

The Theme of Nature in John Keats's "To Autumn" and Abdulla Goran's "Paíyz": A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to compare and the theme of nature in two romantic poems that were written in two different historical periods and remote geographical locations. On one hand, there is "To Autumn" (1819), a poem by the English romantic poet John Keats that depicts 19th century English rural life as autumn progresses. On the other hand, Abdulla Goran's "Payiz" (1947), a poem in which Goran portrays the mood of autumn and was published in his poetry collection book (Sirushtî Juwan) *Beautiful Nature* (1947). "To Autumn" is divided into three eleven-line stanzas that depict the evolution of the season, starting with the late maturation of the crops and ending with the harvest and final days of autumn before the approach of winter. Likewise, "Payiz", the Kurdish word for autumn, is a poem that captures the essence of the autumn and the changes take place during this season. In this study, the researchers tend to compare and contrast these two poems to identify their differences and similarities. Reliance on the French school of comparative literature, this research argues that the English poet had an influence on Goran which is reflected in the title in the first place, and the content on another level.

Introduction

After the initiation of the European colonial process in the sixteenth century, and the rise of the British Empire as the most powerful representative of the continent; English language, eventually, gained a universal position through which it almost becomes the language of world literature, philosophy, science, technology and social studies. This linguistic domination made it possible for English literature to possess a higher position compared to the literature of other nations in the world, more specifically those nations that were once colonized by the British Empire. Accordingly, some critics claim that a huge body of modern literature is indebted to English literature. As it is stated by Pity (2001, p. 43), “English is the most important foreign language for accessing information, absorbing and developing science, technology, arts, and culture, and fostering international relations” (cited in Horobin, 2016). In that respect, Kurdish twentieth century literature is no exception as it was deeply influenced by the English romantic movement.

Kurdish literary indebtedness to European literature could be of various factors, however the most probable are identified by the Kurdish critic and philosopher Dr. Farhad Pirbal. The first one is, “Directly through European culture and European languages, and this because of those thinkers (Kurdish) who had lived and studied in European universities and received high degrees, or at least learned French, German, Russian, English and Greek, and used the western literature and languages to enrich and reform Kurdish literature” (2001, p 22). This group of Kurdish intellectuals spent several years in various European countries which made it possible for them to engage and interact with the literature of the hosting country or literary works from other European countries. Accordingly, this made an impact on the rise of new Kurdish literary movements once they returned home.

In comparative studies, literary translation plays a major role in the spread of new literary movements worldwide. As defined by Mangattu, literary translation

is seen as “The channel through which influence is transmitted from source language to receptor language” (2013). Similarly, Dr. Pirbal, points out the role of literary translation in the reformation of Kurdish literature and the birth of new literary movements when stating, “Through European literature that was translated to Turkish language¹ and was read by (Kurdish) writers like Piramerd, Sheikh Nuri, Sheikh Salih, Najdat Karkuky, Khalil Khayali, Mustafa Shawqi, Abdulrahim Rahmi Hakari, Jamil Saeb and many others” (2001, p 32). It is evident that literary influence occupies a large space within comparative studies, more specifically the influence coming from literary works of another nation. In that respect, English literature in general, and romantic poets specifically, had a great impact on the rise of Kurdish modern poetry; a movement that in-debts largely to Abdulla Goran who knew English, Arabic and Turkish languages.

It was necessary for the researchers to trace back the period at which Goran began to engage with English language and its literature. The impact of European literature, more specifically English poetry on Goran is indisputable as he declared “We should not forget that from the beginning and due to the English literature, I followed the art for art’s sake movement and used to read the literary products of that followed it like those of John Keats and Oscar Wilde” (Qtd in Abdul-Wahid: 215-16). Goran’s confession demonstrates that he had read English poems, including Keats’s. Another channel of influence according to Dr. Ma'arouf Khaznadar, was the establishment of the British East Radio in the city of Jaffa, Palestine, opened a new door for Goran as he, along with Ramzi Qazzaz and Rafeeq Chalak, worked for the station between 1943 to the end of 1944 (2010). Consequently, it can be stated that Goran was familiar with the work of English poets, especially of Keats which makes room for the link between the two selected poems in this study.

¹ After the decline of The Ottoman Empire and the rise of the new secular Turkish Republic, Turkish literature was deeply influenced by the literature translated from European languages, and this helped Kurdish writers who knew Turkish to be familiar with their works. .

Comparative Literature and Influence

Students and researchers of comparative literature may not easily arrive at one specific definition that would help them define its limits and boundaries. Henry Remak defines the discipline arguing that “Comparative literature is the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country, and the study of the relationships between literature on the one hand and other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the arts (e.g., painting, sculpture, architecture, music), philosophy, history, the social sciences (e.g., politics, economics, sociology), the sciences, religion, it is the comparison of one literature with another or others, and the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression” (Cited in Stallknech & Frenz 1961). Remak’s definition manifests comparative literature as an interdisciplinary field of study that encompasses a wide range of human experiences. Comparative literature transcends beyond geographical location and brings together diverse human societies.

There are several schools of comparative studies, and each school upholds different views and values when two literary texts are compared. Generally speaking, there are four major schools of comparative literature that scholars and critics agree upon, and that includes the French, Russian, German and American schools (Bassnett,1993). As it is illustrated in the previous section, the researchers of this study intend to rely on the French school in their attempt to compare and contrast the two selected works. The French school of comparative literature adheres an immense amount of literature to the study of “influence” coming from the original language on the receptor language. Thus, for two writers of different nations and historical periods, it is more than natural to write about a natural aspect of their countries such as a season (autumn); especially when those two geographical locations (England and Kurdistan) have in their possession such beautiful breathtaking landscape.

Methodology

To compare "To Autumn" by Keats and "Paíyz" by Goran, the researchers intend to apply a qualitative approach according to which ideas and themes from the two texts are examined. Thematology occupies a large space in the study of comparative literature as it is involved with the subject matter or the main content of literary works. This helps the researchers to examine the theme of nature in the two selected poems. To help the readers engage with the differences and similarities, "point by point" method is going to be employed in which few lines of each poem are compared to the one of the other poems consecutively. The collection of data will be gathered through different sources such as books and articles in both English and Kurdish languages to highlight the similarities or differences of these two literary works.

John Keats's short biography (1795-1821)

Keats was an English Romantic poet, born in 1795 in London, and known for his lyrical and sensual poetry, which often explored themes of the "Inevitability of Death". Keats acknowledges death as an unavoidable aspect of life, portraying it as a natural and peaceful occurrence in his poetry, an idea that is deeply reflected in "To Autumn". "The Contemplation of Beauty" is another theme of his work, he finds inspiration in the beauty of nature, art, and human emotions, celebrating the trans-formative power of beauty to uplift the human spirit through his work. Keats's most famous works include "Ode to a Nightingale (1819)", "Ode to a Grecian Urn (1819)," and "To Autumn (1819)", and many others. Keats faced numerous personal challenges and tragedies in his short life, including the deaths of his parents and younger brother. He trained as a surgeon but was passionate about poetry, which led him to abandon his medical career to pursue writing. His poetic career was brief, spanning just a few years, but he left a lasting legacy in English literature. He became ill and died of tuberculosis in 1821, at the age of 25 (Khan & Jabeen, 2015).

Abdullah Goran's short biography (1904-1962)

Goran was a Kurdish poet, teacher and journalist who was born in 1904 in Halabja, Kurdistan. Goran's work often explores themes of love, especially his early poems often express a romantic and idealistic view of love. Another dominant theme of his work is nature; the beauty and resilience of the Kurdish landscape found a prominent place in his work. The Kurdish struggle is another theme in which he addressed the social and political issues faced by the Kurdish people, giving voice to their suffering and aspirations. His poetry continues to inspire and resonate with readers, making him a beloved figure in Kurdish literature. His famous works include *Tears and Art (Firmêsk û Huner)* (1968), *Paradise and Memory (Beheşt & Yadgar)* (1950). Many critics consider Goran as the most influential Kurdish poet of the twentieth century. He undoubtedly brought about a revolution in Kurdish poetry. He is often referred to as the father of Kurdish Modern Literature for his pioneering role in shaping the course of Kurdish writing. His impact extends beyond poetry, inspiring generations of Kurdish writers and artists, and he did not use Arabic words in his poems, which were common at that time, he died of illness in 1962 (Govari Kurdi, 2017). Goran paved the way for Kurdish poets to get liberated from traditional forms of poetry that were mostly influenced by regional literary movements in order to carry an international essence instead.

Comparison of the Two Poems

Romanticism, as a literary movement, laid the ground for poets to engage and interact with the natural world around them. Natural images dominated their imagination; John Keats's poetry makes a good example of such literature. The English writer and critic, John Ruskin praises Keats's depiction of nature in his work *Modern Painters* (1843). Ruskin admires Keats for his ability to connect with and depict nature's beauty in his poetry, particularly in "To Autumn". Similar to

Keats, Goran is considered as the leading figure of Kurdish modern poetry. He established a new form of poetic self-expression with nature at the heart of it. There are multitude similarities and differences between Keats's "To Autumn" and Goran's "Payiz", however the very first one is reflected in the titles of the two poems. In literature titles play a major role for the readers to anticipate what they are about to explore in a literary work. They are like the button that initiate every reader's first interaction and engagement with any text. In this study, it is necessary to begin with the titles of the two selected poems to identify the first point of similarity. One of the possible interpretations of "To Autumn" as a title, is the use of the season as a metaphor standing for death for the term is usually used in literary works as a synonym of death. A metaphor is "A figure of speech in which one thing is described in terms of another, ... A comparison is usually implicit whereas in simile (q.v) it is explicit" (Cuddon, p. 507, 1999). Keats was suffering from the killing disease of tuberculous by the time he wrote this poem, he felt that death was at his doorstep. However, he welcomed this inescapable fate with open arms because to him death was not as terrifying as many people would think. In addition, despite the short life he had, Keats believed that he had a "fruitful" one as it is stated in the opening line. On the other hand, "Payiz (Autumn)" is the title of Goran's poem in which the poet focuses on the theme of nature, but he does so from a Kurdish perspective. The poem reflects Goran's connection to nature and his cultural background, portraying the autumn landscape in a way that resonates with the Kurdish experience. Like Keats, he chose a title that marks the metaphoric presence of death in the poem. The depiction of death as an eventual natural occurrence can be noticed when Goran states "Hercend gull sís ebé bigrín," meaning "Whenever the rose withers, we must cry". Apparently, Goran upholds a different insight on death as there is a tone of sadness and grief in his poem as in "the rose withers" while Keats perceives autumn as the season of "fruitfulness". Remarkably, both poets depict

death as an inevitable natural occurrence, similar to the eventual arrival of autumn.

Romantic poets unleashed their imagination which enhanced readers chances for a deeper understanding of people and objects around them. This led to the utilization of several literary devices through which they convey complex messages. In that respect, personification was one the most frequent used poetic device, and it is defined as “The impersonation or embodiment of some quality or abstraction, the attributes of human qualities to inanimate objects” (Cuddon, p. 507, 1999). Since nature was a dominant theme in English Romantic poetry, romantic poets persistently portrayed natural elements with human qualities and aspects. Keats’s “To Autumn” celebrates the beauty and richness of autumn, it describes various elements of autumn. The poem has a serene and contemplative tone, capturing the fleeting nature of life and the inevitability of change. Keats impersonates autumn, and accuses it of conspirator with the sun, as in the the following lines

“Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;”
Conspiring with him how to load and bless”.

To Keats, autumn is a living thing that is able to think and behave independently. With the complete absence of human voice throughout the entire poem, Keats opens the second stanza with a question directed towards “autumn” which indicates another form of personification of the season when saying:

“Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;”

Romantic poets devoted an obscene amount of literature to nature, and to many of them humans were inseparable from nature. In that respect, Keats speaks to autumn as if it were a real person by using pronouns like “thee (you)

and thy (your)" which is considered as an attempt to help his readers to sympathy with the season. Thereby, he laboriously brings the season to life that he personifies autumn. He asks a rhetorical question, who has not witnessed autumn amid its abundance? The poet uses this language to convey a sense of attachment to the season by emphasizing its universal presence and significance. The way the poet describes autumn in "Thee sitting careless on a granary floor," highlights the relationship between the season and harvest. The word "careless" suggests a carefree attitude that contributes to the poem's overall peaceful and idyllic depiction of Autumn.

Like Keats, Goran also personifies autumn and brings to the fore a fascinating view of the season in "Payiz", he infuses his Kurdish identity and cultural background into his depiction of autumn. Through his unique perspective, he captures the essence of the season in a way that resonates deeply with the Kurdish experience. Similar to Keats, Goran uses the personal pronoun (you) to address autumn. To Goran, autumn is a "blonde bride" who had abandoned its beloved, therefore they both suffer from the same illness which is loneliness.

"Payiz! Payiz!" (Autumn ! Autumn!)

Búkí pirc zerd, (The blonde bride)

Min mat to ziz: (I sedentary, you estranged)

Herdú hawderd!" (Both with same illness)

The repetition of "Payíz! Payíz!" sets the tone of the poem and emphasises the importance of the season to the poet as if he is protesting against what brings it. Like Keats, Goran stresses the ambiguity of the season when he describes it as a "The blonde bride" who is counting her last days in this life; the poet emphasises the natural cycle and the common human experience in this line. Moreover, Goran personifies autumn as he addresses it as a fellow who is being "estranged" from him; he creates an image to express his solitude in the last days of life "autumn". however, there is harmony between the poet and autumn when

both are depicted to be of similar status. Keats and Goran personify autumn and attempt to understand its ambiguity and beauty at the same time.

The tone of the two poems by which autumn as a natural occurrence is being depicted, lays the ground for another concern of this study. Keats addresses autumn with a positive tone, it is shown idly perched on “a granary floor”. Keats captures the spirit of autumn by using various elements and uses auditory imagery in the form of the sound of hedge-crickets singing to capture the spirit of autumn in this line. “Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft” (Keats 1819). Keats vividly depicts the lively and beautiful essence of autumn through the sounds of buzzing insects and singing hedge-crickets, as well as the sight of swallows gathering and twittering in the skies. Another positive aspect of autumn lies in Keats’s depiction of autumn as the season of “fruitfulness” during which “all fruit(s)” are mature and ready to be harvested. To Keats, a fruitful tree carries a lot on its shoulders when saying “To bend with apples”, similar to a man like him who has been burdened with an illness for a long time. He encapsulates the essence of autumn when highlighting the relationship between autumn and the sun suggesting an intimate and collaborative connection between natural elements. Keats uses the term "conspiring" which emphasizes nature’s working together forming a lively and picturesque setting. He draws a contrasting image of nature in which it is “misty” and “fruitful” at the same time. However, there is a moment in which Keats laments the absence of “the songs of spring” and describes the "full-throated ease" of the nightingale's song. This emphasizes the contrast between the joyous songs of spring and the melancholy mood of the current season (autumn). It suggests a change in the mood of the poem, Keats portrays a sense of sadness in the natural sounds around him.

In contrast to Keats’s bright images of autumn, a sense of sadness overshadows Goran’s poem, and historically, lament is apparent in most Kurdish stories. In contrast to Keats’s idyllic image of autumn, Goran addresses the season with a darker tone in which he compares his, or in a broader sense, the experience of a

Kurdish individual to autumn. The poet repeatedly makes reference to several sorrowful notions such as “firmesk” (tears), “xem” (grief) and “to hewrî giryani” (you are the cloud of weep) that never ends. Like most Kurdish traditional stories, there is a sad mood in Goran’s poem. In his vocal exchange with autumn, Goran employs a number of contrasting perceptions. For instance, in “Min henasem, to bay sardit” (*I am the breath, you are the cold air;*), usually human breath is warm, and Goran contrasts it with the cold air of autumn. Goran embraces a melancholic tone, connecting human emotion and nature with autumn; autumn is known as a symbol of sadness, grief and loss because in this season the leaves of trees turn yellow and disappear, similar to human experiences. Moreover, Goran’s poem highlights the passing of time and its aftermath. The speaker mourns the passing of summer and the coming of autumn to remind us that nothing remains the same, and that we should cherish the time we have. Accordingly, the beauty of the world should be appreciated even as we know that it is fleeting.

Conclusion

It is more than natural for two poets to express their insights on a season (autumn), death or nature. However, and reliance on Goran’s familiarity with the poetry of Keats, as illustrated earlier in this research, this research designates Keats’s influence on the Kurdish poet. Keats’s influence on Goran is undeniable, yet we cannot claim that “Payiz” is a replica of “To Autumn” because Goran addresses autumn with a darker tone than that of Keats. Rather than being a complete imitator, Goran keeps his original voice and identity. It is evident that both poems deeply reflect on the theme of nature. Moreover, Keats’s “To Autumn” celebrates the theme of nature in a more romantic and nature-oriented manner, while “Paîyz” by Goran offers a Kurdish perspective on the natural world and may touch on themes related to the harsh Kurdish experience and identity. They present unique viewpoints on the season and express a deep connection

with the natural world. Goran's poem explores the theme of beauty and nature, while Keats creates lyrical and sensual image of beauty and nature. Both poems centralize the theme of autumn, however they approach it from different cultural backgrounds and different perspectives, both "To Autumn" and "Paíyz" are well-known poems that eloquently depict the beauty of autumn and its nature.

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بابه تی سروشت له شیعرى بۆ پایزی جۆن کیتس و شیعرى پایزی عهبدوللا گۆران: توێژینهوهیه بهراوردکاری

پوخته:

ئامانجى ئەم توێژینهوهیه بریتیه له شیکردنهوهی لیکچوون و جیاوازییهکانى بابەتی سروشت له دوو شیعرى پۆمانتیکیدا، کهوا له دوو سەردهمی میژوویی جیاواز و ناوچه جوگرافیی دوور له یهکتر پیکهاتوون. یهکیکیان شیعرى بۆ پایزی ۱۸۱۹ ه، که لهلایهن شاعیری پۆمانتیکى ئینگلیزی جۆن کیتس نووسراوه، شیعرهکه ژيانى لادییى له ئینگلتەرا له سەدهی نۆزدههەم لهگەڵ گەشەسەندنى پایزدا وێنا دەکات. دهقی دووهمیشیان، شیعرى عهبدوللا گۆران پایز ۱۹۴۷ ه، که له کۆمهله شیعرى سروشتى جوان بـلاوکراوهتهوه، وێناى کەش و ههواى پاییز دەکات. بۆ پاییز دابهش کراوه بۆ سێ پارچه، هەر یهکیکیان له یازده نیه دێر پیکهاتوو، که هاتن و بهرهوپێشوهچوونی وەرزهکه نیشان دەدات، به درهنگ پیکهیشتنى دانهوێلهکان دەست پێدەکات و به دروینه کۆتایی دێت، ههروهها دوا پۆژهکانى پاییز پێش هاتنى زستان دەردهخات. بهههمان شپوه، وشه پاییز که زاراوهیهکی کوردیه بۆ ناولێنانى وەرزی پاییز بهکارهاتوو، ناونیشانی شیعریکه که پهنگدانهوهی پۆحى وەرزهکان دەردهخات لهگەڵ ئەم گۆرانهکارپانهی لهم وەرزهدا پوودهدهن. لهم توێژینهوهیهدا ئەم دوو شیعره بهراوردکراون و لیکچوون و جیاوازییهکانیان دەرخران، ئەمەش به پشتبەستن به قوتابخانهی ئەدهبی بهراوردکاری فەرهنسى. ئەم توێژینهوهیه ئەمه دەردهخات که شاعیری ئینگلیزی کاریگهرى لهسەر گۆران ههبووه، ئەمەش له ناونیشانهکه و له ناوهڕۆکهکهدا دیاره.

موضوع الطبيعة في قصيدة "إلى الخريف" للشاعر جون كيتس و قصيدة "الخريف" لعبد الله غوران: دراسة مقارنة

ملخص :

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل أوجه التشابه والاختلاف في موضوع الطبيعة في قصيدتين رومانسييتين، تنتميان إلى حقبتين تاريخيتين مختلفتين ومنطقتين جغرافيتين متباعدتين. الأولى قصيدة "إلى الخريف" (١٨١٩)، للشاعر الرومانسي الإنجليزي جون كيتس، وتصور الحياة الريفية في إنجلترا في القرن التاسع عشر مع حلول فصل الخريف. أما الثانية، فهو قصيدة "الخريف" لعبد الله غوران (١٩٤٧)، المنشورة ضمن ديوان "الطبيعة الجميلة"، والتي تجسد ملامح فصل الخريف وطقسه. تنقسم قصيدة "إلى الخريف" إلى ثلاثة أجزاء، يضم كل منها أحد عشر بيتاً نصفياً، تُظهر تدرج الفصل من بدايته إلى نهايته، بدءاً من تأخر نضج الحبوب وصولاً إلى موسم الحصاد، في دلالة على آخر أيام الخريف قبل قدوم الشتاء. وبالمثل، فإن كلمة "خريف"، وهي مصطلح كوردي يُستخدم لوصف فصل الخريف، التي تشكل عنوان القصيدة الثانية والتي تعكس روح الفصول وما يطرأ عليها من تحولات. تعتمد هذه الورقة البحثية على المدرسة الفرنسية في الأدب المقارن لمقارنة القصيدتين، والكشف عن أوجه التشابه والاختلاف بينهما، مع بيان أثر الشاعر الإنجليزي في تجربة عبد الله غوران، كما يتجلى في العنوان والمضمون معاً.