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## **DESPERATE LOVERS VERSUS TYRANT BELOVEDS: THE MASTER-SLAVE ANALOGY IN THE POEMS OF JOHN KEATS AND FELICIA HEMANS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Although love of nature as a source of inspiration is one of the primary themes in Romantic period, romantic love, which conveys the passion, pleasure, or the pain of love, often appears as a common theme in Romantic poetry. Romantic poetry becomes as a fertile space where some of the poets explore romantic love as a powerful, intense, and irresistible emotion that gives pain and melancholy rather than pleasure and happiness. I argue that the uneasy relationship between the lovers and beloveds in Romantic poetry, particularly in poems of John Keats and Felicia Hemans parallels with a long-lasting theme, the pain of love, depicted through the sultan-servant or master-slave analogy in Ottoman Divan poetry. Discussing the function of master-slave analogy in Ottoman Divan poetry and theorizing love within philosophical and scientific contexts with the ideas of Ficino and Hegel, this paper examines how Keats and Hemans employ this analogy in their poems and explore the pain of love to demonstrate the power dynamics between the lovers and beloveds.*

**Key words:** *romantic poetry, Divan poetry, love, John Keats, Felicia Hemans*

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## Umutsuz Âşıklara Karşı Zalim Maşuklar: John Keats ve Felicia Hemans'ın Şiirlerindeki Efendi-Köle Benzetmesi

### ÖZET

*İlham kaynağı olarak tabiata duyulan aşk Romantik dönemin ana temalarından biri olsa da, sevgiliye duyulan aşk, tutkuyu hazzı ve aşk acısını ileten Romantik şiirde oldukça sık rastlanan tematik bir öğedir. Romantik şiir bazı şairlerin sevgiliye duyulan aşkı haz ve mutluluk yerine melankoli ve acı veren güçlü, yoğun ve karşı konulamaz bir his olarak ele aldıkları verimli bir alan oluşturmaktadır. Özellikle John Keats ve Felicia Hemans'ın şiirlerindeki âşık ve maşuk arasındaki huzursuz ilişki, Osmanlı Divan şiirinde sultan-kul ya da efendi-köle benzetmesi ile resmedilen aşk acısı teması ile benzerlik göstermektedir. Divan şiirindeki efendi-köle benzetmesini tartışan ve Ficino ve Hegel'in aşk üzerine düşüncelerini filozofik ve bilimsel çerçeveler içinde ele alan bu çalışma, Keats ve Hemans'ın âşık ve maşuk arasındaki güç dinamiğini göstermek için bu benzetmeyi ve aşk acısını şiirleriyle bütünleştirdiklerini inceler.*

**Anahtar kelimeler:** romantik şiir, Divan şiiri, aşk, John Keats, Felicia Hemans

### Introduction

Although love of nature as a source of inspiration is one of the primary themes in Romantic period, romantic love, which conveys the passion, pleasure, or the pain of love, often appears as a common theme in Romantic poetry. Driven by the feeling of love based on personal experiences or observations, William Wordsworth describes love in “Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known” as a secret feeling he “will dare to tell, / in Lover’s ear alone, / What once to [him] befell,” (1984: 148) while for Robert Burns, love is a fresh flower and long-lasting feeling depicted in “A Red Red Rose.” Instead of writing her romantic experience, or perhaps employing a woman’s story as a reference to hers, Felicia Hemans narrates an Italian Renaissance sculpture Properzia de’ Rossi’s pain of love through “Properzia Rossi” which is seen a “self-mirroring poem” by critics (Luu, 2014: 49). Similarly, a

less-known female Romantic poet Letitia Elizabeth Landon explores the pain of love in “Love Tormenting the Soul,” looks for the ways of forgetfulness in “Love’s Last Lesson,” and expresses her disappointments in “Revenge.”

Compared to the heartbroken, therefore melancholic female poets who bitterly reproach their lovers/beloveds, male Romantic poets seem relatively enthusiastic to express admiration to the beloveds. In “Bright Star, would I were steadfast as thou art,” John Keats declares his love for Fanny Brawne with whom he was infatuated, while Lord Byron explores not directly love but deep affection and admiration for a woman in “She Walks in Beauty.” Using natural imagery and laws of nature that command connectedness and intermingling, Percy Shelley playfully attempts to seduce the beloved for physical unity in “Love’s Philosophy,” while Samuel Coleridge writes how all feelings are connected to love in “Love” and reveals his admiration for the beloved in “The Presence of Love.”

It is not unusual to see various examples of love poems, epitaphs, and ballads written by Romantic poets since Romantic poetry is defined as “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” by Wordsworth in the Preface of *Lyrical Ballads* (1802: 1). Therefore, Romantic poetry becomes a fertile space where some of the poets can examine romantic love as a powerful, intense, and irresistible emotion that gives pain and melancholy rather than pleasure and happiness. I argue that the uneasy relationship between the lovers and beloveds in Romantic poetry, particularly in the poems of John Keats and Felicia Hemans, parallels with a long-lasting theme, pain of love, depicted through sultan-servant or master-slave analogy in Ottoman Divan poetry. Discussing the function of sultan-servant analogy in Ottoman Divan poetry, particularly in rhyming couplets called gazel, I will examine how Keats and Hemans employ this analogy in their poems and explore the pain of love to demonstrate the power dynamics

between the lovers and beloveds. To theorize love within philosophical and psychological framework, I will discuss the ideas of Marsilio Ficino and G. W. F. Hegel on love along with psychologist Robert J. Sternberg's the triangular theory of love and sociologist John Lee's taxonomy of love. This conceptualization of love develops a better understanding about how and why the literary beloveds and lovers act the way they do since the beloveds become dominant and tyrant while the lovers are subordinate, pathetic, needy, and desperate like a slave. Moreover, philosophical approaches and scientific research on love shed more light on the motivations of the literary lovers and beloveds.

Throughout history, philosophers and scientists have strived to theorize and conceptualize the epistemology of love with different definitions classifications, and schemes. Among many, the pioneering German sexologist and physician Richard von Krafft-Ebbing identifies five main varieties of love: true love, sentimental love, platonic love, friendship, and sensual love (Regan, 2016: 3). On the other hand, religious theoretician C. S. Lewis identifies other types of love including *affection*, *friendship*, *eros*, and *charity*. *Eros* is a state of "being in love," and *charity*, a selfless and "Divine-Gift-love" that has no expectations of reward or reciprocity, is "simply best for the beloved" (qtd. in Regan, 2016: 4). In more contemporary context, however, psychologist Robert J. Sternberg proposes three components of love: intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment. The intimacy is emotional and involves feelings of closeness, warmth, and connection. Passion is less stable and includes physical and romantic attraction and sexual consummation. Hatfield and Walster refer to passion as "a state of intense longing for union with the other" (qtd. in Sternberg, 1986: 122). The needs for affiliation and submission feed passion. The decision/commitment, however, is closely related to conscious control and includes decisions about short and long-term commitment (Sternberg, 1986: 119). Sternberg argues that the three components of

love produce eight different love types one of which is infatuation driven by passion, and characterized by extreme attraction without intimacy and decision/commitment. On the other hand, sociologist John Lee's taxonomy on love includes:

(a) *eros*, the love style characterized by the search for a beloved whose physical presentation of self-embodies an image already held in the mind of the lover; (b) *ludus*, which is Ovid's term for playful or game like love; (c) *storge*, a style based on slowly developing affection and companionship; (d) *mania*, a love style characterized by obsession, jealousy, and great emotional intensity; (e) *agape*, which is altruistic love in which the lover views it as his or her duty to love without expectation of reciprocation; and (f) *pragma*, a practical style involving conscious consideration of the demographic characteristics of the loved one. (qtd. in Sternberg, 1986: 125)

For the discussion on the literary beloveds in the second part of this paper, Lee's categorization, particularly *eros* and *ludus* are significant due to their function between the lovers and beloveds. The ludic lover considers love as a game and has several partners simultaneously. They do not have a place in ludic lovers' future life plans because "The ludic lover avoids seeing the partner too often and lies and deception are justified, and expect the partner to remain in control of his or her emotions" (Regan, 2016: 9).

Although scientists substantially conceptualize love over the last fifty years, today's research draws on the discussions on love in the Ancient Greeks. In philosophy, particularly Platonic tradition, love is defined as the desire for beauty and transcends the physical body. There are three notions of love according to the Ancient Greeks philosophy: *eros*, *agape*, and *philia* (Moseley, 2001: para. 4). *Eros* is a passionate and intense desire for an object, particularly sexual passion. *Agape* is the love of God in the Judaic-Christian tradition or brotherly love. *Philia* is a love for family members, public, community, or country.

*Philia* and *eros* are responsive to the beauties and goodness of the beloved. Influenced by Plato, Italian philosopher Marsilio Ficino explains his conception of love in *Commentary on Plato's Symposium*,

He who loves, dies; for his consciousness, oblivious of himself, is devoted exclusively to the loved one, and a man who is not conscious of himself is certainly not conscious in himself. Therefore, a soul that is so affected does not function in itself, because the primary function of the soul is consciousness.... If it does not exist in him, it also does not live in him, and he who does not live is dead. Therefore, everyone who loves is dead in himself. But at least he lives in the other person, does he not? Certainly. (1944: 144)

Ficino expands Plato's discussion on love by reinterpreting various aspects and characterization of love. For example, he explains 'simple love' that "occurs when the loved one does not return his lover's affections" while "mutual love" occurs if the love of the lover is reciprocated (1944: 144). Ficino's ideas correspond to that of Hegel who characterizes love with his theory of recognition:

The fundamental principle of the empirical character is love, which has something analogous to reason in it, insofar as love finds itself in other men, or rather by forgetting itself, puts itself outside of its own existence, and, so to speak, lives, feels, and acts in others, just as reason as the principle of universally valid laws knows itself again in every rational being, recognizing itself as fellow citizens of an intelligible world. (2001: 59)

Both philosophers mention the self-forgetfulness of the lover who forgets himself to live in another person. For Hegel, "the mind of the lover (in Hegel: the self-conscious person) leaves the body and tries to 'incarnate' itself in the body of the beloved" (Lemanski, 2019: 105). According to Ficino, the lover puts himself in danger because he does not know if the beloved loves him in return. "If the love of the lover is not reciprocal," the lover "is completely dead' (omnino mortuus est)

because he has left his body and his soul is not revived in the body of the beloved” (Lemanski, 2019: 105). In this case, the love of the lover is not intersubjective.

### **The Master-Slave Analogy in Divan Poetry**

The self-forgetfulness of the lover suggested by both Ficino and Hegel pervades Ottoman Divan poetry where the love of the lover is mostly not intersubjective. The lover depicted as a servant/slave is a passive character who loses his willpower and is completely under the control of the beloved. The words categorized to depict the lover in Divan poetry are “naked, lost, helpless, afflicted, ruined, yellow, maddened, burning, bewildered, powerless, downtrodden, disheveled, ill, insane, fallen, weak, unhappy and destroyed” (Andrews, 1976: 45). He has genuine feelings for the beloved, and his life is his only capital. He is loyal, brave to die for the beloved, and keeps his promises. Being away from the beloved is equal to death, thus the lover constantly goes back and forth between life and death. The lover is willing to risk his life for the beloved although the beloved attempts to kill the lover with her gaze which is as sharp as a sword or “arrow-like” eyelashes. For example, fifteenth-century poet Ahmet Paşa asks: “Is there any heart not bleeding from the arrows of your glance / Is there any life not sacrificed to the bow of your brow?” He continues describing his pain, “I have wept so much blood longing for your rubied lips / Every door and wall of your town are made coral from my tears” (Andrews et al., 2006: 35). Similarly, the sixteenth-century poet Figâni describes the beloved’s intention to kill the lover with her gaze writing, “Close friends! If only I knew what sin I committed toward that beloved! / Her drunken eye became enraged and drew a dagger to kill me” (Andrews, 1976: 161). Besides arrow, dagger is used as a metaphor for the lethal gaze of the beloved.

The beloved, on the other hand, can be defined a “ludic lover” as examined in Lee’s taxonomy of love. Being the source of pain, grief, and love sickness is the major characteristic of the beloved, who is playful and sometimes unfaithful by seeing multiple suitors simultaneously. The beloved has a heart made of rock and does not keep her promises nor care about the lover who is about to die due to sorrow and heartache. The beloved tortures the lover psychologically and emotionally. For example, the sixteenth-century poet Necâtî writes, “The custom of the beautiful ones is tyranny and torment / But they’ve never ruined anyone the way they’ve ruined me!” However, he consoles himself saying, “Hey Necâtî, have patience, what can you do? / Who among the lovers has not learned torment from the beauties?” (Andrews, 1985: 41). If the beloved is no longer mean and tyrant, it is considered as a bad omen by the lover because this could mean that the beloved lost interest towards the lover. The lover seeks to stay in the center of the beloved’s attention although the beloved is mostly mean and disinterested. The primary reason of the beloved’s cruel attitude is to test the lover to see whether she/he is committed. Despite the tortures of the beloved, the lover should be steadfast, endure the tortures with patience, and most importantly, not complain about the beloved.

Ottoman Divan poetry is highly complex and sophisticated. It inherited formidable poetic tools, forms, and themes common to Arabic and Persian literary traditions within Islamic context, and included “the most intricate metaphors, the most perplexing ambiguities, and the most mind-boggling hyperboles” (Andrews et al., 2006: 7). With the influence of Arabic and Islamic context, the Divan poetic tradition emerged in the thirteenth century. Divan poetry, which was a highly symbolic art form allowing numerous interpretations and potential meanings, ended in the nineteenth-century due to the influence of modernism and degradation of the Ottoman Empire. In this period, besides long poems, poets wrote gazel, a short lyrical poem in couplets



ranging from four to fourteen or more lines. It is considered as the heart and soul of classical Ottoman literature and a popular poetic form in Divan poetry.

Within a male dominated literary tradition, some of the female poets wrote gazel to express their love by transgressing the male lover and female beloved image. For example, Mihri Hatun “had to belong to the Empire’s highest social class, where classical poetry was produced and performed” (Silay, 1997: 204) and one of the elite women who attempts to exist in the conventional literary circle controlled exclusively by male artists. Andrews notes that Mihri Hatun “is said to have been of a passionate nature and to have fallen in love several times, which her poetry is then presumed to reflect” (Andrews et al., 2006: 219). In one of her poems titled “My Heart Burns,” Mihri Hatun addresses her beloved and expresses the pain of love. Her poem begins with the following lines: “My heart burns in flames of sorrow / Sparks and smoke rise turning to the sky/Within me, the heart has taken fire like a candle / My body, whirling, is a lighthouse illuminated by your image” (Andrews et al., 2006: 51). Like her male counterparts, she praises the physical appearance of the male beloved saying, “See the rope-dancer of the soul, reaching for your ruby lips/spinning, descending the twist of your curl/Oh you with the bright face, radiant as Venus / The moon twisted into a crescent to resemble your arching brow” (Andrews et. al., 2006: 51). She emphasizes the beauty of his “ruby lips,” curly hair, “bright face” and “arching brow.” The face of the beloved including the eyes, forehead, eyebrows, lashes, cheeks, lips, teeth, chin, and mole are examined elaborately by the poets. The beloved is often portrayed unapproachable, which leads the lover to idealize her beauty. This practice corresponds to *Eros* as a love style which leads the lover to create an image about the beloved in his mind. Patriarchic literary tradition clearly shaped Mihri Hatun’s artistic creativity since she adopted the same descriptive images and metaphors

used by male poets. Female poets followed the traditional style exclusively created and used by males. Perhaps, for Mihri Hatun, Zeynep Hatun or Leyla Hanım, adopting the clichés about physical beauty attributed to the female beloved was the only way to get acceptance from the male dominated literary club.

Since Divan poetry is highly metaphorical and multidimensional, the master-slave analogy between human beings which I examined in earthly framework can also be interpreted within a spiritual and metaphysical context where the lover is a faithful servant while the beloved is the Lord. In corporeal and earthly context, the lover is after physical pleasure, but encounters rejection, suffering, and pain. When his unavailing endeavor does not find an answer, he concludes to disregard earthly ambitions which allow him to receive divine insight. The earthly love transforms into a spiritual love, and the new consciousness of the divine power “puts the lover in contact with the other world, thereby ‘curing’ him of the ills of this transitory world” (Andrews, 1985: 82). Moreover, the lover gains a new insight about the world and life which is temporary and full of tests measuring the lovers—servants’ endurance. This love corresponds to Lewis’s *charity* and *agape* in both Greek philosophy and Lee’s taxonomy of love. The love of the lover is altruistic, and he acts without expectation or reciprocation.

Most of the characteristics of the beloved symbolize the Divine love in Islamic mysticism since God is the source of eternal beauty, the reason of continuation, and perfection. The cruelty of the beloved/God is to test the lover/servant and purify him/her from the sins through various tortures. However, the lover needs the beloved, his mercy, protection, and forgiveness, and “man’s love for God is expressed through obedience to him” (Abrahamov, 2003: 15). Unlike the material love, Divine love “awakens man’s soul from the slumber of negligence and folly and makes the soul ascend from the material to the rational

things, from the sensational to the spiritual entities” (Abrahamov, 2003: 20). The soul leaves the material temporary pleasures for the permanent spiritual gratification. One of the renowned Ottoman poets, Bâki says, “Do not heedlessly waste life now in the corner of despair / For the place to be is the edge of the garden and the bank of the stream. / Do not lose the opportunity for, like the time of the rose, / The sway of the garden of this world is transitory” (Andrews, 1976: 42). The passionate lover who is growing insensible to the surrounding world forgets all attachments other than the beloved. He reaches to a point where his essence and the essence of the beloved unite. “The Platonic-Socratic position maintains that the love we generate for beauty on this earth can never be truly satisfied until we die; but in the meantime we should aspire beyond the particular stimulating image in front of us to the contemplation of beauty in itself” (Moseley, 2001: para. 5). Likewise, the lover in mystical discourse closes himself to the pleasures of physical world and sharpens the power of insight to perceive the love of God.

### **The Pain of Love**

In most of Keats’ poetry, we see an idealized beloved whose beauty is incomparable to any of the living creature. She is depicted as a “dove” in “Ode to Psyche,” or “Full beautiful—a faery’s child,” whose “hair was long, her foot was light, / And her eyes were wild” in “La Belle Dame Sans Merci” (Keats, 1899: 139). In “Lamia” published in 1820, the beloved is a “full-born beauty” (Keats, 1820: 13) and “was a maid/More beautiful than ever twisted braid, / Or sigh’d, or blush’d, or on spring-flowered lea / Spread a green kirtle to the minstrelsy: / A virgin purest lipp’d, yet in the lore” (Keats, 1820: 14). Virginity of the beloveds can be related to purity and chastity as well as secular and religious discourse. It suggests that Keats uses these particular words to emphasize one of the popular criteria of woman’s beauty associated with body rather than personality. The physically idealized beloved

points out Keats's intention to create a love style like *Eros*, which allows both the speaker and the poet to create a perfect image of the beloved in their minds.

However, Keats often hides wickedness behind the charming face of the beloved as in "Lamia" where "happy Lycius" will learn the deep love "to the red heart's core." "Lamia" can be considered as a "text about love for ideal and perfect things and, at the same time, as aesthetic existence of confusion by ideal, perfect things possessing magic tempting power of transformation and reincarnation" (Semerenko & Pliushchai, 2018: 180). In the poem, Lycius takes the role of a slave who tastes the pain of love while Lamia becomes a tough and relentless master who is graduated from "Cupid's college." As the beloved in Divan poetry, Lamia allures Lycius with her beauty.

Lycius surrenders to Lamia's charm and is fascinated by her appearance, coyness, and soft voice with a sweet tone. As the lovers drink "the wine of love" in Ottoman Divan poetry, Lycius drinks Lamia's beauty, becomes intoxicated and is "chain[ed] so sure" (Keats:, 1820: 18). Being chained refers to the master-slave relationship between the lover and the beloved. The following lines point out how Lycius becomes desperate and helpless due to Lamia's seductive magnetism:

For so delicious were the words she sung,  
It seem'd he had lov'd them a whole summer long:  
And soon his eyes had drunk her beauty up,  
Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup,  
And still the cup was full,—while he afraid  
Lest she should vanish ere his lip had paid  
Due adoration, thus began to adore,  
Her soft look growing coy, she saw his chain so sure. (Keats, 1820: 19)

Lamia has most of the characteristics of the beloved in Ottoman Divan poetry. She is "cruel," and makes Lycius sick with her love. When Lamia spreads her "white arms," "He, sick to lose / The amorous

promise of her lone complain, / Swoon'd, murmuring of love, and pale with pain. / The cruel lady, without any show / Of sorrow for her tender favourite's woe" (Keats, 1820: 19). Lycius's face becomes pale due to the fear of losing Lamia and the pain of love. Lycius is drawn to Lamia, acting as if he was under a spell. He loses self-control and will-power whenever he hears Lamia's sweet voice and songs. However, when she "put[s] her new lips to his and gave afresh/ The life she had so tangled in her mesh:/And as he from one trance was wakening" (Keats, 1820: 22), it becomes a renovation and resurrection for the lover. Lycius "from death awoke into amaze, / To see her still, and singing so sweet lays; / Then from amaze into delight he fell / To hear her whisper woman's lore so well; / And every word she spake entic'd him on / To unperplex'd delight and pleasure known" (Keats, 1820: 22). He cannot resist but gives his possession to Lamia who takes him from death to life, amazement to delight, or perplexity to pleasure. On one hand, Lamia desires to take Lycius's life like a witch and supernatural creature; on the other, she resurrects him with a kiss like a savior angel. For the public, Lycius is a "senseless" or "madman," but he ignores the rumors and reason instructed by Apollonius that human passion cannot be ruled by rationality and intellect. The duality of the beloved between cruelty and mercy in "Lamia" parallels with the role of the beloved depicted in Ottoman poetic tradition.

In another poem titled, "La Belle Dame sans Merci," meaning "the beautiful lady without mercy," Keats tells the story of an unfortunate knight lured by a destructively beautiful woman without pity. "La Belle Dame sans Merci," "reveals Keats seemingly struggling with his vexed attitudes towards women and women readers. His knight is emasculated by his subjugating desire for the beautiful faery" (Ulmer, 2017: 142). The lady is depicted as an attractive, yet deadly and mysterious creature whose victims are "pale kings and princes / Pale warriors, death-pale were they all; / They cried—"La Belle Dame sans

Merci/Thee hath in thrall!” (Keats, 1899: 139). The knight in the poem is lost and abandoned “On the cold hill’s side. / Alone and palely loitering, / Though the sedge is withered from the lake, / And no birds sing” (139). Even though the knight “remains unloved, unloving even *dying*, nonetheless *he gets to tell the story*” (Mellor, 1993: 184). The knight tells his story, feelings and thoughts; however, belle dame’s voice is never heard. Women in Keats’s poetry are usually supernatural, mysterious, destructive, and sexually powerful. On the other hand, men such as the knight in “La Belle Dame sans Merci” or Lycius in “Lamia” is between love and death, dream and waking, and ecstasy and its aftermath of despair. They cannot escape from the tortures of the cruel beloveds who treat them like slaves. In Keats’ poetry, love and death goes hand in hand as in Divan poetry where unity means death of love and the idealized image of the beloved. Keats suggests that the lovers need to take the risk of losing their lives before entering the dangerous domain of love.

The lovers in Keats poetry endanger their lives for the unity with the beloved which is also true for the lovers in Divan poetry. Physical unity occurs in Keats’s imagination as the lovers embracing each other in “Ode to Psyche,” living together in “Lamia” or spending time together in an “Elfin grot” in “La Belle Dame sans Merci.” However, although the lovers yearn for a physical unity in Divan poetry, there is always distance between the lover and the beloved. Thus, meeting, touching, embracing, and kissing are relatively rare in Divan poetry. The only place the lover can see the beloved is the dreams, which is very similar to Keats’s idea of creating a secret place like the paradisiacal forests in “Ode to Psyche” and “Lamia” in his imagination to meet his ideal love.

Compared to Keats’s male lovers who unite with the beloved, yet suffer afterwards or lose their lives like Lycius, Felicia Hemans presents a heartbroken female lover through a historical figure to

portray the pain of love from a unique feminine perspective in “Properzia Rossi.” Helen Luu defines Hemans’ poetry “not merely domestic and nationalistic, but also cosmopolitan and transnational; not simply sentimental and affectional, but also prophetic and vatic; not passionate, unstudied, extempore effusions, but restrained and reserved, polished and academic, scholarly and pedagogical poetry” (2014: 41). Through her unusual literary style, Hemans “speaks for” important women figures lived and died before Hemans who explores their stories in *Records of Woman*. Hemans makes the dead speak by using a literary device, prosopopeia — “a figure of speech in which an imaginary person is represented as speaking,” which enables us to enter into the “frozen world of the dead” (de Man, 1979: 928). Literary critic Paul De Man defines prosopopeia as “the-voice-from-beyond-the-grave” (927). The rhetorical function of prosopopeia in Hemans poetry is to restore the life and the voice of the dead through poetic form and connect the dead and the living. Replacing the actual voice with a fictionalized one, Hemans essentially grants immortality to the dead and resurrects a historical figure, Properzia de’ Rossi by making the history accessible. She “moves the dead from private parlors to public fora” (Gates, 2014: 59) and creates a direct bond with her dead subject.

Hemans reconstructs the unfortunate romantic experience of Properzia de’ Rossi revealing the passions and pain of love. However, as a critic, Glennis Byron is skeptical whether the poem, as its title suggests, should be associated with the experience of one woman and asks:

So with whom do we associate these lines: Rossi the sixteenth-century Italian artist, Joan the fifteenth-century French heroine, Mme de Staël’s fictional Corinne, or the nineteenth-century English poet herself, Felicia Hemans. Or, to expand the possibilities to a ridiculous degree, perhaps they should be associated with the tragic Ariadne of classical myth; after all, this is the woman whom Rossi is sculpting and to whom she gives her “form” and “lineaments.” (2003: 82-83)

Byron indicates that the poem not only mirrors Hemans's persona as a tragic lover but also gives voice to diverse women and connects them in a multicultural sphere. Hemans publishes her poems in *Records of Woman* and preserves the lives and memories of women unrecorded and unremembered by memorializing them. Hemans relies on the universality of love experienced by women in different geographical locations, cultural domains, and time periods. Thus, her poem connects the past and present and transcends time and space through effigial forms. Disregarding nationalism, Hemans has "a less grounded imagination looking beyond the home into a variety of wider aesthetic and geographic horizons" (Singer & Sweet, 2014: 1). The multiplicity of voices in the poem points out Hemans's multidimensional work and ambitions to construct a global aesthetic art.

At the beginning of "Properzia Rossi," a dramatic monologue, Hemans notes that Rossi "died in consequence of an unrequited attachment" in a short explanation and pictures the Renaissance Italian sculpture working on her final project (Hemans, 1853: 25). The speaker in the poem dedicates her last work to talk to both the beloved and the others. Addressing the beloved, she says, "May this last work, this farewell triumph be— / Thou, loved so vainly" (25). She desires to leave "Something immortal of my heart and mind, / That yet may speak to thee when I am gone" (26). It is the desire of lovers to communicate with the beloved and express themselves in some way. Thus, the lover carves a sculpture, which reveals her feelings to the beloved, and her story to the others, as the speaker in the poem reveals, "Yet the world will see / Little of this, my parting work in thee" (28). Hemans, on the other hand, creates a "verbal art from visual art" (Scott, 2001: 36). This last artistic work of the speaker is "something that may prove / What she hath been, whose melancholy love / On thee was lavished—silent pang and tear" (Hemans, 1853: 26). The unrequited love, "Simple Love" as Ficino puts it, is "Stealing the brightness from her life away,"



yet the speaker places it in her artistic piece to give it a life. By doing so, she hopes that the beloved would feel guilty of not reciprocating her romantic feelings. She states, “Live in thy work breathe out!—that he may yet, / Feeling sad mastery there, perchance regret / Thine unrequited gift” (Hemans, 1853: 26). The lover also attributes the role of a mediator to the sculpture to convey her feelings to the beloved.

The love pain the speaker experiences is the primary motivation of her creating an artistic piece as a form of visual expression. The speaker/lover suffers due to the pain of love as she states, “How had my spirit soared, and made its fame / A glory for thy brow!” (Hemans, 1853: 29). The lover has not only a “burning heart”—a heart, whereon to lean, / With all these deep affections that o’erflow” but also an “aching soul, and find no shore below” (27). Like a typical lover, “the fire / Burns faint within [her],” (29) while the beloved takes the “the brightness” from her life, leaving her “under the burden and the agony / Of this vain tenderness” (26). The beloved is depicted as a merciless man; however, the lover is willing to carry the burden of the unrequited love that brings lovesickness, disappointment, and broken-heartedness.

Enthusiastically watching the masterpiece she is making, the speaker is proud of herself: “The bright work grows/Beneath my hand, unfolding, as a rose, / Leaf after leaf, to beauty; line by line, / I fix my thought, heart, soul, to burn, to shine, / Thro’ the pale marble’s veins. It grows—and now / I give my own life’s history to thy brow” (Hemans, 1853: 26). Comparing her experience to that of Ariadne, a mythological character, Hemans uses intertextuality to connect the experiences in ancient and modern times. “Forsaken Ariadne!—thou shalt wear / My form, my lineaments; but oh! more fair” (26). The sculpture records the experiences of the speaker as she mentions, “Thou art the mould / Wherein I pour the fervent thoughts, the untold, / The self-consuming!” (27). The sculpture not only restores a personal story, but also becomes an interpreter for the speaker because the lover asks the sculpture to

“Speak to him, lorn one, deeply, mournfully, / Of all my love and grief!” (27). She gives flesh to the stone and blurs the boundaries between the living and the dead. Besides feelings, the speaker desires to give it a voice by saying, “Oh! could I throw / Into thy frame a voice—a sweet, and low, / And thrilling voice of song!” (27). As the lovers discussed in Keats’s poems and Divan poetry, the speaker is between life and death: “Surely my parted spirit yet might know, / If love be strong as death!” (27). Comparing love and death, Hemans suggests that these two concepts are equal in terms of the damage and pain they cause. As Ficino and Hegel mention, the speaker is already dead since she leaves her body to revive in the body of the beloved; however, her love is not reciprocated.

Although the speaker cannot incarnate in the body of the beloved, she ironically constructs a new body form—sculpture to cherish her life as well as love. She states, “Now fair thou art, / Thou form, whose life is of my burning heart” (Hemans, 1853: 27). Metaphorically placing her heart/life into the sculpture, the speaker challenges the philosophical death of the lover due to unrequited love. Though she is not dead, nor is she free due to the chains of love because “where’er I move, / The shadow of this broken-hearted love/ Is on me and around!” (28). Like a slave, she is under surveillance and has limited power to control her feelings. Thus, she loses her hope: “Therefore my brief aspirings from the chain / Are ever but as some wild fitful song, / Rising triumphantly, to die ere long / In dirge-like echoes” although through the sculpture, she “might have given / Birth to creations of far nobler thought” or “might have kindled with the fire of heaven” (27-28). Despite the unfinished work, the sculpture will complete its mission. On behalf of her, the sculpture should not only tell her story but also “Give the parched flower a raindrop, and the meed / Of love’s kind words to woman” (28). Although Williamson argues, “In fact, the sculpture becomes the vehicle not for her voice, but for the

voice of an abstracted male commemorator who sees in the sculpture a simulacrum for the body and voice which once created, and yet now can command, speech in others” (2014: 36), the speaker creates a visual interpreter for her feelings in a way by creating a sculpture. The last lines of the poem point out her intention: “I leave it, with a sound, / A spell o’er memory, mournfully profound; / I leave it, on my country’s air to dwell— / Say proudly yet—‘*Twas hers who loved me well!*’” (29). The speaker fantasizes to hear the voice of the beloved in the sculpture. Moreover, the lover opens her bitter experience to the public rather than keeping it as a secret incident. The sculpture transforms into a hybrid medium which unites public and private so that the bitter personal story will historically be preserved.

Similar to Properzia de’ Rossi’s unrequited love story conveyed through poetry, in “Juana,” Hemans portrays the desperate lover Juana, the mother of the Emperor Charles W.. In the headnote, Hemans mentions that Juana lost her husband Philip the Handsome of Austria, “who had treated her with uniform neglect” during his lifetime (Hemans, 1853: 69). Besides his infidelities, humiliations, and physical and emotional abuse, Philip “spread[s] rumors of Juana’s spiritual and mental tribulations, and to promote her insanity: refusal to confess or to receive Holy Communion, poor personal hygiene, mistreating servants, and hatred of other women” (Gómez et al., 2008: 12). Juana I of Castile, also known as Juana the Mad becomes a source of inspiration for many artists, including Hemans. The headnote along with historical documents suggest that Juana’s husband did not love his wife in their marriage. The tragic fate of Juana allows us to define her as a lover while her husband was/is the beloved. Juana, “a woman with long raven hair sat watching by the dead,” is “possessed with the idea that it would revive” (Hemans, 1853: 69). Watching the dead body of her husband, the speaker laments for her husband to whom she assigns a superior position by calling him “my prince, my lord!” (Hemans, 1853: 71). This

attribution automatically makes the speaker a servant for her “lord” and highlights the master-slave relationship between the husband and wife.

The master-slave relationship between the speaker and her husband is also highlighted through their different physical characteristics. For example, while “On *her* wan cheek no beauty dwelt, and in her garb no pride,” the dead body of her husband majestically lays, “Proudly and sadly glittering in royalty’s array” (Hemans, 1853: 70). Stressing her husband’s beauty, the speaker addresses him as “a monarch, robed and crowned / With all thy bright locks gleaming still, their coronal beneath, / And thy brow so proudly beautiful” (70). Similar to the speaker in “Properzia Rossi,” Juana describes her husband as the “Fairest and stateliest of the earth!” (Hemans, 1853: 70). However, “I am not fair like thee,” she says, and “A frail and drooping form is mine—a cold unsmiling cheek” compared to “the very glance of whose clear eye threw round a light of glee!” when she mentions her husband (71). Unlike her faded cheeks and sad face, her husband has a “sunny” smile. The speaker declares ownership over her husband’s smile “Which brightly fell, and joyously, on all *but* me erewhile” by protesting, “my own, my own shall be the sunny smile” (Hemans, 1853: 71). In Hemans’s poetry, “The regenerative, redemptive power of sentimental Christian feminine affection is often motivated by thoughts of ownership and appropriations of male beauty that are hardly pure, saintly, or holy” (Williamson, 2001: 39). The speaker’s dark hair and color draws a sharp contrast with her husband’s hair and features, indicating the idealized purity and beauty of the beloved. Like Mihri Hatun who praises the beauty of her beloved, the speaker in “Juana” admires her husband’s physical appearance.

The speaker is aware of the fact that her love was not reciprocated by her husband, but keeps her hope alive as a persistent lover. Showing feminine affection, she calls him “the beloved one!” and asks if “thou hast not loved me yet” (71). As if she was not worthy of

his love, she sees him above herself. Asking for mercy from her husband, the speaker hopes to win his love, saying, “I have but a woman’s heart wherewith *thy* heart to seek” (71). She eventually concludes that only “a patient love must win back love at last!” (71). Like the hopeless lover in Divan poetry, the speaker finds consolation in patience and chooses to endure the pain of the beloved. Although the beloved is dead and cannot answer the desperate calls of his wife, he continues to torture her as indicated that it is an unsettled case between the wife and husband when he was alive. She bitterly reflects on that saying, “No more in vain affection’s thirst my weary soul shall pine—“ if “years of hope deferred were paid by one fond glance of thine!” (71). She is in denial of her husband’s death and faithfully waits for the smile of the beloved who keeps withholding it from the lover. Williamson notes that, Hemans’s “Women who mourn their husbands are supposed to view dead men as irreplaceable” (2001: 20). Delusional of the reality like typical lovers discussed earlier, the speaker is in despair and grief while the cruel and dead beloved continues to punish Juana by leaving her questions and demands unanswered.

Due to grief and love-longing, the speaker is in deep pain: “But wake my heart within me burns, yet once more to rejoice / In the sound to which it ever leaped, the music of thy voice” (72). Eventually, “The passion of that loving dream from a troubled soul found way” when “they bore away the royal dead with requiems to his rest, / With banners and with knightly plumes all waving in the wind” (72). When the dead is buried, “a woman’s broken heart was left in its lone despair behind” (72). Not coming to terms with her loss along with unrequited love, the lover becomes melancholic and mentally unstable. However, Hemans states the message of the poem in the headnote: “too much we give / Unto the things that perish” (Hemans, 1853: 69). The pain of love intermingles with the pain of loss and grief in “Juana” where Hemans presents a historical figure and the voice of the dead. Unlike her male

Romantic counterparts, Hemans brings a feminine perspective to the private life of women like Juana and Rossi to the public by exploring the central conflict between the lovers and beloveds.

## **Conclusion**

Romantic love urges philosophers and scientist to know its various aspects along with the poets who explore this intense feeling through the master-slave analogy in both Romantic and Ottoman Divan poetry. Through the analysis of Keats's and Hemans's poems, this study demonstrates that both poets adapt the theme of pain of love through the master-slave analogy which is a common theme in Ottoman Divan poetry between thirteenth and nineteenth centuries. The theoretical and philosophical context on love provide a sufficient background to develop my argument within philosophical and scientific framework. Particularly, Ficino's theory of love and Hegel's theory of recognition allow us to define and categorize different types of love that correspond to my discussion about the lovers who experience "self-forgetfulness" in the poems of Keats and Hemans as well as Divan poetry. Keats' poems "La Belle Dame sans Merci" and "Lamia" present how the lovers are possessed and lose their self-control due to cunning beloveds who imprison desperate lovers into their almost demonic domains. The analyses of these poems show that the lovers are chained and embrace the role of a slave who follows his master and orders. Consequently, the lovers experience the pain instead of the pleasure of love. Similarly, Hemans conveys the pain of love in her poems "Juana" and "Properzia Rossi" where she uses a literary device called prosopopeia to make an imaginary person speak. By doing so, Hemans gives voice to a historical figure and builds a connection between the past and present. In her poems, Hemans depicts tyrant male beloveds who torture the lovers by not reciprocating the lovers' feelings. Using the master-slave analogy to explore the theme of love that gives pain rather than pleasure

both Keats and Hemans present the complicated relationship between the lovers and beloveds in Romantic poetry.

### **Information Note**

The article has been prepared in accordance with research and publication ethics. This study does not require ethics committee approval.

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## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study is to show how Romantic poetry shares similar themes with Ottoman Divan poetry. Through close reading of selected poems of John Keats and Felicia Hemans and bringing the philosophical discussions of Ficino and Hegel, this paper examines how Keats and Hemans employ the master-slave analogy in their poems as one of the common themes in Ottoman Divan poetry. Although love of nature as a source of inspiration is one of the primary themes in Romantic period, romantic love, which conveys the passion, pleasure, or the pain of love, often appears as a common theme in Romantic poetry. Romantic poetry becomes as a fertile space where some of the poets explore romantic love as a powerful, intense, and irresistible emotion that gives pain and melancholy rather than pleasure and happiness. I argue that the uneasy relationship between the lovers and beloveds in Romantic poetry, particularly in poems of John Keats and Felicia Hemans parallels with a long-lasting theme, the pain of love, depicted through the sultan-servant or the master-slave analogy in Ottoman Divan poetry.*

*In order to reveal the thematic relationship between Romantic and Divan poetry, the characteristics of Divan poetry, particularly the interaction of the lovers and beloveds in selected gazels are discussed. This discussion elaborates the parallels between the eastern and western poetic traditions in regards to the master-slave analogy to depict the pain of love theme. The philosophical and psychological epistemologies of love are employed to situate my argument within a theoretical framework. Influenced by Plato, Italian philosopher Marsilio Ficino explains his conception of love by arguing that the lover dies and the soul of the lover leaves him. He categorizes love as “simple love” and “mutual love” depending on whether the love of the lover is reciprocated. Similar to Ficino’s ideas, influenced by Fichte, Rousseau, and Aristotle, Hegel characterizes love with his theory of recognition by proposing that the lover forgets the sense of self and desires to revive in the beloved’s body. If the love of the loved is not reciprocated, the love is not intersubjective. The philosophical concepts paved the way to the scientific research about love as psychologist Robert Sternberg and sociologist John Lee propose taxonomies of love. Their research suggests different types of love and lovers, which provide a background for my discussion about the motivations of lovers and beloveds in the poems of Keats and Hemans.*

*The theoretical and philosophical concepts of love allow us to define and categorize different types of love that correspond to my discussion about the lovers*

*who experience “self-forgetfulness” in the poems of Keats and Hemans as well as Divan poetry. Keats poems “La Belle Dame sans Merci” and “Lamia” present how the lovers are possessed and lose their self-control due to cunning beloveds who imprison desperate lovers into their almost demonic domains while Hemans conveys the pain of love in her poems “Juana” and “Properzia Rossi” where she uses a literary device called prosopopeia to make an imaginary person speak. By doing so, Hemans gives voice to a historical figure and builds a connection between the past and present. Using the master-slave analogy to explore the theme of love that gives pain rather than pleasure, both Keats and Hemans present the complicated relationship between the lover and the beloved in Romantic poetry.*