

**IBN HAZM OF AL-ANDALUS AND CÁO XUĒQÍN OF CHINA:
LOVE AND GENDER IN COLLAPSING SOCIAL STRUCTURES**

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Abstract

In this paper, we discuss the opinions of Ibn Hāzım and Cáo Xuěqín on love, sex and gender. The Ring of the Dove and Dream of the Red Chamber were written when their authors' respective societies experienced multifaceted crises. Ibn Hāzım and Cáo Xuěqín were both of noble birth, but the decline of their societies forced them to leave their ranks and look at society in a new light. We discussed their views on the topics of reason and love, ideal and real love, and the nature of love. We observed that Ibn Hāzım concluded his opinion on love with an ideal but imaginary vision, on the other hand, Cáo Xuěqín came to a more complex and protest conclusion for love in his novel. Finally, we try to demonstrate how and why Ibn Hāzım and Cáo Xuěqín take steps to critique the patriarchal structure of their collapsing feudal societies, reconceptualize love, and make an early case for gender equality.

Keywords: *Ibn Hāzım, Cáo Xuěqín, The Ring of the Dove, Dream of the Red Chamber, isolation and equality in love.*

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ENDÜLÜSLÜ İBN HAZM VE ÇİNLİ CÁO XUĒQÍN: ÇÖKEN TOPLUMSAL YAPILARDA AŞK VE TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYET

Öz

Bu makalede İbn Hazm ve Cáo Xuěqín'in aşk ve toplumsal cinsiyet hakkındaki görüşlerini tartışmaktayız. Güvercin Gerdanlığı ve Kızıl Odanın Rüyası, her iki yazarın çok yönlü toplumsal krizler yaşadığı bir dönemde yazılmıştır. Hem İbn Hazm, hem de Cáo Xuěqín asil bir aileden geliyordu; ancak mensup oldukları sosyal sınıfın gerilemesi onları buldukları pozisyonlardan kopardı; böylece yaşadıkları topluma karşı yeni bir bakış geliştirdiler. Burada ayrıca akıl ve aşk, ideal ve gerçek aşk, aşkın mahiyeti gibi konularla ilgili görüşlerini de tartıştık. İbn Hazm'ın aşk hakkındaki görüşlerini ideal fakat hayali bir vizyonla sonuçlandırıldığını, buna karşılık Cáo Xuěqín'in aşk konusunda daha karmaşık ve protestocu bir sonuca vardığını gözlemledik. Son olarak, İbn Hazm ve Cáo Xuěqín'in çökmekte olan feodal toplumların ataerkil yapısını eleştirme, aşkı yeniden kavramsallaştırma ve belki de toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği konusunda erken bir örnek olma bağlamında ne tür adımlar attıklarını göstermeye çalıştık.

Anahtar Sözcükler: *İbn Hazm, Cáo Xuěqín, Güvercin Gerdanlığı, Kızıl Odanın Rüyası, aşkta yalnızlık ve eşitlik.*

1. Introduction

The two authors whose works we analyze in this paper have hardly anything in common. They never interacted with one another because they were born in different millennia and wrote in different languages. The literary cultures they contributed to and the religions they practiced were oceans apart from each other. What brings them together in this paper is not the comparable social circumstances under which they produced their respective works either, but rather the very similar sensitivities they seem to have developed in response to those circumstances. As we will discuss later, the collapse of the social structure to which both writers belonged must have led them to take a different attitude toward

women and love. In particular, their economic weakness, the loss of powerful friends, the loss of the privileges they had previously enjoyed, and the changing political environment undoubtedly influenced their views. The state of collapse they experienced must have led them to an enlightenment about women and love.

Ibn Ḥazm was a prodigy born in 994 in the eastern part of Córdoba (Ibn Bashkuwāl, 1996: 415-417). According to his disciple al-Ḥumaydī, he was of Persian origin (1966: 308-310). With the support of records in Šā'id al-Andalusī (1912: 75-77), some historians claimed that Ibn Ḥazm was originally from Spain and that his mother was of Spanish origin (Dozy, 1931: 326-332). Although Ibn Ḥazm recorded the names and genealogies of the Muslim scholars of Arab origins in his work *Jamharat ansāb al-'Arab*, he never discussed his genealogy (Wasserstein, 2013: 69-87).¹ His famous work on love, namely *Ṭawq al-ḥamāmah fī al-ulfat wa al-ullāf* (طوق الحمامة في الألفة والألاف) was published many times (Petrof, 1914; Bercher, 1949; al-Şayrafī, 1950; Makkī, 1975; al-Qāsimī, 1980; 'Abbās, 1980; Sa'd, 1992), and translated to several languages, including English (Arberry, 1994). Also, Giffen's research explains Ibn Ḥazm's approach to love (Giffen, 1971: 23-25, 79-80, 129-131).

Cáo Xuěqín (曹雪芹), a cornerstone of Chinese literature, was born around 1715 in Jiangning, now Nanjing. His first name is Zhān (霑), known by his style name, Mèng Ruǎn (梦阮), and pseudonym Xuěqín (雪芹), also known as Qín Xī (芹溪) and Qín Pǔ (芹圃) (Hú Shì, 2016: 31-32). His novel *Dream of the Red Chamber* (Hóng Lóu Mèng: 红楼梦) is one of the four great masterpieces of Chinese literary history and is regarded as the pinnacle of classical Chinese fiction globally. In the first decades of the Guāngxù period, many researchers in Beijing were keen on the interpretation of this book and called themselves *Redologists*. (Guō, 1980: 1-2). Guō has divided the history of the study of *Dream of the Red Chamber* into two major periods, the period from the Qianlong period of the Qing dynasty to the early years of the Republic, and the second after the May 4th Movement. Studies on *Dream of the Red Chamber* also gave rise to many schools of thought, among them those of Wang Guowei, Cai Yuanpei,

¹ Recently, an erudite collection of research on Ibn Ḥazm has been published by Brill. As editors mentioned in the *Intro* section, this collection “presents Ibn Ḥazm and his works in their historical context and analyzes his contribution to a variety of religious and secular disciplines.” See, *Ibn Ḥazm of Cordoba: The life and works of a controversial thinker*; ed. Camilla Adang, Maribel Fierro, Sabine Schmidtke, (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 826 pgs. Here, David J. Wasserstein summarizes the major discussions on his origins and ancestral lineage in the section “Ibn Ḥazm and al-Andalus”.

and Hu Shi. Under their influence, many modern Chinese humanists conducted *Red Studies*: Mou Zongsan, Rong Geng, Jiang Liangfu, Wang Kunlun, Guo Moruo, Wang Li, Bing Xin, Fallen, and Ba Jin, to name only a few (Liú, 2005: 2-8).

International scholarship on *Dream of the Red Chamber* began around the middle of the last century, including a line of early expository texts in Japan, Germany, Russia, and the United Kingdom, which mostly analyzed the novel's thematic ideas, character descriptions, style, and structure, and different book editions, etc. *Redology* was further developed outside China when, in 1980, the first symposium on the *Dream of the Red Chamber* was held at the University of Wisconsin in the United States, the first event of its kind in the international *Redology* community. At present, studies on *Dream of the Red Chamber* continue to develop globally across a wide range of fields, including philosophy, sociology, psychology, economics, and aesthetics (Wáng, 1992: 102-108).

Among the characteristics that distinguish the writings of these authors from those of their peers' and ancestors', we argue, is their common and unique gender sensitivities. Both authors lived and wrote in times of great upheavals that announced the destruction of the socio-political grounds upon which they stood. As the patriarchal societies of which they were members came crumbling down, these authors turned to women and produced writings that retrospectively read like critiques of patriarchy at large.

2. The cultural milieu of *The Ring of the Dove*

The cultural difference was both a marker for ethnicities and a prerequisite in the process of social integration in the 11th century al-Andalus where Arabs were mixed with other ethnicities. The dominant culture emerged as the result of religious exchange, and as a fusion of Arabs, Berbers, Goths, and Romans, constituting a particularly distinctive Andalusian character. As Aḥmad Amīn indicates (2013: 702.), the pillars of al-Andalus were erected responding to signals from the East, "like a radio station receiving frequencies from faraway lands" through noble commanders, the patrons of Arabic arts and culture, and pilgrimages bringing a great deal of Arabic literature to al-Andalus, including the books of history and science. The political authority of Arabs had strengthened the widespread diffusion of the

Arabic ethos in the region. The enthusiasm of the old local Andalusians helped the Arabs' acceptance by the indigenous groups. As Ḥannā al-Fākhūrī explains, "the two factors were clear; the amalgamating of the Arabs with the native peoples of the new land, and, the imitation of the Eastern Arabian traditions." (1953: 700). Classical Arabic, the language of the high literati, was considered superior by all parties. Even though al-Andalus first learned manners and fashions from the East, it developed finally its distinctive mode as a center of scholarship, similar to the Eastern Arabian cities such as Cairo, Baghdad, and Damascus.

Because Arabs of al-Andalus interacted more intensely with other ethnicities and developed a synthesis, the newly emerged Andalusian literature did not become a modest imitation of the Eastern Arabic counterpart. The new Andalusian environment differed from the Arabian Peninsula in terms of climate, natural resources, and overall geographic conditions. Newly Arabized writers would excel at depicting sceneries filled with rich emotional expression, developing the poetics that Arabs brought with them from the desert, giving rise to the distinct *muwashshah* style. As Tova Rosen indicates (2000:163–89), the *muwashshah* was the product and an epitome of the multifaceted cultural relations in al-Andalus. Its complexity reflected the diverse linguistic situation of the inhabitants, giving acknowledgment to non-Arab cultures and brave female voices, expressing secular sentiments and unordinary religious aspirations. Aḥmad Amīn compares Andalusian culture to a weave and other cultures to threads: "It is, therefore, difficult to distinguish which of the threads in this Andalusian weave are Eastern, European or innovative, but all we can do is wonder and speculate." (Amīn, 703). That is the unique, diverse, and intertwined environment where *The Ring of the Dove* of Ibn Ḥazm arose.

3. Women in *The Ring and Dream*

The author of *Ṭawq al-ḥamāmah* (طوق الحمامة) spent his childhood years surrounded by powerful women. As Kevin Fox skillfully explains, slavery existed in Iberia and throughout Europe before and after al-Andalus, but the social and cultural mix of races and religions there led to unique outcomes (Fox, 2019: 54-55). On the other hand, Ibn Ḥazm's gender sensitivities are well-recognized among scholars. Even women depicted as "slaves", or "servants" in his work did not refrain from expressing

their emotions and choices in amorous relations. Ibn Hāzım did not paint this picture of equality only in his masterpiece *The Ring of the Dove*, but also in his other works such as *al-Faşl*, (1978: 275) and *al-Uşûl* (1996: 119-120), going so far as to recognize women's right to "prophet-hood" without second thoughts. In his masterpiece *Ṭawq al-ḥamāmah*, Ibn Hāzım extends the category of women who were eligible to be courted to include all, regardless of their social classes, and ethnical or cultural backgrounds. In medieval European court and chivalric literature, women worthy of pursuit were often of high social status. In contrast, many of the women pursued in *The Ring of the Dove* were servants, who, regardless of their social circumstances, still clearly expressed their feelings, desires, and choices.

Women with whom Ibn Hāzım fell in love in his youth were also servants, some of whom rejected him according to his account. As Hickman explains, Ibn Hāzım's women have not only the right to accept and reject amorous relationships but also the right to actively pursue them. The women portrayed in *The Ring of the Dove* have the right to actively pursue love, a right that in the social context of the period was commonly viewed as a male right and duty. (Hickman, 2014: 53-68). Ibn Hāzım not only acknowledged but also praised female agency in his poetry: "As she withdrew, the lissome maid, / This way and that she gently swayed / Ringing out a tender melody; / I love thee dearly: lovest thou me? I pictured her poise and grace / A dove that goes with perfect pace." (1994: 67)²

What distinguishes Ibn Hāzım from his peers is his recognition of women as fully rational human beings equal to men in love relations. In fact, his ideas about sexual difference did not differ greatly from many Muslim scholars of the time, who associated masculinity with controlling passions; or, from the medieval Western belief that femininity meant irrationality. In the chapter titled "*On the vileness of sin*", he illustrated his perspectives on reason and passions, arguing that God created every human with two contrasting natures i.e., *al-'aql* [the reason or the intellect] and *al-nafs* [ego] (Ibn Hāzım 1994: 138). Ibn Hāzım states that God created every human being, regardless of gender, with the same essence, and he continues to explain: "These two contrary natures are the poles in a human; they are two of the body's various faculties, by means of which the body acts. Everybody has its share in these two natures,

² Ibn Hāzım, *The Ring of the Dove: A Treatise on the Art and Practice of Arab Love*, translated by Arthur John Arberry, (London: Luzac, 1994). Henceforth, all excerpts and page numbers of *The Ring of the Dove* are taken from the PDF version of Arberry's translation at Muslim Philosophy Online: <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/hazm/dove/ringdove.html#ch1> 2022-08-16.

according to the degree to which it responds to them.” (138-139). Ibn Hāzım acknowledges the equality of men and women in terms of feelings, decisions, responsibilities, and capability of sin and good deeds. He maintains that men and women have equal power over their passions. He places men and women on an equal footing about their accountability in the face of temptation to sin and focuses on individual characters. (139). Ibn Hāzım acknowledges the role of women as equal participants and suitors in amorous relationships, and, more crucially, as rational individuals.

Similarly, *Dream of the Red Chamber* presents a vision of women, that contrasts with the existing values of its time. Against the background of a feudal patriarchal society of 18th century China, *Dream of the Red Chamber*'s depictions of women are most reflective of its superiority in accounting for gender dynamics, whether the author Cáo Xuěqín praises women directly or through the male protagonist Jia Baoyu. Unlike his peers, Cáo Xuěqín does not only praise women's physical appearance but also his mastery finds expression in his account of women's spiritual qualities. That he incorporates women's personality traits into the portrayal of their appearance already demonstrates his sensitivities. He wrote long lines for the emotional Lin Daiyu, (Cáo Xuěqín, 2012: I, 90-91) while he described the enthusiastic Wang Xifeng as a “smiling summer face.” (I, 79).

Dream of the Red Chamber ignores beauty, which was a must for women under the male gaze of his feudal society. *Dream of the Red Chamber* violates the patriarchal norm to focus on women's distinct characters and personal independence: “I compared all the women I'd met that day and recognized their behavior and knowledge were superior to mine.” (Cáo Xuěqín & Gāo, 2015: 1-2). His concentration on and admiration for the nature of women is bold, and there is no more renowned statement than these in which Jia Baoyu remarked about the girls (Cáo Xuěqín, 2012: I, 111). He also says: “The pure essence of humanity was all concentrated in the female of the species and males were its mere dregs and offscourings.” (2012: I, 652). This viewpoint is a complete rejection of his contemporary societal paradigm. *Dream of the Red Chamber* focuses on amorous relations between men and women, as Daiyu, Cáo Xuěqín's favorite character, takes center stage to embrace the amorous quest and celebrate love. (2012: I, 226). The poems in the book display how Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu's feelings develop over time. Daiyu addresses the suffering they experienced before, and the happiness

they experience once they fall in love. As Daiyu observes Baoyu's love for herself, she fervently expresses concern for his conduct while celebrating this hard-won love until she accepts Baoyu's affection, thereby portraying the equality and freedom of women to their suitors.

Cáo Xuěqín's introduction of the concept of "lust" in the fifth chapter of *Dream of the Red Chamber* further elaborates on the theme of gender equality. When Jia Baoyu visits the *Land of Illusion*, the fairy named "Disenchantment" describes him as the most lustful person she has ever known in the whole world. Disenchantment defines Baoyu's lust as different from others. (2012: I, 129). Baoyu's lust does not objectify women but is the "lust of the mind", a blind and defenseless love. Here, Cáo Xuěqín turns eroticism into consideration and care.

In terms of women's portrayal, both *Dream of the Red Chamber* and *The Ring of the Dove* aim to make a case for gender equality. This is inexorably tied to the intersexuality of women in these works, that is, the idea that women and men possess both masculine and feminine qualities. The human spirit and mind exhibit characteristics typical of both sexes. Common life and mutual interaction between men and women make some people acquire heterosexual qualities, which, according to our authors, ensures coordination and understanding between the sexes. As Jung would have it, "anima" is the feminine aspect of a man's psyche, and "animus" is the masculine part of a woman's psyche (Calvin & Vernon, 1973: 46-47). Our authors would agree.

The reason why the female characters in *The Ring of the Dove* and *Dream of the Red Chamber* are innovative for their period is that the authors depict them as sexually ambivalent figures. In *The Ring of the Dove*, women display characteristics that are completely different from those of medieval women of the time, such as taking the lead in amorous relationships, as mentioned. The women of *Ring of the Dove* are defined by various degrees of imbalance between "anima" and "animus," surpassing the medieval emphasis on character consistency. The women of *Dream of the Red Chamber* are manifestly more masculine as well. Wang Xifeng, one of the most ambivalent women in *Dream of the Red Chamber*, will serve as an illustration of the strength of character. Wang Xifeng was raised "as a boy," which demonstrates that the "animus" in her character was nurtured, not repressed. She stomps on the threshold and picks her teeth with an ear digger. During her supervision of the Jia Mansion, Wang Xifeng

demonstrates a strong desire to be in charge, high regard for money and power, and good managerial abilities. Even though the Chinese social system made women subjected to men, Wang Xifeng is not a submissive woman to her husband (Cáo Xuěqín, 2012: I, 122). In short, Wang Xifeng unquestionably defies the norms of the age. The “animus” in Wang Xifeng’s personality surpasses the “anima”. (Fù Shǒu, 2005: 100-114).

The uniqueness of both *The Ring of the Dove* and *Dream of the Red Chamber* can be attributed to their attempt to break the traditional binary view that only men can act like men, while women can only act like women. Both works make women have a double temperament and pursue the truth of human nature.

3.1. Women and politics

Ibn Ḥazm had to bid farewell to the privileged and steady life of his youth due to political unrest. In his initially successful political career, he did rise to high ranks but later was imprisoned and expelled. His loyalty to the Umayyad Dynasty did not end with the fall of the Caliphate of Córdoba but was only strengthened. Despite being exiled multiple times due to his Umayyad sympathies, he remained faithful to the deteriorating Umayyad rule during the most turbulent period.

A large number of Arabs married local non-Muslim women in al-Andalus. Even in the first years of the Arab conquest, interreligious marriage was a common phenomenon, as Anwar Chejne points out (1993: 21). The Umayyad rulers used interreligious marriage as a diplomatic tool to establish stable relationships with Christian groups. In a constant transition from war to peace, the phenomenon of intermarriage, or the exchange of brides, was simply a continuous process of gift exchange. These types of exchanges may bring about a transition from hostility to support and alliance, from anxiety to trust, and fear to friendship (Lévi-Strauss, 1969: 67-68). The subjection of native women is often an extension of political and military conquest, as well as a psychological reference to the “might” of rulers. Yet the local nobles of al-Andalus too attempted to marry Muslims to protect their status, allowing new rulers to inherit regions legally in the long run. Consequently, the Arab kings’ affection for native women was not only a physical and psychological necessity but also a political issue. An interesting example in this

regard is the marriage of Uthmān ibn Abī Nas‘a “Munuza” with Lampegia, the daughter of Odo, the Duke of Aquitaine. Influenced by this marriage, Munuza made a political agreement with Odo and was finally killed by Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Ghāfiqī (d. 732 AD). It seems that the major intention was to gain more political power among the competing rivals. (‘Inān, 1997:85-86).

Ibn Ḥazm’s most significant political metaphor, was his favorite maid, a servant girl whose fate was intertwined with that of his family, of Córdoba, and of the Umayyad state. During the author’s childhood, Córdoba was prosperous, stable, and wealthy. As the political unrest begins, Córdoba loses its former splendor, and the loving maid loses her beauty. Córdoba’s collapse brings the figure of the maid to the fore, the state’s destiny appearing to be linked to the destiny of the women of Córdoba through Ibn Ḥazm’s eyes (1994: 106-107).

In *Dream of the Red Chamber*, the author again reveals some of his ideas on society and politics. Numerous women meet tragic ends in the narrative; despite their independence and power, they are unable to control their destinies. Baoyu and Daiyu could not arrange their marriages. Lin Daiyu was deemed unfit to be Jia Baoyu’s wife. Her generous display of her talents, sarcasm, and sentimentality was not in line with the traditions of the time. Daiyu’s defiance is a challenge to the old patriarchal society’s authority. Eventually marrying Jia Baoyu, Xue Baochai becomes a sought-after good wife, a mother, and a kind person adhering to the rituals. Cáo Xuěqín depicts Lin Daiyu’s death to express his condemnation of this system’s persecution of human beings. By destroying these characters in his work, Cáo Xuěqín displays his opposition to the political ideals of his society and implicitly points to gender equality as an ideal.

Cáo Xuěqín favors and sympathizes with some of his characters and mocks and criticizes his villains. He depicts Lin Daiyu as a figure who fights for the author against her oppressive society. In *Dà guān yuán* (*Grand View Garden*: 大觀園), he favors characters who resist oppression in varying capacities and perish tragically. He calls for compassion for them, underlining their oppressors’ corrupt rule. Cáo Xuěqín’s brilliance is demonstrated by the fact that not all of his heroes and heroines are flawless. Wang Xifeng possesses beauty, talent, courage, and determination, but is also power-hungry and manipulative. Using the Jia Family’s power, she steals their money and torments their servants.

Eventually, at the direction of the governing power, she seeks to destroy Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu's marriage. In her job as steward of the Jia family, she becomes a tool to sustain the authority of the feudal rule but also represents the deterioration of this rule from the inside.

4. Reason and love

As Ormsby explains, Ibn Ḥazm considers the human to be an entity with two contradicting natures, a creature of two extremes. The self (al-nafs: النفس), motivated by desire and appetite, is one pole. The opposite pole is the reason or the intellect al-'aql: العقل which is directed by justice. The connection between these two extremes is provided by the soul al-rūḥ: الروح (Ormsby, 2000: 241). In his descriptions of love in the stories titled "*On falling in love while asleep*" (1994: 24-25) and "*On falling in love with a quality and thereafter not approving any other different,*" (1994: 32-35) young people are rational, but they fall irrationally in love with imaginary persons who appear in their dreams. Ibn Ḥazm believes that love involves a significant irrational element and that rational persons are capable of irrational perceptions and behaviors depending on the strength of their emotions. Yet he also believes that one should be rational, even in amorous affairs. His characterization of true love as a combination of "reason and sensuality" was uncommon throughout the Middle Ages, a period in which reason was always held in the highest regard. The ability to maintain a balance between reason and passion is an important aspect of Ibn Ḥazm's criteria for appraising people and their relationship to the divine.

Cáo Xuěqín and Ibn Ḥazm appear to hold similar opinions regarding whether love is a matter of desire or constraint. In *Dream of the Red Chamber*, Cáo Xuěqín defined two kinds of "lust". One is the physical desire, which is senseless and shallow. The other type of lust is mental and includes rational, considerate, and thoughtful love. Cáo Xuěqín believes that one should maintain "lust in the mind" and despises "physical desire". If love is only instinctual, that is, not rational, then it lacks the allure of the spirit. If love is purely rational, then it would never be able to elevate the psyche, and its energy would dwindle. Love brings together the rational, irrational, the instinctual, and the spiritual. With the advancement of civilization, the vigor of this longing grows. (Kiril, 1985: 117).

4.1 Nature of love

Ibn Ḥazm describes his perspective on the essence of love by pointing to the medieval theory of love, which is the union of souls; “eternal love”. This was also historically Islamic and strengthened by ancient Hellenic philosophy (Plato, 2013: 29-39). As the Prophet Muhammad says in his *hadith*, “Some souls are very keen on others and they like to be together.” (Al-Bukhārī, 2002: 820). Therefore, according to Ibn Ḥazm, true love only exists between souls that are naturally and willingly attached. This combines Plato’s perspective of love, particularly the essence of love as described in *The Symposium*. Plato’s love prefers the soul to the body: “The love of a mortal who prefers the body to the soul is revolting.” (2013: 39). Notably, love is a completely spiritual feeling, devoid of any material base. According to this perspective, pure love has nothing to do with sexual desire, which is the essence of animal nature. In the shadow of medieval religious asceticism, an increasing number of individuals opted for spiritual union and despised material union. As Ormsby indicates, Ibn Ḥazm’s concept of love is a merger between the scattered parts of the soul that have become fragmented in this material realm (Ormsby, 245). Ibn Ḥazm must have believed that the soul was first created in the Isthmus (البرزخ: al-Barzakh), with innate affinity and similarity, and that this soul was not “divided” at this dimension (Ibn Ḥazm, 1996: 121-126).³ As he explained, when the soul was sent to this material world, it was separated into different individuals, with an innate repulsion of opposites, harmony of similarities, and attraction of likenesses. These souls knew each other before the formation of the human entity, and following the soul’s incorporation into the body, each remembers what they liked and disliked. Numerous of the soul’s actual characteristics may be veiled by mishaps in the material world. These impediments do not preclude the soul from merging with its fellow souls, but they unquestionably impede this union, so the soul will recognize its similarities and compatibility with its companion and complete its union with its beloved only after extensive planning and preparation. He referred to what God said, “He it is Who did create you from a single soul, and therefrom did make his mate that he might take rest in her.” (*The*

³ Ibn Ḥazm mentioned the details of this idea in *al-Faṣl*: “God had created all souls before he created Adam, putting them in the steady place of the Isthmus (مستقر البرزخ). God is sending every soul into his/her body when the body is created in this world. Then, when the human dies, the soul will return to its former steady place.” The subject of the soul is studied under the title of “*mustaqarr al-arwāḥ*” (مستقر الارواح) i.e., “the steady place of the souls”.

Quran, 7: 179). In short, Ibn Hāzım believes that the highest level of love is not related to the attractiveness of the body or the harmony of the earthly personalities, but to the union of souls. As Adrian explains in his lecture, Ibn Hāzım believes that carnal desires, which may lead a person to assert that he loves two persons or is infatuated with two different persons, are not true love since the soul then is blinded by material things. For Ibn Hāzım, while the most sublime type of love is the one that announces a union of souls, this type of love is followed by the love between relatives, then the love of familiarity and the love of sharing a common goal, the love of comrades and acquaintances, etc. However, he does not dismiss worldly causes and desires altogether, recognizing the significance of physical love, and praising the physical union of lovers when “love arises as soon as spiritual concord is achieved.” (Adrian, 2018). Physical contact completes the circuit, allowing the flow of love into the soul.

In Chinese culture, *The Ching* defines love, or the relationship between Yin and Yang as follows: “Yin and Yang, which are mixed in Taiji, are divided by their disparities in clarity, emptiness, and size, becoming distinct Yin and Yang.”⁴ Yin and Yang are distinct and relative notions. Nonetheless, Yin and Yang are interactive and it is due to the combination of Yin and Yang that all things exist. This Chinese notion of love stresses the physical union of man and woman, and only the union of man and woman, i.e., Yin and Yang, can give birth to all things. The Chinese concept of love has evolved in time with the influence of Buddhism, which holds that the union of man and woman is due to “Yuanfen” (yuánfēn缘分) i.e., destiny. Since Buddhism has the principle of reincarnation, it is believed that destiny in this life is due to past life reasons (good, bad, or neutral reasons), and therefore, the union of the couple is arranged by past events: “Husband and wife in one day, marriage in a thousand lifetimes; a hundred lifetimes of cultivation to cross the same boat, a thousand lifetimes to sleep together.” (Guō & Zhāng, 2004: 62). Becoming husband and wife is the outcome of a hundred lifetimes.

In *Dream of the Red Chamber*, the love between Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu begins in their prior lives (Cáo Xuěqín, 2012: I, 219). Lin Daiyu was a fairy plant in a past life. When Baoyu was still a god, he watered this fairy plant every day. When the god came to the mortal world and became a human, this

⁴ For the details on Taiji and Yin Yang, see <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=en&chapter=690175&searchu=虚实>, 2022-02-22.

plant transformed into a human being and decided to repay Baoyu's kindness by watering him with her tears. The love between Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu was predestined as a "wood and stone partnership" in a previous life. *Dream of the Red Chamber* displays a significant influence of Buddhist principles on the Chinese concept of love. The original Chinese description of love does not include the concept of soul connecting; instead, it emphasizes a kind of spiritual affinity.

The perspectives of Ibn Hāzım and Cáo Xuěqín on the topic of whether the object of love is unique are similar, yet distinct, due to their diverse intellectual backgrounds. Ibn Hāzım argues that the object of true love (reunion of souls) must be unique, based on the philosophical premise that "a soul is divided into two halves, therefore love is the search of two comparable souls." Ibn Hāzım argues that physical desire may induce a person to claim that he/she loves two persons, or is infatuated with two completely different people. For Ibn Hāzım, this is not true love in the real sense, because the soul is misled here by material things. On the other hand, *Dream of the Red Chamber* reflects the singularity of real love. The protagonist Jia Baoyu seems to express his adoration for several women, praising their beauty, candor, and mental purity, stating that he "cares for everyone, and hence becomes fatigued." (Lǚ, 2005: 237). The love of Jia Baoyu is expansive, encompassing closeness, affection, respect, sympathy, pity, and so on. Jia Baoyu cares for every person, every kind of life in different circumstances, and every form of life, including the lowly maids and servants. This brotherly affection of Jia Baoyu exemplifies the Buddhist concept of the equality of all creatures and equal love for all persons. The unique love here is Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu's genuine, spiritually-aligned love. Wu Mihong uses the concept of "one and many" to rationalize the love between them as well as Jia Baoyu's passion for other women: "There are two aspects of life in the universe: one and many. However, the one exists within the many, and the one is more significant than the many. Therefore, everyone should comprehend the relationship between one and many and strive to pursue the one." (Wú, 2021: 118). As Wú indicates, the martyrdom of Daiyu and the monkhood of Baoyu are all about keeping one and leaving many.

4.2 Real and Ideal Love

As Eric Ormsby indicates, Ibn Hāzım's notion of humans as a "mixture" of two opposing natures,

is the impetus for building two worlds (Ormsby, 242; Ibn Hāzım, 1983: v. I, 6)⁵ Ibn Hāzım compares life in this world to the exquisite castle, which symbolizes paradise, and to the tiny cottage, which symbolizes the tomb. Why would someone choose fleeting pleasures over permanent ones? Ibn Hāzım does not dismiss this choice; it is the multitude of experiences of earthly life that causes individuals not to opt for eternal happiness. This point reveals his nuanced understanding of human nature. As Ormsby writes: “Perhaps the soul loses its imagination of splendor while traveling to the cemetery, so it clings to the tiny and compromised joys of the road rather than the pleasures of the castle.” (Ormsby, 243). Just as Ibn Hāzım laments the wreckage before him in his nostalgia for his childhood home: “A visitor from Córdoba informed me, when I asked him for news of that city, that he had seen our mansion. On the western side of the metropolis; its traces were well-nigh obliterated, its waymarks effaced; vanished were its spacious patios. All had been changed by decay. Where peace once reigned, fearful chasms yawned; wolves resorted there, ghosts frolicked, demons sported.” (Ibn Hāzım, 1994: 106).

The two worlds, real and ideal, in Cáo Xuěqín’s *Dream of the Red Chamber*, are interdependent. Although Cáo Xuěqín makes considerable use of his historical/real world as a source of inspiration for his masterpiece, his artistic vision extends well beyond historical reality. Cáo Xuěqín crafts two contrasting universes in *Dream of the Red Chamber*, one inside the *Dà guān yuán* (*Grand View Garden*: 大觀園) and the other outside. Some scholars believe that the *Dà guān yuán* is a utopian world rendered by the author with ink and brush and that the world outside the *Dà guān yuán* represents filth and degradation (Yú, 2002: 42). However, this clean ideal world is built based on the filthy real world, and Cáo Xuěqín reminds us that the cleanest is the one that emerges from the filth. He relentlessly erodes and destroys this ideal world with the might of the filthy world beyond the *Dà guān yuán* until the ideal world crumbles entirely. Baoyu is so saddened by the disintegration of the perfect world, that he ultimately decides to forsake the physical world and enter a spiritual one. Cáo Xuěqín’s inner conflict between the two worlds and his compassion for the real world stopped him from ignoring the deterioration of the ideal world at the hands of the tainted rulers. Eventually, both worlds were destroyed, and Cáo Xuěqín picked the side of “the Taoist way”.

⁵ In the source, *al-Ihkām*, (Ibn Hāzım, 1983) this paragraph is part of a long explanation of the human spirit and its potential powers like justice “adl”, wrath “ghaḍab” and lust “shahwa”, starting from page 4.

The wonderful world that Ibn Hāzım created was based on his nostalgia for his magnificent childhood, and this affluent life was inseparable from the steady Arab rule in al-Andalus. In addition to his religious longing for paradise, Ibn Hāzım's yearning for this marvelous world was a desire for the splendor of the Umayyad Empire in al-Andalus. Likewise, Cáo Xuěqín suffered a downfall. Cáo Xuěqín was in the midst of a slow transformation of Chinese feudal society, which produced and developed new economic variables of an emerging capitalist nature since the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. Consequently, a new thought that reflects the structure of the emerging capitalist economy was evolving. Cáo Xuěqín, as a relatively liberal-minded intellectual, criticized the corruption and incompetence of the feudal society at the time, while the system suppressed the emerging bourgeois mentality. Cáo Xuěqín experienced a life of poverty after his family's downfall.

Féng Qíyōng argues that *Dream of the Red Chamber* contains three critiques. The first is directed to the bureaucratic and political power groups of the time, who jointly held the imperial government and oppressed the people. In this system, poetry, books, and rituals promoted by the feudal ruling group were superficial. The rotten interior was full of male thieves and female prostitutes. They laid a net of administration to rule the people, from the emperor to the local officials, so that the people cowed to them. The second critique is focused on the prevailing thoughts of the day, which were rigid and oppressive toward individuality. The third is social criticism of the egotism and decaying culture of his time. Cáo Xuěqín desired to escape the social constraints of his era. Instead of taking the traditional imperial examinations to pursue a career in civil service, he severed himself completely from the actual society and opted to live a completely liberal life that was free of feudal constraints (Féng, 2003: 6-13). *Dream of the Red Chamber* mentions the goddess Nü-wa, who repairs the sky in the first chapter, pointing at Cáo Xuěqín's subjective desire to mend the sky (Cáo Xuěqín, 2012: I, 40).

Cáo Xuěqín also implied that there is no way to fill the holes in the sky, which refers to the objective social reality, the existence of defects, and regrets in life - including love, marriage, family, state, society, etc. Of the two paths before him, one was to live in peace, wealth, and honor and bow down to feudal governors, while the other was to sever the link to the physical world. He was resolved to escape the confines of his class, which took the form of a protest against the entire world. However,

this was not an avoidance of the outside world. Cáo Xuěqín's "eschatology" was neither an avoidance of the world nor a foresight of social trends, but a calm, disinterested critique.

5. Conclusion

In *The Ring of the Dove*, Ibn Ḥazm depicts women, love, and nature as complex, dualistic, and ambivalent. He blends the wisdom of Islam with classical Greek philosophy by describing love as a fusion of reason and passion. He also integrates Islamic philosophy into his real-life experience, observing love as a union of souls. While *Dream of the Red Chamber* sprang from a feudal setting, striving to escape its confines, it is also defined by a blending of cultures and viewpoints, whether it is the portrayal of women, the fusion of Chinese and Buddhist cultures in his concept of love, or the choosing of "the world" in the fusion of Confucianism and Taoism.

The Ring of the Dove and *Dream of the Red Chamber* were written when their authors' respective societies experienced multifaceted crises. Ibn Ḥazm and Cáo Xuěqín were of noble birth, but the decline of their societies forced them to leave their ranks and look at society in a new light. Ibn Ḥazm severely felt the decline of his world, so his work is full of sighs of regret at the passing of the heyday. Cáo Xuěqín was at the pinnacle of a feudal society's power structure, but the appearance of new forces allowed the author to break free of his bonds and objectively assess social change. Both *The Ring of the Dove* and *Dream of the Red Chamber* are critiques of the patriarchal structure of their collapsing feudal societies.

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