

Poem

A comparison between Nizar Qabbani and Ella Wheeler Wilcox in their two poems "Father"

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Abstract

This paper aims at comparing two poems that share similar themes and style. This comparison is an example of literature for begins universal. It aims to compare the Arab poet " Nizar Qabbani " in his poem Father, and the American poetess " Ella Wheeler Wilcox " in her poem Father. The comparison between both poets is in their style, themes, tone, figures of speech used in their poems, and the significant similarities and differences between the two poet although they belong to different culture, continents and backgrounds.

Keywords: Father, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, Nizar Qabbani, poems

INTRODUCTION

Comparative literature is, relatively speaking, a young discipline and accordingly its practitioners are still keenly interested in fixing its objectives and defining its scope. It is the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country, and the study of the relationships between literature on one had and other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the arts, philosophy, history, the social science, religion, etc., on the other. It is the comparison of one literature with another or others. It is an academic field dealing with the literature of two or more different linguistic, cultural or national groups. Comparing poetic works can be tempting especially when both poems are similar like these two poems in this study.

In the famous definition, William Wordsworth calls poetry " the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling Recollected in tranquility ".

Poetry is a literary work in which special intensity is given to the expression of feelings and ideas by the use distinctive style and rhythm. Poetry can also be defined as an imaginative awareness of experience expressed through meaning, sound and rhythmic language choices so as to evoke an emotional response. Poetry has been known to employ meter and rhyme, but this is by no

means necessary. Poetry is an ancient form that has gone through numerous and drastic reinvention over time.

The very nature of poetry as an authentic and individual mode of expression makes it nearly impossible to define (Flanagan 2013).

To analyze a poem we should study its elements; tone, language, figures of speech, images, etc. Here we have two poems to compare which carry the same title and celebrate the same emotions and themes. The first is Nizar's poems, then Ella's.

أبي.
أمات أبوك؟
ضلال! أنا لا يموت أبي
ففي البيت منه
روائح رب ... وذكرى نبي
هنا ركنه ... تلك أشياؤه
تفتق عن ألف غضن صبي
جريدته. تبغه. منكاه
كان أبي -بعد- لم يذهب
وصحن الرماد... وفنجانه
على حاله... بعد لم يشرب
ونظاراته... أيسلو الزجاج
عيوناً أشف من المغرب؟

بقاياها, في الحجرات الفساح
بقايا النور على الملعب
أجول الزاوية عليه, فحيث
أمر... أمر على معشب
أشد يديه... أميل عليه
أصلي على صدره المتعب
أبي... لم يزل بيننا, والحديث
حديث الكؤوس على المشرب
يسامرنا... فالدوالي الحبالى
.. توالد من ثغره الطيب
أبي خيراً كان من جنة
... ومعنى من الأرحب الأرحب
وعينا أبي... ملجأ للنجوم
فهل يذكر الشرق عيني أبي؟
بذاكرة الصيف من والدي
... كروم, وذاكرة الكوكب
*

أبي يا أبي... إن تاريخ طيب
... وراءك يمشي, فلا تعتب
على اسمك نمضي, فمن طيب
شهي المجاني, إلى أطيب
حملتك في صحو عيني... حتى
... تهيأ للناس أني أبي
أشيلك حتى بنبرة صوتي
فكيف ذهبت... ولا زلت بي؟
*

إذا قلة الدار أعطت لدينا
ففي البيت ألف فم مذهب
فتحننا لتموز أبوابنا
ففي الصيف لا بد يأتي أبي

Father

Your Father died?
Delusion... my Father never dies
At home there are Lords' odors and Prophets'
reminiscence of him
Here is his corner
Those are his things
Taper of them a thousand succulent
His newspaper... his Tobacco. His divan
As if Father still not gone
The ashtray... his teacup
Unchanged... untouched
His glasses... could glass forget eyes more translucent
than evening
His remains in the spacious rooms
Like remains of the light on pitches
I wander searching him, for him
And wherever I pass... I am passing on a lush
I pull on his hands... lean towards him
Pray at his weary chest
Father...still among us-and the talk
Is the cups talk on the bar?
Humanizes us, for corded vineyard
Breed from his detectable mouth
Father, surely was from heaven

And in every sense of the word a magnanimous
And in speckle, Father' eyes were the result of the stars
Dose east remember Fathers' eyes?
In summer's memory there are vines from Father, and the
planet's memory
Father... oh Father
Aromatic history walks behind you, do not reproach
Oh your name we move... from delectable
Fruitful reap... to the most delectable
I hold you in my clear pupils
Till people thought I was you
I even raise you in my voice tone
Then how come you are gone, yet still in me
If our Jasmine would flourish
There are a thousand golden mouths at home
We have opened our doors to July
Because in summer, Father must come.

Father

He never made a fortune, or a noise
In the wold where men are seeking after fame
But he had a healthy brood of girls and boys
Who loved the very ground on which he trod.
They thought him just little short of God;
Oh you should have heard the way they said his name- "
Father ".
There seemed to be a loving little prayer
In their voices, even when they called him " Dad ".
Though the man was never heard of anywhere.
As a hero, somehow understood
He was doing well his part and making good;
And you knew it, by the way his children had
Of saying " Father ".
He gave them neither eminence nor wealth
But he gave them blood untainted with a vice
And opulence of undiluted health.
He was honest, and unpurchable and kind;
He was clean in heart, and body, and on mind.
So he made them heirs to riches without price- This
father.

He never preached or scolded; and the rod-
Well, he used it as a turning pole in play.
But he showed the tender sympathy of God.
To his children in their troubles, and their joys.
He was always chum and comrade with his boys,
And his daughters-oh, you ought to hear them say
" Father "
Now I think of all achievements 'tis the least
To perpetuate the species; it is done
By the insect and the serpent, and the beast.
But the man who keeps his body, and his thought,
Worth bestowing on an offspring love-begot,
Then the highest earthly glory he was won,
When in pride a grown-up daughter or a son
Says "That's Fathers".

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Wheeler Wilcox was an American author and poet. Her best-known work was *Poems of Passion*. Her most enduring work was "Solitude", which contains the lines: "Laugh, and the world laughs with you; Weep, and you weep alone ". Her autobiography, *The Worlds and I*, was published in 1918, a year before her death.

Ella Wheeler was born 1850 on a farm in Johnstown, Wisconsin, east of Janesville, the youngest of four children. The family soon moved north of Madison. She started writing poetry at a very early age, and was well known as a poet in her own state by the time she graduated from high school.

In 1884, she married Robert Wilcox of Meriden, Connecticut, where the couple lived before moving to New York City and then to Granite Bay in the Short Beach section of Branford, Connecticut. The two homes they built on Long Island Sound, along with several cottages, became known as Bungalow Court, and they would hold gatherings there of literary and artistic friends. They had one child, a son, who died shortly after birth. Not long after their marriage, they both became interested in theosophy, new thought, and spiritualism (Beers, 2006).

Ella Wheeler Wilcox was among the first of Wisconsin's writers to achieve literary fame. Her poems are framed in the popular style of the 1870's and 1880's when " the Fireside Poets " – Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, James Greenleaf Whittier, William Cullen Bryant, and Oliver Wendell Holmes among others – composed rhyming quatrains that " raised hope and made the blood sing ". While many of these poems today seem outdated and even juvenile, in Ella's time they would be recited wherever the public would gather for an important occasion (Roberts, 1999).

Nizar Qabbani:

Nizar Tawfiq Qabbani was a Syrian diplomat, poet and publisher. His poetic style combines simplicity and elegance in exploring themes of love, eroticism, feminism, religion, and Arab nationalism. Qabbani is one of the most revered contemporary poets in the Arab world.

Nizar Qabbani was born in the Syrian capital of Damascus to a middle class merchant family. Qabbani was raised in Mi'thnah Al-Shahm, one of the neighborhoods of Old Damascus. Qabbani studied at the national Scientific College School in Damascus between 1930 and 1941.

The school was owned and run by his father's friend, Ahmad Munif al-Aidi. He later studied law at the Damascus University, which was called Syrian University until 1958. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in law in 1945 (Qabbani 2007).

When Qabbani was 15, his sister, who was 25 at the time, committed suicide because she refused to marry a man she did not love. [3] During her funeral he decided to fight the social conditions he saw as causing her death.

When asked whether he was a revolutionary, the poet answered: " Love in the Arab world is like a prisoner, and I want to set (it) free. I want to free the Arab soul, sense and body with my poetry. The relationship between men and women in our society are not healthy ". He is known as one of the most feminist and progressive intellectuals of his time.

The city of Damascus remained a powerful muse in his poetry, most notably in the *Jasmine Scent of Damascus*. The 1967 Arab defeat also influenced his poetry and his lament for the Arab cause. The defeat marked a qualitative shift in Qabbani's work – from erotic love poems to poems with overt political themes of rejections and resistance. For instance, his poem *Marginal Notes on the Book of Defeat*, a stinging self-criticism of Arab inferiority, drew anger from both the right and left sides of the Arab political dialogue (" Biographical notes on Nizar Qabbani ", 2007).

He had lived in London since 1967 but the Syrian capital remained a powerful presence in his poems, most notably in "The Jasmine Scent of Damascus ". After the Arab defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, he founded the Nizar Qabbani publishing house in London, and his became a powerful and eloquent voice of lament for Arab causes.

Qabbani was a committed Arab nationalist and recent years his poetry and other writings, including essays and journalism, had become more political. His writing also often fused themes of romantic and political despair. Qabbani's later poems included a strong strain of anti-authoritarianism. One couplet in particular – " O Sultan, my master, if my clothes are ripped and torn it is because your dogs with claws are allowed to tear me " – is sometimes quoted by Arabs as a kind of wry shorthand for their frustration with life under dictatorship.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox's prolific excellence lay in her positive approach and optimistic nature. She had started penning down poetry from as early age and continued to do so till her death. Her poems reflected her optimism—her belief that hope would triumph over despair and good would overcome evil. For Wilcox, the severity and roughness of life did not exist. Wilcox also was a strong believer of reincarnation. She believed that the negativity that life presented was just an opportunity for man to turn into a blessing.

Wilcox played part in the establishment of the American Rosicrucian movement and was also appointed as its first Supreme Council officer. Her term as the Supreme Council officer lasted until her death.

In other hand; Qabbani was revered by generation of Arab for his sensual and romantic verse. His works was featured not only in his two dozen volumes of poetry and in regular contributions to the Arabic-language newspaper *Al Hayat*, but in lyrics sung by Lebanese and Syrian vocalists who helped popularize his work.

Through a lifetime of writing, Qabbani made women his main theme and inspiration. He earned a reputation for daring with the publication in 1954 of his first volume of verse " *Childhood of a Breast* ", whose erotic and

romantic themes broke from the conservative traditions of Arab literature.

The suicide of his sister, who was unwilling to marry a man she did not love, had a profound effect on Qabbani. Thereafter, he expressed resentment of male chauvinism and often wrote from a woman's viewpoint and advocated social freedoms for women.

Similarities between both poems

Fathers' immortality

Both poems gave the father a short image for a God, which indicates that fathers never die even if they were physically dead because their memories will stay forever. The God's image also indicates strength, unconditioned love, caring, peace, security and support.

Both poems showed that the spirit, or deeper mind, which nourishes a number of journeying souls with its light, is a thought of God.

Father's altruism

Both poems showed that the father's life is a rich legacy for his children, in addition to his behavior that makes his daughters and sons feel proud of him. They admire him, love him, miss him, and speak about him as if he is not already dead. Both poems used poetry elements professionally and conveyed their meanings artistically. Here I will mention the significant ones:

1. Tone:

Like the tone of the voice, tone in literature often conveys an attitude toward the person addressed. Like the manner of a person, the manner of a poem may be friendly or belligerent toward its reader.

The tone in both poems tells us how the poets feel about their fathers; how great their love is, how great their fathers are, how much they love their fathers, and how much they respect them. Tone of both poems shows that the poets are sad, affectionate, longing, and are being highly emotional. The poems include lifelike details that are pretty in a tone that make it easy to be recognized. The attitudes of the poets are plain, clear, and not hard to be recognized.

2. the person in the poems:

Persons in poems can be the poet him/herself (speaking of their very own experience), lover, family member, nature, an object, or a feeling. In our poems the speakers are the poets themselves talking about a family member; the father.

3. The languages:

Words echo inner feeling. With Qabbani, the inner feeling are love, respect, emptiness, denial of his father's death. So with Ella, the inner feeling is love, respect, and pride. Words flow easily, richly, rhetorically, in a way to make readers understand that the person they are describing is not an ordinary man. Both poets transformed ordinary life

of their fathers into art in a process of interpreting, shaping, personifying emotions and personal features and characteristics.

Qabbani was skilled in applying imagination in his poetry. Allusions are used in both poems; as with Qabbani:

أيسلو الزجاج عيوناً أشف من المغرب؟
فهل يذكر الشرق عيني أبي؟
حملتك في صحو عين

Here Qabbani gives glass, and East, and eyes human feature, Ella on the other hand was direct and clear in her description of her father:

Have given them neither eminence nor wealth
But he gave them blood untainted with a vice.

4. Word choice and word order:

The level of diction varies between the two poems. Qabbani chose metaphors and similes (elaborated literary expressions). Description of his father comes in the middle of the poem. His diction is rhetoric, deep and carries depth in meaning. Every word has at least one denotation (a meaning as defined in a dictionary) and full of connotations (over tone or suggestion of additional meaning that is gained from all the contexts in which we have met in the past).

Ella's diction is general English. She avoided elaborated literary expressions. Her words are flexible, direct, and used in fairly definite and inviolable pattern.

5. Imagery:

The term image refers to a word or sequence of words for any sensory experience. Often this experience is a slight (visual imagery), a sound (auditory imagery), or a touch (tactile imagery), as a perception of roughness or smoothness. It may be an odor or a taste or a bodily sensation such as pain (Kennedy & Gioia 2005). Qabbani's images cause the reader to experience a sense of impression. His images asks to be seen with the mind's eye. His poem is full of sights, sounds, odors, and tastes.

6. Figures of speech:

These are devices often state truths more literal language cannot communicate; they call attention to such truths; they lend them emphasis:

Simile: refers to only one characteristic that two things have in common.

Metaphor: it is not plainly limited in the number of resemblance it may indicate.

Apostrophe: it is a way of addressing someone or something invisible or not ordinarily spoken to, like Qabbani when he asks the East about his father, or the cups talk over the bar.

Transferred epithet: a devise of emphasis in which the poet attributes some characteristics of a thing to another thing closely associated with it.

Generally speaking, Qabbani's poem is full of figures of speech in a rich and impressive way.

7. Song:

Most poems are more memorable than most ordinary speech, and when music is combined with poetry, the

result can be memorable. This is very much true with Nizar Qabbani for he had several poems being sung by famous singers, the thing that contributed in spreading his poetry among people.

8. Sound as a meaning:

Meaning can be powerful when it is not apart from the sound of consonants and vowels. They can contribute greatly to a poem's effect. Both poems have a clear arrangement of sound of words that makes reading enjoyable and represents essential aspects of the poems.

9. Open form:

Qabbani wrote his poem in an open form in a way to make readers discover fresh and individual values in this special arrangement of words. Here the poet relies on other means to engage and sustain the reader's attention.

10. Symbol:

It is a visible object or action that suggests some further meaning in addition to itself. It is an image that radiates meaning. In both poems father is used as a symbol of God; carrying all what the word may indicate; power, firmness, sympathy, pride, with Ella father carries a religious meaning. Which Qabbani farther is present in his deeds and works and odors even if he is not seen.

Finally, it is obvious that the two poets try to celebrate the memory of their father in a way that reveals deep compassion and endless love and refusal of the fact that they lost those fathers. Although the two poets are different in the style they use, but they managed to draw a beautiful picture of their feelings and thoughts.

CONCLUSION

Comparative literature is a universal discipline that makes the world as a small village. It helped us and exposed us

other cultures and literatures that for our surprise are much alike to ours. The poem is plainly an effective articulation of both Qabbani and Ella's grief. It is clear that they were profoundly affected by the death of their fathers. The images they create are indicative especially those of Qabbani. The voice is a sorrow filled; emotional, representing the poets attempt to accept their fathers' deaths.

Both poems are, in their own ways, expressing a noble affection, a special image of the beloved father, good deeds and reputable history and admired personality.

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