

# Nature as a Motif in Arabic Andalusian Poetry and English Romanticism

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## Abstract

This paper examines some tenets in the Andalusian and Romantic poetry and shows how poets such as Ibrahim Ibn *Khafāja* (1058-1138) and William Wordsworth (1770 –1850) used nature as a motif in their poetry. Relying on a historical approach, this paper links smaller features such as themes and literary devices in the Andalusian and Romantic poetry with larger features, including genre, traditions, and cultural system. I argue that the emphasis on both the larger and smaller features of poetry creates what Franco Moretti calls “distant reading.” Comparing and contrasting Ibn *Khafāja*’s “the Mountain” and Wordsworth’s “the Daffodils,” for instance, introduces nature as a recurrent theme in both Andalusian and Romantic literary traditions, reinforcing Johann Wolfgang Goethe’s description of poetry as a common possession of humanity” (Goethe 229). In addition to that, comparing the images and themes in both the Andalusian and Romantic poetry not only shows internally linked meanings, but it creates what Cesar Domínguez, et al, call “a space for polyglottism, multidisciplinary, scholarly collaboration” (75). Reading these works and movements closely and distantly serves as a cross-cultural dialogue between the Arabic and English poetic conventions. While Ibn *Khafāja* and Wordsworth lived in different places and times, wrote in different languages, and did not have the same socio-political circumstances, their poems show the richness and multiplicity of the historical experience of world literature.

**Keywords:** World Literature; Nature; Andalusian Poetry; English Romanticism; Close Reading; Distant Reading

## 1. Introduction

Nature is considered a major theme in Arabic Andalusian poetry as well as in the poetry of the English Romantic period. It helps poets escape the complexity of urban life and provides them with a pure spiritual source of renewal. The beauty of nature is a recurrent element in the poetry of many Arabic poets in the Medieval Period. This tradition started in the Pre-Islamic Era, when 'Imru' al-Qays (496-544), Tarafah ibn al-'Abd (543-569), and other poets described the she-camel, desert, clouds, and other aspects of nature. Poetry of nature flourished in the Umayyad and Abbasid periods, reaching its apex in the eleventh century Islamic Spain, where it was classified as a distinctive literary genre. Similar to the Arabic poets who valued nature, many European and American Romantic poets and critics such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), Percy Shelley (1792 –1822), and John Keats (1795 –1821) celebrated the beauty of nature in their writings. Romantic poetry, which highly admires nature as a source of inspiration, came as a reaction against some socio-political and economic events that

started at the end of the eighteenth-century Europe, including the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution (1789-1799). This paper examines some tenets in the Andalusian and Romantic poetry and shows how poets such as Ibrahim Ibn Khafāja (1058-1138) and William Wordsworth (1770 –1850) used nature as a motif in their poetry. While the paper compares two literary movements, it aims to reinforce Johann Wolfgang Goethe's description of poetry as "a common possession of humanity" (Goethe 229). It also serves as a cross-cultural dialogue between the Arabic and English poetry of nature.

The idea that poetry helps progress a common sense of humanity in the world is a recurrent motif in comparative literature. In one of his conversations with Johann Peter Eckermann, Goethe states that "poetry is the common property of all mankind and that it is manifest everywhere and in all ages in hundreds and hundreds of people" (qtd. in Domínguez 11). He adds that "national literature is no longer of much account; the age of world literature is upon us, and everyone must work to hasten its arrival" (Goethe 327–29). While this paper does not claim any particular influence of the Andalusian literature over the Romantic one, George Steiner's statement that "literature is by essence thematic" (Domínguez 68) can help to identify a few implicit and explicit connections between these two literary movements. In *Introducing Comparative Literature*, the authors state that comparing the Chinese and British landscape poetry, for instance, results "in a complex group of internally linked meanings from which robust accounts of function and value, not to omit beauty, can emerge" (Domínguez, et al. 74). Similar to this comparison, I argue that comparing the images and themes in both the Andalusian and Romantic poetry not only shows internally linked meanings, but it creates what Domínguez, et al, call "a space for polyglottism, multidisciplinary, scholarly collaboration—the very dimensions into which more and more of the comparative enterprise is likely to shift" (75).

Relying on a historical approach, this paper links smaller features such as themes and literary devices in the Andalusian poetry and the Romantic poetry with larger features including genre, traditions, and cultural system. The emphasis on both the larger and smaller features of poetry creates what Franco Moretti calls "distant reading," a method "essential to understanding world literature as an intricate, historically developing ensemble of cross-cultural relations" among different traditions (qtd. in Venuti 186). Claudio Guillén describes the focus on studying "the large entities—periods, currents, schools, movements" as a "proper" approach for comparative literature because it provides "the structures, make it understandable" (qtd. in Domínguez, et al. 89). Explaining this historical approach, Marc Bloch says:

To choose from one or several social situations, two or more phenomena which appear at first sight to offer certain analogies between them; then to trace their line of evolution, to note the likenesses and the differences, and as far as possible explain them. Thus two conditions are necessary to make a comparison, historically speaking, possible: there must be a certain similarity between the facts observed—an obvious point—and a certain dissimilarity between the situations in which they have arisen. (45)

The application of this historical method of comparison, Bloch adds, leads comparatists to discover what he calls "fundamental unity of the human mind" (47). This unity is reflected in many works of world literature that deal with similar human experiences of writers who lived at different times and places.

## 2. Nature in Classical Arabic Poetry

The history of Arabic poetry of nature can be traced back into a few centuries before Arabs settled in Al-Andalus. This genre started with scattered poems by some Pre-Islamic poets such as al-Shanfarā (d 525) 'Imru' al-Qays (496-544), and Tarafah ibn al-'Abd (543-569). A repeated theme in the works of those poets is the struggle for survival in the harsh conditions of the Arabian desert. Horse, she-camel, and desert are among the frequent images in their poetry. Al-Shanfarā, for instance, often describes the difficulties of travelling in the Arabian desert even for its indigenous populations. He concludes his famous poem "Lāmiyyāt al-'Arab" with the following verses: "The dust-hued mountain deer Roamed around me, as if they were maidens trailing long-trained gowns/ Toward sunset motionless they stood about me, as among the white footed deer I were a long-horned buck, heading for the mountain peak, Unassailable" (qtd. in Liebhaber 113). Those Pre-Islamic poets used the dry nature of the Arabian Desert as a setting of their poems. Through nature, they tended to express their sentimental longing, wistful affection for the lost past, and their nostalgia for the simple and happy life with the people they love. Also, the poetry of nature at that era was characterized by its spontaneous images, simple but solid structure, and clear meanings.

With the advent of the Umayyad Caliphate (661-750), the Capital of Islam moved from Madina to Damascus. This move from the desert of the Arabian Peninsula into the urban life of Damascus brought the topic of nature into the fore in the works of many poets, whose poetry involved "some notion of yearning for the simplicity of life in nature" (Jayyusi 368). Consider, for example, Maysūn bint Bahḍal (d 700), wife of the caliph Mu'āwiya ibn Abī Sufyān (ruled 661-680), who wrote the following verses when she moved with her husband to live in an ornate palace in Damascus: "Oh for a tent in which the winds blow freely, that's dearer to my heart than a stately palace!" (qtd. in Jayyusi 369). Maysun complains about the new life and "longs for her desert home away from the complexity and artificiality of life in Mu'āwiya palace" (368-369).

The Abbasid Era (750-1258) is regarded as the Golden Age in the history of Arabs in most aspects of life. The Islamic Empire stretched from the borders of Western China and India, across Central Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, Sicily, and the Iberian Peninsula, to the Pyrenees. This expansion enriched Arabic poetry and developed it in terms of the form and content. While Baghdad was the capital of the Islamic World at that time, it was also a major center of learning in the

Medieval world. Politicians and decision makers placed poets on the top of social hierarchy and encouraged them to use their artistic skills to help them establish their authorities. Arabic poets started to encounter new natural scenes in the conquered areas, a new situation that gave rise to nontraditional topics in poetry. Apart from the three common patterns in Arabic poetry, eulogy, satire, and *fakher* (praise of the self and/or the tribe), description became one of the favorite models at that time. Abū Nuwās (756-814), Ibn al-Rūmī (836-896), and al-Mutanabbī (915-965) were among the prominent writers who dedicated some of their poetry to describe nature in the Abbasid Era.

### 3. Nature in Andalusian Poetry

During this Golden Age, Al-Andalus was the most prolific area in terms of nature poetry. At that time, “orchards, flowers, fruits, fountains, trees and flowing streams became not only common images but direct object of description, together with the man-made creations of palaces, ponds, orchards and shady arbours” (369). Poetry of nature grew up dramatically, becoming a distinct genre in the Andalusian poetry. Within this genre, *muwashshaḥ* was a new form of poetry which was considered a literary revolution against the classical form of the Arabic *qaṣīda*. However, it “incorporated and confirmed the whole repertoire of this kind of facile, pleasant and enjoyable landscape imagery” (369). In addition to the changes in the form represented by the *muwashshaḥ* poems, new trends within nature poetry emerged in the ninth and tenth centuries. These trends include genres like the *nawriyyāt* (poems describing flowers); *zahriyyāt* (poems describing another kind of flowers); *rawḍiyyāt* (garden poems); *rabi’iyyāt* (poems describing the spring season); *thaljiāt* (poems describing snow); *ma’iyyāt* (water poems) etc., (Hammond and Saidi 193). The renewed nature poet, Abu Baker al- Ṣanwbari (d 945) says in one of his *rawḍiyyat*:

garden flowers when they smile,  
they beckon ...  
still they speak though they are silent.  
The silence of gardens is speech. (qtd. in Nightingale 132)

These genres in nature poetry were improved significantly by such poets as *al-Sharīf al-Raḍī* (970- 1016), Ibn Zaydūn (1003-1071), *Ibn Ḥamḍīs al-Ṣiqillī* (1056-1133), among others. The poets captured the natural differences between Al-Andalus and the Eastern side of the Arabic-speaking world and composed poems that employed nature as the only theme.

While nature poetry flourished in Al-Andalus rapidly, little known about the factors that gave birth to this poetical phenomenon. Steven Nightingale describes the Andalusian nature poetry as one of the most creative genres in Arabic poetic traditions: “centuries before the Romantic of England, and yet more centuries before the powerful tradition of nature writing in North America, we have the poets of Al-Andalus in conversation with nature, seeking concord and hoping to attend, to learn, to understand” (132). Salma Jayyusi differentiates between the Andalusian nature poetry and the Pre-Islamic *qaṣīda* or even the European pastoral poetry. The coexistence of both artificial and natural scenes in the Andalusian urban communities helped poets to create uncommon combinations of images in their poetry. Jayyusi maintains that for the Andalusian poet, nature “was not an essential element of his experience; his relationship with nature was not normally one of challenge and necessity” (369). Nevertheless, it “to this urban poet, was never wild and awesome, but friendly and accessible, humanised and under the poet’s control. What the poet usually saw in nature was its external, pleasant and passive qualities” (369). The Pre-Islamic poet was “deeply involved with the fauna and flora of the desert world around him, but ... remained a separate entity, existing either in dialogue with nature or in opposition to it” (367). However, the relationship between the Andalusian poet and nature was a relation of “conflict and conquest” and the greatest accomplishment of a human being “was to succeed in traversing the expanse of the desert towards a particular destination” (367). It is also different from the European pastoral poetry which “involves an idealised, imaginary world of bucolic simplicity and perfect peace, where love between shepherds and shepherdesses is exemplary and leads to a blissful existence of peace and harmony ... a world set in a bygone Golden Age when life was primitive and unadulterated” (367).

The Andalusian poetry of nature has general characteristics that often distinguish it from other patterns of Arabic poetry. It was written purely for aesthetic purposes (375), a motive that drove many poets to embellish the form of their poems at the expense of meaning. This poetry was also not usually “connected with the mystery of creation”, and it does not depict God except as “the Supreme Being, the divine order behind nature” (375). Nature, in this context, is not treated as goddess, but as a neutral ineffective entity (375). It is, in fact, shown as fragmented in some subgenres such as the *nawriyyāt*. Nature poetry does not give nature any moral function; it is rather “completely amoral” (376). This perspective removes any agency that nature might have and places it in the hand of the Supreme God and human beings, a monotheistic view that pervades most aspects of life in the Muslim community of Al-Andalus.

The poet in the Andalusian nature poetry can be described as an “anatomical examiner” (375). That is, he often focuses on one object in his poem and does not describe nature as a whole. This trend restricts the social experiences of the poet and isolates the poem from its physical surroundings. Very few subgenres such as the *rawḍiyyāt* do not follow that very narrow spatial description as they envisage a larger space and the movement of the natural elements in the depicted gardens. However, even the poet in the *rawḍiyyāt* is still limited to the physical restrictions of the particular gardens they describe. While poets express their fascination with the natural beauty of Al-Andalus, nature “does not arouse mediation in the poet, or

excite any philosophical views on life and the universe, nor does it lend itself to any symbolism or any mythic notions” (376). Although that was the case for most poets, some later Andalusian poets such as Ibn *Khafāja* in “the Mountain” used elements of nature to contemplate and create philosophical ideas that would correspond to their personal beliefs.

Jayyusi also includes other general observations in the Andalusian nature poetry. She explains that this kind of poetry does not intend to teach or convey moral messages (376). The tone is not didactic, and the poet is neither a teacher nor a messenger. The only purpose of the poem “beyond its own existence” is “to excel over another piece like itself” (376). The tendency to write poems that appeal to larger numbers of audience, and to compete with other poets in composing forms that can be orally transmitted and sung in public gatherings, drove many Andalusian poets to pay little interest to the moral message of their poems and increased the desire to create a “poetry for poetry’s sake”. Jayyusi adds that “there is no trace of primitivism” in this poetry (376). That is, although poetry “is divorced from social preoccupations, it is usually written in the context of gathering of wine drinkers and pleasure seekers” (376). This compels the poet to focus on the form and reduces the symbolic or philosophical messages of the poem.

In terms of the relationship between the poet and the urban life, Jayyusi explains that there is no rejection of urbanism, “but rather a projection of it” (376). While there is no sense of conflict between the poet and the urban life, there is also “no ecstasy in the soul” (376). There is only “some vague aesthetic fervour not normally linked with any spiritual joy in beauty” (376). The joy that the city causes is artificial or not deep as it has short effects on the poet’s psyche. Nature is, on the other hand, reduced into a well-created system that human being “can dominate and place under his control” (376). Jayyusi concludes her description of the characteristics of this genre by explaining the complex task that the poet should undertake:

The poem or the part of the poem dedicated to this kind of description has no need of any dramatic dimension connecting it with something outside itself, and no ambition to fuse with other feelings or evoke a mood. It is an independent organism, sufficient to itself, responding to the aesthetic need for ‘a realisation that the Beautiful has independent importance and that the poet must be technically scrupulous in this work’. And scrupulous the poets were in their constant striving to perfect their depictions”. (376)

While the poets are free from any didactic responsibility in this poetry, they are chained to strict rules that limit their choices in terms of the poem’s form.

#### 4. The Rise of Ibn *Khafāja*

Ibn *Khafāja* is considered one of the most prominent poets of nature during Almoravid rule in Al-Andalus. He was born in 1058 in Jazirat Shukr (currently known as Alzira) near Valencia. He lived a quiet but frivolous life in his youth and that was reflected in his early poetry, where love adventures, women, and wine gatherings were among his main topics (Schippers 13). Ibn *Khafāja* was wealthy, but he had only a few trips out of his homeland; one of them was to North Africa where he wrote some poems in his *Dīwān*. Unlike many of his contemporary Andalusian poets such as Ibn Zaydūn, Ibn ‘Ammār, and Ibn ‘Abdūn, who were involved in politics and eulogized politicians to earn their livings, Ibn *Khafāja* had little interest in politics and used poetry as “a source of pleasure and solace” (Al-Nowaihi 1). In the introduction to his famous collection of poems, *al-Dīwān*, Ibn *Khafāja* states that he entrusted poetry in all his states of mind; he “conversed with it at night as a companion, who talked to [him] in a friendly manner ... walked side by side with it as an intimate friend, who conversed sweetly with it in private” (qtd. in Al-Nowaihi 1). Because of his leading role in nature poetry, Ibn *Khafāja* is dubbed as “*al-jannan*” (the gardener in English) and “Al-*Ṣanwbari* of the west” comparing him with the renewed Eastern Arab poet of nature, Abu Baker Al-*Ṣanawbari*.

When it comes to its form and content, Ibn *Khafāja*’s poetry can be identified as traditional and innovative at the same time. Ibn *Khafāja* follows the steps of earlier Pre-Islamic and Abbasid poets such as al-Shanfarā, ‘Imru’ al-Qays, and al-Mutanabbī. However, his poems reflect a development in diction, style, vocabulary, and syntax. His ability to exploit the Eastern Arabic poetry and the Andalusian one enables him to be one of the exceptional poets of his time. Jayyusi maintains that there are “two distinct poetic personalities” in Ibn *Khafāja*’s poetry: “the first harking back to a different age, and the second surging forward towards a time beyond his epoch” (380). Having the ability to adapt with the modernized changes in the Andalusian poetry and preserving the Bedouin tradition of the Arabian style, Ibn *Khafāja*’s poetry demonstrates a great flexibility that was rare at that time.

In his collection of poetry, *al-Dīwān*, Ibn *Khafāja* admits that nature poetry is not always spontaneous. It requires the poet to work hard and think carefully:

And good poetry, even if it is cared for and worked on, is not free of worthless parts, and can be divided into two extremes and a middle [excellent, bad, and somewhere in between], for intellects in the end become tired, and material in terms of expressions and rhyme decreases. Also, everything that is formed related parts, is composed of different things. Poetry is composed of meaning (ma’na) and expression (lafz) and meter and rhyme-letter, and in some places one of these parts or more may become difficult, so that the verse is sometimes composed as poetry and sometimes as prose, until it is rightly arranged as is desired, or is formed lacking in the luster of beauty and acceptance. (qtd. in Al-Nowaihi, 2)

The restrictions in form imposed in the classical Arabic poetry challenges poets to compose solid poems that keep a balance between the form and content. Apart from the creative abilities that nature poets should possess, they are required to be artificial in many cases.

In addition to the artificiality of the form that Ibn *Khafāja* defends, he believes that poets may not always picture real events in their poems. He states in his *Dīwān* that poetry is imaginary, and it is different from prose in that regard:

It is permissible in the art of poetry, but not in the art of prose, for the speaker to say ‘I did’ and ‘I made’, without there being any truth behind that, for poetry is a mode and a system, and since the intention in it is imagination, then the intention in it is not the truth, and lying is not reprehensible in it, and for every situation there is a suitable type of speech. (qtd. in Al-Nowaihi 2-3)

This tendency to use unreal images in poetry is common in Ibn *Khafāja*'s poetry, and it can be seen in his personification of many nature elements. His conversation with the mountain in “the Mountain” poem as well as his personification of the moon, the sun, and rivers in other poems are some examples of his imaginary use of poetry.

### 5. Ibn *Khafāja*'s “The Mountain”

Written in his old age, “the mountain” is regarded as Ibn *Khafāja*'s most celebrated work. It symbolically captures the poet's feelings of loneliness and fear that he is near approach to death. The traveler depicts the various elements of nature that he encounters in his desert journey such the dark night, the intimidating wolf, the rushing winds, and the lofty mountain:

In a night which, whenever I say it has passed away and ended, shows this to be a false assumption./ In which I trailed the black locks of darkness, to embrace the white chests of hopes./ So I tore the shirt of night to reveal the figure of grayish [wolf], who appeared with a white-teethed mouth, scowling./ I saw in him a dark piece of dawn, which peered with a kindled, piercing star. (qtd. in Al-Nowaihi 163)

While the traveler gives a vivid image to some natural scenes in his journey, he stops near a high mountain and ironically starts listening to an existential speech by the “dumb, silent” mountain.

Although Ibn *Khafāja*'s poetry is not generally religious, it includes some references to the weakness of human beings and the supreme power of the One God who determines people's destiny. The mountain describes itself as an ancient place that many people of different backgrounds used as a shelter: “[the mountain] said: ‘How often have I been the refuge of a killer, and the habitation of a sinner, who retired from the world, repenting’” (164). However, all those people have died: “the hand of death hid them away ...” (164), and the mountain remained alive to witness their loss: “so how long will I remain, while a friend departs ...” (164). While the poet puts these words in the mouth of the mountain, he allegorically depicts his melancholic situation; he is an old man who helped many individuals during his life and most people of his generation had already died. He finally submits to his fate and resorts to the One God who gives life and death: “So have mercy, oh my Lord, a prayer from an implorer, who extends to your grace the palm of desirer” (164).

Ibn *Khafāja* gives human characteristics to nature and vice versa. Sometimes, he silences human beings in his poetry and lets the inanimate elements of nature speak instead. For instance, in “the Mountain”, the poet listens to the mountain, which tells him about its long experience: “I listened to it, though it was dumb, silent, for it talked to me, during the night of travel, of wondrous things (164). While he humanizes the mountain in this poem, in other works, he bestows natural elements on humans, especially women:

Youth made a rose bloom in her cheeks,  
In a brunch of a tree that was swaying youthfully.  
The sides of her neck appeared white as a lily,  
And her finger-tips became red like a jujube. (Ibn *Khafājah* 18)

J.C. Bürgel identifies two features in Ibn *Khafāja*'s nature poetry. First, he gives objects some human characteristics, which he calls “humanization” (32). He states that in Ibn *Khafāja*'s poems, “human traits, human emotions and reactions are projected into nature, in short: man is projected into nature, and, since nature is also projected into man in the descriptions of human beauty, it means that nature and man are blended into each other” (32). The second feature Bürgel includes is the “interprojection of macrocosm and microcosm” where Ibn *Khafāja*'s poems rely on “cosmological comparisons, or describing cosmological, meteorological phenomena in terms of humanization” (33).

In “The Mountain”, Ibn *Khafāja* uses humanization as a literary technique to express philosophical ideas that are not usually addressed in nature poetry including death, fear, and exile. This humanization includes human thoughts, feelings, as well as physical entities. Ibn *Khafāja* starts with the physical description of the mountain, which is similar to a lofty man: “And the peak of the one with a high forelock [i.e. the mountain] appeared, lofty, reaching the summits of the sky with its back/ blocking the blowing of the wind from every direction, and crowding the night's stars with its shoulders” (qtd. in Al-Nowaihi 164). After this concrete description of the man-like mountain, the poet starts a conversation with that inanimate element of nature: “I listened to it, though it was dumb, silent, for it talked to me, during the night of travel, of wondrous things” (164). The mountain here is humanized and given the ability to tell amazing stories. It expresses its sadness and loneliness: “So how long will I remain, while a friend departs, in whom I bid farewell to a departer who will not return” (164). While the poet humanizes the mountain and describes its sorrow as most of its friends left it alone, he uses this technique of personification to implicitly express his own feelings. That is, Ibn *Khafāja* talks figuratively about his experience of living more than eighty years and losing most of his friends who had already died before him.

In addition to the original images that Ibn *Khafāja* creates in his poems, his rhetorical devices, syntactic choices, and uncommon structure complicate his poetry and help him achieve specific purposes. Magda al-Nowaihi explains that these functions include “the structuring of one or more lines, the strengthening of imagery, and the creation of harmony of sound and sense” (8). She adds that at his early poetry, Ibn *Khafāja* was heavily influenced by ‘Abd al-Muḥsin al-Ṣuri (950-1028), an Abbasid poet famous for his extensive use of different rhetorical devices in his poems (8). Similar to al-Ṣuri, Ibn *Khafāja* frequently uses particular rhetorical devices to embellish his poems, including *jinās* (paronomasia) and *tibāq* (antithesis). In the introduction to Ibn *Khafāja*’s *Dīwān*, Mustafa Ghazi, the editor, states that Ibn *Khafāja* imitated the *muḥadathūn* (the moderns) of the tenth century and “like them he was concerned with the embellishments and ornamentations of *badi*’. Then he became independent with his own unique style and began to draw from the spring of his own heart and his environment and time, so that he had his own Khafaji style” (qtd. in Al-Nowaihi 67), which was significantly different from the style of his contemporary poets.

Like most of Ibn *Khafāja*’s nature poems, the first noticeable characteristic of “the Mountain” is its high number of rhetorical devices. The excessive use of these devices is not merely for decorative purposes, but it helps to knit the form and meaning in a unified poem. Most of these devices belong to certain categories such as *Jinās*, *tibāq*, and alliteration. *Jinās* (paronomasia), which is Ibn *Khafāja*’s favorite rhetorical device, has different sub-categories “depending on the extent of the identity between the two terms that form the paronomasia” (Meisami and Starkey 660). The two terms “may be two identical words with different meanings, one of which maybe a combination of two words; they may be identical words in writing, but different in vocalization and diacritics” (660). They also “may be only partially identical except for a reserved sequence of their letters” (660). This reliance on these rhetorical devices serves as a persuasive instrument for Ibn *Khafāja* and gives his words more powerful resonance among his audience.

From the first line of “the Mountain”, the poet uses *jinās*; the words “janā’ib”, which means winds, and “najā’ib”, which means camels, are similar in form but different in meaning. The traveler starts with a question to express his confusion: “By your life, do you know whether it is the violent south winds that are heaving my saddles, or whether it is the backs of noble camels?” (qtd. in Al-Nowaihi 163). The perplexity is “intensified by the *jinās* between “janā’ib” and “najā’ib”, so that the similarity of two in terms of the strength and speed is mirrored in their similar sounding names” (67). The poem is replete with other examples of *jinās* that the poet uses purposefully such as “n-nawa” and “n-nawa’ibi” in line eighteen, and “ḥatta” and “mata” in line twenty-one. Al-Nowaihi maintains that the frequent use of *jinās* in Ibn *Khafāja*’s nature poems has multiple functions such as “emphasizing an idea, intensifying the emotional tone, enhancing the effects of other rhetorical devices, and conferring balance and symmetry over one or more lines, and in some cases over entire poems” (79). While Ibn *Khafāja*’s use of *jinās* further improves the form of his poem, it does not distract him from capturing the subtle elements of the nature he describes.

Aside from the repeated use of *jinās* in the poem, Ibn *Khafāja* depends on other rhetorical and syntactic choices such as *tibāq*, alliteration, and repetition. *Tibāq* (antithesis) is defined as “the inclusion of two contraries in one line or sentence” (Meisami and Starkey 659). In the second line, the poet puts together two apposite words “mashāriqī”, east, and “maḡāribī”, west: “For I had hardly emerged at the beginnings of the eastern parts as a star and appeared, before I traversed the ends of the west” (163). *Tibāq* here is used to indicate the fast movement of the traveler, who covers a long distance from the east to the west at night. The poet also uses alliteration many times especially in line sixteen where he includes five words starting with the letter “m”: wa-kam marra bī min mudlijin wa-mu’awwibin wa-qāl bi-zillī min maṭiyyin wa- rākibī” (163). The repetition of the syntactic words and constructions emphasizes the feelings of perplexity and loneliness of the traveler. Four lines begin with “ma”, three of them with “fa” and one with “wa”; two lines start “wala” (neither), and two lines begin with “ḥatta mata” (how long). Al-Nowaihi explains that “these repetitions mirror the mountain’s feeling that its existence is a set of incidents that keep repeating themselves without any change” (168).

The use of colors is another remarkable element in the nature poetry of Al-Andalus. Similar to many poets of his time who were influenced by the colorful Andalusian environment, Ibn *Khafāja* expressed his fascination with the natural beauty of his homeland. With many colorful scenes of rivers, sky, sun, dark, trees, etc., Jazirat Shukr, where he was born, inspired him to paint his poems with different colors such as the golden and bronze, which were rarely used in the Arabic poetry. Because of Ibn *Khafāja*’s reliance on colors in many of his poems, critics call him the founding father of “al-lawnyyāt”, a sub-genre in nature poetry consisting of poems that describe natural colors. In their study of color in the medieval Arabic poetry, Zahra Khafri, et al, counted the number of occasions that nine nature poets used color in their poems. With 164 lines (or 5.71%) including colors out of 2869, Ibn *Khafāja*’s poetry is the most colorful at that time (90). In “the mountain”, the poet uses color several times: “the cloud wrap around it black turbans, which have, from the sparkle of lightning, red tufts” (164). The use of color is not merely decorative in the poem, but it is utilized to make the sky imagery appear “majestic and spectacular, with red tufts of lightning and black turbans of clouds, combining darkness and light” (Al-Nowaihi 167). This grand description of the colorful view of the sky helps the traveler appreciate the wonder of God’s creation, compelling him to resume his journey with more satisfaction.

## 6. The Emergence of Romantic Movement

Unlike the Andalusian poetry of nature, which added new changes to a previous literary tradition, Romantic poetry was part of a whole movement in arts and literature that originated as a reaction against long-held traditions. At the end of the

eighteenth century, Romanticism came in response to the scientific ideas of the Age of Enlightenment. In contrast with the Age of Reason which emphasized rationalism, Romanticism cherished individual thoughts and personal feelings. Romanticism affected the works of many European and American writers, artists, and intellectuals such as Eugène Delacroix (1798 –1863), Felix Mendelssohn (1809 –1847), and Edgar Allan Poe (1809 –1849). It gave rise to new generations of writers and artists who resisted “the authority of neoclassical rules and conventions and ... [found] inspiration instead in the emotions, experiences, and speech of ordinary persons” (Leitch 557). Consider, for example, the English Romantic poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who defines poetry as a “species of composition, which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its immediate object pleasure, not truth” (148). While the Romantic movement was not limited to literature, poetry was one of the greatest products of that period as it clearly recorded many changes that took place in Europe.

The political and economic transformations that Europe had undergone at the end of the eighteenth century paved the way for Romanticism to dominate the Western literary and artistic scenes. The French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution were two turning points in the history of Europe as they reversed the socio-political and economic situation in the continent. After the revolution in France overthrew the monarchy, many dramatic changes in the social and political situation happened there. These changes inspired rebellious attitudes toward nature, religion, politics, etc., giving rise to new generations of writers and artists who innovated a special art. The increasing effects of the Industrial Revolution, on the other hand, was the topic of many romantic poets, who criticized the unnatural changes in the country life. William Blake’s “the chimney sweeper”, for instance, shows the woes that children suffer in the industrial modernized life:

When my mother died I was very young,  
And my father sold me while yet my tongue  
Could scarcely cry 'weep! 'weep! 'weep! 'weep!  
So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep. (qtd. in Borgmeier et al. 27)

While the Industrial Revolution improved Europe in many aspects of life, it created a more difficult life for the working classes and affected the purity of nature in negative ways. These transformations led romantic poets to resort to nature, looking for a lost sense of innocence.

Although it is difficult to identify a specific date that marks the beginning of Romantic Movement in literature, Blake’s famous saying in 1793: “a new heaven is begun” (Blake et al. 34), can be considered as one of the earliest references to that era. Blake’s comment was later confirmed by Shelley, who states “the world’s great age begins anew, the golden years return” (qtd. in Greenlaw and Hanford 420). Regardless of these meager references, the first noticeable literary achievement of Romanticism was the publication of *Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems* in 1798. Written by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, this collection of poems is accompanied with a preface that explains the poetic principles of Romantic poetry: “The majority of the following poems are to be considered as experiments. They were written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purpose of poetic pleasure” (V). The *Lyrical Ballads* was the beginning of a new literary era, in which the return to nature with its simple and pure elements became a main topic of poetry.

From the very beginning of this movement, many critics, poets, and scholars such as Wordsworth, Shelley, and Coleridge, tried to explain Romanticism from their own perspectives, but none of them used the term “Romantic”. In *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Chris Baldick provides a concise description of Romanticism. He demonstrates that “freedom of individual self-expression: sincerity, spontaneity, and originality became the new standards in literature, replacing the decorous imitation of classical models favoured by 18th-century neoclassicism” (10). He adds that “Rejecting the ordered rationality of the Enlightenment as mechanical, impersonal, and artificial, the Romantics turned to the emotional directness of personal experience and to the boundlessness of individual imagination and aspiration” (10). Instead of the rationality that prevailed throughout the Age of Enlightenment, Romantic writers “cultivated the appeal of the exotic, the bizarre, or the macabre ... [and] showed a new interest in the irrational realms of dream and delirium or of folk superstition and legend” (10). Nostalgia for the past, melancholy, horror, nature, and sentimentality became frequent themes in many writings in the Romantic period.

## 7. Wordsworth: A Founding Father of English Romantic Poetry

Born in Cockermouth, Cumberland in the northern part of England’s Lake District, William Wordsworth is regarded as one of the founding fathers of Romantic poetry and criticism. Similar to Ibn *Khafāja*, who was smitten with the natural beauty of his homeland, Wordsworth was extremely fascinated by the magnificent landscape in Cockermouth. This fascination continued to be a main source of inspiration to Wordsworth’s poetry for his entire life. He elevates nature’s charm and for him “Nature is a better teacher than books, and one finds one’s lost identity with nature in moments of feeling in which one is penetrated by the sense of nature’s ‘huge and mighty forms’” (qtd. in *Leitch* 556). As a product of his environment, Wordsworth suffered the consequences of the French Revolution as well as the military conflicts between England and France in 1793. Because of the war, he left Annette Vallon and their little child, an event that alienated him and affected many of his later writings including *The Prelude*. In spite of his influential writings about literary criticism, Wordsworth states that he is not a critic but only a poet (556).

In his preface to *Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems*, Wordsworth explains his objectives in writing poems, setting the stage for a new writing trend that distinguishes Romanticism from other movements. First, he states that nature inspires the poet and helps him express his sincere feelings spontaneously. He adds that in rustic life, “the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language” (xi). He also maintains that nature makes “our elementary feelings exist in a state of greater simplicity and consequently may be more accurately contemplated and more forcibly communicated” (xi). Because those elementary feelings are genuine, they are “more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature” (XI). Nature, in the Romantic context, urges the poet to mediate and communicate in a simple way, making his message more spontaneous and lovely for the ordinary audience.

In terms of the language used in poetry, Wordsworth advocates the use of a non-philosophical everyday language. The use of non-elevated language reduces the distance between the poet and his audiences and helps him reach them effectively. Poetry for him should be “purified” from “what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike and disgust” (XI). Unlike the Neoclassical writers, Romantic poet should avoid rationalism and address people with an emotional language that they can understand. Wordsworth explains that the poets should communicate with the audience “from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse ... [in order to] convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions” (XII). Wordsworth asserts that this ordinary language, which arises out of “the repeated experience and regular feelings” (XII) is a more:

Permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle appetites, of their own creation. (XII)

Indeed, Wordsworth explains that being artificial and using embellished language prevent the poet from reaching his audience and conveying his sincere feelings in an appropriate way.

In the preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth provides one of the most memorable definitions of poetry in the history of English criticism. He contends that:

Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility: the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquility gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on; but the emotion, of whatever kind, and in whatever degree, from various causes, is qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will, upon the whole, be in a state of enjoyment. (xxxiii- xxxiv)

Wordsworth here identifies two elements that any good poetry should include. That is, the poet should be sensitive and reflective at the same time. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* comments that “in valuing naturalness and spontaneity, Wordsworth was proposing not that poets abandon literary craft but that poetry should begin with acts of self-expression and self-exploration” (557). Therefore, it is not sufficient for the poet to rely only on his overwhelming emotions, but he also should contemplate before composing his lines. Wordsworth discusses the attributes that good poets should acquire. For him, the poet is different from other men, as he is:

[E]ndowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. (qtd. in Sarker 647)

In addition to the merits of sensibility and meditation that poets need to possess, knowledge of the universe is another quality that distinguishes them from common people. This knowledge is also superior to the one that scientific scholars possess: “the Man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion” (650-651). While the knowledge of the scientists is hard to access and isolated from the experiences of the ordinary man, the poet addresses universal issues that are pertinent to most human beings.

## 8. Wordsworth’s “The Daffodils” As a Romantic Poem

Although Wordsworth was loyal to the principles of Romanticism in most of his works, many ideas in his preface do not correspond to all his writings. The Norton Anthology states that there are several examples of “overemphases, ambiguities, and contradictions in Wordsworth’s arguments as well. He stresses that poetry heals and restores the feelings of persons; but when one reviews his poetry and prose as a whole ... his points become hard to grasp” (558). While the Norton Anthology does not provide specific examples of those obscurities and lack of compatibility between Wordsworth’s critical opinion and his poetry and prose, examining his famous poem “daffodils” can probably help explore the degrees in which this work embodies his theoretical Romantic ideas. The poem is a short lyric ballad and it is also called “I Wandered Lonely as a

Cloud". It was written in 1804 and first published in 1807 in his *Poems, in Two Volumes*. In 1815, Wordsworth added one stanza and made a few changes that correspond more to his concept of imagination (Sucksmith 151).

From the very beginning of the poem, the poet relies on nature as remedy to heal his loneliness. The speaker walks alone on the vales and hills and compares himself to a lonely cloud in the sky: "I wandered lonely as a cloud" (Wordsworth 80). While he wanders, he is confronted with a splendid scene, where he sees a large group of daffodils: "When all at once I saw a crowd/ A host, of golden daffodils" (80). After the speaker gives a detailed description of those flowers, his feeling of melancholy renders to be a great joy: "And then my heart with pleasure fills" (80). Nature in this context is a psychological healer that helps the speaker overcome his feeling of sorrow and replaces it with happy emotions: "A poet could not but be gay" (80). In this organically coherent poem, which focuses mainly on the joyful experience of seeing the daffodils, the poet introduces nature as a powerful source of pleasure and solace.

In accord with his Preface, which includes two elements that a Romantic poet should consider in his poem: sensitivity and thought, "the daffodils" introduces these two merits. The poem shows the sensibility of the speaker and his ability to appreciate and respond to the beautiful natural scenes. As a response to this natural sublimity, the speaker's sensitive emotions transform the melancholic feelings he experiences into great excitement: "And then my heart with pleasure fills" (80). These overwhelming feelings culminate when the poet subconsciously interacts with nature: "And dances with the daffodils" (80). In addition to the tenderness and enthusiasm that the poem shows, contemplation is strongly present. The repetition of the word "gazed" demonstrates that the poet spends time looking at and thinking about these daffodils: "I gazed—and gazed—but little thought" (80). The poet here describes his empty-mindedness and contemplation in the same line, two contradictory moods that cannot occur simultaneously: "For oft, when on my couch I lie/ In vacant or in pensive mood" (19-20). The contemplative mood, a required feature of the Romantic poet, enables the poet to appreciate the beauty of nature and share his joy with it.

Apart from content of the poem, which adheres to the main principles of Wordsworth's Preface, the structure somehow deviates from the guidelines of Romanticism. The poet uses a simple rhyme scheme as well as a plain language that the ordinary reader can understand. However, the poem is replete with many artistic devices that introduce it as an artificial and unspontaneous work. The excessive use of paradox, simile, metaphor, personification, and other figures of speech complicates the poem and gives it various layers of meanings, a quality that contradicts with the simplicity that Wordsworth himself advocates. For example, in order to express the feeling of loneliness, the poet begins his poem with a sad tone, describing his solitary aimless travel as a cloud: "I wandered lonely as a cloud" (80). While he uses a simile in the first line, the author ends the poem using personification to show the formidable effect of nature on his feelings: "And then my heart with pleasure fills/ And dances with the daffodils" (80). The poet humanizes both his heart and the daffodils when they dance as people who feel happy and celebrate. In addition to all of these literary techniques, the poem includes many examples of alliteration such as "Beside" and "Beneath", and "Ten" and "Thousand". The extreme richness of the poem in terms of the artistic devices and the new changes that Wordsworth added to the poem after several years make the spontaneity of "the Daffodils" a subject of debate.

## 9. Conclusion

Exploring the Andalusian nature poetry and the English Romantic poetry from a comparative perspective reveals many similarities and differences in terms of the form, content, purpose, etc. Nature poetry of Al-Andalus came as a continuation to a rich literary Arabic in the Eastern side of the Arabic-speaking world probably, but it developed due to the confrontation with new conquered lands that had elements of beauty different from those in the Middle East. The Romantic poetry, on the other hand, came as a reaction against the rational ideas of the Age of Enlightenment. The embellishment of the form and the inclusion of uncommon literary techniques in the Andalusian poetry were employed merely for aesthetic purposes. However, the Romantic poetry rejected the artificiality of poetry and advocated the use of ordinary language accessible to the common people. The Andalusian poets appreciated the beauty of nature and resorted to its psychological comfort, but they often did not criticize the urban life in cities. They also treated nature as a creature of the Supreme God and minimized its agency. The Romantics, on the other hand, were nature worshipers who praised the country life and disproved the urban lifestyle. In terms of the poet's role, the Andalusian nature poetry often restricted the role of the writer to the description of a limited space, making the poet like an "anatomical examiner". Such a restriction is not present in the Romantic poetry, where some poets described cities and countrysides in the same poem.

Ibn Khafāja and Wordsworth were two outstanding poets of nature in their times. They developed that poetry and adhered mostly to its common characteristics, but they deviated in some cases. For instance, the return to nature as a spiritually healing source in "the Mountain" and in "the Daffodils" can also be found in most of the Andalusian and Romantic works. The reflection about God's creature that the traveler experiences in Ibn Khafāja's poem is a Romantic quality that Wordsworth indirectly refers to in his preface. The excessive use of figures of speech in "the Daffodils" is very similar to that of the Andalusian nature poetry, which tends to embellish the form. Furthermore, similar to "the daffodils" where humanization brings man and nature together in a joyful scene, humanizing the mountain in Ibn Khafāja's poem makes humans come to terms with nature, introducing nature elements in a more rational and comprehensible to the human mind.

Indeed, the combination of Guillen's historical approach, which deals with larger entities such as periods, schools, and movements, and the New Critics' method of close reading, which focuses on smaller entities such as literary devices,

structure, and themes, broaden our understanding of the concept of nature in the Andalusian and Romantic poetry. The striking similarities between the two movements reinforce Goethe's argument that poetry is a possession of all humanity, extending beyond the national borders. The considerable differences that the two movements show seem inevitable as both literary traditions originated in two historically different circumstances. A close or distant reading of a group of poems written by famous poets in the two movements such as Ibn Zaydūn, Ibn Ḥamdīs, Coleridge, Shelley, or Keats consolidates Bloch's statement about the shared principles of human thinking. While Ibn Khafāja and Wordsworth lived in different places and times, wrote in different languages, and did not have the same socio-political circumstances, their poems show the richness and multiplicity of the historical experience of world literature.

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