


**A Comparative Analysis of Birds as Archetypes in the World Literature:
A Jungian study of Selected Poems by Attar, Coleridge, and
Agbemabiese**

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Abstract

World literature investigates literary works that circulate beyond their cultures and demonstrates what like-but-unlike is. It considers a certain motif and sees how it represents its cultural aspects. . The Jungian archetype of the bird is the common thread that has been analyzed in this comparative study. Bird's flight sheds light on metaphysical ascendance and transcendence. Moreover, the bird archetype conveys meanings associated with death, rebirth, awareness, consciousness, enlightenment, and wisdom. This article compares the archetype of birds in the poetry of Attar's *The Conference of the Birds* (1177), Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1992), and Agbemabiese's "Sankofa" (2008). The reason for such a choice is that, although they belong to different ages and literary heritages, all three portray a journey toward an individual's Self-perfection. These poets utilize the bird archetype to manifest how *Simurgh*, *Albatross*, and *Sankofa*, reveal their archetypal meanings in Persian, English, and African cultures. By a comparative method based on Jung's archetypal "process of individuation", the bird is a uniting archetype, that represents the "Self" in Jung's terminology. Binding the poetry of these nations demonstrates that through a self-realization journey, the individual can achieve perfection or become one with the whole.

Keywords: Jung, bird's archetype, individuation, comparative literature, world literature

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1. Introduction

Individuation is a natural process that leads to the integration of the psyche. Indeed, through this process, the personal and collective unconscious, by using different means such as dreams, move to consciousness (Jung 1962, 23). In this sense, the Jungian individuation process is an archetypal process in which different symbols, based on certain archetypes, mark their stages. In the last stage, the individual attains a perfect Self (Jacobi 113-114). The search for perfection has been a long-standing desire that the whole human beings have had from ancient times to the present among different nations and cultures. Since literature is a mirror that reflects its culture, by chasing literary works of different nations and ages, we can ensure more that the desire for self-perfection is a universal desire that should be satisfied. World literature seeks such common themes and motifs, and in this case, it answers the question of how different individuals attain a perfect Self through different cultures and times. It shows that in Persian mystical tradition, man's perfection relies on his union with God while English Romantics find Nature as a soothing entity that they can unite with it and find peace. On the other hand, post-colonial Africans, who suffer from "double consciousness" and "hybridity", only can find a unified identity and Self if they seek their roots. The reason for choosing Persian, English, and African cultures to compare with each other, is that although there is a huge time gap between these cultures and they belong to different literary heritages, they present various responses to the question of Self-perfection. Further, as David Damrosch, the American literary historian and a prominent figure in World Literature, in his precious book *What is World Literature?* (2003) states, "In its most expansive sense, world literature could include any work that has ever reached beyond its home base. These works, moreover, stem from widely disparate societies, with very different histories, frames of cultural reference, and poetics" (4). Therefore, Persian, English, and African kinds of literature belong to disparate societies, but world literature has to dig through history and literary works and find such commonalities and differences about the same entity, i.e. the question of self-perfection. Therefore, the quest for perfection, in one way or another, is a fundamental dream human beings have chased. Considering the bird's archetype, as a symbol of perfection in the Jungian process of individuation, and with the help of the comparative literature, Persian, English and African's ways to perfection can be investigated.

This research, with a comparative approach and based on Jungian archetypal theory, aims to study the poetry of Farid-ud-Din Attar (1146 – 1221), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772 – 1834), and Padmore Enyonam

Agbemabiese (1951-) as representatives of bird archetypes. The reason for this choice is that the three world poets belong to different nations, cultures, and eras and, due to their settings, they take advantage of bird symbolism to demonstrate the values and thoughts of their own time. With this respect, the concept of the “perfect man” or the “perfect Self” not only can be considered in Persian mystical culture but also its other alternatives can be investigated in English and African cultures. Therefore, by analyzing the concept of the bird in the selected poems of these nations, this manuscript tries to answer the following questions:

1. How does the bird’s archetype manifest itself in the context of Persian, English, and African poetry?
2. Despite the temporal, spatial, and cultural differences, what similarities do birds have to each other in their poems? What is the significance of their similarities? How does World literature look at these similarities and compare them to each other?
3. How can we explain and contextualize the cultural and linguistic differences?

2. Literature Review

The bird archetype, one of the recurring archetypes in Jungian psychology, is more associated with spirituality, divinity, and union. However, comparing studies of different researchers that have listed in the following, illuminates that bird symbolism universally refers to concepts such as life, longevity, death, rebirth, spirits of the dead, afterlife, and wisdom, as well. It can also symbolize God, truth, spiritual forces and figures, and angels. Due to the universality of the bird archetype, the bird’s ability to fly is a portrait of both the ascendance and transcendence of the soul that can be traced in different cultures. However, certain types of birds can also portray different cultural and ritual values and notions. To exactly cite the above notions, here’s the list of these researchers:

Investigating various sources, it was found that different researchers have studied bird archetypes and symbolism in various cultures. Christopher M. Moreman (2014) has asserted that birds can steal the souls of dying people and carry their souls to the next world with themselves, at the same time, they can be the embodiment of the spirits of the dead, as well. (2). Peter Tate (2007) has portrayed the viewpoint of Mongol Buryats of Siberia that their loved ones may be reincarnated as diving birds (32-33). Also, John Pollard (1977) has illustrated that seagulls as well as other seabirds, are seen as the transmigration of the deceased sailors (189). Martha Warren Beckwith (1970) has studied the Osage people, Native Americans of the Great Plains, who

believe that there are different types of spiritual worlds, and on the highest level, there is a world that is filled with a lot of birds which are the embodiments of human souls (387).

Bird's symbolism is also associated with God, spiritual forces, and certain people. According to Robert Beer (2004) folklore of Tibetan people describes birds as divine heralds (85). Laura C. Martin (1993) has studied the Navajo, Native American people of the Southwestern United States, who consider the bluebird as the messenger of the Sun which is the "supreme image of God" (12). Irmawati Marwoto Johan (2019) analyzed that birds, in mystical poetry such as Attar's *The Conference of the Birds*, are not only a symbol of the soul and divinity but also symbolize certain people like Sufis who are imprisoned in the cage of exile and they die, they go back to their holy nest (695). Roya Esmi and Habib Shahbazi Shiran (2022) have studied the peacock as a paradise bird that especially in Attar's poetry is associated with a gatekeeper that guides people toward heaven and repels the devil; while *Simurgh* is a symbol of a mystical mentor and manifestation of the Truth. *Simurgh* also represents man's long-standing desire to fly and transcend to the higher spiritual world and it also symbolizes wisdom and healing in Persian Literature (777).

Charles H. Rowell (1962)" has considered the Albatross as Jesus Christ because similar to Jesus who came to save humanity from the peril of the sin, the Albatross came to save the mariner and his shipmates from the peril of the storm (133). In contrast, Howard Creed (1946) has asserted that the Albatross is identified with God, Himself, not His son. Xing Fang-fang and Hua Yan (2017) have dealt with the Albatross as a virtuous figure that symbolizes both God and Jesus, together. They have analyzed that the Albatross like Christ, loves man, and is similar to Jesus who pleads with God to forgive man, forgives the mariner, and finally bestows the mariner his life (678). Parisa Shams and Farideh Pourgivi (2015) have analyzed the Albatross as a symbol of wisdom, mind, awareness, knowledge, and transcendence that when it is killed by the mariner, this leads the crew to lose their wisdom and guide, and finally to become lost; the mariner, himself, who has lost his way, to find the way and save himself, needs to repent. (51).

Bird symbolism has great importance in African iconology, as well. Appiah Kubi Kwarteng (2016) has studied the *sankofa* as a symbolic Ghanaian bird whose head is backward while carrying a precious egg in its beak which is representative of the future; therefore, the *sankofa* implies the concept that man should dig deeply into his history to move forward successfully (60). Jennifer Slater (2019), however, has analyzed that the golden egg in the beak of the mythical African bird, *sankofa*, is a treasure that represents historical wisdom. Africans should rediscover this historical wisdom to deal with their

current challenges because the knowledge of the past provides what it means to be considered 'human' in Africa. As a result, this journey toward the past is a source of healing, reconciliation, and spiritual recovery (1).

3. Research Methodology

By using Jungian archetypal criticism, this descriptive-analytical article considers the bird archetype as a unifying symbol in the process of individuation in the poetry of the selected poets. It must be also noted that the three birds, *Simurgh*, Albatross, and *Sankofa*, highlight their ritualistic national values and offer various ways to perfection as they manifest their cultural differences. Therefore, through comparative literature, both similarities and differences are investigated.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1 Comparative Literature, General Literature, and World Literature

Comparative literature, according to Praver, is "a study of literature which uses comparison as its main instrument. But ... [it] makes its comparisons across national frontiers" (2). Praver further explains that this comparison more accurately happens "across linguistic barriers" (3). To clarify this, he uses R.A Sayce's distinction between 'General Literature' and 'Comparative Literature' and asserts that 'General Literature' studies literature without any concerns about the linguistic frontiers, that is to say, it scrutinizes the literature of the same nation that speaks the same language. However, in 'Comparative Literature' the scope of literature is broader and includes works of literature of different nations about each other (Praver 3). Now, to start our journey in comparative literature, we need to "look at key terms not in isolation but in comparative associative and lexical fields. The lexical field of comparative literature besides the term of 'General Literature', that of 'World Literature'" (Praver 3-4). Through World literature, it is possible to bring together Persian, English, and African literary works and compare how each culture answers to the question of self-perfection by taking advantage of the bird archetype.

It was Goethe who first introduced the concept of 'World Literature' or '*Weltliteratur*'. This comprehensive word has different disparate meanings, three of which are more important in our current understanding of world literature. First, it is a kind of historiography that attempts to write a history by juxtaposing sections and chapters of different national literatures or describing various eras, movements, or currents in a great scope of different countries. In this sense, choosing the Persian, English, and African works that belong to different eras and literary heritages seems appropriate; because, we can

juxtapose their contents, and at the same time, compare a common theme and the survey of bird archetype and the quest for self-perfection through history from the ancient time to the present. Second, this word, *Weltliteratur*, is used to refer to great books, masterpieces, and classics that have been written around the world. The third and most important final definition of world literature calls for accommodating national literatures of the world beyond your boundaries and being open to and receiving works of art that are written in other countries and languages to exchange between different literatures that have parallel concepts (Prawer 4). In this sense, comparing both masterpieces of Iran and England and even the marginalized work of Africa that are written about the same theme – the bird archetype in attaining Self-perfection – helps us to understand how different individuals belonging to different nations and eras, respond to this issue. Therefore, these various responses open our eyes to further frontiers about ways to self-perfection.

Among the similarities comparative scholars can find, cultural differences are valuable as well, since they can define the idiosyncratic features of certain cultures as well as the identity of people who live within these cultures. For example, investigating Attar, Coleridge, and Agbemabiese's works, represents that although the three world poets have taken advantage of the bird archetype, their approach toward the question of perfection is different: mystics find perfection in God, Romantics seek it in Nature, and Africans chase it in their lost roots. With this regard, Thorlby notes that comparative literature helps us not only to see one poem or one picture in one culture to understand its qualities but also "to see another example of the 'same' thing" in another culture which is of course not identical but only 'comparable'" and enables us "to take the first step towards recognizing what is in each case good, original, difficult, intended" (78-79). With this respect, the study of themes, motifs, symbols, and types cross-culturally can give us very precious information about each nation and culture. It also gives us a bird's eye view of the same theme, motif, symbol, and type that enables us to understand them comprehensively and universally.

François Jost (1974) in *Introduction to Comparative Literature* has mentioned to four categories of comparative literature. The first three categories discuss the topics of first, relations (analogies and influences), the second, movements and trends, and the third, genres and forms; while the final category includes studies of themes, motifs, and types. Jost defines a literary type as "a written incarnation of either a motif or a theme in the form of outstanding figures, be they mythical, fictional, or historical" (184). Historical figures are associated with 'thematical types' while fictional and mythical figures are suited with 'motival types' (184). "Motiv-types have often

been promoted, by general consent, to the rank of Urtypen, archetypes or prototypes" (185). *Simurgh* and *Sankofa* do not exist in reality but they are the mythical and fictional types that their traces in Persian and African literature, respectively, illuminate important notions about their cultures. On the other hand, the Albatross, the real seabird, suits the English Romantic traditions and reveals many mysteries, as well.

4.2 Jungian Archetypal Criticism

This research is an interdisciplinary study, so I need to link comparative literature and the study of themes, motifs, and types to psychoanalysis. In the case of archetypes, it was Jung who defined his archetypal psychological theory based on the concept of "collective unconscious". Similar to Freud, Jung believed that many of our behaviors emerge from our unconscious, but unlike him, Jung asserted that every single individual's unconscious is not completely separate and distinct from the other, but the whole human race shares some parts of our unconscious. With this respect, he defined the concept of collective unconscious. The collective unconscious is a storehouse of images, experiences, and an entire knowledge of the human race that functions as an ancestral memory expressed in rituals and myths, and is closely associated with the concept of the "archetype". That is why sometimes, Jungian psychoanalysis is also called, ritualistic, mythological, totemic, or archetypal (Dobie 62).

According to Jung, some part of our unconscious is shared with all members of the human species. Indeed, the human psyche consists of three parts: a "personal conscious", a "personal unconscious" and a "collective unconscious". In this tripartite psyche, the personal conscious is associated with the present moment and what we are experiencing right now. Once this state of present awareness is passed, it becomes part of our unconscious. However, beneath both the personal conscious and personal unconscious, there is the collective unconscious. The collective unconscious is a storehouse of all images, experiences, and knowledge of the human species. Moreover, the collective unconscious is an "ancestral memory". It is important to note that, we have inherited the collective unconscious from our ancestors, so it binds past to present. It is often expressed in rituals and myths and can be found in archetypes. Archetypes can be discovered in almost identical images and patterns of rituals and narratives of different cultures, no matter where and when they have lived. Archetypes can be also recognized in literature because we meet various characters and situations that have comparable familiar features. At the same time, archetypes can be rediscovered in dreams and religious rituals, as well. Archetypes are the means that they can tell our myths

and our past mysteries; because, as it mentioned they bring the past to the present. In other words, they dig the history and extract what has been forgotten. In this sense, archetypes mediate the unconscious and conscious; because by utilizing archetypes, we become aware of what is unconscious, unknown, or long forgotten. When we remember what has been forgotten, we touch our unconscious; because our remotest memories long been buried deep in our unconscious, are now accessible. Therefore, we can formulate the answers to the unresolved and unknown questions. With this respect, by uniting the unconscious and conscious, archetypes can make us complete, whole, and perfect (Dobie 62-63).

4.2.1 The Process of Individuation

According to Jung (1962), 'Individuation' is a process of psychological integration and transformation since the collective unconscious – using "dreams", "active imagination" and "free association"– is brought to consciousness (21). Jacobi mentions individuation is an "archetypal process" (59), and by chasing its different stages, the individual can attain a unique personality (113). The different stages of the individuation process can be recognized by various symbols, among them the most significant symbols are "the *shadow*, the *Wise Old Man*, the *child*, the *mother* ('Primordial Mother' and 'Earth Mother') ..., the *maiden*, the *anima*, and the *animus*, ... and finally 'the uniting symbol,' the *Self*" (114). These symbols can be represented by figures of gods. They can be also recognized through indestructible symbols such as a stone, a diamond, etc., or abstract geometrical ones like mandalas (114-115). In the case of the uniting symbols for the Self, Jacobi asserts that not only big or sublime symbols can represent the Self, but also little and lowly symbols can illustrate it. (115). In this sense, the symbol of the bird, as it is the main issue of study in this research, can represent the archetype of Self and portray Self-perfection in the individuation process (115).

It was mentioned that through the Jungian individuation process, the individuals seek perfection and through this journey, they should pass different stations. Each of these stations can be recognized by a certain symbol and Rowan describes them as the following: the first stage and symbol in the individuation process is the *persona*, then the *ego*, *shadow*, *anima*, and *animus*, respectively, and finally the *Self*. Although some believe that the *Wise Old Man* or the *Wise Old Woman* is the penultimate stage before the *Self*. (144)Therefore, the process of individuation is a self-realization process that ends with a unified and complete psyche (*Self*) and can discover and experience the true meaning and purpose of life. To fulfill this purpose, we should learn to "discover and accept the different sides of ourselves, even

those we dislike and resist" (Dobie 63) because this process "depends on the interplay and synthesis of opposites e.g. conscious and unconscious, personal and collective, psyche and soma, divine and human, [and] life and death" (Schmidt).

5. Discussion

5.1. The Archetype of the Bird in Attar's Poetry

Attar's allegorical narrative poem, *The Conference of the Birds* (1971), begins with a group of different birds, symbolizing Sufi wayfarers, decide to choose a king for themselves because they believe that "no country can have a good administration and a good organization without a king" (11). Regarding man's psyche as a country and a microcosm, therefore, at the very beginning of the story, the Jungian process of individuation has just started. The birds' journey symbolizes the necessity for man to take a self-realization journey to become complete and whole. Attar has listed many different types of birds including, the Hoopoe, the Nightingale, the Peacock, etc. in his poetry to represent different symbolic meanings of each, and above all, he has illuminated and glorified *Simurgh*, as a Supreme Being. Choosing birds instead of any other creatures is significant because their archetypal meanings refer to transcendence and soul flight. Moreover, birds reside in the sky, mediating between the earth and heaven. In this sense, birds symbolically represent both the human and the divine because they fly between these two domains and they belong to both realms. With this respect, birds as archetypes, can mediate between the known realm of the earth and the unknown mysterious realm of the heavens. As a result, the bird archetype unites the conscious and the unconscious by uniting the mundane and the divine. That is to say, the bird archetype integrates the evident and the hidden, the known and the unknown, and the conscious and the unconscious. Through this integration, the bird archetype works as any other archetype and moves toward the goal of wholeness and perfection.

According to Jung (2020), "the celestial soul, as such dwelling with the Gods, ... appearing in the form of a bird" (370). This notion is illustrated in Attar's poetry because the Sufis who suffer in the cage of exile have appeared as birds that want to return to heaven; to the abode of *Simurgh*, and dwell, live, and subsist in Him. In addition, the relationship between the birds and the human's soul is a sufficient comparison; because they can really or metaphorically fly. Indeed as the bird flies, the soul aspires upward and becomes free from any restraints and boundaries of the earthy world, while it is seeking for the heavenly peace. As Waterbury stated, birds help man draw his eyes away from his surroundings and his mundane desires. Instead looking

at birds' flight invites man to pay more attention to his soul which should go upward and reach to the heavens (57). Hoopoe in Attar's poetry, similarly, mentions several times that the flock of birds should pass over their mundane desires. They should deny whatever they have and renounce their worldly desires to reach to the stage of 'Nothingness' and 'Annihilation'. Just in this way, they are free like birds and they can ascend to the heavens. It is important to note here, that immediately after the stage of 'annihilation', there is the stage of 'Subsistence',. These two last stages represent the final purpose of mysticism that Sufis want to be free from themselves and whatever they lack in their incomplete beings to unite with a Supreme Being which is complete, whole, and perfect. To achieve this valuable goal, birds' flight can remember man's soul flight, and that is the theme, literary figures artistically take advantage, of to remind man of his forgotten myth – where he has come from and where he should end up.

Attar describes that after thirty birds – the number is significant because it is associated with the *Simurgh* – meet *Simurgh*, the veils lift and the truth illuminates as the thirty birds discover that *Simurgh* exactly looks like themselves altogether. *Simurgh* reveals the secret and explains, "The sun of my majesty is a mirror. He who sees himself therein sees his soul and his body and sees them completely. Since you have come as thirty birds, *si-murgh*, you will see thirty birds in this mirror. If forty or fifty were to come, it would be the same" (132). In this quote, self-realization is a key to salvation. Self-realization, in the Jungian process of individuation, is the key to individualizing a complete Self, as well. Jung to show this psychological development utilizes archetypes and asserts that they can help the individual to become whole and perfect (Dobie 63). Similarly, Attar, by taking advantage of the archetype of the bird, illustrates this transcendental growth. Therefore, the thirty birds, in a metaphoric form, symbolize the journey toward self-realization in the process of individuation, while the *Simurgh*, itself, represents the final stage in this process, and demonstrates the archetype of a complete Self. As a result, knowing one's Self, through the process of individuation, can make man perfect, and this goal is demonstrated mystically in Attar's allegorical poetry.

Jung (1976), asserts that "the bird signifies the aerial, volatile spirit, ... whose physical and spiritual meanings are united" (476-477). As the crown of creation, man has willpower and that is what distinguishes him from other creatures. He has the innocence of angels and the sexual instinct of animals. In other words, he has both mundane earthy desires and spiritual transcendental goals. However, by looking at the birds, flying in the sky, he remembers his forgotten myth and his ancestral memory. Indeed, the bird archetype reminds man of his remotest myth about the real purpose of his life and helps him

answer the unknown questions, such as “why we exist, why we suffer, and how we are to live” (Dobie 63). Comparably, Sufis ask similar fundamental questions, as well. Rumi puts it as:

All day I think about it, then at night I say it.
Where did I come from, and what am I supposed to be doing?
I have no idea.
My soul is from elsewhere, I’m sure of that,
And I intend to end up there (lines 1-5).

The answer to the three fundamental questions – Where have human beings come from? What are they supposed to be doing? And where will they go? – lies in Rumi’s poem, as well. Indeed, the poem mentions that we have come from heaven, so our souls should end up there, and this journey is the purpose of our lives. Attar symbolically demonstrates this skyward journey of the thirty birds to *Simurgh* in his poetry. He uses a creature that has feathers and wings to highlight the notions of ascendance, flight, and transcendence of the soul. By using the bird’s archetype, he teaches man to unite his conscious (known) and unconscious (unknown) to soar up into the heavens, where he can be satisfied, fulfilled, and complete. Therefore, through the archetype of *Simurgh*, Attar illustrates the mystics’ final goal: reunion with God and subsistence in Him.

5.2. The Archetype of the Bird in Coleridge’s Poetry

According to Jung (2009), “the daimon of sexuality approaches our soul as a serpent ... [while] the daimon of spirituality descends into our souls as the white bird” (354). The Albatross, in Coleridge’s *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1992), functions as an archetype that represents transcendence, spirituality, divine wisdom, and insight. The dominant white color of this seabird is significant because it resembles the “white bird” that Jung has spoken of. Through the poem, Coleridge describes how this white bird descends spirituality into the mariner’s soul and saves him eventually. Moreover, the Albatross is a bird that repels any evils, such as the “storm-blast” (line 41), and “[makes] the breeze to blow” (line 94). However, by killing the Albatross, the mariner puts himself in great difficulty. The Albatross came to save the mariner from the storm, but the mariner compensated its good act with cruelty and, for this sin, it was necessary for him to indemnify. Since the Albatross symbolizes Christ, the killing of the Albatross can be compared to Christ’s crucifixion. Christ, on the cross, prayed to God to forgive man, similarly, the Albatross wanted the mariner to be forgiven, as well (Fang-fang and Yan 678). With this respect, when the mariner finally understands the

beauty of another natural creature, the water snakes (line 282), he is saved and the Albatross falls off his neck and sinks into the sea (lines 290-291).

The archetype of the bird symbolizes transcendence because generally, the bird's flight represents the soul's flight to the heavens. However, in some cultures, the afterlife where the souls travel, is not located in the heavens but it is in the underground. In these cultures, transcendence is not exactly equal to upward and skyward ascendance, but the direction is downward. With this respect, in Coleridge's poetry, when the Albatross sinks into the depths of the sea, it does not happen accidentally. Indeed, the sea is the source of the Romantic Sublime, and the Albatross's sinking into the sea represents the afterlife that one can become complete, united, and satisfied there.

Birds can carry the spirits of the dead to the next world (Moreman 2). Regarding the Albatross as a bird that carries the spirits of the dead crew, when it sinks into the sea, the bird carries these souls to the fulfillment realm of the afterlife in the sea. Therefore, the souls return to their origin; to that of the sublime of nature, and there they unite with their true essence and become whole and complete there. Jung (1973) explains that birds can be omens of death, but uses this sample as an example of 'synchronicity', noting the archetype of rebirth (22-23). Therefore, the Albatross that carries the dead souls, by sinking into the sea, carrying the souls to the afterlife, and integrating and uniting them with the Sublime, causes the souls to be born again and revived in Nature. Comparing the mystical concepts of "annihilation of the ego" and "subsistence in God" with a romantic view of Nature, for romantics, it is Nature and, especially water here, that is the life-giving element reviving the souls. The mariner, himself, at the end of the poem, sinks with his ship into the sea, but he is saved and finds himself in a boat as he has been baptized and gained a spiritual rebirth.

Bird's symbolism in different cultures represents other seabirds such as storks and cranes as a symbol of life, longevity, immortality, and rebirth. For example, Chinese and Japanese believe that cranes transfer the souls of those who gained immortality to heaven (Martin 34) Moreover, storks – deliverers of babies in European traditions – along with cranes, symbolize fertility and longevity (Moreman 8). Furthermore, storks' migration implies the return of the spring and emphasizes the notion of fertility (Tate 131). The cranes' dance imitated by some people – for instance, the dancers of Ostiks of Siberia who dress in the skin of the cranes and start dancing in their funeral rituals (Rowland, 32) – represents longevity, as well. Considering the cranes with longevity and fertility, and performing cranes' dance in funerals, makes it "difficult and sometimes impossible to distinguish funerary from fertility elements" (Armstrong 71). This proves more that how death and rebirth can

be interwoven and interconnected. With this respect, the Albatross, another seabird, portrays similar notions of life, death, rebirth, and immortality altogether. To confirm this, it should be noted that the Albatross is not only a seabird whose domain is water, but at the end of Coleridge's poem when it sinks into the water of the sea, this represents the afterlife and rebirth because, according to Jung, the symbol of "water" is associated with "the divine quality of transforming and giving spiritual rebirth to man (Jung, 1938, 110). Therefore, the Albatross, the spirits of the dead crew that the Albatross carries, the ships and the bodies of the dead crew, and the mariner when they all sink in the waters of the sea, find union there and then revive in Nature.

The Albatross and the water-snakes are closely associated with each other in Coleridge's poem as they both have similar archetypal meanings. Although Jung (2009) asserts that the "serpent" represents the "daimon of sexuality" while the "white bird" portrays "the daimon of spirituality" (354), water-snakes, in Coleridge's poem, are a kind of fish that represent spirituality and divinity, as well. Both Albatross and water snakes symbolize God and Christ, and they refer to human wholeness and perfection. With this respect, Jung (1951) states that,

The alchemical fish symbolism leads directly to the lapis ...; that is, psychologically, to the self. We now have a new symbol in place of the fish: a psychological concept of human wholeness. In as much or in as little as the fish is Christ, does the self mean God? It is something that corresponds, an inner experience ... into the psychic matrix, a new realization of the divine son (183).

Therefore, fish symbolism as Jung (1951) asserts, increases and develops consciousness and awareness (183). With this respect, both the Albatross and the water snakes, representing the bird and the fish's archetypes, illustrate notions such as wisdom, insight, inspiration, and knowledge, and they symbolize a Supreme Being, God or Christ. As soon as the mariner perceives the beauty of the water snakes, the Albatross falls off his neck, and the mariner's curse breaks. This is another example of "synchronicity" because "his appraisal for nature coincides with getting rid of the spell around his neck" (Shams and Pourgiv 51) and in this way he is saved as the archetypes have a healing effect. Therefore, Coleridge, taking advantage of natural phenomena and creatures, especially the Albatross, emphasizes the notion that man's salvation and perfection depend on his reunion with Nature.

5.3. The Archetype of the Bird in Agbemabiese's Poetry

The symbolic bird, *sankofa*, refers to a *Twi* word from the Akan tribe of Ghana and is made of three parts: *san+ko+fa*. The English translation for *san* is "to

return”, *ko* means “to go” and the equivalent to *fa* is “to fetch or to seek and take”. Therefore, *sankofa* altogether means “return to go and fetch it” “go back and get it” or simply “retrieve it”. The symbolic *sankofa* is also associated with the Akan proverb which says *so wo be fi na wosankofa a yenkyi* meaning, it is not wrong to go back for what you have forgotten. The *sankofa* is a significant symbol in the African-American *diaspora*, as well, because it invites individuals necessarily to look back to their past to build a successful future. In other words, postcolonial individuals, to find and rebuild their true identity, need to go back to their roots; they should retrieve it from the past and accompany and integrate it with the identity that is defined for them by their ex-colonizer. Thus, the post-colonial successful future relies on passing this identity crisis successfully and achieving a unified Self. They should know themselves in the context they have belonged to, to make a better and truer Self, which has merged their ‘double-consciousness’ into ‘self-consciousness’ (Du Bois 2).

Agbemabiese’s poem entitled “Sankofa” seeks the lost history of African people who were affected by the British ideologies of the Imperial period for a long, and by gaining this knowledge, Africans can know themselves better and pass their identity crisis. With this respect, the use of an archetypal figure of a bird is sufficient. The *Sankofa* recalls knowledge, and it searches for lost history. History is a crucial term that comes from the Latin *historia*, meaning “inquiry; knowledge acquired by investigation” (Brian and Janda 163). Therefore, the symbolic *sankofa* is an archetype of wisdom, knowledge, awareness, and consciousness. As the archetype can integrate the unconscious and the conscious, it can lead the individual to become complete and whole, the archetype of the bird, *sankofa*, by bringing lost history and unknown knowledge to the surface and to the consciousness, makes the post-colonial individuals complete and whole, and make a better truer Self for themselves. In other words, the individuals, through the process of individuation with the help of archetypal *sankofa*, become complete and merge their ‘double-consciousness’ into a unified self-consciousness. With this respect, Du Bois asserts,

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife – this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self, in this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He does not wish to Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He wouldn’t bleach his Negro blood in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world.
(2)

Agbemabiese in the poem “Sankofa” plays with the notions of ‘history’ and ‘his-story’ as he composes: “I want to tell my-story, our-story / Not his-story stripped of my-story” (lines 1-2). This verbal association between ‘history’ and ‘his story’ is due to the fact that history has always been written by people who had power. In the case of British Imperialism, the British were the dominant power, so they dictated their English ideologies to their colonies, and wrote and defined the history of indigenous people as they wished and according to their standards. Therefore, the ‘his story’ of the British Empire is not the ‘history’ of African people. With British ideology, Africans used to define themselves as inferior while seeing their colonizer as superior. As a result of this feeling of inferiority, Africans try to satisfy themselves in an act of “mimicry” – imitating the colonizer’s behaviors and appearance. However, the mimicry only gives them a sense of “double-consciousness” and they feel “*unhomely*” even in their own country because they feel they are not at home within themselves (Tyson 421). Therefore, the archetypal symbolic bird, the *sankofa*, reminds Africans of their remotest myths, roots, their history, cultures, and rituals. Further, by integrating their unknown history with their present identity, with the help of the archetypal bird, the *sankofa*, they integrate and unify their unconscious and consciousness and gain a truer complete Self. With this respect, the *sankofa* is a symbol of both spiritual and historical wisdom and it helps Africans transcend their psyches by remembering their pre-colonial values and rituals. Therefore, Africans can become perfect and whole by remembering when they were considered as ‘human’. In this way, they do not feel ‘*unhomed*’ anymore.

Comparing the Persian, English, and African cultures, the three birds, *Simurgh*, Albatross, and *Sankofa*, help the individuals to go back to their true Home and feel perfect, whole, and satisfied there. Indeed, by comparing these three works, celebrating the bird archetype, we can scrutinize the same entity but through multiple lenses. These works are not “identical” but only “comparable” because they are different examples of “the same thing” (Thorlby, 78). So they represent how man can become perfect and whole variously. Looking at and finding these different alternatives to the same question, is the purpose of world literature; because it investigates between literature of different cultures through history and looks at how different views can be recognized for the same issue. Therefore, by putting all these pieces together, World literature can give us a comprehensive understanding of the same issue. Domrosch, a great master in World Literature, exemplifies Goethe who utilizes Chinese novels in his writing. Domrosch himself, binds the past to the present in the analysis of Gilgamesh. He also, explains how foreign texts can portray at the same time “a sharp *difference* we enjoy for its sheer

novelty; a gratifying *similarity* that we find in the text or project onto it, and a middle range of what is *like-but-unlike* – the sort of relation most likely to make a productive change in our perceptions and practices. (Domrosch 2003, 11-12). In this sense, choosing the Persian, English, and African literary works not only brings together the most ancient literary works to the current ones but also it ties different cultures and highlights their cultural differences in responding to the same question – Self-perfection through the bird archetype. In other words, the main reason the researchers of this study have brought these different literary works together is that, although each belongs to a different literary heritage and culture, they represent what is like-but-unlike, and simultaneously they celebrate both similarities and differences about the same quest – self-perfection.

As demonstrated in Attar's poetry, Persian Mystical culture defines the true Home, the Abode of *Simurgh*, symbolizing the Garden of Eden, where mystics can unite with their true essence, the ultimate Truth, God. English Romantic culture, as it was shown in Coleridge's poetry, identifies Nature as the true Home. Therefore, by reunion with Nature man can find peace and become perfect. To reach this perfection, however, he needs to attain knowledge and wisdom, and the Albatross in Coleridge's poetry marks the process man should take to gain such awareness, perceive the beauty of Nature, and reconcile and unite with it. The Albatross, itself, celebrating nature, also implies God, Christ, and Divinity. As a result, uniting with the Albatross in the sea as the source of the Romantic Sublime makes man whole, Similar to the unification of mystics with God in Attar's text Therefore, God and nature are comparable and they both lead to perfection in different cultures. In Coleridge's poem, this unification happens through two processes that happen almost back to back: first, after the mariner perceives the beauty of nature, his spell breaks and the Albatross falls from his neck and sinks into the sea, second, shortly after the mariner with all other corpses in his ship sink into the sea. Therefore, all become united deep down in the sea.

In the above paragraph, it was discussed that in Attar and Coleridge's work, reunion with God and Nature, respectively makes man feel perfect. However, in the Post-colonial African culture that is portrayed in Agbemabiese's poetry, self-perfection paces through a different path. In African culture, individuals need to take a self-realization journey by traveling to the past and knowing one's roots to build a successful future. With this respect, Africans' true Home is located in the past and their roots. Therefore, the symbolic bird, *sankofa*, is a metaphor that binds the past to the present, and it helps post-colonial individuals find their unified identities and become perfect, both historically

and spiritually, by reunion with their past, where they were valuably considered as a real human, not as an inferior slave

6. Conclusion

As it was discussed in this paper, world literature is the lexical field of comparative literature. Further, world literature can include any works that circulate and go beyond their own cultures whether by translation or even through their original languages. World literature can bring together works from the remotest time to the current time to dig and investigate a certain issue from various lenses. In this way, it can portray a comprehensive image. By comparing both similarities and differences, world literature presents what is like-but-unlike simultaneously, and it can broaden our horizons and intercultural understanding.

The topic investigated through this paper, was the question of man's Self-Perfection through the bird archetype and within different cultures. Archetype is the backbone of Jungian psychology, and through the process of individuation, it demonstrates how this self-realization journey ends with a completely unified Self, Wisdom, and the Truth. The strife to be 'complete' has been a long-standing desire in the collective unconscious of the whole human race. However, each nation, through different times and settings, has had its interpretation of this desire and responded to it variously. Comparative Literature and World Literature are the instruments that go across national and linguistic frontiers and investigate how certain artists and poets have utilized certain themes, motifs, symbols, and types to represent their ideas, and have offered a balanced view and a sublime perspective.

As it was studied in this article, the archetype of the bird, comparably, revealed its transcendental and spiritual wisdom-oriented meanings in the poetry of Attar, Coleridge, and Agbemabiese. The mystical tradition of Persia has been manifested in Attar's poetry, and the archetypal bird, the *Simurgh*, portrayed the mystical endeavor to become one with God and unite with Him. The English Romanticism, glorifying Nature, has been represented in Coleridge's poem and the archetypal bird, the Albatross, has represented how transcendence must be achieved through union with Nature, which is, in fact, a manifestation of the Divine. The main concern of the African poet, Agbemabiese, has been to search for the lost indigenous history, and the symbolic bird, *sankofa*, has shown the path toward the past traditional values. Therefore, all of three birds, the *Simurgh*, the Albatross, and the *Sankofa* represent transcendence based on self-realization and wisdom. All three are archetypal birds, and they help individuals discover their true selves and become complete and whole. Indeed, by uniting the known and unknown, and

bringing what is unconscious to the consciousness, these three archetypal birds help a man become perfect, complete, and whole. However, each of these birds, belonging to a certain culture and setting, represents transcendence and perfection according to their cultural values. The unknown for Persian mystics is the Divine; they should soar their souls to God to unite with Him and become the One. The unknowable for English Romantics is the bare Nature or not civilized landscape, that they must reconcile and unite with it. The unknown or forgotten realm for African Post-colonial individuals is their past and lost history that they should retrieve and reunite with it to become both spiritually and historically perfect because by retrieving the past they do not consider themselves inferior and 'non-human' anymore, but they find their true Selves there.

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How to cite:

Soroori Sotoodeh, N., & Sasan, S. 2023. "A Comparative Analysis of Birds as Archetypes in the World Literature: A Jungian study of Selected Poems by Attar, Coleridge, and Agbemabiese, *Naqd va Nazaryeh Adabi*, 17(3): 21-40. DOI:10.22124/naqd.2024.25811.2519

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پژوهشگاه علوم انسانی و مطالعات فرهنگی
پرتال جامع علوم انسانی

تحلیل تطبیقی کهن‌الگوی پرندگان در ادبیات جهان: بررسی اشعار منتخب عطار، کالریج، و اگی مبایس از منظر روانشناسی یونگ

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نگار سروری ستوده^۲

چکیده

ادبیات جهان در مورد آثار ادبی که فراتر از فرهنگ بومی جریان می‌یابند، تحقیق می‌کند و آنچه که هم‌زمان مشابه و فاقد شباهت به نظر می‌رسد را نمایش می‌دهد. ادبیات جهان، یک بنمایه مشخص را مورد مطالعه قرار داده و چگونگی نمودهای فرهنگی‌اش را تصویر می‌کند. کهن‌الگوی پرنده یونگ، آن وجه مشترکی است که در این بررسی تطبیقی مورد تحلیل قرار گرفته است. پرواز پرنده، صعود و تعالی متافیزیکی را آشکار می‌کند. به علاوه، کهن‌الگوی پرنده معانی دیگری همچون مرگ، تولد ثانوی، بیداری، آگاهی، روشن‌ضمیری و معرفت را نیز دربرمی‌گیرد. این مقاله به بررسی و تطبیق کهن‌الگوی پرنده در اثر منظوم منطق‌الطیر (۱۹۷۱) عطار، منظومه دربانورد کهن (۱۹۹۲) کالریج، و شعر «سانکویفا» (۲۰۰۸) اگی مبایس می‌پردازد. دلیل چنین گزینشی این است که، با وجودی که این آثار به اعصار و میراث ادبی مختلفی تعلق دارند، اما هر سه سفری در جهت کمال فرد را به تصویر می‌کشند. این شعرا، با استفاده از کهن‌الگوی پرنده، معانی کهن‌الگویی سیمرغ، آلباتروس و سانکویفا را به ترتیب در فرهنگ‌های ایرانی، انگلیسی و آفریقایی آشکار می‌کنند. پرنده، کهن‌الگوی متحدکننده‌ای است که از طریق روش تطبیقی و بر اساس «فرآیند فردیت» کهن‌الگویی یونگ، نمایان‌گر کهن‌الگوی "خود" (سلف)، در واژگان تخصصی یونگ است. با پیوند اشعار این ملل، کهن‌الگوی پرنده، به وسیله سفری خودشناسانه، مسیر کمال جویی، تعالی، و وحدت انسان با کل، را نشان می‌دهد.

واژگان کلیدی: یونگ، کهن‌الگوی پرنده، فرآیند فردیت، ادبیات تطبیقی، ادبیات جهان

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