

## *The Lamb and The Flute: Two Parallel Symbols In W. Blake's and Jubran Khalil's Poems*

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### Abstract

The study deals with two famous romantic poets: W. Blake, the English (1757-1827), and Jebran Khalil Jebran (1883- 1931, the Arab one who has been undoubtedly motivated by Blake's vision and mysticism.

Indeed, the study sheds light mainly on two symbolic terms of their poems, "The lamb" by Blake and "The flute" by Jebran. The Lamb refers to 'innocence' in Blake's poetry, whereas 'The Flute' means 'singing' in Jebran's poetry.

Tracing analytically their poetry, the study shows at last intertextual relation between their poetic views in order to understand nature, religion, and their relations with man's life. Many clear examples are included too.

**Key word:** The Lamb and The Flute, William Blake Jubran Kahalil

## ' الْحَمَلُ ' وَ ' النَّاي ' رَمَازَانِ مُتَقَارِبَانِ فِي شِعْرِ وليم بليك وجبران خليل جبران

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### الخلاصة

تتمحور الدراسة حول التعريف بتجربة شاعرين رومانتيكيين مشهورين هما وليم بليك الانكليزي وجبران خليل جبران العربي والذي حفزته جداً رؤية وصوفية بليك الشعرية. البحث يسلط الضوء بالذات على رمزين في قصيدتي الشاعرين هما: الحمل (lamb) لبليك والناي (flute) لجبران (من قصيدة الشحور) كرمزين متقاربين: البراءة في قصيدة الحمل والغناء في رمز الناي. وتوضح الدراسة تحليلاً للعلاقة التناسلية بين قصيدتيهما ورؤيتهما الشعرية من اجل فهم وكشف علاقة الطبيعة والدين بحياة الإنسان، مع عديد من الأمثلة.

الكلمات الدالة:الحمل والناء، وليم بليك، جبران خليل

1- In the beginning of the twentieth century, new elements and conceptions present literary discourse in Arabic literature which is mainly known as the Romantic Movement (1789 -1836). Therefore, many English romantic poems have been considerably translated into Arabic literature, and issued in various literary magazines.

The influence of the English romantic poetry impressively extends to different countries so long as it is a new turn in the history of literature. Coleridge and Wordsworth, for example, exert two critical essays, which are concerned with the concept of imagination and feeling. The first one writes 'Biographia Literaria'(1817), and the second one writes 'Preface to Lyrical Ballads'(1800). 1

In this field, a new Arab generation of romantic poets appear, and three distinguished ones respond to obtain great fame, known as "Immigrant Poets": Jebran Khalil Jebrab (1883- 1931, Michael Nuaima (1889-1988), and Elliya Abu Madi (1890-1957). Those poets are characterized with certain elements such as contemplation, humanity, and love of nature, which form the basic element of literature. 2

2 - Now before we start our analysis, let us exert a short biography of each one:

William Blake (1757-1827) is an English poet. He was born in London, and received little formal education, but his father kept him well supplied with books and prints of great painting. He was a great student at the royal Academy (1779). He was also influenced by the Old Testament and John Milton. He saw the prophet Ezekiel in a field, and saw the fall of Bastille as a great symbol of a nation. Suffering from being a solitary prophet, he saw visions as some titles of his works indicate. Among his famous collections of poetry are: "Songs of Experience", "Songs of Innocence" and "The marriage of Heaven and Hell". Jebran Khalil: (1887-1931) is a Lebanese poet and story writer. He is one of the prominent Arab poets who has been affected by the English romantic poet W. Blake. He was influenced by the Bible, and read for many Arab classic poets and non- Arab ones such as Al-Marre, Ibn - Al Farid, W. Blake and Whitman. In reading the human and Arab cultural tradition, he indulges in the spiritual experience rather than the materialistic one. As Al-Ghazali, Blake and Netziche , he goes a way from philosophy to a high mystical thinking at last.

He emigrated to America (1894)and issued "Al -Arwah Al-mutamarrida" (1908) in New York. He wrote stories as well as poetic prose. Al-Mawakib (The parades) is considered one of his prominent rhythmical poems whereas some writers consider him a reformer as well as a preacher.3

- It is interesting to mention first that Jebran presents an effective meaning of nature through seeing, hearing and feeling. He presents not only a physical world but a world which gives a source of joy.4 In other sense, he comes to operate of those faculties in man through imagination which represents a visionary state .

Blake's poem 'The Lamb' holds the idea of innocence which means innocence of children and lambs. It is a vision of a world of love in which God can be found in peaceful men and women. It rather reveals delight and freedom in natural life.' The Lamb', as Blake

sees, gets a clothing not just of wool but of light. Blake actually introduces a pleasing description of it together with a child's affection for it. 5

**He jumps all over, who are you?**

**You are jumping too**

(Songs of Innocence)

Therefore, each one of them creates his suggestive symbol out of nature. The 'flute' by Jebran represents a joyful space and symbolizes the purity of the forest that he creates through a world of mystical happiness and singing, whereas Blake's lamb, which has been taken from Blake's collection 'Songs of innocence,' represents both child and lamb, two attributes of God that are His Incarnation and His Passion : 6

**Little Lamb, God bless thee**

**Little Lamb, God bless thee**

Jebran's poem which is taken from his poem 'Al-Mawakib, is full of genuineness, particularly when he emphatically repeats the term "singing": 7

أعطني الناي و غنّ  
فالغنا نار ونور

Blake's symbol of the lamb reflects awareness of the Creator whereas Jebran presents the universe that represents the spiritual creator:

ليتني مثلك روحا في فضا الوادي أطير  
اشرب النور مداماً في كؤوس من أثير

Blake's lamb is obviously an innocent child who reveals the poet's pure understanding of God. Then, both child and lamb are called by God's name. That means God who made the lamb is called a lamb too. 8

**Which are most God-like. we  
can have mostly remember .**

Both poets, then, share the view of human soul, which is liberated from its slavery, and the idea through their symbols that life will be triumphant over death:

تعالى إن رب الحب يدعونا إلى الغاب  
لكي يمزجنا كالماء والخمرة في كأس  
ويغدو النور جلبابك في الغاب جلبابي  
فكم نصغي إلى الناس ونعصي خالق الناس

On the other hand, Jebran's effective symbol 'the flute' is religiously based on "blowing" which reminds us of two opposed verses used in the Holy Quran. They are both linked with creation as follows": 9

"أني أخلق لكم من الطين كهيئة الطير فأنفخ فيه فيكون طيراً" (آل عمران، ص 56).

This holy verse refers to birth which means life, whereas in the second verse refers to doomsday:

"ونفخ في الصور فجمعناهم جمعاً"

The term 'blowing' then refers to sacred voice, because Jebran knows that the voice of the flute nourishes the mind. It is like praying even after death, and represents, at the same time, simplicity of country life. The poet focuses as a symbol on the spirit where "spirits meet to form one pure and effective melody" 10.

وأنين الناي يبقى بعد أن يفنى الوجود

In addition, Blake personifies successfully imagination, which is God-like when he sees 'through the eye' not 'with the eye'. Both poets, thus, devote clearly themselves to express their mystical faith and visions of a heavenly world when they modify the imaginative and the irrational to a powerful human awareness that develops the social and political attitude. In nearly the same understanding, both poets, Blake and Jebran, agree with Shelley that 'the great instrument of morals is the imagination itself. 11

أعطني الناي و غنّ و انس ظلم الأقوياء  
إنما الزنبق كأس للندى لا للدماء

Therefore, Jebran says of immortality:

يا نفس إن قال الجهول الروح كالجسم تزول  
قولي له إن الزهور تمضي ولكن البذور  
تبقى وذا كنه الوجود

Clearly the two poets share also other literary devices when they develop metaphorically the growth of their images to express love of peace, purity of nature, and singing rather than war and hatred:

**The sword he sang a song of death,  
But could not make the sickle yield.**

Moreover, Jebran joins the abstract with the concrete in an ideal world to appreciate eternity, and uses some dual terms in his poems such as: fire and light, life and death etc. 12

أعطني الناي و غنّ فالغاسر الخلود

It is also necessary to mention here that Blake and Jebran suffered a lot through their lives; Blake feels of being solitary prophet whereas Jebran frequently feels of nostalgia and worry 13:

لست في الشرق ولا الغرب ولا في جنوب أو شمال

One important point to be added here that the term Jebranism appreciates man's inner power against weakness and the church not against Jesus. Jebran succeeded to combine two heritages and achieved fame in widely different cultures as well.

We conclude , up to this analogy, that both poets tried to create spiritual freedom of man whose spirit will mostly be immortal and endeavored to find out their own prophetic voice through "innocence and singing" 'which are religiously based on using their two suggestive symbols; lamb and flute. If Blake is based upon the vision of every thing in its right relationship, Gebran portrays well and respects this case: God with mankind and the creation, and the protector with the protected as Watson says.14

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

There are no conflicts of interest

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