

The Arabic literature is more familiar with poetry than other genres as it is the oldest form of written and spoken heritage and commences with a tribal scope to preserve and document great deeds . There are two major kinds : the pre-Islamic poetry, "Jahili poetry", and the Islamic poetry, the first tackles so many themes emanating from the desert milieu : ubi sunt lamentation “ where are they now”, stoicism, love, valour, self-pride, nostalgia, criticism, battlefields, camels, horses, wool tents, beauty, female eyes, deer and so forth . Such stipulates a kind of strict versification and structure adherent to the traditional law of poetry . In the second, the tapestry of the themes extends to wider and longer fields of life : Quranic topics, praise to Islamic traditions, Ahlulbayt deeds, divine and mundane love, justice, equality, humanity, female manumission, rights for women and the like . Islam as a faith and mind revolution prevails to disseminate all kinds of humanitarian principles and the most touching factors of development, in this regard, Imam Ali, pbuh, says : “People are either your brothers in faith or your equals in humanity” .

The Arabic poems as samples in the study are taken from the Ahalabayt literature whose poet elucidates the pain of

betrayal at the hand of the most adjacent person, the most trusted one and the most intimate part, the wife :

**He is attired in the vesture of patience
with sapience to preserve traditions .**

**Until they offer him poison to drink,
More instrumental than just instrumental**

A branch from Mohammeden tree is severed .

**A branch vanishes and Fatima`s heart is truncated
for the loss of her son, Al-Hassan .**

**In patience he falls martyr, all the planets
in the farthest dark slump with agony .**

**A denomination grows armoured,
led with aggression and in dissension .(Al-Hidi, lines 27-31)**

Seid. Ridha Al-Hidi in his "*Elegy on Imam Al-Hassan*" moves from the great chronicle of the imam Al-Hassan through his solitude, quandary, perseverance, staunch faith, arrow attack on his coffin, to his burial and praise for his argument prowess . The historical background of the text reveals the fact that Ju`ada bint Al-Ash`ath, the wife of Imam al-Hassan, assassinates the imam by poisoning after conspiring with Mu'awiya ibn Abu Sufyan against her husband, the imam .The word “branch” manifests the esteemed niche of the imam Al-Hassan and tends to be iterated twice in a state of palilogy : the first reflects his high-rank position in the Mohammeden pedigree and the second does to the impact of his death on his mother Fatima Al-Zahra. That is why the language is so elegant and so innovative to narrate such a historical tale . Thus, the political and authority functions surge into the ambience of the excerpt . Here the poet, overtly, uses narrativity as a rationale for such mariticide ; “they offer him poison to

drink" functions as a conspiracy, "they" refers to both the seller and his commodity : Mu'awiya and Ju'ada .

The dean of the Hussenist pulpit, Dr. Ahmed Al-Waeli, May Allah grant him mercy, in his 22-line poem : "*Affinity between Prophethood and Imamate*" elucidates the importance of both the prophethood and the imamate , then throws light on the noble pedigree of the imam Al-Hassan from cradle to martyrdom : his great feats, self-abnegation, endurance throughout all the calamities and hardships, the succession of his sons to fight for Islam and truth and the commemoration of his sacrifices beyond time :

Thou endure agonies and blame of Ibn Hind

like a led lion though being shackled .

He has nothing but poison to use

the hand of the cowardly with hate grows lionized .

once thy entrails are torn, the brilliant lights dim

thy lips recite Quran .

The pulpit misses a cleric used to

Reciting at the heart of nights.

O, good soil, O the fragrance of Mohammed !

O, the sanctity of his aroma in the Baqi al-Gharqad.(Al-Waeli, lines 27-32)

Every historical event Dr. Ahmed Al-Waeli scrutinizes to expose the dilemma the imam al-Hassan confronts, though alone and forlorn, then dovetails the pain of the poison, that slashes all the entrails of the imam, with his faith that knows no limits : aye, he is dying from poison, but he is reciting Quran ! Both of the words "lion" and "pulpit" imply certain figurative messages ; for a lion, the imam, though being poisoned, grows more faithful, adherent to Allah and His Quran, never bends the knee to the "cowardly" and cleaves to his doctrines ad infinitum, and the pulpit hold metonymy to cast knowledge that the imam is the pivotal dynamic leader . The epizeuxis of "O" and "O" serves to express the agony of losing a part of the Mohammedan system of justice on earth. For the language Dr.Ahmed employs runs equal to the rank of the imam and his sacred cause in life and appears more innovative and well coined. The story takes logic as there are facts to unveil : a wife betrays for some political and authority reasons . The major focus falls on the seller more than on the commodity : "He has nothing but poison to use" reveals the conspiracy and the major plotter, for the poet, Ju'ada is an arm no more no less, paid enough to betray and then finds no way in life but loss and vagrancy .

As a third sample of the study, the poet, Hameed Halmi Al-Baghdadi, manipulates the theme of assassination in his

"*No Oblivion for Imam al-Hassan*" with an innovative structure as there is a 13-quatrain stanza poem with both prelude and postlude . The first stanza ponders over the unique features of the imam : his noble pedigree and the acts of desecration . The second does vice and virtue, the third does the staunch faith in the face of horror, the fourth does the preparation to his martyrdom : arrow attack on his coffin, the fifth does the hate of the opponents, the sixth does the honoured chronicle, but they betray him . The seventh probes into the heart of human deviation :

Where is the one who shoulders my ardour to Al-Baqi cemetery

It is an imam died from saturated poison

They kill him and fear our tears

It is hoped my poetry is nothing but the price for the tears.(Al-Baghdadi, lines29-32)

Again and again, the use of a lady to poison the imam is rather overt, "It is an imam died from saturated poison" proves that it is conspired to assassinate the imam and none is permitted to mourn . Stanza eight wakes man to the Ahlulbayt golden chain of knowledge and science and the ships of salvation throughout ages, the stanzas ten, eleven and twelve mention with elegiac tone the loss of the imam but his son acts valiantly on behalf of his father in al-Taff battle between the vice and virtue, Islam and no-Islam . The postlude iterates the distinguished attributes of imam al-Hassan and his supreme niche in paradise . "adour" throws light on the venerated niche of the imam and how seida. Fatima Al-Zahra calls him . The poet, with sublime language equal to the imamate discourse, mentions the reasons behind the order of mourning cessation : no one weeps for the loss of the imam, or commemorates his martyrdom . Thus, the femm fatale functions as a catalyst for distorting and obliterating the social repute and leverage of the imam, pbuh.

As for the West samples, there are three poems, the first, "*La Belle Dame sans Merci*," The Beautiful Lady without Mercy, by John Keats, shows in quatrain a dialogue between the persona and a knight who meets an attractive lady in a meadow . After spending amorous moments with a fairy-like lady, he suffers the loss for his mania love to possess her forever :

She found me roots of relish sweet,

And honey wild, and manna dew,

And sure in language strange she said,

"I love thee true!(Keats, lines 25-8)

The lover realizes that his ludus love no more exists and has to bear the repercussion of the philia love and the reality of his state . Emotional paralysis and affectionate nostalgia cast a shadow on his entire life : no virility, no stamina and no one to mitigate his anguish :

**And that is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing. (Keats, lines 45-8)**

The last stanza comes closer to the persona in “ The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”, who is lost between desire and action, no power to move and no volition to continue :

**Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.
I do not think that they will sing to me.(Michael 658)**

The Femme fatale here functions as a megalomaniac persona to dominate him and strip him of his real personality traits and leaves him grief-stricken and broken-hearted . The lover sees everything dim and vague : no more flowers, no more rippling waves and no more chirping birds : he is thoroughly ostracized and wanderings cast him to demise .

The second West poem, "*On the Medusa of Leonardo da Vinci in the Florentine Gallery*" by Percy Bysshe Shelley, tackles the mind set of an interlocutor, his conception and the deep insight of literature to depict the innermost abyss of horror and dwells heavily on the amalgam of both beauty and horror : someone is to be attracted to her beauty and then turns to be a stone . Her gaze for Shelly leads a conflicting battle between the desire to be mingled with people and the intent to cease turning people to stone . The terrifying snakes on her head furnish an atmosphere of horror and when one has a glance at her beauty, he all at a sudden tends to be stone like :

**'Tis the tempestuous loveliness of terror;
For from the serpents gleams a brazen glare
Kindled by that inextricable error,
Which makes a thrilling vapour of the air
Become a [.....] and ever-shifting mirror
Of all the beauty and the terror there---
A woman's countenance, with serpent-locks,**

Gazing in death on Heaven from those wet rocks.(Hutchinson,577)

In time there is beauty attracting man, in time he loses his entire life when gazing at her : there is a kind of beauty but coalesced with fatal desire : inevitable death. The ekphrastic narration serves the poem to offer the reader the opportunity to taste the sublime language used and the images palpitating with life :

**Hairs which are vipers, and they curl and flow
And their long tangles in each other lock,
And with unending involutions show
Their mailèd radiance, as it were to mock.
The torture and the death within, and saw
The solid air with many a ragged jaw. (Hutchinson,576)**

Shelley proves that the art is so powerful as it creates Medusa as both attractive and horribly hideous and sets Medusa present though absent in reality : the paradoxical face it could capture the eye and petrify the heart . Her complex nature, beautiful but freakish, dominates men but isolates her from the community and the more she desires to be as normal as possible, the more she tends to live in anguish .

From painting to painting, here comes the “ *Body's Beauty*” as the third West sample by Dante Gabriel Rossetti to trace the fatal allure and its seductive webs to ensnare men . Historically, the painting narrates the myth of “ Lady Lilith” from the Jewish folklore as there is a femme fatale desirous to take control of everyone and entice lovers and then perishes them :

**Of Adam's first wife, Lilith, it is told
That, ere the snake's, her sweet tongue could deceive,
And her enchanted hair was the first gold.
And still she sits, young while the earth is old,
And, subtly of herself contemplative,
Draws men to watch the bright web she can weave,
Till heart and body and life are in its hold.(Kundu 780)**

Rossetti breaks the mould of the Victorian age since the portrayal of the women is always passive and submissive and treated as a commodity, so here the tale of “ Lady Lilith” comes to the fore to pave the way for a kind of seductive and destructive allure and voluptuousness:

The rose and poppy are her flowers; for where

Is he not found, O Lilith, whom shed scent
 And soft-shed kisses and soft sleep shall snare?
 Lo! as that youth's eyes burned at thine, so went
 Thy spell through him, and left his straight neck bent
 And round his heart one strangling golden hair.
 (Kundu 781)

The ekphrasis falls mainly on the physical features : scent, eyes, neck and hair, to convey the fact that the lady in question employs everything to ensnare her victim . The symbolism of the hair serves as both a net to catch men and a whip hand over lovers . The poet is quite observant of the body duality to stoop to conquer :to lynch her idolizers.

Section Three :

Paper Statistics Analysis

no	Aestheticism				Syntactic Structures		Particularity		Truth		
	Figurative	Sound	Elegiac	Form	Standard	Non-Standard	Innovative	Developed	Real	Fictional	Hybrid
POEM 1	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓		
POEM 2	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓		
POEM 3	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		

CLAT Table Data Analysis (3)

As a study procedure, there is a propensity to adjust a theory closer to the poems in question, *La Belle Dame sans Merci, On the Medusa of Leonardo da Vinci in the Florentine Gallery* and *Body's Beauty*, to probing their merits, demerits and the FLC, feminist literary criticism, parameters below : the Faults/ Individual climbs to 100% to indicate that all the femm fatale personas intentionally plan to ensnare men, the Development / Educational

demonstrates 66.66% as the femm fatale personas fluctuate between remorse and cruelty, the Objectification / Pastime rises to its nth peak, 100%, to illustrate that the femm fatale personas hanker after desires and lust . The last, the more competitive, in Dark Triad both Machiavellian and Psychopathy score 40% to unmask the duality of the femm fatale persona : no limits and no quarter to conquer :

no	Faults			Development		Objectification		Dark Triad		
	Individual	Societal		Educational	Vocational	Commodity	Pastime	Machiavellian	Psychopathy	Narcissism

Poem 1	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	
Poem 2	✓			✓		✓			✓
Poem 3	✓				✓	✓	✓		

FLC Table Data Analysis (4)

For being more accurate and precise to determine the major functions of the femm fatale, the study creates an eclectic model to trace the peaks and troughs of the personas and their proclivity for FLR or accomplice or both :

no	Complicity		Dark Tetrad				Truth			Functions				
	Overt	Covert	Machiavellian	Psychopathy	Narcissism	Megalomania	Real	Fictional	Hybrid	Political	Social	Moral	Authority	Elegiac
POEM 1		✓		✓		✓	✓			✓			✓	
POEM 2		✓		✓			✓			✓			✓	
POEM 3		✓	✓				✓				✓			✓
POEM 4	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓				✓	
POEM 5	✓				✓			✓					✓	
POEM 6	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓					✓	

FLR and Accomplice Model Table Data Analysis (5)

The above-drawn table, FLR and Accomplice Model Table Data Analysis, exposes the type of the femm fatale applied to the sample poems: the Complicity/ Covert, for the Islamic holds 50% and also Complicity/ Overt, for the West sample, does 50%, such indicates a difference between the sample groups and reveals the sense of conspiracy in the East samples and the web of carnal desires in the West samples. Then the Dark Tetrad/ Psychopathy reaches 36.36% to prove that in both sample groups the femm fatale shows no mercy to bring her intents into effect. Here comes the second parameter of difference between the sample groups that the Truth/ Real, for Islamic samples, is 42.85%, yet the Truth/ Fictional, for West samples, is 42.85%. Last in the table, Functions/ Authority rises to 55.55% to pinpoint the second parameter of similarity between the sample groups as the authority is quite paramount in these poems as an iron fist to exploit whatever

possible to win or as a lust to dominate and then humiliate. In complicity and truth the sample groups diverge diametrically, but in dark tetrad and functions they converge.

CONCLUSION

The paper endeavours to touch upon a kind of correlation in the welter of difference between the East and West femm fatale poems and confronts a quandary of two different cultures, two different language and two different stylometries. Such lies a challenge in itself. The concept of femm fatale in non-equivalent in Arabic as a term and seems traceable in other terms pertinent to a lady who exploits her beauty to ensnare men .

The classical literary Arabic theory finds in the East samples, *Elegy on Imam Al-Hassan, Affinity between Prophethood and Imamate and No Oblivion for Imam al-Hassan* that the figurative and standard language, aestheticism, innovation and real facts are more statistically significant and frequent than other parameters as they gain 50%, 100%, 40%, and 100% respectively as shown in the table (3). By the same token, the feminist literary criticism applied to *La Belle Dame sans Merci, On the Medusa of Leonardo da Vinci in the Florentine Gallery* and *Body's Beauty* shows that the individual faults, educational development and pastime objectification are statistically significant and frequent and collect 100%, 66.66% and 100% respectively, yet the dark tetrad, the driving force for the femme fatale, reveals the paramountcy of both Machiavellian and Psychopathy to be more significant and reach 40%. Such delineates the lust drives that steer her actions and reactions.

After applying these two theories, classical literary Arabic theory and feminist literary criticism to the study samples, the eclectic model makes use of certain parameters of these two theories and delves into the abyss of the femme fatale: the complicity parameter manifests that the machination of the femme fatale in the East samples is covert, yet in the West ones is so overt and both gain 50%, that is, the femme fatale in the East poems acts as an accomplice, on the contrary, the West ones as a domineering part. In the Dark Tetrad/psychopathy, both run equal to each other, 36.36%, and expose the clandestine desire to destroy men without quarter. Then they run counter to each other in the orbit of truth; the East samples rely on facts and the West ones do on fictional events: 42.85% for each. The two groups are commensurate with each other, 55.55%, in Functions/Authority to substantiate that authority or being authoritarian is the pivotal motive of the personas; to be an accomplice is to gain a sense of authority, or to be dominant, FLR, is a practice of authority:

- 1- Running parallel to each other in both Dark Tetrad and Functions as shown in table (5).
- 2- Running counter to each other in both Complicity and Truth as shown in table (5).

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