

From the Ottoman *Tezkire* Tradition to the Biography of the Poet's Image in 18th-Century English Literature

Osmanlı Tezkire Geleneğinden 18. Yüzyıl İngiliz Edebiyatında Şair İmgesi Biyografisine

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the Ottoman tezkire tradition of poet biographies, with particular reference to Kınalızade Hasan Çelebi's *Tezkiretü's-Şuara*, alongside the eighteenth-century English biographical tradition represented by Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, within an interdisciplinary and comparative framework centered on the construction of the poet's image. Situated in two distinct historical, cultural, and aesthetic contexts, the study problematizes the function of biography as a mediating form between literary production, authorial identity, and canon formation. Drawing on concepts from biography theory, author function, cultural memory, and symbolic capital, the analysis effects a comparative scrutiny of selected poet portraits, foregrounding narrative architecture, character construction, thematic orientation, and evaluative language. The findings substantiate that, while both traditions instrumentalize biography as a central mechanism for the legitimization of literary authority and the consolidation of the canon, they manifest pronounced divergences in representational strategy. Ottoman tezkires configure the poet within an idealizing discourse anchored in moral integrity, aesthetic mastery, and communal validation, whereas Johnson's biographies operationalize critical judgment, individual distinction, and the public negotiation of literary value. Across both corpora, recurrent archetypes such as the satirical master and the spiritual poet retain analytical salience, yet are recalibrated in accordance with the cultural priorities and institutional frameworks of their respective literary fields. The study advances literary biography as a cultural practice that actively generates and mediates collective memory, literary value, and authorial identity.

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Introduction

The biographical inscription of poets' lives occupies an ambivalent position at the intersection of historical documentation and literary interpretation, resisting reduction to the mere enumeration of events. As Pierre Bourdieu (1993, pp. 37-41) contends, the narration of a life unfolds within a "field of cultural production" structured by asymmetrical distributions of symbolic capital. The act of remembrance itself presupposes a hierarchy of value. The biography of a poet therefore inscribes implicit assumptions concerning the nature of literature, the criteria governing cultural preservation, and the processes by which literary reputation attains durability and authority.

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Within the Ottoman literary tradition, the tezkire emerged as a formally codified register of poetic heritage, performing simultaneously celebratory and regulatory functions. Kınalızâde Hasan Çelebi's *Tezkiretü's-Şuara* presents, at a descriptive level, concise accounts of poets' lives; each entry nevertheless operates within a dense matrix of moral exemplarity, political affiliation, and aesthetic legitimation (Eyduvan 2014, pp. 46-47; İpekten 1988, pp. 15-16). In his portrayal of Bâkî, for instance, Kınalızâde remarks that "his couplets are as pearls in the treasury of eloquence," a metaphor, semantic force exceeds rhetorical ornamentation and signals alignment with a court-centred aesthetic regime. Such formulations register a broader cultural configuration shaped by imperial patronage, the interpretive authority of the learned religious elite, and the expectations of an aristocratic readership (Kılıç 2007, pp. 102-105; Okumuş 2016, p. 195). Among the numerous tezkires produced both prior to and subsequent to his work, *Tezkiretü's-Şuara* functions as a representative case on account of its scope, its canonical standing within Ottoman literary historiography, and its capacity to synthesize earlier tezkire conventions into a fully articulated evaluative paradigm. In this configuration, the tezkire operates as a moral cartography, mapping poetic reputations in accordance with the symbolic order of empire. While the present analysis focuses primarily on Kınalızâde Hasan Çelebi's *Tezkiretü's-Şuara* as a consolidating canonical text, it is informed by the broader tezkire corpus, including earlier works by Sehî Bey, Latîfî, and Âşık Çelebi.

The literary environment surrounding Samuel Johnson's composition of *Lives of the Poets* (1779-1781) took shape under markedly different forces, including the expansion of commercial print culture, the institutionalization of periodical criticism, and the epistemological orientations of Enlightenment rationalism (Clingham 1997, pp. 2-4; Korshin 1971, p. 506). Commissioning by a consortium of booksellers positioned Johnson's project at the intersection of literary production and market dynamics, enabling the integration of narrative biography with sustained critical adjudication. The resulting portraits accommodate both commendation and censure. Johnson's assessment of Milton, "his political notions were such as to displease those in power, yet his genius commanded respect," encapsulates a dual evaluative posture grounded in admiration tempered by critique. Although evaluative contrast does not remain entirely absent from Ottoman biographical writing, often mediated by conjunctive structures such as *egerçi... ammâ...*, such moments typically remain subordinated to an overarching framework of moral regulation. In Johnson's biographies, critical tension acquires a constitutive function, embedded within a literary economy privileging individual achievement and facilitating the public contestation of reputation (Bate 1977, p. 291; Rogers 1971, p. 54).

The analytical framework guiding this study draws upon Michel Foucault's (1991, p. 107) formulation of the "author function" and Philippe Lejeune's (1989, pp. 27-29) theorization of biography as an ideologically inflected narrative form. Foucault's intervention reconceptualises authorship as a discursive position rather than a biographical essence. Stabilization occurs within the Ottoman tezkire tradition via hierarchical patronage and communal validation and within Johnson's context via critical authority, originality, and canonization within a national literary tradition. Lejeune's perspective foregrounds narrative organization, directing attention to the ways life-writing orchestrates meaning through selection, sequencing, and emphasis. In Ottoman practice, biographical narration gravitates toward idealization, aligning factual record with exemplary virtue. In Johnson's biographies, greater latitude is accorded to dissonance, allowing contradiction to remain constitutive of literary identity.

Both traditions operate through selective logics, though the principles governing selection diverge significantly. In *Tezkiretü's-Şuara*, exclusion frequently indexes deviation from accepted moral or political alignments. In *Lives of the Poets*, omission more commonly registers judgments concerning the durability of artistic merit. As Jan Assmann (1992, pp. 39-42) underscores, cultural

memory sustains itself via processes of active re-inscription rather than passive accumulation, with life-writing occupying a central position in these processes. In the Ottoman context, the tezkire articulates literature as a shared cultural inheritance. In Johnson's milieu, biography configures literature as a canon subject to continual reassessment and negotiation (Hirsch 2008, p. 107; Miller 2000, pp. 14-16; Sacks 2009, pp. 3-5). Approached based on representative cases, this comparative analysis interrogates the conceptualization of the relationship between life, text, and value across distinct literary cultures, and the role of biography in the configuration of a literary past structured as much by omission as by commemoration.

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual architecture of this research assembles a set of interrelated theoretical perspectives that collectively enable a refined analytic engagement with the processes by which literary biography produces, circulates, and legitimizes cultural value. Foucault's reconceptualization of authorship as a discursive construct, Lejeune's narratological account of biography, Assmann's model of cultural memory, Hirsch's theorisation of postmemory, and Bourdieu's sociology of the cultural field converge to form a composite framework for approaching *Tezkiretü's-Şuara* and *Lives of the Poets* as structured sites of biographical mediation and value attribution. In *What Is an Author?* Foucault formulates the author as a discursive function that operates to "limit, exclude, and choose" (1991, p. 107), foregrounding the regulatory dimensions inherent in acts of authorship. Within the Ottoman tezkire tradition, this regulatory logic becomes legible in criteria of inclusion governed by courtly etiquette, moral propriety, and established poetic canons (Kılıç 2007, pp. 102-105; Okumuş 2016, pp. 194-197). At the same time, tezkire writing accommodates a spectrum of evaluative positions. Alongside idealizing formulations, tezkires incorporate moments of critical appraisal, moral reservation, and evaluative restraint, indicating that authorial representation permits circumscribed critique while remaining anchored within a broader regime of normative regulation. A representative instance appears in Kınalızâde Hasan Çelebi's depiction of Bâkî, with the poet's verse receiving praise as "pearls in the treasury of eloquence" (Eyduvan 2014, p. 48), an aesthetic judgement inseparable from his position as *Sultânü's-Şuarâ* within the structures of imperial patronage. Such framing situates authorship as a form of symbolic status conferred by the legitimizing mechanisms of state authority and the cultural elite (İpekten 1988, pp. 20-22).

A comparable regulatory logic, articulated within a different institutional configuration, informs Johnson's portrayal of Milton, with critical esteem maintained despite political controversy (Johnson, 2009, p. 215). In this context, reputational authority derives from sustained critical reception within the public sphere of eighteenth-century print culture (Clingham 1997, pp. 3-5; Korshin 1971, p. 506). By contrast, in Ottoman contexts the author function attained stability via hierarchical consensus; in Johnson's Britain the same function remained subject to ongoing renegotiation within an open field of critical discourse. Lejeune's theorization of biography foregrounds the proposition that "to tell a life is to organize it; to organize it is to give it meaning" (Lejeune 1989, p. 22). From this perspective, biographical practice entails the selection, structuring, and interpretation of events in accordance with broader ideological and aesthetic frameworks (Pascal 1960, pp. 45-47; Miller 2000, pp. 15-16). In *Tezkiretü's-Şuara*, such narrative organization frequently privileges idealisation. Nefî's biting satire, for example, receives acknowledgement alongside moral commentary stating that "his words became the cause of his undoing" (İpekten 1988, p. 142), situating his fate within a cautionary trajectory that reinforces communal values (Kılıç 2007, pp. 112-114). The decision to frame his downfall as moral instruction illustrates the didactic orientation embedded in this narrative design. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* advances a distinct architecture of meaning. In the portrayal of Pope, the observation that "his body was deformed, but his wit was unbent" (Johnson 2009, p. 302) integrates personal

limitation into the configuration of artistic achievement without recourse to moral exemplarity (Bate 1977, pp. 291-293; Rogers 1971, pp. 54-56). Such an evaluative posture sustains unresolved tension, allowing complexity and contradiction to remain integral components of literary representation.

Assmann defines cultural memory as the “store of knowledge from a group derives an awareness of its unity and peculiarity” (Assmann 1992, p. 40). The curatorial role of biography within this memory structure becomes evident in *Tezkiretü’s-Şuara*, where the inclusion of poets like Fuzûlî, described as stringing “pearls with the thread of divine love” (Eyduvan 2014, p. 72) ensures their enduring symbolic presence in Ottoman literary identity (Okumuş 2016, pp. 210-213). Johnson’s *Lives* similarly consolidates cultural memory by enshrining figures such as Gray, whose “elegance and finish” in verse (Johnson 2009, p. 589) have helped secure his position in English poetic heritage. This canonizing function is not neutral: the process of selection and narrative framing directly influences which figures are remembered and their works are interpreted (Sacks 2009, pp. 3-5; Hirsch 2008, p. 107).

Hirsch’s concept of postmemory captures later generations “remember” events and figures they never directly encountered, through mediated narratives that generate deep personal connections (Hirsch 2008, p. 106). In literary biography, this dynamic explains readers form affective relationships with historical poets via the interpretive lens of biographical texts. An Ottoman reader in the nineteenth century might “know” Bâkî less through his divan than Kınalızâde’s laudatory account; an English student might first meet Milton or Pope through Johnson’s biographies rather than their primary works. These mediated encounters demonstrate biography functions as both a scholarly record and an affective bridge (Assmann 1992, pp. 42-44; Miller 2000, pp. 18-20).

Bourdieu’s (1993) analysis of the cultural field underscores that literary value emerges from struggles over symbolic capital among writers, critics, institutions, and patrons. In the Ottoman literary sphere, symbolic capital was largely distributed through proximity to the court and the endorsement of influential arbiters (Kılıç 2007, pp. 105-107). *Tezkiretü’s-Şuara* thus operates as both a documentary record and a strategic act of consecration, reaffirming the prestige of its subjects. In eighteenth-century Britain, Johnson’s *Lives* functioned within a different competitive matrix: reputations were made and unmade in the pages of reviews, salons, and public debates (Clingham 1997, pp. 8-9; Korshin 1971, pp. 508-509). Johnson’s public practice of evaluative biography functioned as a constitutive mechanism in the circulation and reallocation of symbolic capital within his literary field.

The theoretical perspectives outlined above delineate distinct yet intersecting regimes within which literary biography operates across the Ottoman and British traditions. Foucault’s conceptualization of the author function situates authorial identity as a discursive formation sustained by institutional mediation rather than biographical referentiality. Within the Ottoman tezkire tradition, such mediation attains stability via imperial patronage, communal endorsement, and adherence to aesthetic and moral codifications. In Johnson’s Britain, authorial legitimacy remains subject to continual renegotiation within the public sphere of print culture and critical exchange. Lejeune’s emphasis on the narrative organization of life histories further clarifies that biographical writing in both traditions performs an interpretive labor extending beyond factual record. Meaning is generated through selective emphasis and narrative architecture, with the tezkire privileging idealization and moral exemplarity, and *Lives of the Poets* sustaining tension, contradiction, and moral ambivalence as constitutive dimensions of poetic legacy.

Assmann’s notion of cultural memory clarifies that both *Tezkiretü’s-Şuara* and *Lives of the Poets* act as canonizing instruments, embedding chosen figures in the long-term literary consciousness

of their respective cultures, thereby influencing subsequent generations conceptualize the poetic tradition. Hirsch's theory of postmemory adds an important affective dimension to this process, showing that later audiences often encounter historical poets not direct engagement with their works, but through the interpretive and often idealized lenses of these biographical narratives, an indirect yet emotionally potent mode of transmission that shapes personal and collective literary identities. Bourdieu's sociology situates all of these operations within a competitive cultural field, where symbolic capital is distributed according to the interplay of political, economic, and critical forces; in the Ottoman context, proximity to the court and endorsement by influential arbiters played decisive roles, in Johnson's Britain, public reception and critical authority in the expanding print market determined a poet's standing.

This composite theoretical lens exposes the structural parallels and divergences in each tradition constructs, legitimizes, and perpetuates literary reputations. In the Ottoman model, biography consolidates the authority of poets whose lives and works harmonize with an established communal ethos, effectively reinforcing the continuity of a state-sanctioned canon. In Johnson's model, biography becomes a site of active negotiation, where inclusion in the canon depends on an ongoing process of critical evaluation, responsiveness to shifting aesthetic norms, and the perceived ability of a poet's work to endure the scrutiny of successive generations. By synthesizing Foucault's attention to discursive regulation, Lejeune's insights into narrative construction, Assmann's model of canonization, Hirsch's affective mediation, and Bourdieu's mapping of cultural competition, this study can more precisely delineate the forces that shape literary memory and value across disparate yet structurally comparable contexts. Such a synthesis transcends the alignment of discrete theoretical positions and consolidates a rigorously integrated analytic orientation, allowing biography to function across stratified regimes of interpretation. This configuration situates biographical writing as a constitutive cultural practice implicated in the articulation, circulation, and continual reconfiguration of literary heritage. At the level of this analytic consolidation, *Tezkiretü's-Şuara* and *Lives of the Poets* attain salience as archival formations alongside their status as interpretive interventions. The cumulative reading advanced here enables a more exact delineation of the mnemonic and evaluative regimes governing literary remembrance, encompassing the criteria according to which poetic achievement becomes subject to assessment, contestation, and iterative recalibration across extended temporal horizons.

The Poet's Identity in the Ottoman Tezkire Tradition

In the historiography of Ottoman literature, tezkires occupy an archival, evaluative, and prescriptive position within the literary field. They register the names and work of poets while delineating the contours of a literary canon and the values it upholds. From the mid-sixteenth century onwards, beginning with Sehî Bey's *Hesht Behişt* and continuing with compilers such as Latîfî and Âşık Çelebi, the tezkire developed into a genre interweaving aesthetic appraisal with moral and social commentary (Kılıç 2007, p. 98). Kınalızâde Hasan Çelebi's *Tezkiretü's-Şuara* (1586) represents the culmination of this trajectory in scope, structural organization, and ideological function. Containing nearly six hundred entries, the work presents each poet according to a fixed rhetorical sequence comprising a formal introduction, biographical details concerning origin, education, and affiliations, an assessment of moral and aesthetic qualities, selected verse excerpts, and an evaluative conclusion (Eyduvan 2014, p. 46). This pattern exemplifies what Lejeune (1989) terms the "narrative architecture" of biography, in which the ordering and selection of details actively shape the interpretation of the subject. Within this tradition, poetic identity remains inseparable from the social milieu, taking form through a network of relationships, obligations, and cultural codes that simultaneously enable and delimit literary agency (İpekten 1988, p. 14).

The evaluation of poets in *Tezkiretü's-Şuara* unfolds along three interrelated axes that structure

poetic authority within the Ottoman literary field. Patronage constitutes the first axis, a dynamic elucidated by Pierre Bourdieu's (1993, pp. 29-34) concept of symbolic capital. As Çetin (2013, p. 112) observes, poetic prestige in the Ottoman context frequently depended upon proximity to influential patrons, a logic reinforced by Kınalızâde's consistent foregrounding of courtly affiliations and the favor of high-ranking officials as markers of distinction. Moral character forms the second axis, grounded in the Islamic *adab* tradition. Attributes such as truthfulness, generosity, and refined manners occupy a central position in the assessment of poetic worth, as Okumuş (2016, p. 198) notes. Kınalızâde's evaluations often describe a poet's conduct in language as elaborate as that reserved for verse, underscoring an understanding of literary excellence inseparable from moral probity. Aesthetic quality constitutes the third axis, articulated via evaluative metaphors and the selective citation of verse. Poetic achievement appears likened to "pearls" or "golden threads" (Eyduvan 2014, p. 48), imagery signaling material value alongside spiritual refinement. These criteria collectively articulate a composite ideal in which the poet figures simultaneously as artist, moral exemplar, and participant within a network of reciprocal obligation. Baki's biographical portrayal commences under the honorific *Sultânü's-Şuarâ* ("Sultan of Poets"), a designation encoding literary eminence alongside formal recognition by the imperial court (Eyduvan 2014, p. 52). Characterizations of his verse as "the jewels of eloquence reflecting the refinement of the palace" articulate an aesthetic correspondence between poetic production and the ceremonial prestige of the Ottoman elite. Within the conceptual parameters advanced by Foucault's formulation of the author function (1991, p. 107), Bâkî's poetic identity remains tethered to institutional apparatuses that confer validation and durability. Qasidas composed for sultans and viziers register literary accomplishment while simultaneously enacting political affirmation. In Bourdieu's theorization of the cultural field (1993), the consolidation of symbolic capital proceeds from the strategic calibration of artistic practice to dominant configurations of power.

Bâkî is introduced with the honorific *Sultânü's-Şuarâ* ("Sultan of Poets"), a title that encapsulates both his literary eminence and his formal recognition by the imperial court (Eyduvan 2014, p. 52). His verse is described as "the jewels of eloquence reflecting the refinement of the palace," an image that links his artistry directly to the ceremonial and cultural prestige of the Ottoman elite. From the perspective of Foucault's (1991, p. 107) "author function," Bâkî's poetic identity is inseparable from the institutional apparatus that validates and sustains it. His qasidas, composed for sultans and viziers, function as both literary achievements and acts of political affirmation. In Bourdieu's (1993) terms, his symbolic capital is maximized by aligning his art with the dominant powers of the cultural field.

Nefî's biographical representation articulates a configuration of literary audacity conjoined with political precarity. Kınalızâde's appraisal of his wit as "sharp as a sword" coincides with a narrative attribution of culpability, encapsulated in the observation that "his tongue became the cause of his undoing" (İpekten 1988, p. 142). This narrative alignment integrates rhetorical brilliance with moral consequence, organizing the life account according to a didactic logic consistent with Philippe Lejeune's proposition that biography imposes intelligible form upon lived events (1989, p. 22). Within Jan Assmann's framework of cultural memory (1992, p. 40), such representation acquires durability as a mnemonic warning, preserving the consequences of transgressive speech within the collective literary imagination. The inscription of Nefî's execution accordingly functions as a normative reinforcement of communal boundaries, transforming individual fate into an instructive paradigm for subsequent poetic conduct. Fuzulî's biographical representation articulates an elevated register of spiritual signification. Kınalızâde's characterization of his ghazals as "the embodiment of love and truth in words" (Eyduvan 2014, p. 72) situates the poetic corpus within a devotional epistemology aligning aesthetic expression with metaphysical authority. Experiences of hardship, material deprivation, and social marginalization acquire

interpretive coherence as semiotic markers of moral steadfastness and spiritual elevation. In the terms articulated by Assmann's model of cultural memory (1992, pp. 42-44), this representational strategy secures Fuzûlî's canonical position as a bearer of communal ethical and symbolic values. Hirsch's theorization of postmemory (2008, p. 106) further illuminates the affective transmission at work, whereby later readerships, encountering Fuzûlî primarily via biographical mediation, internalize a mediated intimacy structuring imaginative access to the Ottoman literary past. Read against this analytic configuration, the portrayal of Fuzûlî exemplifies a modality of identity formation coalescing spiritual authority, mnemonic transmission, and symbolic valuation within the discursive economy of the *tezkiye*.

The interplay of these portraits and theoretical perspectives underscores that *Tezkiretü's-Şuara* is far more than a historical record; it is an instrument through which the Ottoman literary field defined itself. The work's structural consistency, the deliberate ordering of biographical elements, the calibrated blend of praise and admonition, the interweaving of aesthetic, moral, and political criteria, produces a template for what it meant to be a poet in the late sixteenth century. This template is prescriptive as well as descriptive: it informs contemporary readers about who the exemplary figures are, but it also instructs future poets on the pathways to, and pitfalls of, literary distinction. The elevation of Bâkî demonstrates poetic identity could be harmonized with the ceremonial and ideological needs of the state, resulting in a mutually reinforcing relationship between art and authority. The cautionary framing of Nef'î's fate reveals the *tezkiye* managed the memory of dissent, preserving the brilliance of his satire while embedding it within a moralizing narrative that reaffirmed communal boundaries. The hagiographic treatment of Fuzûlî shows personal adversity could be reframed as a mark of spiritual authenticity, allowing his poetry to serve as both artistic and ethical capital.

Assmann's model of cultural memory positions these portrayals as nodes within an extended mnemonic network sustaining Ottoman literary identity across successive generations. Hirsch's concept of postmemory further elucidates the affective dimension of this process, according mediated narratives the capacity to produce familiarity and intimacy for readers temporally distant from their subjects. Within Bourdieu's account of the cultural field, the *tezkiye* assumes the function of a strategic intervention consolidating the positions of figures aligned with its dominant value system while marginalizing alternative configurations of literary authority. The text thereby operates across multiple registers, encompassing archival documentation of poets' lives, pedagogical inscription of aesthetic and moral norms, political articulation of hierarchical order, and cultural technology mediating the transmission of literary memory. In this configuration, *Tezkiretü's-Şuara* participates in the continual redefinition of poetic authority, value, and legacy within Ottoman literary culture.

Lives of the Poets and the Construction of the Poet's Identity

Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* (1779-1781) remains one of the most ambitious works in eighteenth-century English letters, a sustained fusion of literary biography and evaluative criticism. Originally commissioned by London's booksellers, the project met an immediate commercial need, but its long-term significance lies in its shaping of the English national canon (Bate 1977, p. 291). Johnson's treatment of biography diverges sharply from the Ottoman *tezkiye* tradition. Ottoman compilers often idealized the poet as a moral exemplar; Johnson produced portraits that balanced admiration with candid acknowledgment of flaws, combining biographical detail, moral reflection, and critical analysis in a single narrative framework (Clingham 1997, p. 4). Each biography adheres to a disciplined structure. The life of the poet is presented through factual information, birth, education, career trajectory, followed by a close reading of the work's content, style, and formal qualities. This is concluded with Johnson's own critical judgment, often unequivocal in tone (Korshin 1971, p. 506). This tripartite organization reflects Lejeune's (1989,

p. 22) conception of biography as the arrangement of life events into a coherent interpretive whole, the selection and sequencing of information shape the reader's perception of the subject.

John Milton's biography exemplifies this method. Johnson extols Milton's epic genius and the theological ambition of *Paradise Lost*, while engaging directly with the poet's republican politics and austere temperament (Johnson 2009, p. 215). From the perspective of Foucault's (1991, p. 107) "author function," Milton's authority derives from both the intrinsic qualities of his works and their placement within the public discourse of eighteenth-century Britain. Johnson's account preserves Milton's place in the canon while registering the political tensions that shaped his reception. Alexander Pope's biographical portrayal foregrounds formal mastery of the couplet, satirical precision, and sustained engagement with the literary and political disputes of his period. Johnson's account incorporates Pope's physical deformity and public controversies as constitutive elements of artistic formation, encapsulated in the observation that "his body was deformed, but his wit was unbent" (Johnson 2009, p. 302). Such integration aligns with Pierre Bourdieu's (1993, p. 31) conceptualization of the literary field, according to which symbolic capital accrues through positions occupied within circuits of public recognition and contestation. Lejeune's narratological framework further clarifies the incorporation of these traits into the biographical portrait as structural components of literary identity, allowing complexity and contradiction to function as integral dimensions of representation rather than peripheral distractions.

Thomas Gray's biography demonstrates Johnson's capacity for nuanced evaluation. Gray's output was limited but meticulously crafted, his temperament marked by reserve and melancholy. Johnson interprets the small corpus as a product of both rigorous discipline and inhibiting perfectionism (Clingham 1997, p. 7). In Assmann's (1992, p. 40) terms, Gray's select poems have entered England's cultural memory as enduring reference points, illustrating quality and longevity can outweigh quantity in the consolidation of literary reputation.

The portrayals of Milton, Pope, and Gray articulate Johnson's resistance to the hagiographic tendencies of earlier biographical traditions. Traits that might be minimized in other contexts, political dissent, personal rivalries, physical limitations, are woven into the narrative as integral to the poet's identity. Hirsch's (2008, p. 106) notion of postmemory is instructive here; many readers encounter these poets first through Johnson's lens, inheriting his assessments as part of their own understanding of the literary past. The cumulative effect of Johnson's method is a work that functions simultaneously as a historical record, a body of literary criticism, a moral commentary, and an act of canon construction. Milton's political convictions are addressed alongside his artistry, reinforcing the idea that a poet's legacy is shaped by more than technical achievement. Pope's adversities and confrontations become part of the narrative fabric, illustrating the interaction between personal experience and public authorship. Gray's example confirms that a concentrated body of work can secure lasting symbolic capital when it resonates deeply within cultural memory.

Johnson's structural consistency, life record, critical assessment, conclusive judgment, provides a framework adaptable to varied temperaments without flattening their differences. This flexibility supports Foucault's author function, accommodates Lejeune's narrative shaping, reinforces Assmann's canonizing process, and aligns with Bourdieu's analysis of symbolic capital in the literary field. Hirsch's perspective adds the dimension of mediated intimacy, explaining how Johnson's critical framing influences not only the reception of these poets in his own time but also their transmission to future generations. *Lives of the Poets* stands as more than a compendium of biographical essays. It is a deliberate intervention in the construction of poetry identity, one that fuses historical documentation with interpretive authority. The work has endured because it not only records, the poets were and what they wrote but also articulates, through the act of writing their lives, the values and judgments that continue to shape the canon of English poetry.

Comparative Case Study: Thematic Archetypes Across Traditions

The repetition of certain poetry archetypes across very different literary cultures is not accidental. Both the Ottoman *tezkire* tradition and Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* employ recurring figures to anchor cultural values in narrative form. These archetypes serve as more than individual portraits; they are instruments for defining the boundaries of poetic legitimacy. Two figures, in particular, invite a sustained comparative analysis: the *Satirical Master* and the *Spiritual Poet*. They appear in both corpora, yet the rationale for their construction, and the manner in which their lives are told, diverge in ways that illuminate the broader aims of each biographical tradition. Nefî's biography in *Tezkiretü's-Şuara* leaves no doubt about his command of language. Kınalızâde describes him as having "a tongue as sharp as a sword," and the entry closes with the stark observation that "his words became the cause of his undoing" (İpekten 1988, p. 142). This coupling of praise and warning transforms his execution under Sultan Murad IV into a moral parable about the risks of pushing satire beyond the unspoken limits of decorum. The narrative pacing here is deliberate; the reader is invited to admire Nefî's skill before being confronted with the consequences of its excess.

In Johnson's account of Alexander Pope, satire is equally central but framed differently. Pope's "precision of style" and "command of the couplet" (Johnson 2009, p. 302) are highlighted early. Physical deformity and highly public quarrels are not concealed; Johnson notes them directly: "His body was deformed, but his wit was unbent." Instead of moral closure, the biography offers a picture of resilience. Pope's polemics become part of his professional identity, a mark of his active engagement with the literary and political currents of his day. This reflects a culture where confrontation could enhance symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1993, p. 31) rather than diminish it. Placed side by side, the portraits of Nefî and Pope embody the "author function" (Foucault 1991, p. 107) within different regimes. Nefî's authority is constrained by the moral and political boundaries of the Ottoman court; Pope's is expanded by public disputation in the print marketplace. Assmann's (1992, p. 40) notion of cultural memory helps explain why both endure: each remains a benchmark of satirical art, though remembered according to distinct cultural priorities.

Fuzûlî's *Tezkiretü's-Şuara* entry radiates moral and spiritual imagery. His ghazals are praised as "the embodiment of love and truth in words" (Eyduran 2014, p. 72), and his life of hardship is reframed as evidence of spiritual sincerity. Poverty, in this telling, is not a lack but a form of wealth, a credential that affirms his alignment with divine truth. Such reframing aligns with Assmann's (1992, pp. 42-44) model of canon formation, embedding Fuzûlî in the Ottoman literary memory as a paragon of both artistry and virtue. Milton's life, as narrated by Johnson, also links moral authority to poetic achievement. Johnson praises the "sublimity of thought" in *Paradise Lost* and recognizes the coherence of Milton's epic vision, yet he addresses the poet's republican politics with equal candor (Johnson 2009, p. 215). Here adversity is not sanctified; rather, it is shown as one influence among many that shaped Milton's intellectual and artistic path. The openness of this portrayal, in Lejeune's terms, preserves tensions rather than resolving them into moral exemplarity. Both poets function as moral authorities within their traditions. For Fuzûlî, legitimacy rests on embodying a Sufi-inflected moral ideal; for Milton, it is built on the capacity to unite theological vision with epic craft and political engagement.

The juxtaposition of these archetypes brings into focus the interplay of theory and narrative practice. Foucault's author function exposes the institutional mechanisms that grant and limit authority. Lejeune's narrative theory reveals how events are ordered and emphasized to produce either cautionary or inspirational readings. Assmann's cultural memory framework situates these biographies as tools for long-term canon maintenance, while Hirsch's postmemory explains the emotional bonds readers form with poets they know only through mediated accounts. Bourdieu's

field theory clarifies how symbolic capital, whether gained through confrontation or spiritual authority, is preserved and circulated. The *Satirical Master* and *Spiritual Poet* archetypes demonstrate both convergence and divergence in the Ottoman and English traditions. In the Ottoman *tezkire*, satire is admired yet enclosed within a moral framework, its dangers made explicit through narrative closure. The account of Nefî moves from celebrating his verbal brilliance to underscoring the lethal consequences of defying authority. In *Lives of the Poets*, satire, as embodied by Pope, is integral to the poet's public identity. His disputes are portrayed as part of his craft, and the reader is left to assess them without a prescriptive moral.

The *Spiritual Poet* archetype follows a parallel split. Fuzûlî's biography sanctifies personal adversity, casting it as a sign of divine favor and moral authenticity. His verses are offered as direct evidence of this union between art and piety. Milton's portrayal retains the link between moral authority and poetic power but resists turning hardship into sanctity. Johnson frames political conviction and artistic vision as coexisting in productive tension. These contrasts reveal biography's dual capacity: it can serve as an extension of a communal moral code or as a site for critical engagement with the complexities of individual character. Both traditions keep these archetypes alive in cultural memory. Nefî and Pope remain reference points in discussions of satire's reach and risk. Fuzûlî and Milton continue to exemplify poetry's engagement with the sacred, whether in the imagery of divine love or the architecture of the Christian epic.

The persistence of these archetypes also reflects their adaptability. They are reframed to fit changing audiences and critical climates: Nefî's cautionary tale can be read as a reflection on free expression; Pope's resilience resonates in an age that prizes intellectual independence. Fuzûlî's devotional verse speaks to modern readers as a meditation on integrity under adversity; Milton's blend of politics and theology invites debate on the role of the poet in public life. In each case, the biography is more than a record, it is an active agent in shaping how these poets are remembered, valued, and reinterpreted over time.

Comparative Analysis

This section institutes a sustained comparative dialogue between the Ottoman *tezkire* tradition and Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* with the aim of analyzing the formation of poetic identity across historically distinct yet structurally comparable literary cultures. The analytical emphasis extends beyond individual portraits, including Bâkî, Nefî, and Fuzûlî in the Ottoman context alongside Milton, Pope, and Gray in the English, toward the principles governing biographical representation, selection, and evaluative authority. The selection of *Tezkiretü's-Şuara* and *Lives of the Poets* derives from their canonical status and their function as consolidating interventions within their respective traditions, each marking a historical moment during which literary biography acquires decisive significance in canon formation and the regulation of poetic legitimacy. As Philippe Lejeune (1989) formulates, "to tell a life is to organize it; to organize it is to give it meaning" (p. 22). In the Ottoman literary context, such organization codifies a shared moral and aesthetic order embedded in courtly and communal norms (Kılıç 2007). In Johnson's biographical practice, as Gregory Clingham (1997) observes, "critical judgment is woven seamlessly into narrative biography" (p. 4), positioning life writing within the expanding public sphere of eighteenth-century literary culture. The comparative framework therefore rests upon structural affinity, treating biography as a mediating cultural form operative during phases of institutional consolidation while acknowledging divergence in the criteria of legitimacy, authority, and evaluative practice. The analysis concentrates on representative canonical figures as normative sites that render the integrative logic of biographical writing analytically legible.

In both traditions, biographical writing functions as a central mechanism in the articulation of literary canonicity. Within *Tezkiretü's-Şuara*, Bâkî's authority under the honorific *Sultânü's-Şuarâ*

gains visibility through figurative descriptions of verse as “jewels of eloquence reflecting the refinement of the palace” (Eyduvan 2014, p. 52). The poet's own couplet consolidates an orientation toward enduring reputation: “Avazeyi bu âleme Dâvud gibi sal / Bâkî kalan bu kubbede bir hoş sadâ imiş” (“Send forth your voice to the world like David; what remains under this dome is but a pleasant echo.”). In *Lives of the Poets*, Milton's “sublimity of thought” (Johnson 2009, p. 215) acquires further resonance alongside the defiant assertion voiced in *Paradise Lost*, “Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven” (Book-I line 263), a formulation integral to Johnson's construction of poetic independence and moral grandeur. Poetic identity across both traditions takes form at the intersection of life narrative and literary production, mediated by distinct regimes of legitimacy and valuation.

In the Ottoman context, Neffî's satirical practice aligns rhetorical audacity with political exposure, as Kınalızâde's account attributes his downfall to a tongue figured as “sharp as a sword,” with speech itself designated as the site of fatal consequence (İpekten 1988, p. 142). The poet's own assertion, “Sözü sühan içinde cevherdir Neffî'nin / Kılıç keser, kalem yazar, ikisi birdir” (“*Neffî's words are jewels within speech; the sword cuts, the pen writes, yet the two are one*”), consolidates an authorial posture grounded in confrontation, visibility, and public risk. A parallel configuration governs Alexander Pope's portrayal in *Lives of the Poets*, stylistic precision and polemical engagement converge within a shared discursive economy. Johnson's emphasis on Pope's “precision of style” (2009, p. 302) attains aphoristic condensation in the maxim “To err is human; to forgive, divine” (*An Essay on Criticism* Part II, line 525), situating moral reflection within the performative arena of public authorship and critical exchange.

A contrasting mode of legitimization structures Fuzûlî's biographical representation, oriented toward spiritual endurance and symbolic elevation rather than public contestation. Material deprivation and social marginality undergo narrative rearticulation as indices of moral steadfastness, with poverty reframed as “spiritual wealth” and poetic expression characterized as “the embodiment of love and truth in words” (Eyduvan 2014, p. 72). Fuzûlî's verse, “Meni candan usandırdı cefâdan yâr usanmaz mı” (“*Your cruelty has wearied me of life; will my beloved never weary of afflicting me?*”) and “Su kasdına meğer bahr-i muhabbetle doluymuş / Kim içtikçe susadım, içtikçe susadım” (“*It seems the sea of love was filled for the sake of water; the more I drank, the more I thirsted*”), inscribes suffering within a devotional economy of meaning, aligning poetic authority with transcendence and communal ethical ideals. Across these configurations, the author function assumes differentiated forms, anchored in patronage, communal recognition, and moral representation in the Ottoman literary sphere, and articulated via visibility, controversy, and critical authority in Johnson's literary culture. The convergence and divergence of these regimes underscore biography's role in structuring the conditions under poetic value, legitimacy, and legacy acquire durability.

Within Johnson's literary milieu, symbolic capital accrues in relation to individual achievement and sustained critical authority, a configuration legible in the biographical treatment of Thomas Gray (Bourdieu 1993, pp. 29-34). Gray's “elegance and finish” (Johnson 2009, p. 589) secure canonical legitimacy for a deliberately limited poetic corpus, while the line “The paths of glory lead but to the grave” (*Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, line 36) situates poetic value within a sustained meditation on mortality and the circumscription of ambition. A contrasting narrative economy governs the Ottoman tezkire tradition, biographical representation translates perceived excess or transgression into moral exemplarity (Lejeune 1989, p. 22). Neffî's execution assumes the function of a cautionary terminus, integrating satirical brilliance into a didactic structure that reaffirms communal boundaries (Assmann 1992, p. 40). Johnson's biographical practice sustains an alternative orientation, retaining imperfection without imposing moral closure and preserving contradiction as a constitutive dimension of authorial identity (Foucault 1991, p. 107). Pope's

physical limitations, acknowledged within the narrative, undergo symbolic reconfiguration in the formulation “his wit was unbent” (Johnson 2009, p. 302), consolidating resilience as a defining attribute of poetic authority.

Across these configurations, authority and value operate within differentiated regimes of legitimation. In the Ottoman literary field, stabilization follows from patronage, communal recognition, and moral representation, Johnson’s cultural context privileges visibility, controversy, and critical judgment within an expanding public sphere (Bourdieu 1993; Clingham 1997). These divergences correspond to distinct operations of authorial function, narrative organization, cultural memory, affective transmission, and symbolic capital, each embedded in the institutional conditions governing literary production (Foucault 1991; Lejeune 1989; Assmann 1992; Hirsch 2008). Biography thus assumes the role of an active structuring practice, mediating between individual life trajectories, collective remembrance, and the evaluative frameworks sustaining literary canons across time.

Across both traditions, biographical writing participates in the organization of cultural memory, with its operative logic varying in relation to the canonical status and representative function of the figures under consideration (Assmann 1992, pp. 39-42). Within the Ottoman tezkire tradition, poets such as Bâkî, Nefî, and Fuzûlî occupy a norm-producing position, their biographical representations articulating an idealized and regulatory core of the tradition rather than its full internal diversity (Kılıç 2007, pp. 98-105; İpekten 1988, pp. 14-22). Bâkî’s ceremonial eloquence, condensed in the line “Bâkî kalan bu kubbede bir hoş sadâ imiş” (*“What remains under this dome is but a pleasant echo”*), formulates an aspiration toward enduring reputation authorized by courtly and communal validation (Eyduvan 2014, p. 52). Nefî’s wit, figured as “sharp as a sword,” undergoes simultaneous elevation and containment, its rhetorical force integrated into a narrative of moral consequence delineating the boundaries of acceptable literary conduct (İpekten 1988, p. 142). Fuzûlî’s deprivation, subjected to narrative transvaluation, acquires the status of spiritual abundance, while his mystical verse, “Aşk imiş cânın cânı, aşk imiş dîn ü îmân / Aşk imiş her ne var âlemde, aşk imiş aşk” (*“Love is the soul of the soul, love is religion and faith; whatever exists in the world is love, only love”*), articulates the Sufi-inflected ethical horizon consolidated within the tezkire’s canonical discourse (Eyduvan 2014, pp. 72-74).

Johnson’s biographical practice advances a structurally distinct mode of memorialization, marked by the sustained presence of tension and contradiction within the canonical frame. Milton’s political convictions remain legible alongside “sublimity of thought” and the defiant assertion “Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven,” preserving ideological conflict as an integral component of poetic authority (Johnson 2009, p. 215). Pope’s imperfections retain constitutive significance within his portrait, his maxim “To err is human; to forgive, divine” registering moral reflection without narrative closure (Johnson 2009, p. 302). Gray’s meditative line, “The paths of glory lead but to the grave,” situates poetic value within an enduring confrontation with mortality and the limits of ambition (Johnson 2009, p. 589). In accordance with Lejeune’s narratological formulation, meaning emerges from selective organization and evaluative emphasis, positioning biography as a site of normative articulation and critical negotiation rather than exhaustive representation (Lejeune 1989, p. 22). For contemporary readerships, Hirsch’s (2008) theorization of postmemory delineates the mediated conditions governing entry into cultural consciousness, with Fuzûlî accessed primarily via the tezkire corpus and Milton via Johnson’s prose. In concert with Foucault’s (1991) articulation of the author function, this configuration renders visible the regulatory operations that “limit, exclude, and choose” (p. 107), thereby organizing remembrance along institutionally sanctioned lines.

The present study advances this conjunction by operationalizing the satirical master and the spiritual poet as analytic archetypes, calibrated to expose the norm-producing core of biographical

traditions without positing exhaustive coverage. The methodological design therefore proceeds via representative canonical cases, a bounded strategy that foregrounds integrative and regulatory dynamics while delimiting scope. Within this analytic economy, the *tezkire*'s canonical discourse consolidates moral and aesthetic norms by stabilizing eloquence, wit, and deprivation as evaluative coordinates, while *Lives of the Poets* maintains productive tension by retaining contradiction within the canonical frame. The comparative synthesis specifies biography as an active cultural technology mediating institutional authority, narrative organization, and mnemonic transmission, thereby determining the conditions under which poetic authority, value, and legacy attain durability. By situating these mechanisms across two structurally comparable yet historically discrete literary cultures, the study contributes to comparative biography and cultural memory scholarship by formalizing a transferable account of canon formation grounded in selective narration, evaluative emphasis, and archetypal abstraction, articulated within a methodologically delimited analytic horizon.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to bring the Ottoman *tezkire* tradition into sustained, systematic comparison with the English biographical tradition represented by Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, with a view to interrogating how poetic identity is constructed, mediated, and perpetuated within two markedly different literary and cultural ecologies. Positioned at the intersection of literary history, biography theory, and cultural memory studies, the inquiry set out to identify both the transhistorical functions of literary biography and its culturally specific inflections. The project unfolded along two interrelated axes: the analysis of the *tezkire* as a historical-literary form embedded in the moral and institutional structures of the Ottoman world, and the examination of *Lives of the Poets* as a critical-biographical enterprise situated in the Enlightenment culture of public debate, individual authorship, and canon formation.

The originality of the research lies in the fact that, despite the extensive scholarship devoted separately to Ottoman *tezkire* literature and to Johnson's critical biographies, the two have rarely been subjected to a sustained comparative analysis. In their respective scholarly traditions, each corpus has tended to be examined in isolation: the *tezkire* as a source of biographical and bibliographical information for classical Turkish literature, moral exemplarity, and poetic networks; *Lives of the Poets* as a landmark of 18th-century English literary criticism and as a reflection of Johnson's role in shaping the national canon. Bringing these corpora into direct conversation has allowed for a reframing of biography as a trans-cultural literary form whose mechanisms of selection, representation, and valuation are adapted to the ideological, institutional, and aesthetic demands of their respective contexts.

The decision to undertake this comparative work was grounded in the recognition that biography is not a passive chronicle of life events but an active instrument of cultural construction. In both traditions, biography determines not only which poets are remembered but also the terms of their remembrance, positioning them within a hierarchy of values that governs their reception over time. In the Ottoman *tezkire*, this positioning is guided by an integrated set of imperatives: the affirmation of moral virtue, the demonstration of aesthetic refinement, and the securing of social legitimacy through patronage and communal recognition. In Johnson's *Lives*, the positioning derives from a balance of literary judgment, moral observation, and character assessment, without the prescriptive closure characteristic of the Ottoman form. Here, the biographical mode is evaluative and dialogic, allowing for the coexistence of artistic achievement and human imperfection in the shaping of a literary reputation.

The principal findings of this study coalesce around three interdependent observations articulated at the level of canonical biographical configurations rather than comprehensive literary traditions.

First, within the delimited corpora examined, literary biography operates as a primary mechanism of canon consolidation, forging a reciprocal articulation between life narrative and textual production that stabilizes poetic value within a normative interpretive framework. Second, the author function materializes through differentiated institutional matrices: in the Ottoman case, authorial legitimacy accrues via patronage structures, communal ratification, and moral representation, while in Johnson's biographical corpus authority circulates through critical judgment, market visibility, and the discursive dynamics of the public sphere. Third, the structurally selective character of biographical narration, privileging particular episodes, traits, and works, exerts a determining influence on long-term cultural memory by regulating the distribution of symbolic capital and conditioning the subsequent mobilization of these figures within literary and cultural discourse. These findings delineate a normative and regulative model of biographical practice operative within canonical formations, without extending claims of exhaustive representativeness. On this basis, the study contributes a methodologically circumscribed yet analytically transferable framework to comparative inquiry into literary biography, canon formation, and cultural memory, specifying the structural operations by which poetic authority, value, and legacy attain durability.

The comparative method adopted here integrated close textual analysis of primary biographical narratives with a theoretical synthesis drawing on authorship theory, narrative theory, cultural memory studies, and the sociology of literature. The detailed examination of individual portraits, Bâkî, Nefî, Fuzûlî alongside Milton, Pope, and Gray, attended to narrative architecture, character construction, thematic emphasis, and rhetorical strategy. These readings were then situated within an interpretive frame informed by concepts such as the author function, the narrative contract, postmemory, and symbolic capital. This combination of textual and theoretical analysis has produced an interpretive model capable of addressing both the universal dimensions of biography as a literary form and the culturally specific modalities through which it operates.

The contribution of this work to the field is twofold. It expands the scope of comparative literature by establishing a methodological precedent for the cross-cultural analysis of biographical traditions, and it deepens the study of biography by foregrounding its role as a mediator between individual lives and collective memory. In Ottoman literary studies, it offers a reconceptualization of the *tezkiye* as not merely a documentary repository but as an instrument of moral and aesthetic canon formation. In Johnson studies, it situates *Lives of the Poets* within a broader comparative framework that illuminates the shared and divergent strategies of literary commemoration across cultures. The analysis isolates two methodologically circumscribed orientations of biographical practice discernible within the examined canonical configurations, without positing exhaustive or transhistorical typologies.

In the *tezkiye* corpus, biographical narration exhibits an integrative orientation, embedding poetic identity within a moral and political horizon that privileges coherence, exemplarity, and alignment with collectively sanctioned norms; perceived flaws acquire interpretive salience as instructive elements calibrated to communal ethical frameworks. In *Lives of the Poets*, biographical practice manifests an evaluative orientation marked by the systematic juxtaposition of commendation and censure, the preservation of complexity, and the suspension of moral closure, thereby constituting critical engagement as an integral dimension of authorial representation. This analytically delimited contrast corresponds to divergent cultural logics operative within the selected materials, with the Ottoman canonical core foregrounding stability and normative integration, and Johnson's biographical project foregrounding contestation and critical openness. Framed at this level of abstraction, the findings advance a bounded comparative insight grounded in representative cases, clarifying the regulatory tendencies of biographical writing while deliberately refraining from general claims concerning the totality of either tradition.

The comparative perspective further renders intelligible the persistence and contextual malleability of certain analytically derived archetypal orientations, specifically the satirical master and the spiritual poet, as they manifest within the delimited biographical corpora under examination. These orientations operate as recurrent analytical reference points, yet their narrative realization remains decisively conditioned by divergent cultural, institutional, and evaluative regimes. Within the Ottoman canonical configuration, satirical expression undergoes systematic constraint under the imperatives of decorum and moral regulation, while the spiritual poet attains legitimacy through the articulation of mystical devotion and ethical exemplarity. In Johnson's biographical project, by contrast, satirical conflict acquires constitutive significance for authorial authority, and theological or spiritual vision converges with formal ambition and critical self-assertion. Formulated at this level of abstraction, the identification of such archetypal configurations refrains from advancing claims of transhistorical universality; instead, it establishes a rigorously bounded comparative analytic horizon capable of tracing the circulation, transformation, and context-specific reconfiguration of literary archetypes across selected cultural formations.

Methodologically, the study advances a rigorously integrated mode of comparative literary analysis predicated upon the reciprocal activation of close textual examination and theoretically grounded conceptual framing. Models of authorship, narrative organization, cultural memory, and symbolic capital operate as mutually reinforcing analytical instruments, clarifying the canonical configurations under consideration while simultaneously furnishing a transferable critical lexicon applicable to biographical traditions beyond the immediate scope of the inquiry. This methodological articulation situates biography as a nodal cultural practice at the intersection of literary form, social functionality, and ideological inscription, enabling individual life narratives to assume collective semantic and normative force.

The intellectual reach of these findings extends beyond the delimited comparative terrain addressed in the present analysis. Attention is directed toward the mechanisms governing the selection, narration, and valuation of literary lives, foregrounding the processes by which literary cultures assign durability, authority, and symbolic investment to particular figures. Such processes entail not only aesthetic discrimination but also ethical negotiation, particularly in relation to the tension between historical referentiality and interpretive configuration intrinsic to biographical writing. At the level of analytic implication, biography constitutes a privileged site for examining the mediation of personal, literary, and cultural identities within institutionalized regimes of public discourse.

The implications for subsequent research assume comparable significance. The comparative framework articulated in this study admits extension across additional biographical formations, including Arabic *ṭabaqāt* literature, Persian *tazkira* practices, and East Asian traditions of literary life writing, thereby facilitating critical assessment of the model's adaptability and analytic thresholds across heterogeneous cultural regimes. Further inquiry oriented toward the reception histories of the tezkire corpus and *Lives of the Poets* promises to elucidate the dynamics of reinterpretation, appropriation, and contestation shaping their afterlives within later literary cultures. Such lines of investigation expand the comparative horizon while consolidating scholarly understanding of biography as a culturally embedded mode of narrative regulation operative across divergent literary systems.

The comparative inquiry articulated in this study formalizes literary biography as a regulative and canon-productive discourse operative across historically discrete yet structurally comparable literary cultures. The Ottoman tezkire corpus and Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* converge at the level of selective narration, interpretive organization, and the systematic underarticulation of life and work; divergence becomes legible in the institutional rationalities governing authority, evaluation,

and narrative emphasis. This calibrated configuration of convergence and differentiation positions biography as a constitutive cultural mechanism for the articulation and stabilization of poetic value, legitimacy, and durability. By situating biographical writing at the intersection of cultural memory, narrative regulation, and institutional authority, the study advances a theoretically transferable framework for comparative literary analysis. Such a framework establishes cross-cultural comparison as an epistemic necessity for apprehending the processes by which literary traditions continuously define, recalibrate, and legitimate their canons.

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