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A Study of the Comparative Elements of Nature and Beauty in the Poetry of William Wordsworth and Abdullah Goran

Barzan Hadi Hama Karim

Department of English Language, College of Basic Education, University of Halabja, Iraq

barzan.hamakareem@uoh.edu.iq

Abstract. The topic of the Comparative Elements in the poetry of William Wordsworth and Abdullah Goran has not attracted the attention of researchers and educators in Iraqi Kurdistan. The similarities and differences between these two key romantic poets have remained unexplored. Wordsworth and Goran occupy a significant position in literature because of their contribution they could make into English and Kurdish poetry. Wordsworth and Goran seem to have many similarities in form and structure of the poems they wrote. Both poets manifested their aesthetic value for the beauty and tranquillity of nature. One of their great similarities is escapism and, through imagination, they seek for a better world where human beings may avoid the dark and melancholies of life. Although Wordsworth and Goran lived in two different times with two different cultures, but they still shared similar thoughts in their work. In this paper we try to analyze what things separated William Wordsworth and Abdullah Goran from other Romantics which caused them to be of great interest to their modernist audience from both English and Kurdish. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to make a detailed and comprehensive comparison between the poetry of these poets.

Keywords. Nature, Beauty, Romantic Poetry, Goran, Wordsworth

1. Introduction

This study extensively aims to compare the corresponding similarities between Wordsworth and Goran regarding nature and beauty in their poems. Although Goran and Wordsworth are from two different times, cultures and backgrounds, yet these two key Kurdish and English literary figures have got a lot in common. When we explore their poetic works, we can clearly see and feel that these two giants of literature have been blessed with the pure romance of spirit.

On the surface, they seem to be different, i.e., Wordsworth uses of English language and Goran uses of Kurdish but they have expressed their feelings almost in the same way. Wordsworth is considered to be a poet of imagination, nature, love, life and beauty. Bacht (2010) believes that Wordsworth “roamed in the realm of imagination by his poetic wings and they helped him to be a poet of senses, warmth, expression of sensitive emotions and humanistic feelings.” (p. 186). These features helped him avoid the distinct notions of selfishness and self-centeredness characteristics.

Mukherjee Kumar (2001) believes that Wordsworth is a priest and a staunch believer of inner beauty of the nature. According to Buell (1995), Wordsworth is the preacher of

environment since much of his poetry is dedicated to study the relationship between literature and environment. An intense love for nature and her objects got the heart of Wordsworth and manifested in his poetry. Wordsworth believes that we cannot live physically and psychotically without the green on earth (Bate, 1991).

Similarly, Goran is considered to be the greatest romantic Kurdish poet. He holds an eminent position in the rich galaxy of the Kurdish poetry. His poems are a combination of various details of the traditions, culture, and Kurdish way of life.

Like Wordsworth, Goran does not conceal the harsh realities of life, he, by the wings of imagination, soars high to the world of ecstasy in order to explore the romantic lands of beauty, joy, love and happiness.

2. Nature and Beauty in the Poetry of William Wordsworth and Abdullah Goran

Although there are many differences between these two poets in terms of ideology, languages, culture, backgrounds, and even huge difference in age, there are still plenty of similarities in their poetry in many ways. Wordsworth and Goran used different ways to express all those feelings of hearts which in return made them immortal and get a safe place in the mind and hearts of people.

3. William Wordsworth

William Wordsworth (1770 –1850) is considered to be one of the key English romantic poets who found the Romantic Age in English literature with the 1798 joint publication of Lyrical Ballads.

For nearly two centuries William Wordsworth has been considered one of the most influential Romanticist writers and he had been read by many of the great Romanticist authors. Few doubted that he was a great poetical genius, but the peculiarity of his writing differentiated him from many of his Romantic contemporaries.

The message Wordsworth gives through his poems helped him to generate and create a kind of pleasure which imprints truths and moral knowledge that make the readers to feel better, wiser and happier.

3.1 Nature and Beauty in Wordsworth's Poetry

Because of his poetry, Wordsworth is called the poet of nature and he is regarded as the prophet of nature. Wordsworth adores nature and its objects in all forms and his love for nature leads him to the love of humanity.

Wordsworth considered nature as his great moral teacher and in the Prelude which is conceived as his best work, nature exists in the background of all his activities and it is expressed upon his discipline of fear and joy (Hough, 1961).

According to Arthur (1963), the purpose of Wordsworth's work is to "seek beauty in meadow, woodland, and the mountain top and to interpret this beauty in spiritual terms". (p. 308). He creates a passion for sensual beauty of nature. At this stage it is evident that he was under the influence of his monocratic senses of nature as it is noticed in the Prelude, Book-II:

*"I roam from hill to hill, from rock to rock,
 Still craving combinations of new forms,
 New pleasure, winder, expire for the sight,
 Proud of her own endowments and rejoiced to lay the inner faculties asleep"*

Abdullah Goran and Wordsworth share an important point which is bringing man and nature closer to each other. Throughout their lives, they believe in the possibility of developing of understanding and communication between human beings and nature for the purpose of establishing a harmony between them.

Wordsworth treats nature as his sole guardian, teacher, and nurse, this is clearly seen in the poem of 'Tintern Abbey as he says:

*“The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse, the guide,
the guardian of my heart and soul of all my mural being”*

It can be said that Goran and Wordsworth became the worshipper of nature. Majority of the poems of Goran are devoted to nature and its beauty. In their poems, both poets tried to represent the tranquillity and quietness of rural life which is located in nature. They glorify rural life because people who live close to picturesque areas have the principles of courage, confidence, strength, dignity and a strong sense of self-esteem.

Wordsworth argues that nature is where human beings may find peacefulness and relieve from their injuries.

He continuously speaks out for the glory of nature and he badly believed that nature will never hurt a heart that loved her.

The sublime expression of his poetry lets Wordsworth sinks in the calm and beauty of nature and this makes him to be her true priest and the best poet of nature of the present and past because Wordsworth drew a unique portrait of nature and also illustrated how its power may feed human's soul. As he says:

*“My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.”*

Like many other famous poets and writers, the life of Wordsworth touched many tragedies. As an educated and sophisticated man, Wordsworth was aware of humanity's varied sufferings which do not match the mercy of nature and contrasted with the fate of man. In the following poem Wordsworth argues that the purity of nature cannot be compared to the lack of man's compassion. He says:

*“I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.
For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye*

*Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils."*

Abrams (1984) argues that modern critics distinguish between two types of Wordsworths, one who is a simple and one who is complex and problematic. As a simple poet, he tries to commune man's heart with the beauty of nature to find peace and rejoice in man's life. The other Wordsworth is complex and self-divided poet that tries to explore the dialectical love between nature and imagination.

In the poem of Immortality Ode, Wordsworth announces an inseparable bond of sympathy between man and nature. As he grew up, he witnessed the tragic suffering of human being which helps them to become more reflective and see things in their true perspective. As he quotes:

*"To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."*

Like Goran, Wordsworth enjoys the four seasons of the year, in the description of Spring, he shows his sensitivity to change the world give its audience a visible portrait of a more sheer and delicate delight of the nature:

*"It was an April morning, fresh and clear
The rivulet, delighting in its strength,
Ran with a young man's speed, and yet the voice
Of waters which the river had supplied
Was softened down into a vernal tone."*

Wordsworth believes that nature is Supreme Being, he lobbies that nature sometimes can make the world meaningful, in the prelude he addresses nature:

*"O Power Supreme!
Without whose care this world would cease to breathe"*

In the poem of 'The Tables Turned' Wordsworth could attract the attention of his audience to the healing power of nature by writing:

*"Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things: —
We murder to dissect.
Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart.
That watches and receives."*

By passing time Wordsworth addicted more to the beauty of nature so when he was an old man, the main concern of his life was only nature as he express it in the poem of 'Tintern Abbey':

“... when like a roe
I bounded o’er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep river, and the lonely stream,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarse pleasures of my boyish day,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.”

4. Abdulla Goran

Abdulla Goran was born in unknown day of May 1904 in Halabja province/Iraqi Kurdistan. Like many other children of his society, Goran suffered from family tragedies. When he was very young, his father died. His relatives helped him to go to school in Halabja and to further education at Teacher's Training Institute in Kirkuk. Later on he was employed as a teacher and started teaching in schools for many years in the Hewraman area.

Due to his contribution into Kurdish literature, Goran can be called the most influential Kurdish poet of the 20th Century. Goran offered a new vision of Kurdish poetry in form, structure and language which was derived from Kurdish culture and nature. During the Second World War, Goran left the Teacher's training institute in Kirkuk and served as Kurdish presenter at the radio broadcasting station which was established by Allies in Palestine. After the war with some of his friends he visited former Soviet Union, China and Korea and this makes him to be politically active and join the Iraqi Communist party. Against the monarchy system and under the influence of communist party, Goran was involved in many of the most important national uprisings and demonstrations of the first half of the 20th century and because of this he was arrested and prosecuted many times and imprisoned. After the coup d'état of 1958 and establishing the Republic of Iraq, Goran was released from prison and later on appointed a lecturer at the University of Baghdad in the Department of Kurdish language and literature. Goran like Wordsworth had cancer and died in the morning of 18 November 1962.

Goran was a self-educated person; he learned several languages including English which helped him to learn a lot about the western literature, especially the English literature. Before the collapse of Ottoman Empire he read western literature through translation into the Turkish language but after some mastery over English language and after the downfall of the Ottoman Empire he could read the original texts as he says:

“I was reading some of the works of Shelley and Byron translated into Turkish language. But after the downfall of the Ottoman Empire and after I had some mastery over the English language, I was able to read their works directly” (Hartshorne, 1980, p. 199).

The influence of western literature on Goran is not only in Romanticism, but he tried to add many European literary techniques and methods into Kurdish literature and this can be clearly seen in his work. Goran wrote several great books of importance to contemporary Kurdish literature. In all of his works, Goran tried to draw beautiful picture of Kurdish nature.

4.1 Nature and Beauty in the Poetry of Abdullah Goran

Abdullah Goran as a great Kurdish romantic poet was a great admirer of nature and beauty. According to Maaruf Khaznadar, Goran explains the importance of beauty and nature for humankind and shows his astonishment about a person who does not appreciate it at the same time he underestimate the value of human being who does not understand the nature and its beauty. (Khazradar, 1969).

The poem A Tour to Hewraman reveals the deviation of Goran from nature. The poem awakened the thoughts of man to the loveliness of nature with noble ideas of life. Khaznadar (1969) believes that Goran, through poetry, has clearly depicted the picture of creative power of the nature; he shows how the chain of mountains with their snowed peaks, forests and streams give human being a refreshed life.

Goran realizes life and says:

*"A mountain mass, wild and defiant,
Has gathered blue heaven in its embrace;
The mantle of its peak is brilliant white snow,
Dark with forest are its silent dales.
Waters imprisoned in their tunnels
Flow on, nor cease their windings round the hills"*

In this poem, Goran reached the height of his poetic genius, the phonetic qualities and rhythmical arrangement of the words he used conveying the sense of aesthetic relationship of nature and beauty

According to Farhad Pirbal (2008), the style of Oscar Wild and Byron had positive impacts on the Goran's poetry. These poets left their influence on Goran in a way that he derived many titles for his poems from them and this can be seen in the poem of "To Irvy Flower" which derived from the 'Daffodils' of Robert Herrick.

به کۆل گریان له چاوم دیت، گوڵی لاولاو رنگاو رنگ
له بێرچی سیس ئه‌بی وا زوو؟ چیه نه‌سبایی ژاکانت؟
هه‌مو تاوێکه روژ هه‌لاتوه بێرچی وه‌ها بێ دنگ
ئه‌ژاکتی؟ توخوا ئه‌ی گوڵ سه‌بر ده‌ستم به‌ دامانت

*"Fair daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away soon,
As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attain'd his soon"*

As the result of suffering from incomplete hopes, disgrace, poverty, extreme desires, and pain, Goran tried to express his joy of life, happiness and peace in the heaven of Kurdish nature:

*"I have seen stars in the sky
I have gathered flowers in spring's garden
At nightfall trees have wet my face
I have seen dusk fall on many horizons
The rainbow after drenching rain
Is arched into the sun"*

Goran sees everything in the eyes of nature, he sums up his love and beauty of Kurdistan in its beautiful valleys, mountains, waterfalls and four seasons.

*"Kurdistan: you are my abode, my abode
of thousands of years,
I have been nurtured by these valleys,
summits and hummocks,
My breath is full of the fragrant breeze o*

*your highlands,
My lips are satiated by your snow waters,
My gaze is used to the sight of your
silvery twilights
Reflecting on evening snows,
My ears are habituated to the music of
your waterfalls
Pouring down from high quarters above
snow to green landscapes”*

In this poem, Goran articulates his love and shapes his mind and expresses his artistic values. Goran believes that natural beauty can make any sense only through the beauty human:

*“But nature is forever without light
In the absence of the woman’s smile.”*

Patrick (2011) believes that Goran tried to have peace, civilization and constant progress by building a dreamland where women and nature come together. But the limitations of conventional classical poetry and the embracing melancholy made Goran not to achieve his dream. (Patrick, 2011). This can be seen in the poem of 'Zalm':

*“Though the rhyme is too narrow
For my wide-ranging gloom
A breath of despair is enough for
(Expressing) a life of sadness.
I wish my sorrows were like the Zalm
Waterfall.
I exhausted my tears, while
It is ever flowing and flowing”*

Like William Wordsworth, Abdullah Goran suffered a lot from the melancholies of life, he was very young when his father passed away, he was 16 years old when his elder brother died, and the illiteracy of Kurdish people and the occupation of his homeland were what Goran expressed them in nature.

Conclusion

The list of similarities between these two great romantic giant poets of literature of two completely diverse cultures may be very long. The poetry of both the poets expresses the emotions and feelings of people.

William Wordsworth, like Abdullah Goran, was also a great admirer of the beauty and tranquillity of nature. His beauty concept transcends the limitations of time and enriches the essence of civilization and culture. They devoted their poetry to express nature and its beauty. Both of these great romantic poets from East and West are great sources of inspiration for the lovers of literature.

Goran and Wordsworth share many similarities in the thoughts, vision and philosophy but still there is divergence in their writings, Goran is more simple and straight forwards while Wordsworth’s style is sensuous. Although these two poets lived in different context and time of the world, yet they composed their poems almost in the same way. They are the honest priests of nature and its beauty. They regard nature as their guide, philosopher and friend.

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