

## Nature in Some Selected Poems of Keats and Al-Shabbi

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### ABSTRACT

*This study is a novel attempt to examine the theme of nature in the poetry of John Keats and Abu Al-Qasim Al-Shabbi since nature is of great importance in Romantic poetry whether Arabic or English. The objective of the present study is to investigate the concept of nature in some selected poems by Keats and Al-Shabbi. The study has proposed that there is a relationship between nature in Arabic poetry and English poetry since Al-Shabbi was influenced by English romantics like Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats through some translations of their poetry. Keats and Al-Shabbi are celebrated poets in English and Arabic Romantic literature. Although they died young at 25 and had only a few years of experience with poetry, they wrote the most beautiful poems that revealed their poetic abilities which were sufficient to rank them among the greatest poets. The study has adopted the qualitative, analytical and comparative approach. The study concluded that there is a similarity between Al-Shabbi and Keats because they belong to the same poetic trend. For Keats, the natural world represents an ideal environment and a source of beauty and truth. For Al-Shabbi, nature represents the spiritual unity between man and nature and a refuge from the cruelty of the city and the anxieties of life. Both Keats and Al-Shabbi found a solace in nature due to their identical suffering; Keats of physical illness of TB and Al-Shabbi of heart disease. Accordingly, they escaped to nature to forget their worries.*

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### 1. Introduction

Nature, as a salient characteristic of Romanticism, plays a leading role in Romantic poetry. Romantic poets placed a great emphasis on the countryside and its natural beauty where they found their true identity and refuge from social injustice. "For Romantic poets, the countryside came to represent simplicity, beauty, purity, innocence, goodness and truth (Hussien 244). They also described it as a way of life that regenerates the human spirit destroyed by the hardships of life. For Romantic poets, it is normal to use the imagery of nature as a means to express their inner worlds. "Nature, thus, in the Romantic view is not primarily part of external or objective reality, but merely the outer or sense-form of the "inner" or spiritual reality. It is inner being in terms of sense" (Schütze, 1918, p. 59). Nature, then, reflects both the inner and outer worlds of the Romantic poets.

The return to nature was allegorical to the essence of Romanticism. Romantic poets admired nature as a source of inspiration, creativity and renewal and considered it their favourite subject. They regarded it a living personality that added a mystical element to their lives. In their views, love of nature means love of humanity – another world in which the ideal concepts of justice and freedom were enshrined. As Habib (2008) describes it, "Nature was transfigured into a living force and held together as a unity by the breath of the divine spirit" (409). Hussein (1989), also mentions some benefits of nature and its beauty as "The beauty of nature was thought to have a beneficial effect on man; in its presence man can be spiritually purified" (244).

Romanticism arose as a reaction to the rationality of the Age of Enlightenment, and the love of nature was a response to the prevailing social order of that time. The Romantics valued nature because they found in it a place where could express their emotions and feelings, a refuge from their painful reality. Nature also offered Romantic poets the opportunity to weave their imaginations widely. "Nature meant many things to the Romantics. It was often presented as itself a work of art, constructed by a divine imagination, in an emblematic language" (Firoze, 2021, p 181).

Romantic poets and philosophers emphasised the influence of natural beauty on human emotions. They rebelled against the seemingly unnatural reality in which became a mere human decoration of economic classes based on ideals incompatible with human nature. The negative consequences of the Industrial Revolution led people to prefer life in the countryside to life in the city. Thus, nature is an alternative force in times of crisis. "Nature never did betray /The heart that loved her" (Tintern Abby 39, 123-124). For the Romantics, poetry is the image of nature and man being adjusted to each other. Dr. Johnson declared, "Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature" (qtd. in Evan, 1999, p. 65). This means a return to the sight of the natural world -the world of flowers, the trees, the sea, the sun, the moon, birds, meadows, forests, etc. Thus, nature played a vital role in self-pleasing.

The Romantics valued the moral influence of nature and saw in it a spiritual role for writing poetry (Rahman et al., 2022; Hilmawati et al., 2021; Amir P., 2023). They believed in the spiritual harmony between nature and man. As a lover of nature, Keats expressed the beauty of nature in artistic and real forms. For him, everything in nature is a source of joy and regeneration. He writes, "A thing of beauty is a joy forever" (Endymion 1). He believed that spending time in nature brings happiness to the heart and peace to the mind. "Nature also brings pleasure and inspiration to man, and this, in turn, leads him to a deeper understanding of nature and its secrets as well as life and its mysteries" (Husseini, 1989, p. 247).

Similarly, for Al-Shabbi, nature is the only place that is not affected by the laws and regulations of the city. Nature expresses the deep human truth- the truth of regeneration. He considers nature as the only book where he found the facts of existence. Thus, "Keats and Al-Shabbi are famous figures in English and Arabic Romantic literature. Although they practiced poetry for a few years, they produced the finest poetry that reflects their poetic abilities. The brevity of life and the belief in the superiority of art bring the two poets together vividly" (Wahas 16).

## **2. Methodology**

The study employs a multifaceted methodology, incorporating qualitative, analytical, and comparative approaches to delve into its research objectives. Within this framework, the authors meticulously analyze a selection of poems authored by two distinct poets, weaving together a comprehensive exploration of their work. In addition to the poem analysis, the study conducts a thorough review of existing literature, contributing a contextual backdrop that enriches the understanding of the poetic nuances under investigation.

## **3. Result and Discussion**

### **3.1. The Lecturer's Incorporation of Humor in Teaching Speaking Skill at Universitas Iqra Buru**

John Keats (1795-1821) is one of the greatest English poets of the Romantic period (2012). According to Bloom (2007), "John Keats is unique among all major poets since Shakespeare" (249). His poetry shows all the characteristics of Romanticism, and his odes are the finest in English Romantic poetry. Robert Bridges comments on Keats's odes, "Had Keats left us only his odes, His rank among the poets would not be lowered than it is. For they have stood apart in literature" (qtd. in Nagar and Prasad, 2005, p. 150). Similarly, Kamble and Meshram (2012) describe Keats's odes as "Keats odes are the finest fruits of his maturity" (2). The early death of his father and the illness of his mother and brothers of tuberculosis prompted him to study medicine. Although he practiced surgery and obtained a certificate in apothecary, he never worked. He realized that writing poetry was his true talent and preferred to become a poet. Tuberculosis was the main cause of his premature death at the age of 25. His life was tragic and short which in turn draw his perception of life. "Keats was not only a deeply thoughtful poet; he was also the most studious and inspired artist among the romantics" (Lall, 1960, p. 12).

As a Romantic poet, he wrote about nature and its beauty. For him, nature is more authentic source of knowledge than science and logic. He held different views of nature and its beauty. "Keats believes in the influence of natural beauty on human emotions and thoughts. He considered nature as an honest friend that never lies or betrays where he expresses his feelings and sufferings" (Wahas 6). He, with the help of imagination, could create poetic images from natural objects. For Keats, beauty is superior and beyond all considerations. He writes: "heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter" (Ode on a Grecian Urn 11,12). He discussed not only their visible beauty but also their mysterious features, thus, nature is completely mysterious to him. In his early poems, he appreciated only the physical things of nature, but his later odes revealed his experience of life.

### **Data1**

One of Keats's favorite themes is the persistence of beauty within the ugliest situations, from intimate anguish to political crisis. In this case, he wants us to think about how poetic language both makes vivid and distracts us from the commonplace reality of someone suffering, unspectacularly, right before our very eyes. (Nersessian 29).

Keats is a sincere lover of nature, and this love is not only for the sensual pleasure it brings but also for its spiritual significance as it became the main source of relief and peace. According to Lall (1960), "Keats was one of the supreme poets of nature" (29). In his view, nature is the only means that leads to an ideal world. "His love of nature was solely sumptuous and he cherished the gorgeous sights and scenes of nature" (Sharma, 2019, p. 53).

He is a spontaneous poet, with extraordinary poetic abilities, used to write his poetry easily as "Ode to a Nightingale" which was written in a short time in one morning. He naturally creates great poetry by using the natural imagery that surrounds him. For him, the best poetry is the one that comes naturally. He states that "poetry should come as naturally as the leaves to a tree, or it had better not come at all" (Bate, 2009, p. 243). Keats' odes are very rich in sensual appeal. They show Keats as a good spectator of nature. He used various images of nature such as morning, evening, night, and autumn to express his perception of life. These images are dominant and clear in his odes. He is a sensual poet who believes more in feelings than in reason. "It is true that Keats is a sensualist, that he is obsessed with capturing the heady particularities of taste and touch" (Nersessian, 2021, p. 5). He concludes that beauty and truth are two dimensions that cannot be separated. His conception of nature drives from his ecological consciousness.

### **3.2. Analysis of the poems**

Keats tries to describe nature in many of his odes, such as "To Autumn, Ode to a Nightingale, Ode to Psyche", and others which will be explained below

"To Autumn" is one of the most wonderful poems by Keats. It is acknowledged by many critics and writers such as Bloom who describes it as "To Autumn" is probably the most eminent of the Great Odes of Keats" (250). For Abrams, the ode "To Autumn" was the last work of artistic consequence that Keats completed [...] he achieved this celebratory poem, with its calm acquiescence to time, transience and mortality" (Cited in Strachan, 2003, p. 174). Moreover, Janiswara (2012) adds "It is one of the best poems of John Keats, that tells about his experience with nature and the beauty of the seasons" (7). For Keats, autumn is a season of fruitfulness depicted with rich sensuous images. It is a redefinition of autumn that gives the ode its consistency and beauty. On one hand, autumn means the end of one's career and approach of death. On the other hand, "To Autumn" is an appropriate end to a writing career. It shows a clear change from struggle to acceptance of things that cannot change. The feelings of the speaker are a noble mode to enter death with.

"To Autumn" gives a clear picture of autumn's beauty. The poet describes the richness and attraction of nature in the autumn season, which reflects the power of his imagination. The ode addresses the generosity of nature and the cycle of life. "The ode consists of two strophes loaded with complete pictures. The first describes the splendid beauty associated with autumn. The second gives a portrait of autumn itself so vivid and full of visions that it leaves a strong impact on our thoughts and emotions" (Hegazy, 2011, p. 16). The ode presents the natural picture of autumn through a group of images. This stanza provides an optimistic view of nature.

### **Data 2**

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;  
Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run; (1-4)

Autumn is a season when fruits and crops are ripe. The trees of apple, vines, gourd and hazel are bending down carrying ripe and swelling fruits. Harvesting corn by harvesters is one of nature's images. The poet describes autumn as a worker who is carrying the crops of corn on his head. The images of autumn are personified in the form of a woman sitting on the warehouse floor with a messy hair that is soft-lifted by the wind. She sometimes fell into a deep sleep on the harvested fields and sometimes in the hills.

**Data 3**

To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,  
and fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;  
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells  
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more  
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor  
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,  
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:  
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep. (5-8, 14, 16, 18,19).

The image of bees is also used by Keats in his ode "To Autumn". "The bees also link the three kingdoms; vegetative, animal, and human" (Rasul, 1986, p. 45). Keats writes:

**Data 4**

Still more, later flowers for the bees  
Until they think warm days will never cease (9,10).

"Ode to a Nightingale" is one of Keats' perfect odes that depicts the beauty of nature. Nagar and Prasad (2005) state, "Ode to a Nightingale" presents Keats's mature skill in reaching out to the world of the nightingale and enjoying the bliss it could offer to him" (218). The poet extols the beauties of nature not to live but to find a solution to human suffering. "The ontological difference between the nightingale and the poet is the difference between a purely natural being and a human being" (Kappel, 1978, p. 272). This ode is spontaneous because it was written in a short time in one morning. The main themes of the poem are the transience of human life, immortality, mortality, and nature. The poet addresses the nightingale as a creature that is happy, untroubled and immortal. Keats was surprised to see the happiness of the nightingale. At the beginning, he compares his mental state which began intoxicated and how he became calm and happy after hearing the nightingale's song.

**Data 5**

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains  
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk  
or emptied some dull opiate to the drains.  
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees  
In some melodious plot  
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless.  
The voice I hear this passing night was heard (1-3, 7-9, 63)

The poet uses the images of nature as a means to express his angst about life and to project his emotional attitude. He describes the life of nightingale, which unaware the misery and worries of man. Hearing the bird's song leads the speaker to think about the mortality of humans and art. "The nightingale, as the being "not born for death," who does not know death, is the object of emulation. Its immortality is simply and exactly its ignorance of death; it is not ultimate longevity, has, in fact, nothing to do with duration but instead with quality of existence" (Kappel, 1978, p. 276). In this ode, there are two pictures of nature showing Keats's pleasure of nature. The first picture is the moon shining in the sky and the other is the picture of flowers, hawthorn, eglantine, violets and musk-roses:

**Data 6**

And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne  
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;

Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves  
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine.

He compares the misery of humans 'weeping cloud' of the bird, then lists precise flowers that are associated with sadness. "In 'Ode to a Nightingale' one can discern the consciousness of the use of nature, symbolized in the bird and its melodious song, is used not only for poetic composition but also for advancing the poet's philosophical speculations" (Ngiewih, 2008). In nature, he finds suitable images for his psychological state. The speaker contrasts the existence of a bird, which is immortal, with that of a human, who is mortal. In his opinion, the bird did not have to die because it brings happiness to others. He writes:

**Data 7**

Here, men sit and hear each other groan;  
Where palsy shakes a few, sad last grey hairs,  
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;  
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow  
And leaden-eyed despairs  
Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird! (24-28, 61)

The bird's song enchanted the poet. He felt as if he had drunk hemlock or emptied the Lethe-ward. He became restless when he heard the bird's song. We recognize here how the poet uses his imagination to describe his situation with the nightingale's song.

**Data 8**

One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:  
Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,  
But being too happy in thine happiness (4-6)

Both the song and the bird embody natural beauty. Aside from the joy evoked by the nightingale's song, the invisible depiction of the surrounding landscape brings some peace to the poet's mind. The below lines express the splendour of autumn associating with the approaching of the summer season with its beautiful images and luxury. Nature seems to be an effective means of coping with the shifts in life that the poet is thinking about. The song of the nightingale left a psychological state in the poet's attitude toward death that reinforced his desire for eternity.

**Data 9**

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,  
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the bough,  
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet  
Wherewith the seasonable month endows  
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;  
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;  
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;  
And mid-May's eldest child,  
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,  
The murmurous haunt of lies on summer eves. (41 – 50)

"Ode to a Nightingale" shows the poet's vast imagination. He imagines himself in a green oasis full of birds that brings him peace and happiness. The feeling he imagined took him back to the medieval times when England was

evergreen and had a variety of natural images such as birds and plants. He wants to restore the state of England during that time even in his imagination. Thus, he creates this feeling in this ode.

**Data 10**

Was it a vision, or a waking dream?  
Fled is that music: —do I wake or sleep?  
I have been half in love with easeful Death,  
(Ode to a Nightingale, 45 – 46, 52)

In “On the Sea” the poet describes the beauty and great power of the tides of the sea, which can cure irritated eyes and exhausted ears. He urges weary people to enjoy their time away from the difficulties of life and contemplate the vastness of the sea. Keats believes that sitting near the sea has calming effects on a person’s mood. It is a remedy for those suffer from disorders and depression. On the other hand, “The sea represents death and eternity, the land represents the brief life of the summer and of one human generation which passes into the sea of eternity” (Lynch, 1953, p. 33). He wrote this ode in Carisbrook when doctors recommended him travel to other places to hopefully to find relief.

**Data 11**

O ye, that have your eye-balls vex'd and tired,  
Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea;  
Oh ye! whose ears are din'd with uproar rude,  
Or fed too much with cloying melody. (9-12)

“Ode to Psyche” “describes the oppressive nature of the psyche, depression, and its onset. Psyche’s existence proves fatal for beauty, joy, and pleasure” (Janiswara, 2012, p. 7). He describes the purity and beauty of nature, saying that the psyche is subjected to many situations in life. In the ode, he considers his love for Fanny Brawne as a goddess who fills the world with peace and love. His love for Fanny also played a key role in shaping his thoughts. Keats adored Fanny and wrote many poems and letters about her. For him, true love is not physical desire but spiritual affinity. In a letter to Fanny, On 25th July 1819, he wrote, “I have two luxuries to brood over in my walks, your Loveliness and the hour of my death” (Qtd. in Lutz, 2015, p. 37). “Ode to Psyche” celebrates the immortal love of the psyche.

**Data 12**

Upon the midnight hours;  
Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet  
From swung censer teeming;  
Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat  
Of pale-mouthed prophet dreaming. (45-49)

Returning to his letters, we recognize many hints that explain Keats’ true love of nature. He writes:

I never felt so near the glory of Patriotism, the glory of making by any means a country happier. This is what I like better than scenery, (Letter to Tom, July 1, 1818).

I assure you I often long for a seat and a Cup o’ tea at Well Walk, especially now that mountains, castles, and Lakes are becoming common to me, (Letter to Tom, July 26, 1818.)

I am not so tired of Scenery as to hate Switzerland, (Letter to Fanny Brawne, August 9, 1819.)

I am getting: a great dislike of the picturesque, (Letter to Fanny Brawne, August 17, 1819).

The environment he lived in influenced his perception of life. He believes that slum areas are primarily responsible for the spread of epidemic diseases. “Keats thus interchanges nature and thought, the internal and the external, by circling around to the beginning where in the real world he retrospectively writes a poem, using real objects like trees and stars, to signal their transformation into the world of thought within” (Bunn, 1970, p. 591). He struggles to know nature properly and enjoy it truly, without hidden thought than to give it a comprehensive expression.

### 3.3. Biography of Al-Shabbi

Abu Al-Qasim Al-Shabbi (1909- 1934) was one of the greatest Arab Romantic poets. He was born in the village of Al-Shabbiya, Tauzer, Tunisia. He received his basic education in Qabs town, and then he was sent to Al-Zaituna mosque to study Arabic language, literature and Islamic sciences (1987). He then studied law at the Tunisian Law School. He became a lawyer, but he never worked. He occupies a significant place in modern Arabic poetry. His extensive reading of Arabic and English literature improved his awareness and led him to become a poet. He was greatly influenced by the poetry and poets of the Arabic Romantic schools such as Al-Mahjar, Apollo, and Al-Diwan. He took from poetry a subject for which he lived, and this is one of the greatest secrets that gave him a place in everyone's heart. He was honest in his feelings and faithful in carrying the artistic and literary message. He used poetry as a means to express the problems of his society. Although he practiced poetry for a few years, he wrote the best Arabic poetry in the twentieth century. His cardiovascular disease was the key cause of his premature death at 25. His poetry embodies all characteristics of Romanticism, such as love of nature, glorification of imagination, individualism, spontaneity of emotions, and revolt against the norms of neoclassical poetry.

Nature is a main component of Al-Shabbi's poetry. For him, it is a refuge in sadness and a friend in loneliness. From the hustle and bustle of the city and away from friends, the poet decided to spend some time in nature for solace and to understand his thoughts and feelings. Moreover, Al-Shabbi's seeking refuge in nature was a symbol of his despair of society's life. "Al-Shabbi's nature is that of any temperate climate, where there are hills, valleys, streams, flowers, trees, birds, and shepherds" (Speight, 1978, p. 184). In a letter to his friend Al-Helewi on April 10, 1932, he wrote: "I am not in an isolation dear to myself, but this doesn't mean that I have run away from the city and taken refuge in nature's bosom in which I find an expression of beauty, kindness and sympathy that I could not find in the hearts of the men" (Cited in Hussein, (2018, p. 253-254). His letter confirms his strong attachment to nature especially when he was frustrated with the apathy of Tunisian people toward the French colonization. In nature, there is mercy, kindness, and tenderness, it carries concepts and values. It also gives and does not take, rejoices and does not grieve. In his poem Al-ghab (The Forest) (1972:469), he extols the beauty of nature and its benefits in inspiring him.

#### **Data 13**

In the forest, the beloved forest,  
it is nature's sanctuary and its magnificent beauty  
I have purified my feelings in beauty's fire,  
and found peace in the world of imagination.

(Translated by Hussein, 101)

Therefore, most of his poems show his love for nature, "he lives with his imagination, senses, and feelings in nature, and he derives his artistic images from nature before he derives them from anything else" (Al-Naqash' 1971,p. 49). Nature is the great vessel into which all feelings and thoughts flow. He was influenced by the works of Arab and English poets including Gubran, Lamartine, and Getty.

### 3.4. Analysis of Poems

Al-Shabbi was one of the Arab Romantic poets whom nature played a big role in his thoughts and feelings. Wahas writes, "Al-Shabbi is a part of nature and his poetry is one of its images" (67). For Al-Shabbi, life in the countryside brings solace to human beings. In the forest, he found the purity of life and the loftiness of beauty. He eulogizes the countryside's life as the perfect place where one can hear the songs of birds and enjoy the sound of water streams. In his famous poem "Quyud Al-Ahlam" (Chains of Dreams), he wishes to live like the poet's life in the countryside and forest away from the harsh realities of the world. Thus, for him, life in countryside is the antithesis of city life, as city corrupts people.

#### **Data 14**

I wish to live like a poet getting  
to see that the world is too small for my dreams  
In the forest, on the mountain far away from people

where natural scenery and fine beauty exist

(Hussein, 1989, p.255)

Nature lives in his heart and mind. His view of nature was spiritual, as shown in the below lines, which clearly express his fondness for nature. "Thus, nature became a sacred thing that released him from the chains of materialism and demands of life" (Quraish, 1995, p. 63).

**Data 15**

Here is the sacred temple!

Oh priest of anguish,

remove your cloak of sorrow,

dress in poetry and dreams.

And raise your vivid prayer

to beauty, reel out your song

lovely as smiling world.

(Translated by Jayyusi and Nye, 99)

In the eyes of Romantic poets, nature is the ideal world that reduces their pains and sorrows. Nature, wherever it is found, is viewed as a symbol of beauty by poets, particularly the Romantics like Al-Shabbi. It will continue to inspire writers, poets, and artists and help them discover their talents. Al-Shabbi, in his famous poem "The Forest", defines poetry as a home of love, dreams, and inspiration. He writes:

**Data 16**

A home that life built for me

from the fragrance and shadows,

Light and song to love, to dream in,

to receive inspiration.

(Translated by Jayyusi and Nye 94 )

In the same poem, the poet describes the visual beauty of nature, which renews his life and purifies his mind. It immerses him in the world of imagination, away from the chaotic life of the city where people live. He believes that nature is a living being that grants him harmony and solace. It is the safe sanctuary of lovers and the refuge of tormented souls where it finds comfort. Nature renews itself throughout time. "Nature is the world that brings the Romantic poets back to the era of innocence and goodness away from the miserable realities of society" (Wahas 67). The poet complains of spiritual alienation he seeks in the ideal life and missing in reality. He keeps rejecting the reality of city, which is limited to food, drink and material things. He writes:

**Data 17**

In the woods, life renews itself,

year after year.

In the woods, there is the food of imagination,

for poetry and dreams.

In the beloved woods at the altar of trees,

I forgot the world of people and found my peace.

Beauty purified me like a flame

Here was the spark to answer darkness!



(Translated by Jayyusi and Nye 94,98)

Al-Shabbi uses elements of nature to express his inner world, which is not separate from him, but we see through his sufferings, sorrows and feelings. In this way, he intends to connect the images of nature with human suffering. Al-Shabbi composed twenty-nine poems that include elements of nature, including *Fi Adhlam* 'In the Dark', *Enshwadat Alra'aed* The Chant of Thunder, *Ayuha Allyal* 'O Night', *Baqaya Al-kharif* 'The Remnants of Autumn', *Alsabah Aljadid* 'The New Morning', *Munajat Asafoor* 'The Monologue of the Bird', and *Tahat Alghasoon* 'Under the Branches' and others. Nature has many images in Al-Shabbi's poetry, such as morning, evening, night, love, and autumn.

Romantic poetry used autumn as a symbol of nature. They appreciated autumn because it addresses their melancholy and suffering. It represents not only the beauty of nature but also the transience of life. "It becomes a symbol of many contradictory feelings, ranging from lucid grief to nostalgia for the unknown" (Al-Qut, 1988, p. 354). For Al-Shabbi, autumn represents a departure, revival, and change from one state to another. It also represents the term's imminence, the drought and cruelty of life, the death of values, the struggle over matter, and life's fleeting temptation.

Some connotations of autumn are found in his poem *Baqaya Al-kharif* "Remains of Autumn" as the poet sees the inconsistency of life in the city and the suffering of oppressed people as reasons for his sadness. Thus, he resorts to nature and uses autumn and its images as a means to express his emotional state. He writes in "Remains of Autumn":

**Data 18**

The tears of life were filled with my soul  
the winds of sorrow filled my heart  
To the broken heart of the poor  
and the wailing shedding tears of my days. (3,4).

The poet expresses his inner world in the autumn image:

**Data 19**

And the evening clouds covered him with a  
sad shadow of a transparent shrine.  
And among the branches that were stripped  
by the tyrant, strong autumn nights.  
I stood around a dead brook,  
with which the naps of the caves continued  
It spent those flowers on its sides  
and shrouded them in the autumn frost. (8-11).

In the poem "Remains of Autumn", he uses images of autumn, including its frightening elements such as winds, heavy rain, and frost to express his sadness and isolation. In the end, he realizes that temporary life and its destiny are determined by the will of a Generous Lord:

**Data 20**

And I said, "The universe is the cradle of beauty."  
But every beauty has an autumn  
I heard a whisper of sorrow  
The soul was overwhelmed with intense worry  
And the drunkenness of the daylight passed away  
And the darkness of existence has spread. (32-34)

Autumn, then, is a symbol of sadness and coldness of human relationships. It indicates departure and change, and is associated with many troubling connotations. Therefore, it is suitable for situations of anxiety, tension, disorder, and vague feelings that dominate the poet. The image of social injustice prompts the poet to leave the city and live in nature.

**Data 21**

I drove to where the spring songs have housed  
the aspirations of autumn fade away  
And where space is a poet, a dreamer  
He speaks to the plains with a funny revelation. (6,7)

Al-Shabbi devoted his poetry to his country, Tunisia. He used autumn images to depict the situation of his country during the French colonization. He wants to tell the colonizer that there are winds and thunders after autumn that stand for revolution and anger. Hussein writes "Al-Shabbi is known as "The Poet of Love and Revolution", sees himself as the bearer of a message he wants to divulge to the world and to his people through nature" (287). In the same context, Badawi adds "He predicts the heroic struggle of his people against foreign occupation and tyranny and the certain downfall of the latter" (164).

**Data 22**

Hey, you, the unfair tyrant...  
You, the lover of the darkness...  
The enemy of life...  
You've made fun of innocent people's wounds  
and your palm covered with their blood.  
Wait, don't let the autumn, the clearness of the sky  
and the shine of the morning light fool you...  
Because of the darkness, the thunder rumble and  
The blowing of the wind is coming  
toward you from the horizon  
Beware because there is a fire underneath the ash  
Who grows thorns will reap wounds  
The blood's river will sweep you away and  
You will be burned by the fiery storm.  
(Al-Shabbi 457)

The morning is another image of nature. Al-Shabbi wrote about it in many of his poems, such as Al-Sabah Al-Jadid "The New Morning", and Dhikra Sabah "A Morning Remembrance". The characteristics of the morning appear in their attractive images, as in his poem Dhikra Sabah "A Morning Remembrance". "He pictures the countryside awakening in the morning, a magical, breathtaking vision, a worthy testimony to the glory of God. He cries ecstatically to his feelings to bind him to the holy beauty of this morning awakening, for in that bondage he will find artistic freedom" (Speight 183). He writes:

**Data 23**

God sanctified the memory of a magical morning  
in the shadow of a beautiful forest.  
As the breeze was dancing drunk

on the roses and the wet plant.  
And the fog of the mountains flowed in a wonderful  
direction on the meadows of the plains.  
And the songs of the Shepherds echo in the  
Valleys, mountains, and hills. (Al-Shabbi 386)

However, the feeling surpasses the sensuous image. The poet describes his lover as she wanders beautifully. Thus, the poem depicts the morning, the wonderful angel, and the ambitions, dreams and beliefs of the poet. He writes in the same poem:

**Data 24**

And the beautiful angel is between basil  
and grass and shady oaks  
She sings with the birds in the jungle  
And looking for a lazy fog  
And the feeling of the angel is dancing in flowers  
Light and gentle breeze. (Al-Shabbi 386).

In another poem, namely, Min Aghani Alruea "From the Shepherds' Songs", "the poet describes the morning that comes slowly to awaken life every morning and fills life with hope and optimism. The breezes move the dry leaves and make them dance when they receive the delegation of the morning that began to roam around life to be energized" (Al-Bitar 28). For Al-Shabbi, who was looking for freedom and independence for his country, morning represents freedom and liberty. Morning means the beginning of new day and new life. He continues describing the morning that, it breathes and spreads its splendour, light and spirit to life. Morning gives life back to everything and pushes the flowers, birds, and sea to dance happily.

**Data 25**

The morning comes singing for sleepy life  
and hills dream in the shadow of swaying branches  
The dry leaves of flowers dance.  
The light roared in those dark breaks.  
The morning comes and fills the horizon with light  
And moves the flowers, birds, and sea waves  
(qtd. in Al-Bitar 28)

The evening is another natural image used by poets to convey their sadness, misery, and alienation. "Evening represents melancholy and sadness, at other times, it is the epitome of beauty and peace" (Hussein, 2020, p. 293). For Al-Shabbi, the evening is the end of weariness and struggles during the daytime. One of the wonderful poems of Al-Shabbi is Almasa Alhazin, "The Sad Evening" which describes his attitudes toward night and its secrets. Speight declares, "In Al-Masa' Al-Hazin', 'The Sad Evening,' the pastoral beauty of rural life settling for the night is set as a foil for the poet's hope, which alone is unable to find repose" (183).

**Data 26**

The sad evening prevailed over the existence  
and in its palm, there is a piano that cannot be seen  
And in its mouth, there are smiles of sadness  
and in its eyes, there are heartbreaks of years

(Al-Shabbi 166)

The description of the evening awakens in the poet a lovely imagination that had been missed for a long time. The poet blends his feelings with images of nature because he did not find a better way to express his complaints.

**Data 27**

It brought back beautiful imagination  
That was withheld by the calamities of the years  
(Al-Shabbi 166)

Night as a natural phenomenon has a special place in Al-Shabbi's poetry. For Al-Shabbi, night with its darkness represents the gloomy conditions and the social and political oppression of Tunisian people under the French colonization. It is an escape of anxieties and concerns of life. It is also a sign of sorrow and silence. On the other hand, "For most Romantics, 'night' was seen as a source of beauty, peace and inspiration as well as a time when man's spirit becomes free from any limitations." (Hussein, 346). Wahas, in the similar way, sees, "The Romantic poet likes night as a world of unity and silence" (70). As a representation of nature, the night shares the poet's woes and tragedies. The sadness caused by the loss of his beloved is shared with nature, especially at night, because it is the only outlet for his pain. In his poem "Al-Sahira" (The Enchanting woman), the poet connects the night with love. He is asking love to read the poetry to the night.

**Data 28**

Let love sing poetry to the night  
How often does its tune intoxicate the night!  
A night passion draped with  
The grace of its soft, penetrating magic.  
(Translated by Hussein, 304).

Night, for Al-Shabbi, represents amazing and beautiful things on one hand, and depression and terror on the other. He depicts the night as the father of misery and terror, and sweet brides of hope that kneel in the temple of life and pray with its beloved voice. The paradox highlighted by the poet's description of night and hope is a beautiful representation of the conflict that the poet wants to highlight between the cruelty of life and hope, and how man confronts and overcomes this cruelty. The night is simultaneously a habitat for cruelty and a cradle of hope. He made from silence a song, and when we see him hears what he sees and this reveals the vast imagination of the poet. In Ayuha Allyal "O, Night", he writes:

**Data 29**

O night, O father of misery and terror!  
O, you skeleton of terrifying time!  
The bride of sweet hope rest on their  
Knees before you, praying in their  
delightful voices.  
O, night You are but a speck, which has ascended  
to heaven from the foothold of the angry  
Hellfire,  
O, night! You are a moving tune on the  
Lips of time, amidst mourning (Hussein, 302).

In his celebrated poem *Iradat Al-Hayat* "The Will of life", he urges his people to resist colonization and revolution. "This poem was the slogan of freedom and revolutions in the Arab World from the gulf to the ocean" (Wahas 1792). The

poet wants to deliver a message to his people that, no one can extinguish their will if they decide to live honourably. "Al-Shabbi stresses the view that nothing can stand in the way of a people who are determined to live a decent and honourable life in their homeland. He then spells out the message of freedom which he wants to relay to his people with the wind, exhorting them to take full responsibility for their future and destiny" (Hussein, 287). He found in the elements of nature what he did not find in people. Al-Shabi uses the images of nature to express his revolutionary energy toward his people. Therefore, nature and the poet have the same features of revolution and anger. He writes:

**Data 30**

If one day people should choose life,  
Fate is certain to respond.  
The night will surely retreat,  
And fetters be broken.  
The wind muttered between the ravines;  
Over mountains and under trees  
He who does not like scaling mountains  
Will eternally in potholes.  
When I asked the earth,  
Mother, do you hate mankind?  
She replied, I bless those with ambition  
those who brave danger-  
I curse the ones not keeping  
Step with time, who are content live a fossil life  
(Jayyusi and Nye 131-137).

Al-Shabbi was unsatisfied with his people situation under French colonization and how they accepted it. He was not only dreaming of political independence for his country, but he went beyond that to create an internal rebellion in their souls. "In his desire to rid his people of their apathy and overwhelming sense of resignation in the face of the tyranny of their colonial masters, the poet wishes he was as strong as the flowing stream, the wind, the thunderstorm and the hurricane, in order to put an end to their apathy" (Hussein, 2021, p. 288). The key reason to explain his Romanticism is that he appeals to freedom and declines all forms of injustice. In the poem "The Unknown Prophet", the poet stresses the need of power in face the colonizer. The poet describes his responsibility toward his people which is to urge them resist the colonization. He writes (1972:246-7):

**Data 31**

I wish I were a flood's  
Torrent demolishing graves,  
One be one.  
If only I were a wind  
Scattering the evil that jinxes flowers,  
If I had the strength of tempests, my people.  
I'd fling out my rebellion at you!  
If I had the strength of flailing hurricanes,  
I'd invite you to life with my words.  
(Jayyusi and Nye 87)

Emotions, to Romantics, are more important than mind and logic. Romantic poets released emotions and feelings. They valued love, considering it a tool of perfection and sublimity. "The poet realizes that all images of nature are represented in his passion of love" (Wahas 72-73). He considers himself as a part of nature and the woman is the best being in existence who grants him love and pity. "Al-Shabbi associates love and nature with childhood. She is also compared to a smiling sky, a moonlit night, a flower or the smile of the innocent new-born baby. Childhood represents innocence, spontaneity and purity. In this respect, it is similar to nature. Romantic poets often associate childhood with nature, seeing both as a source of innocence and beauty in their natural states" (Hussein 336, 341). Al-Shabbi elevated women to a level of sanctification that is mixed with the images of nature. *Salwat fi Haikal Alhub* (Prayers in the Temple of Love), as one of Al-Shabbi's top love poems, where the poet elevates the women's status to the level of holiness. He was against those who looked at women as a body just to be enjoyed and this translates the maturity of Al-Shabbi's Romanticism. He writes:

**Data 32**

You are endearing as childhood's drifting melody,  
Limpid as the morning air.  
Like a laughing sky, a moo-rich night  
Like roses, or a new-born smile.  
What are you?  
An image painted by heaven's sacred brush,  
An unexpected dawn  
Casting light over my life's pain?  
(Jayussi and Shihab 117-119)

#### 4. Conclusion

Romanticism moved the focus from logic and mind to nature and emotions. Nature played a significant role in Romantic poetry. For Romantic poets, nature is the source of inspiration and creativity, and a refuge from life's anxieties and cares. English and Arabic Romantic poets look at countryside as a symbol of simplicity, purity, beauty and innocence. Both Romantic poets used images of nature such as autumn, night, morning, evening, and others to express their inner world and philosophy of life. They found in nature and its images their refuge in hard times and their happiness that did not come from people. Their poetry about nature reflected their extensive connection with it and its visual beauty, as we found them were addressing nature as humans and expressing their joys and sorrows. Both poets shared the same similarities in using nature images, however, the dissimilarity was that Al-Shabbi used images of nature against the French colonization. Both poets were distinguished poets in English and Arabic Romantic poetry. Despite their early death and their practice poetry for a few years, they wrote the best poetry that placed them among the top poets. Thus, this study is expected to contribute to more understanding the poetry of Keats and Al-Shabbi. It also has a significant contribution to future studies.

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