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### The Search for the Absolute in Attar's Speech of the Birds and Schiller's The Veiled Image at Sais

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Article Info	Extended Abstract
<p><b>Article type:</b> Research Article</p> <p><b>Article history:</b> Received: 27 October 2022 Received in revised form: 13 February 2023 Accepted: 13 March 2023 Published online: Summer 2024</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> The Absolute, comparative literature, mystical philosophy, mystical veil, spiritual journey, World Literature.</p>	<p>The search for the absolute and the endeavor to achieve it, which have always been among humanity's concerns, are primarily expressed in the mystical literature of different nations. Attar's <i>Speech of the Birds</i> (1177) and Schiller's <i>The Veiled Image of Sais</i> are two notable examples. Concerns with the desired absolute, the ways to achieve it, and finally the consequences that follow the reunion with the ultimate beloved are based on the assumption that one can go beyond the limits of this world. In philosophical and mystical schools, the absolute truth is introduced as a great mystery or the mystery of mysteries. In Attar's narrative, the heroes of the story are birds—representatives of human souls in this world and a symbol of mystics—, whereas in Schiller's poem, the hero is a young man who yearns for absolute knowledge. The present article explores the nature of the connection (con/di-vergence) between the abovementioned narratives in order to find out the issues each narrative raises about this quest and what its hero(es) achieve(s). Although the narratives share common ideas and motifs such as the search for the absolute, God, self, and the truth, the existence of a mystical veil on the path of knowledge, the discovery of a secret, the spiritual journey, and finally annihilation, the literary-historical foundations, story elements, point of view, plot structure, heroes, as well as the quantity and/or quality of the stories, differ in the two narratives. The differences are also visible in the persistency of the hero(es), the use of archetypes, the path and time/duration of the spiritual journey, and the conclusion of the two stories. Nevertheless, due to their common elements of ambiguity and mystery, these transcultural stories in the world literature archive are both open to different interpretations. Therefore, this article attempts to answer the following questions: Are the concept of the absolute and the possibility of and the path to achieving it similar in both narratives? Which approach do the two mystical narratives, which belong to two different cultural-linguistic fields, take regarding truth-seeking and the possibility or impossibility of achieving it? In other words, fitting into the American school of comparative literature, the present paper examines the thematic and stylistic commonalities and divergences between the abovementioned works from a multifaceted and partially interdisciplinary critical perspective</p>

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