

Problematized Humanism: Sadi's Racist Tendency in Gulistan

Ahmad Gholi (Corresponding author)

English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Gonbad Kavous University, Golestan, Iran
E-mail: sirjustadina@gmail.com

Masoud Ahmadi Musaabad

English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Gonbad Kavous University, Golestan, Iran
E-mail: ahmadimusa@yahoo.com

Received: 17-08- 2014

Accepted: 28-11- 2014

Advance Access Published: December 2014

Published: 01-05- 2015

doi:10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.4n.3p.39

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.4n.3p.39>

Abstract

From ancient times to the present, blacks have been the victim of both overt and covert racism in different parts of the world and Iran is no exception. The most inhumane and outstanding facet of racism is slavery which, due to their belief in their cultural and racial supremacy, Iranians also practiced from the Achaemenid period until the second half of 19th century when it was abolished. One of the dark sides of racism infamous poets' participation in it by legitimizing, normalizing, and promulgating the negative images of supposedly inferior race. Some poets are blatantly racist but in some racism appears just in the form of a furtive tendency, thus it needs to be uncovered with zeal of an archeologist, and Sadi belongs to the second category; therefore, this article seeks to lay bare his racist leaning by focusing on one of his tales in his *Gulistan* (Rose Garden), thereby challenging his humanism.

Keywords: Sadi, Blacks, Racist Leaning, Humanism, and Tale

1. Introduction

This part is divided into four parts; in the first section, Sadi's life along with the explanation of his *Gulistan* (*The Rose Garden*) will be briefly presented. Then a very short history of African slaves in Iran from the ancient times up to early Islamic period will be offered. After that, a concise review of literature will be presented and finally the tale which is going to be analyzed will be added.

1.1 Sadi's Biography and his *Gulistan* and *Bustan*

Sadi, whom Jami calls "the nightingale of the groves of Shiraz"¹ (Arbuthnot, 1887, p. 57) was born about 1184². He lost his father in his early childhood and became an orphan, to which he refers in one of poems, "The sorrows of orphans full well can I share, since I lasted in childhood" (qtd. in Browne, 1956, p. 527). In his hometown he just acquired his primary education but the deep fear of brutal Mongols' invasion forced him to leave his country and depart to Baghdad where he attended celebrated Nezamiyeh academy, the epicenter of Islamic sciences, to pursue his education. When he completed his studies there, he started his long lasting travels. In the course of them, "he visited Balkh, Ghazna, the Panjab, Somnath, Gujerat, Yemen, the Hijaz and other parts of Arabia, Abyssinia, Syria, especially Damascus and Baalbekk (Baalabakk), North Africa, and Asia Minor, India, Iraq, China, Mecca, Armenia, Asia Minor, Tripoli, Marv, and some African countries which lasted for thirty years" (p.529). Sadi regards his extensive travel highly profitable because "in every corner I found something to profit me, from every sheaf I gathered an ear" (qtd. in Arbuthnot, 1887, p. 55). However some scholars cast doubt on the authenticity of his trips refuting them as a figment of his fertile imagination (Katouzian, 2006 & Keshavarz, 1994). When he returned from his wide-extending travels to Shiraz, his friends who were impressed by "His eloquence, maturity of thought, mastery of tales and narratives" urged him to render his observations and experiences into books (Dashti, 1975, p.231); the result was *Bustan* (*The Orchard*) in verse and *Gulistan* (*The Rose Garden*) in prose along with his odes, threnodies, panegyrics, and ghazals (or sonnets), which are about "joys of love, ecstasy of being in union with the beloved, and the sadness of separation" (Katouzian, 2006, p.38). *Gulistan*, on which his reputation dominantly rests, was hailed by both the intelligentsia and lay due to offering practical wisdom and moral instruction, reflecting social and cultural mores of his time, and demonstrating elegant and concise style. *Gulistan* has been the standard text book for the students of Persian Language for a long time (Browne, 1956) and this testifies to the religious-cultural importance of *Gulistan* as an ideal textbook for students of Persian Language since it is in line with teaching ideals of Islam and is inspired with its way of thinking. The book is consisted of eight chapters: (1) *On the Manners of Rulers*, (2) *On the Morals of Dervishes*, (3) *On the Virtues of Contentment*, (4) *On the Advantages of Silence*, (5) *On Love and Youth*, (6) *On Weakness and Old Age*, (7) *On Effects of Education*, and (8) *On Rules of Conduct*. Tales in the book are in prose but the writer embellishes them with inserting some verses sometimes in the middle of them serving as their summaries and sometimes at the end functioning as conclusions.

¹. Shiraz is the capital city of Fars province.

². There is a lack of consensus about his accurate date of birth.

Regarding its coherence, *Gulistan* is not a flawless work because it contains some tales which do not correspond with the subject of the chapters under which they are classified (Dashti, 1975). With regard to his *Bustan*, unlike *Gulistan* it is in verse in the form of mathnavi³ couplets; it comprises of ten chapters: (1) *On Justice, Sound Management of Affairs, and Good Judgment*, (2) *On Beneficence*, (3) *On Love, Intoxication, and Passion*, (4) *On Humility*, (5) *On Resignation*, (6) *On Contentment*, (7) *On the World of Edification*, (8) *On Gratitude and Well-being*, (9) *On Repentance and Taking the Right Course*, and (10) *On Close Communion*. *Bustan* shares many features of *Gulistan* such as “a very high standard of elegance, fluency, color, and effectiveness” (Iranica). In contrast to *Gulistan*, *Bustan* “is more serious in tone” (ibid.). Sadi’s poems has not just fascinated Iranians and cultures under its influence, he also enjoyed popularity in 18th century in the Europe by the virtue of his stress on humanism and rationality which were congruent with the ideals of European intellectuals advocating sensibility, as Yohannan (1952) points that “men of Enlightenment, such as Voltaire and Franklin, had seen in his strong ethical tone much to recommend him to their ages” (p. 143). Similarly, Schimmel notes that “[Sadi] appealed greatly to Europeans, especially during the Age of Reasons, and has rightly been considered the Persian poet whose works is easiest for the Westerners to understand” (qtd. in Katouzian, 2006, p.72). It should be mentioned that he had also his own critics as well. To give an example, Ahmad Kasravi, one of the proponents of Enlightenment Movement in Iran, attacked him for preaching and emphasizing Sufism which, according to him is “pessimistic, and would loosen morals and discourage the struggle for a better life” (Katouzian, p.75). Sadi, after living eighty six active years, died in his hometown and was buried there.

1.2 Black Slaves in Iran up to Early Islamic Period

Regarding the desire of ancient Iranian kings to conquer African countries and enslave the Africans and the presence of the blacks as slaves in ancient Iran, there is a dearth of information which one can find in Herodotus’ *History*. According to him, “Cambyses (529-522 B.C.) conquered Egypt and sent expeditions against the Ethiopians and the Ammonians and planned an expedition against Carthaginians with the intention of reducing the latter two peoples into slavery” (qtd. in Southgate, 1984, p.4). He also writes that “Xerxes (486-465 B.C.) who had considerable number of Ethiopians mercenaries in his armies sent Sataspes, son of Teaspes the Achaemenian, to circumnavigate Africa” (Southgate, pp. 4-5) hoping to gain foothold there and evaluate the prospect of invasion to benefit from trade and slavery. From Herodotus’ report it can be inferred that the ancient Iranians already exploited many Africans as military slaves in their armies and coveted more to use in various areas because they were highly important for the ambitious Persian Empire entertaining the idea of extending its political borders. Herodotus gives some information about slavery in Sassanian period as well: “Iran became a dominant sea power, gaining control of the sea ways in western half of the Indian Ocean by mid fifth century. This control increased Sassanian interest in Africa; it is likely that the late Sassanians brought slaves from East Africa to be their *mamelukes* [military slaves]” (p.5).

When Muslim Arabs defeated Iranian in 7th century and established their Islamic government in Iran, slavery as an institution was paradoxically developed and became systematic in Iran despite the fact that Islam encouraged Muslims to grant slaves’ freedom and treat them as their equals not as others nonetheless didn’t fully abolish it. The negative consequence of this booming institution was the enslavement of many Africans particularly *Zanjs*⁴ and *Habasis*⁵ by the Iranians during “Samanid and Ghaznavid rulers [enslaved many] under pretext of spreading Islam... by conquering non-Muslims [including Africans]” (p.7). They were mainly used as agricultural, industrial, domestic, and military slaves.

1.3 Review of Literature

Investigating about the image of black people in classical Persian literature has not aroused the curiosity of Iranian scholars. Nevertheless, the only scholar who has studied the tarnished image of the blacks, is Minoo Soughate (1984) in her seminal article entitled, *The Negative Images of Blacks in Some Medieval Iranian Writings* in which she provides many examples from great classical poets such as Ferdosi, Sadi, Rumi as well as political books like Keikavus ibn Eskander’s *Qabusnamah* (A Mirror for Princes), Nezam al-Molk’s *Siyastnameh* (Book of Politics) and *Akhlaq-i Nasiri* (Nasiri Ethics). According to Southgate in classical Persian literature, “blacks are accused of being stupid, untruthful, vicious, sexually unbridled, ugly and distorted, excessively merry, and easily affected by music and drink... cannibals [and] infidels” (p. 10). Southgate also in her article brings anecdote number forty from Sadi’s *Gulistan* to show the misrepresentation of blacks, but she does not highlight in detail its intricacy; therefore, the current article attempts to reveal its complexity so as to unveil his racist leaning which poses challenge into his humanism.

1.4 Tale Number Forty

This tale is the fortieth tale in the first chapter of *Gulistan* entitled, “On the Manners of the Rulers”. Since it is short, the whole text is included here,

They have brought a Chinese girl to a certain king, whilst he was intoxicated, he wanted to have certain connection with her; but she refused to compliance, at which he was so much enraged, that he give her to one of his negro slaves. This fellow’s upper lip reached above his nostrils, and the lower one hung pendent on his breast, his countenance [or his shape of body] was such that the demon Sakreh [he is the demon who stole Solomon’s ring] would have fled from him in terror and fount [ain] of pitch distilled from his arm pits. You would say that to the

³. “Mathnavi is in the form of a poem of any length in short meters consisting of couplets which rhyme in the form of AA, BB, CC, and so on (Katouzian, 2006, p.27)

⁴. they were imported from Zanzibar

⁵. Imported from Ethiopia

end of world he will be considered as the extremity of ugliness, the same as Joseph is looked upon as the standard beauty. One of so detestable an aspect that is impossible to describe his ugliness and from his arm-pits good God defend us! The stench was like a corpse in the month of August. The negro in the fury of his lust violated her chastity. In the morning the king inquired for the girl, and they informed him what had happened. He was enraged and commanded that negro and the girl should be bound fast together by their hands and feet, and precipitated from the roof of palace into moat. One of ministers a man of virtuous disposition bent his forehead to the earth, and implored mercy, saying, "negro is not criminal in this instance, since the slaves and servants of the court accustomed to receive princely gifts and largesse." The king observed that he might have restrained his passion for one night. He replied, "Alas, my lord have you not heard that saying? When a person parched with thirst arrives at the limpid spring imagine not that he will be terrified at a furious elephant. So if the hungry infidel be alone in a house filled with viands, reason will not believe that he would pay regard to the fast of Ramazan [the season of fasting for Muslims]. The king pleased at the joke, and said, I make you the present of negro, but what shall I do with the girl?" he replied "give her to the negro, as no one would like to eat his leavings. Never associate with one who frequents filthy places. A man, although thirsty, cannot relish water half drunken by one who has stinking breath. When an orange has fallen into the dirt, how can the heart of thirsty wish for the water out of flagon which has been touched by ulcerated lips (Sadi, 1865, p. 168-169).

2. Discussion

HomaKatouzian (2006) notes that "a recent western study has described Sadi as Persian humanist" (p.7); a humanist by western standards is someone who stresses on the dignity of humans regardless of their color, religion, and race because "nothing in the world can be found that is more worthy of admiration than man" (qtd. in Galens, 2002, p. 179). Scholars often quotes these verses to prove his strong belief in humanism,

Children of Adam are limbs to one another, and are produced from the same substance; when the world gives pain to one member, the others also suffer uneasiness. Thou who are indifferent to the suffering of the others, deserves not to be called a man. (Sadi, 1865, p.128)

However, the tale number forty in the first chapter of Gulistan clearly problematizes his deep belief in the nobility of humans. On the surface, Sadi as the narrator of the tale seems a poet with strong sense of social conscience due to the fact that he wants not only to admonish the king for his inappropriate manners such as being drunk, offering his beautiful Chinese maid to his sexually parched black slave, and deciding to kill the maid and the black slave by throwing them from his palace while the king himself is accountable for what happened in his court, but also provide moral advice tacitly to the despotic ruler to be just and sober in his dealings with his subjects and not to victimize even his slaves in his kingdom, hoping to correct his vices. Nevertheless, beneath the veneer of his humanism concealed is a tendency to racism which he reveals in the tale under scrutiny by associating the black slave with devil, depicting his rapacious sexuality, emphasizing the foul odor of his armpit, and uglifying him.

Sadi in the tale under discussion exaggerates the sheer scale of the black slave's ugliness not only compares him with Sakhr-aljin, but also portrays him more unsightly than that jinni. By employing this simile, he implicitly links the black servant with the tribe of repulsive devils. To decode the racial dimension of this devilish representation, probing into the physical features and overall character of the jinni is essential, but these is a problem for reaching this goal and that is the concise nature of the tale which entails gaps. If these gaps are filled carefully; they will lead to the better understanding of the tale, consequently revealing its hidden layers of meaning, i.e., Sadi's racist inclination. According to Iser (1980), gaps in the literary text should be filled with what is unsaid,

What is said only appears to take on significance as a reference to what is unsaid; it is the implications and not the statements that give shape and weight to the meanings. But as the unsaid comes to the life in the reader's imagination, so the unsaid 'extends' to take on greater significance than might have been supposed; even trivial scenes can surprisingly profound (p. 1527).

The key gap which hampers the process of understanding is the identity of Sakhr Al-jinn, and the best way to fill it is finding a literary work with which the tale has intertextuality and in which the jinni is a main character. In Persian literature, this character appears as an antagonist in *The Thousand Nights and One Night* in the story of the *Fisherman and The Jinni*. The jinni in this story introduces himself clearly,

Know that I am Sakhr al-Jinn, one of the rebel ifriti [devil] who mutinied against Sulaiman [Solomon], son of Daud [David]. There was a time when Sulaiman sent his Wazir [vizier] Asef ibn Barakhya against me, who overpowered me in spite of all my strength and led me into the presence of Sulaiman. You may believe that at that moment I humbled myself very low. Sulaiman [Solomon], seeing me, prayed to Allah and conjured me both to take that faith and to promise him obedience. When I refused, he had this jar brought before him and imprisoned me within it. Then he sealed it with lead and impressed thereon the Most High Name [Allah's name].

Moreover, his physical characteristics is mentioned in the same story as well which displays his clear picture,

An Ifrit whose top reached to the clouds while his feet were on the ground. The head of this Ifrit was like a dome, his hands like pitchforks, his legs like the masts of a ship, and his mouth like a cave in which the teeth had the appearance of great stones. His nostrils were like jugs, his eyes like torches, and his hair was dusty and matted at the appearance of this being the fisherman was so frightened that his muscles quivered, his teeth chattered together, and he stood with burning mouth and eyes that could not see the light (ibid.).

To complete the picture, somewhere in the middle of the story the Jinni interestingly appears as a Negro magically out of the wall, “immediately the kitchen wall opened and through it entered a Negro, as ugly as a great buffalo or one of the giants of the tribe of Had” (p.39).

From above descriptions what we understand is that the huge-asymmetrical-scary-black jinni is represented as a rebellious character like the Satan of Milton who is connected to the dark forces threatening not only the peace and stability but also the authority of Solomon who is “identified, in the Persian lore with the mythical king Jamshid [ancient Persian King]” (Schimmel, 1992, p. 75). The only way to bring him under control is to oppress him and take away his freedom by imprisoning or placing him under constant surveillance, if not, he has a strong tendency to create mayhem and commit crime as the black slave did in the loyal court with his sexual assault against the beautiful Chinese maid when he was granted relative freedom. Through associating the black slave with demon and negative forces, Sadi subscribes to the age old notion that “the black figures are linked explicitly to the devil, their black skins standing in for the evil natures of these purely evil creatures” (Waters, 2007, p.80). Similarly Sadi in the guise of the narrator in his *Bustan* characterizes a black man as a demon or afreet when he sees the black man putting his arms around a white girl, “A black man, long as mid-winter night! In his embrace a girl lay, like the moon Into whose lips he'd sunk his teeth; Bilgis' afreet [demon], you'd have said he was: In ugliness a very model for the devil!” (qtd. in Southgate, 1984, p. 24). In lieu of depicting the black as humans, Sadi resorts to worn-out clichés which was not uncommon in his time. In fact, Sadi here is a color-conscious poet with a racist tendency who depicts and defines the black man as the other since “we define our identity always in relation to what we are not, and therefore what we are not[,] must be demonized and objectified as the others” (Seldon *et al.*, 2005, p.183).

Sadi also discloses his racial bias against the black slave in the tale by employing smelling imagery. According to Synnott (2002) Olfaction as a sense in comparison with others senses received insufficient attention from the philosophers such as Aristotle, Aquinas, Kant, and Hegel. Both Aristotle and Aquinas believe that the sense of smelling does not direct humans to God and beauty unlike the senses of hearing and sight, thereby relegating this sense to the lowest part in the hierarchy of senses. Worse than Aristotle and Aquinas, Kant did not discuss it in his esthetics and similarly Hegel ignores the sense in the question in his esthetics. This indifference towards this sense explains why Helen Keller regards it as a fallen angel (p.185). Despite its ill-treatment by the philosophers, odor has strong power in terms of construction of self, “the odor is the natural sign of the self as both a physical and moral being, the odor is the symbol of the self” (p.190). In addition, humans in their judgment of smell follow this simple hypothesis, “what smells good is good. Conversely what smells bad is bad” (ibid.), therefore, they associate foul smell with something which is evil and the evil with malodor. Sadi in the tale under discussion deploys the foul smell of black slave’s armpit in his characterization to demonstrate the fact that the black slave has evil and rotten nature because “a fount [ain] of Einol-Ghatar distilled from his arm pits ... [and] from his arm-pits good God defend us! The stench was like a corpse in the month of August” (Sadi, p.167). With respect to the meaning of Einol-Ghatar, it is “black substance and foul smelling oil which was rubbed on camels in the past [for medical purposes]” (qtd. in Alipoor, 2009, p.89). Interestingly, its black color corresponds with the slave’s black skin. Moreover, as discussed earlier Sadi likened the black slave to Sakhr-al jinn who according to Shamsia “has extremely bad smell” (qtd. in Alipoor, 2009, p. 89). Furthermore, Harward Malchow (1996) extends the symbolic dimension of odor and notes that “body odor [especially foul one] ...[is] associated with sexual perversion ... and disdain for polite self-control...with animalistic African” (p.141). Moreover, to lend color to his rank smell, Sadi compares his vile body odor to a corpse in August. Thus Sadi by foregrounding the malodor of the black servant not only lays bare his racist leaning but also subtly perpetuate the wrong ideology, that is, the inferior blacks are animalistic, sexually uncontrolled and have evil nature, so belonging to devils. Sadi in this regard is remarkably similar to American slaveholders who subjugated and exploited the blacks and often claimed that “black has a disagreeable, acrid smell which made close association between races impossible, this odor was thought to be not simply due to living conditions but intrinsic to blacks, whether laborers or middle class, and noticeable among even the cleanest of them” (qtd. in Classen *et al.*, 2003, p.167).

Sadi throws his racist inclination into limelight by representing the black slave’s sexuality as uncontrollable as well. Southgate (1984) points out that “the notion of the black’s unbridled sexuality occurs in many Iranian Muslims sources” (p. 24) and Sadi’s tale is one of those sources. In the tale in question, to punish the pretty Chinese maid for her audacity to reject his sexual advances, the drunken king bestows her on the sex-starved black slave and he deflower her that night. Later the king after gaining his sobriety regrets giving the maid to his black slave and gets furious about him for what he done and decides to kill both of them. From the unsaid dimension of the story, to borrow Iser, it can be inferred that the king’s sense of the resentment and hostility towards the black slave seems to stem from the black slave’s brutal rape resulting from his immense sexual libidos which overpower his intelligence, force him shut up his heart to the maid’s heartrending cries and render him superman to easily thwart the maid’s attempt to resist his sexual approach. Here, Sadi’s portrayal of black slave’s licentiousness resembles to Josiah Priest who claimed, “the baleful fire of unchaste amour [sexual passions] rages through the negroes’ blood more fiercely than in blood of any other people inflaming their imaginations with corresponding [lurid] images” (qtd. in Fredrickson, 1971, p. 276).

Concerning rape scene, Sadi remains silent about it and leaves to the readers to imagine it, due to his religious codes and the restrictions which his concise style impose on him. However, the scene looks to bear resemblance to the image of rape in *Gone with Wind*, in which the black character’s uncontrollable sexual desire is emphasized with his acrid smell,

The negro was besides her, so close she could smell the rank odor of him...with her own free hand she fought madly, clawing at his face, and then she felt her big hand her throat and, with a ripping noise, her basque was torn open from breast to waist. Then the black hand fumbled between her breasts, and terror and revulsion such as she had never known came over her and she screamed like an insane woman (qtd. in Sedgwick, 2000, p.696).

With respect to the black slave's sexuality, Sadi tacitly approves it violent, animalistic and out of control, thus he by holding this view subtly provides racially charged warning to kings and princes that their black slaves with their uncontrollable sexual passions can bring them shame and destroy their honor thereby repressing or removing their dangerous sexual appetite is essential and this can be achieved through castration and changing them into eunuchs otherwise, in the worst scenario, the black slaves will destroy the chastity of queens as happened in the beginning *The Thousand Nights and One Night*,

[Narrated by Shahzaman-King Shahryar's brother] returning and entering home, he found his wife stretched on her bed and being embraced by black slave...[describing the infidelity of his brother's wife] suddenly, on the king's wife crying Oh YaMasud! A gigantic negro ran towards her and turning her upon her back and enjoying her (Vol. 1, pp. 1&2).

In fact the presence of black eunuchs in the royal courts attests to the belief that Iranian viewed the blacks' sexual prowess immense and highly destructive; hence Sadi's tale can be interpreted as a kind of complaint for the presence of uncastrated black slave in the court, and he intensifies it by choosing the Chinese maid who is the symbol of beauty during Sadi's time, as the helpless victim. At the end of the tale, although the king spares the rapist and the raped on behalf of his vizier's intercession, Sadi, however, promulgates this assumption that "male Negroes are sexually dangerous animals" (p.287).

Finally, the writer in question reveals the trace of his racism which is eclipsed by his humanism through depicting the black servant slave as the very avatar of ugliness through comparing him with Prophet Joseph and exaggerating his lower lip. There is no doubt that Sadi like Rumi, who is contemporaneous with him, draws on his inspiration and ideas from Koran, in which Prophet Joseph is a very epitome of beauty. Al-Thalabi (2002) states the commentators of Koran assert that "God allotted to Joseph two-thirds of (all) beauty and divided up the remaining third among humanity" (qtd. in Armajani, 2009, p. 409). He is so beautiful that Potiphar's wife falls in love with him and this provides sufficient grounds for the female members of the court to charge her with impropriety. To prove that they are misjudging her, she invites them to her palace and gives them a knife and orange; then she asks Joseph to enter so that they will gaze at him fully. Marveled at his matchless beauty, they unwittingly cut their hands instead of oranges⁶. If Joseph is the personification of perfect beauty, the black slave naturally is that of repulsiveness. Sadi by contrasting the black servant with Joseph creates a binary opposition in which Joseph is the embodiment of virtues while the black character as the representative of wickedness. Sadi in fact by this simple comparison propagates and adheres to the concept of beauty mystique. This philosophical view, which was developed by Plato, states that "beauty...is not only primarily physical-it is also identical with Good and Love, and with happiness, wisdom and truth and knowledge Conversely, ugliness equates with the opposite qualities in other table of opposites: evil, ignorance, lies, and hate, unhappiness, waste and *destruction* [authors emphasis]" (Synnott, 2002, 79). The effect of this view is subtly nipping the readers' sympathy towards the black slave in buds because of his ugliness. In addition, to uglify the black man, Sadi employs caricature "which in verbal description (as in graphic art) exaggerates or distorts, for comic effect, a person distinctive physical features or personal traits" (Abrams, 2009, p.38). In this tale, the writer in question for his artistic exaggeration chooses the black slave's lips, "This fellow's upper lip reached above his nostrils, and the lower one hung pendent on his breast" (Sadi, 1865, p. 168). Here caricaturing as a tactic not only reduces the black man in the tale to the object of mockery but robs the identity, personality, and worth from him and this is another way of establishing binarism and dividing line between the writer from dominant culture and the inferior-ridiculous subject.

3. Conclusion

Sadi was adored by critics as a humanist, but this virtuous trait of him becomes difficult to believe easily when he portrays the black servant in the tale number forty. In positive evaluation, his original intention for composing the tale seems chastising the tyrant king for his inappropriate conducts and educating him the right manner of ruling his kingdom and subjects, but beneath this sheen of humanism lies his invisible racist leaning which discloses it by demonizing the black slave when he links him to Sakhr al-jinn, by accentuating his extremely unpleasant armpit odor which he interprets as the infallible index of his inferiority, immorality, bestiality, and rapacity, and by distorting his sexuality which transgresses the propriety and dares to rape the king's maid as well as uglifying him with comparing to Joseph, a perfect symbol of beauty, as well as caricaturing him. Sadi as humanist fails to portray the black slave-servant as a human.

References

- Abrams, M. (2009). *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
 Arbuthnot, F. (1887). *Persian Portraits: A Sketch of Persian History Literature & Politics*. London.
 Browne, E. (1956). *A Literary History of Persia: From Firdaws to Sadi* (Vol. 2). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁶. This story is in Koran, Sura (chapter) 12: 30-31.

- Fredrickson, G. M. (1971). *The Black Image in The White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny 1817-1914*. New York.
- Glanes, D. (Ed.). (2002). *Literary Movements for Students* (Vol. 1). New York: Thomson Gale.
- Iser, W. (2010). Interaction between Text and Reader. In B. V. Leitch (Ed.), *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Katouzian, H. (2006). *Sadi: The Poet of Life, Love, and Compassion*. Oxford: One Word Publications.
- Keshavarz, F. (1994). Much Have I roamed Through the World: In Search of Sadi's Self Image. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol:26 No. 3, 465-475.
- Malchow, H. (1996). *Gothic Images of Race in 19th Century Britain*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- The Glorious Koran*. (2003). (M. Pickthall, Trans.) New York: Tahrike Tarsile Quran, Inc.
- The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night*. (1986). (M. Powys, Trans.) London: Routledge.
- Sadi, M. (1865). *Gulistan or Rose Garden*. (F. Gladwin, Trans.) Boston: Ticknor & Fields.
- Sadi, M. (2009). *Golestan-e Sadi*. (M. Alipoor, Ed.) Tehran: Tirgan.
- Schimmel, A. (1992). *A Two-Colored Brocade: The Imagery of Persian Poetry*. Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. (2000). Between Men. In J. Rivkin, & M. Ryan (Eds.), *Literary Theory An Anthology* (p. 702). Malden: Blackwell.
- Seldon, Roman, Peter Widdowson and Peter Brooker. (2005). *A Reader's Guide To Contemporary Literary Theory*. Harlow: Pearson: Longman.
- Southgate, M. (1984). The Negative Images of Blacks in Some Medieval Iranian Writings. *Iranian Studies*, Vol: XVII, 3-36.
- Synnott, A. (1993). *The Body Social: Symbolism, Self and Societ*. London: Routledge.
- Waters, H. (2007). *Racism on the Victorian Stage: Representation of Slavery and Black Charater*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yohannan, J. D. (spring 1952). The Persian Fad in England 1770-1825. *Comparative Literature*, Vol:4 No 2, 137-160.