



## The Comparative Study of Epicurean thoughts in Horace and Hafiz

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**ABSTRACT:** Hafiz and Horace are both among the greatest poets of the world. Despite the differences and dissimilarities in their motifs, concepts, and notion infrastructures, they are somehow similar in their Epicurean notions. Both agree about notions on carpe diem, death acceptance, greed absence, drinking, and being happy leading the readers to perceptiveness and new horizons. It is attempted here to study the Epicurean notions of Hafiz as the presenter of Iranian thinking, and Horace as a versifier of ancient Rome. The following question will be answered in this study: What are the Epicurean notions? Which basic notions of Hafiz and Horace are common in Epicurean domain?

**Key Words:** Comparative literature, Epicure, Horace, Hafiz, Epicurean notions

ORIGINAL  
ARTICLE  
Received 02 Sep. 2013  
Accepted 24 Oct. 2013

### INTRODUCTION

Comparative literature studies the traces of human thoughts, and indicates that people have thought about the same things in the past and in different places. It won't be strange that a thinker thinks about a subject another thinker have thought about it earlier or will think about it in another part of the world, because as it is known, the notable world poets pay attention to motifs which are the concerns for all thinkers in their poetry. Horace is excellent in that he is interested in moment like our Iranians' Hafiz, and he repeats the carpe diem motto like him. Although Epicurean notions had some followers in Iran due to the translation of Greek works into Arabic from 1020s to 1420s, and even some patches of it appeared in poets' poetries, Hafiz has paid attention to it with his special roguery.

Studying the research background indicates that although carpe diem had been compared between Hafiz and Khayyam notions in some studies[1], no comparative approaches has been taken towards Epicurean notions of Hafiz and Horace and no independent research has been done in this regard. Therefore, the vantage point of the present article is its concentration on a comparative approach towards the reflection of Epicurean notions in Hafiz and Horace poetry performed in a descriptive method based on desk studies.

#### Epicure

Epicurus or Abiyur is the Greek philosopher originating a school called Epicureanism [1]. Although pleasure and happiness are bases of Epicurean philosophy, he does not mean that every pleasure leads to happiness, but the pleasures must be chosen. Two points must be regarded here. First, Epicurus does not mean instant pleasures or personal feelings, but he means a persistent pleasure during lifetime. Second, according to him, pleasure mostly is the lack and absence of pain rather than positive achievement [2]. Epicurus prefers mental pleasures over physical enjoyments because they can be perceived easier and possible universally at any time. Death and its aftermaths must not be feared and apprehended because everything causing fear and dread can be eliminated. Epicurus had put this order always before him and had been acting accordingly. He had not been seeking wealth and dignity, and had avoided interfering in territorial affairs, and had been less thinking about social life. He said no pleasure is bad in itself, but it might be bad whenever the means to achieving them cause disturbance more than happiness and joy [3]. Epicurus had held these lessons in a garden. He was very popular that thousands of students were present to his lesson and worshiped him, and behaves in fraternity with each other. Epicurus Garden is known to the learned and they recognize it as a metaphor for Epicurean philosophy [4]. According to Epicure, the notions leading to pleasure and happiness and are similar in Hafiz and Horace and appeared in their poetry are as follows: carpe diem, friendship and love, satisfaction and contentment, and accepting death. The fear of death must be overcome to gain pleasure in life [5, 6].

#### Horace

Horace was one of the most eminent poets of ancient Rome and a contemporary to Virgil. He also had a trip to Greece in his youth and was influenced by Epicurus thoughts reflected as the carpe diem creed in his poems.

Due to his bitter experience of Philipian battle and also due to the Epicurean teachings, Horace had retreated from social life and became involved in Versifying, according to Hafiz [7]. He was given a field in 5 kilometers from Rome by Maecenas after a period of poverty and misery, to be able to pay attention to versify his poetry far from life anxieties. Horace has been seeking much benefit from poetic styles and thoughts of Greek poets. According to Horace, the life follows a linear path leading finally to death. Meanwhile, human being has no choice but following the natural rules, and thinking about the future is a useless thing. Therefore, it is better to seize the day and enjoy it. Other subjects such as friendship mentioned in his poetry are also in line with Epicurean philosophy. He was covered with his thoughts in his last days. It was fifteen years from the time he once said to Maecenas "O man, I won't last long after you". Maecenas deceased and Horace followed him a few months later in his 65, and was buried besides Maecenas [1].

### **Epicurean notions of Hafiz and Horace**

Some notions of Epicurus, known as Epicurus and Abiyur in Islamic resources, are similar and near to Horace and Hafiz verses which cannot necessarily be the evidence for adoptions and the like, but is mostly a propinquity of notions.

### **Happiness and Drinking**

According to Hafiz, the most valuable capital is one's life which must be spent in happiness and be enjoyed at its every moment. According to him, the transience of life causes happiness, and life is passed in a hurry so that it could not be come up with but with the drunkenness and unawareness steed [8]. Naser Khosrow has told the prescient oracle in a dream, «the wise could not make anything except this wine to reduce worldly agonies" [9]. Therefore, the most frequent terms in Hafiz poetry are considered wine (241), drunk (87), drunkenness (38), and other similar concepts [10]. It does not seem necessary to him to frown always and moan from his destiny. He sees the wisdom condition as not thinking about other things except the present pleasure and immediate joy, and not be anxious about that is veiled and those things that are not completely known yet [11].

He thinks drinking wine is the way to eliminate worldly sadness and says:

I. Sweet minstrel! The sweet lay utter afresh, anew.

The wine, heart-expanding, seek afresh, anew, Ghazal NO.478 [12].

Without wine and the minstrel, be not beneath the sky's arch. For,

Within melody, grief from out of thy heart thou canst make, Ghazal NO.143 [12].

Yesterday, the Pir, the wine-seller whose mention be for good!

Said: "Drink wine; and, from recollection, take the heart's grief, Ghazal NO.100 [12]."

This paying attention to inconsistency encourages him to be happy and compliment wine.

I seek a bitter wine potent in its power, to repose for a while from world and its ado, Ghazal NO.278.

Hafiz is not anxious about having or lacking. He tries to be happy hearted with something, console you, and shades a beam of delight and hope on you and himself in the dark night of disappointment by expressing these notions [13].

Grief for this mean world, how long sufferest thou? Drink wine:

Pity is that this sage heart is perturbed, Ghazal NO.159 [12].

Grieve neither at existence nor at non-existence: Be thy mind, happy.

For the end of each perfection is – is non-existence, Ghazal NO.25 [12].

Because grief about the day will cause the body to lose its tranquility. He wants his audience to be happy instead of grieving.

O Hafiz, happiness & pain both expire

I'd better for peace of mind, inquire, Ghazal NO.326 [12].

Horace, like Hafiz, knows drinking wine the way to eliminate anxieties:

O gallant heroes, and often my fellow-sufferers in greater hardships than these,

Now drive away your cares with wine: to-morrow we will re-visit the vast ocean [14].

Horace also refuges to the cup of wine to extinguish life sadness and agonies and writes:

Bring hither, boy, larger bowls, and the Chian or Lesbian wine; or, what may correct this rising qualm of mine, fill me out the Caecuban.

It is my pleasure to dissipate care and anxiety for Caesar's danger with delicious wine [14].

According to Horace, whether thou shalt lead a life of continual sadness or through happy days regale thyself with Falernian wine of the oldest date, at ease

Reclined in some grassy retreat, where the lofty pine and hoary poplar delight to interweave their boughs into a hospitable shade, and the clear current

With trembling surface purls along the meandering rivulet. Hither order [your slaves] to bring the wine, and the perfumes, and the too short-lived flowers

Of the grateful rose, while fortune, and age; and the sable threads of the three sister's permit thee [14].

According to him, drinking is the means to tranquility of mind.

The sky delightfully has stored many anxieties and sorrow for those who seek less.

It is only wine that can scatter the bothering thorns [14].

### Accepting death

One of human anxieties has been thinking about death. Noone has discovered the mystery of death. According to Epicurean notions, the wise is the one he does not fear from death, and fulfills his desires in the moments before his life jar is crushed with the death stone. Hafiz, like Horace, has considered the shortness and transience of life an example to his ideas and thoughts, and knows the *carpe diem* as a remedy and treatment for it in order not to pay attention to it, somehow as a protest against this disability. He had decided to come with a new design and shatter the firmaments, so that people can reach their lifetime wish, and nothing remains a mystery to him anymore.

Rose petals let us scatter  
And fill the cup with red wine  
The firmaments let us shatter  
And come with a new design, Ghazal NO.374 [12].

In a world with lots of temptations for self-escape, and the beautiful discovery of alienation horizons, death cannot be always in mind. The death which will bury human being forever in itself. The happy pleasure seeking of Hafiz is exactly at this point [15]. He recognizes living happily and being not sorrowful about the transient world.

Come, come! And (with the glance of blessing) viewing of the arch (the eye-brow) and of the spectacle-place (the eye) - make.

O breeze of the garden of paradise! From the dust of our assembly, to paradise, a perfume take; and (it) the aloe-fuel of the censer make, Ghazal NO.454 [12].

Now for a while that meeting is possible,  
Note us that the worldly affairs are not clear, Ghazal NO.253 [12].

Horace is also occupied greatly with the notion of finality, and the life ending in his poetry.

To the gods. Let there be a settled standard, that may inflict adequate punishments upon crimes, lest you should persecute any one with the horrible thong,

Who is only deserving of a slight whipping. For I am not apprehensive, that you should correct with the rod one that deserves to suffer severer stripes:

Pale death knocks at the cottages of

The poor and the palaces of kings, with an impartial foot. O happy Sixties! The short sum total of life forbids us to form remote expectations [14].

### Now likewise

It is fitting to sacrifice to Faunus in the shady groves, whether he demand a lamb, or be more pleased with a kid [14].

Three hundred bulls render propitious pitiless Pluto, who confines the thrice-monstrous Geryon and Tityus with the dismal Stygian stream, namely, that stream which is to be passed over by all who are fed by the bounty of the earth, whether we are kings or poor ninds [14].

He also compares death with a carina somewhere else:

We are all driven toward the same quarter: the lot of all is shaken in the urn; destined sooner or later to

Come forth, and embark us in [Charon's] boat for eternal exile [14].

According to both, People must overcome the fear of death to be able to be pleased in life.

### Satisfaction and Equanimity

If Hafiz tends towards poverty and contentment, and avoids the wealth and dignity temptations of serving the king approaching him victimizing knowledge and liberality and religion and humanity, it can be to some extent due to his life experience which sows when considerable amount of wealth is gathered, all humane spirit and life must then be equipped and sacrificed to keep it. Then, despite having wealth and power, peace and tranquility which are the only real purposes of an actual human life will seem just a disturbed dream [15].

It is why he emphasizes:

Beneath the azure vault, I am the slave, who  
Is free from whatever taketh color, Ghazal NO.39 [12].

Because this dissatisfaction deems the peace and tranquility which are the life purposes.

We take not the honor of poverty and of contentment:

To the king, speak saying daily victuals are destined.

Hafiz imagines the transience of the world. The satisfaction, satiety, contentment, mysticism, or the independency leads to freedom according to him [16].

Make contentment thy stock-in-trade; and consume; since, in this pain and affliction, thou art one resource less.

Contentment makes human not to accept the low men's indebtedness due to the transience of worldly materials, and avoid the king's dwelling to achieve dignity and status.

Like Hafez, strive in contentment; and let go the mean world:

Because two hundred "mans" of gold, one grain of the favor of the mean is not worth, Ghazal NO.151 [12].

To him, whose last sleeping-place is with two handfuls of earth?

Say "Thine what need to exalt the turrets to the sky? Ghazal NO.9 [12].

Of the throne of Jamshid and of the diadem of Kay, only a word hath remained.

Treasure-possessing, by the inheritors is kufr, Ghazal NO.486 [12], Liberality and self-respect of Khajeh's mind was related to this vast and high view which prohibited the poet to serve his whole life for the inhumane worldmaster. Therefore he shouts and says:

How long will you sit at the inhumane world master's,

To see when khajeh will appear, Ghazal NO.232 [12].

If be not the treasure of gold, contentment is left:

Who, to kings that gave, to beggars this gave, Ghazal NO.112 [12]?

He also describes human contentment and self-respect:

Beneath the azure vault, I am that slave of resolution, who

Is free from whatever taketh color attachment, Ghazal NO.37 [12].

According to Horace, covetousness and greed are like a tree which must be uprooted and annulated.

The unacceptable and extremist greed must be uprooted and annulated and terrain or fable spirits through the most hard affairs [14].

He had described the covetousness and need into a hole the human being goes deep into it

Covetousness, need and wants are abysses mad the human to go deep down into it with unfound [14].

According to Horac, the more a person adds to his properties, the MOR his anxieties will be, and this satisfaction and contentment causes people to be pleased with his life and be content to what he has. .

When power and property rays, the suffering a sorrows and anxieties join it. The thirst for God and wealth always increase [14].

The more a person is satisfied and self-aware, the more wealth and bounty the Gods give him [14].

When the world takes back all he gives to human, it is not blasphemy to pass his life in difficulty and fear to keep thing just cause anxiety for him and might only have benefits for some later inheritors [15]?

All the properties and wishes you gain with your heart for your heart will pass to a needy inherited [15].

Life teaches many lessons to human beings that his example seer heart will learn always seek the things in your boundaries and powers. Passing beyond limitations is considered as incongruent with religion shame and fear [15]. Each of these poets remind us of the lack of averseness and greed, and disconnection from good and bad in the present time, in their poetry which is another epicurean notions to tranquility.

### **Carpe Diem**

In Hafiz poetry, carpe diem and mystic time consciousness and perception of the moments can be seen eminently. He thinks the lifetime is teaching examples. As we see, it repeats a point that the lifetime is a short opportunity; therefore, it must be seized.

Reckon plunder; and, in the rose-garden, drink wine:

For till another week, the rose is not, Ghazal NO.162 [15].

A space of five days that thou hast in this stage of favor;

Rest pleasantly awhile. For Time all this is naught, Ghazal NO.74 [15].

Treasure the time till you know,

The result of life is not but this moment o, dear, Ghazal NO.316 [15].

Sometimes that the human must go to dust, why in abjectness. Why he should not be filled with joy and happiness. As Ghazzali says how this felicity is gained [17]. He must seize the day. Now that the Jam crown is disappearing, the mankind must be time conscious, and knows the value of moments.

Every pleasant moment that appeared, reckon plunder;

Delay is to none. For the end of work is what, Ghazal NO.65 [17]?

The world spoils everything even its own days. Only a moment is ours. If it is appreciated and valued, we have seized the treasury of a conquest. Otherwise, we have lost, Ghazal NO.298 [15].

Isolate and know the moment,

Some life robbers are hidden on the road [15].

Again he says (O true Beloved!) on the wounded and ruined heart of Hafiz show pity;

For the reason that, after to-day, is certain a terrible to-morrow [15].

Horace also wore his audience that he most values the moments the appreciate. Lidf is in progress and the time cannot be stopped. Therefor we must cling to moments and gain them. What will be tomorrow and also the destiny will give you do not seek. Accept whatever it is like a soviner [14].

Also:

Tis better to accept whatever comes to us [14].

Now that the sorrow on inconsistency embraced human beings, the wise must seek a remedy for it. Horace advises that awake o you man and appreciate the fleeting time. Dn not spoil your life with long wishes. Be aware. Pablish your bowls and cut the wings and fathers of long hopes. Now that we are talking, the time is envying the fled eyes. Pik the flower of the day, without establishing your hopes on future [14].

Both ask human to use most of his time, does not regret the past, and does not fear the yet unmarried future. Instead of regret of the past and sorrow of the future, the present time must be dynamicised and benefited from as soon as possible.

Be again a man that receives the present gifts and benefits, happily, and send the sad and heart breaking thoughts away from yourself [14]. It must be mentioned that in some cases, moment of acting according to your heart is not a heavy gift and easy, to the precious lifetime we lose, but it is gaining your right and restoring a part of lost destiny [15].

## DISCUSSION

The common notions of Hafiz and Horace can be seen in their Epicurean thoughts. We can certainly say that there were no familiarity and relations between these two, and the similarity of Hafiz poetry to Horace is just a matter of their motifs and poetic subjects. Or their worldviews and thoughts have caused them pay attention to common subjects always been the theme in many famous poetic works around the world, and poets around the world have paid attention to them in their own languages and cultures. However, sometime the motifs of these poetries are as near as it is wonderful. Both had the same agony about human life, and both had advices on gaining the time, being happy, satisfaction, etc. At the end, the day must be seized so all of our actions are concentrated on pleasure seeking. This Epicurean notion can be nodded to Hafiz and Horace ideas.

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