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Description of Human Features and Feelings through Flora in English Poetry

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Abstract: *In literature, especially in poetry, it is very widespread to express joys, sorrows, and ideas of human beings and their lives. Describing them by using flora in an attempt to broaden the readers' imagination and kindle their interest is talent that poets can manage. Flowers are mainly associated with romance, love, temptation, eternity and femininity in a variety of way in poems, especially flowers such as roses. The main purpose of this article is to reveal the theme of plants which express attitudes towards love and life in the works of poets such as William Blake, William Wordsworth, Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, William Butler Yeats and Anne Riddler. This article intends to find out exquisite applications of flowers in English poetry and analyze explicitly the symbols they carried.*

Keywords: Flowers, flora, floral imagery, poetic texts, comparison, analysis, love, life, iris.

Introduction

Poetry interprets life, surrounding nature, human feelings and many other things that exists in our world. While describing those notions poets masterly use different means among which plants and flowers can stand out for their effectiveness to create literary image. English poets made successful use of flora to depict life and love in their poems. Flowers and plants have been the main source of inspiration for

poets and writers for centuries and often used as metaphors to convey meaning and emotions. The sheer variety of their color, shape and beauty offers authors diversity of choice to depict human features in a striking literal way so that it can be used to create vivid images for the readers, raising their emotional and aesthetic upheaval. There are many flowers with many different meanings in many distinct contexts in which specific flowers can be used to evoke particular meaning. For centuries, flowers have been holding an integral place in English Literature as an explicit indicator of love, affection, happiness and feminine beauty. Specific meanings behind their natural peculiarities has long been glorified by many poets regardless of cultures and such a tradition is being continued in today's poetry. It is considered to be one of the most effective ways to conduct precise and hidden perspectives of the author by which he or she manages to make the literal works appeal to directly to the senses of listeners or readers, sharpening their imagination to comprehend what is being communicated to them.

Main part

The description of attitudes towards human life can be observed in the poem "A catch for singing" by Wilfrid Wilson Gibson. The poet clearly shows how pessimist sees the world in grey colours and always thinks negatively about his age and decaying life

while positive person replies with the same answer as "The cherry tree is in flourish."

Said the Old Young Man to the Young Old Man—
Both flower and fruit decay.

Said the Young Old Man to the Old Young Man—
The cherry tree is in flourish.[11]

This couplet would arouse some thoughts about two characters of this poem, who demonstrate that development and age are not just a matter of physical states, but states of mental being. The first character means that the world is becoming old by saying fruits and flowers decay. He tries to insist that every person how young might be (flower or fruit) will grow old. Vice versa, second character who could cope with the normal stresses of life in contrast with physical being that is pertaining to body as a material organism shows flourishing cherry tree as a bright life ahead of them. To some extent, cherry tree can be a symbol of positive mindness of people.

Folk poem by the William Butler Yeats named 'Down by the Salley Gardens' is often described as a song that recounts a sad or tragic personal or communal life.

Down by the salley gardens my love and I did meet;
She passed the salley gardens with little snow-white feet.

She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree:

But I, being young and foolish, with her would not agree.[10]

In this poem salley gardens simply means willow gardens, all happens there. As we know willow symbolise moaning, affliction for love and that's why forsaken lovers are represented wearing willow wreath by early poets.[8] The speaker is an older man looking back on his younger and "foolish" self. The refrain at the end of each stanza evokes the sadness of a man who has lost love because he could not match his ambition with his lover's view of life. She tries to give her lover to let love happen naturally – "as the leaves grow on the tree". This

stanza ends with the speaker's rejection of his lover's advice to "take love easy". It is clear that shoots can be a tree naturally over the years. It means that love can not be forced or hastened but only should develop in natural pace.

In a field by the river my love and I did stand,

And on my leaning shoulder she laid her snow-white hand.

She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs;

But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears.[10]

In addition, second stanza ends with the finality of the full realization of what he has lost through his stubborn rejection of his lover's view of life. To enjoy the slow unfolding of life "as the grass grows on the weirs" is a powerful image of nature and symbolically represent the virtues of a person attuned to nature rather than the ambition that the speaker now recognizes as his greatest mistake. It can be seen that this poem is about memory and loss and heart-burning realization of a life-changing missed opportunity. It is brought out understandably by comparing love to the process "the leaves grow on the tree" and life to the process "grass grows on the weirs".

The theme of love and life can also be observed in the work "A Matter of Life and Death" by Anne Riddler who is the representative of contemporary English poetry. The losses and gains that she experienced reflected on her poems as well. The poetess states "It's a poem about change, from not being to being, from infancy to maturity. That's why I called it *The Matter of Life and Death*" [12]

I did not see the iris move,

I did not feel the unfurling of my love.[10]

In this poem, author wanted to state his feelings of love in comparison with iris which comes in many forms, shapes, colours and meanings and named after the goddess of love because of the numerous colours it is available in. With striking beauty, it is compared

with appearance of love described like unfurling. Iris did not flourish, as the poet could not see any sparks of love inside of him. Apart from this, irises can convey deep sentiments including faith, hope, courage and admiration. It is highly possible that the poet wanted to say she had no faith to love somebody. It can also be interpreted as writing about human life since in the next lines author describes the process how the flower develops from the first leaf to the blossom which also can resemble life itself.

Discussion

William Blake was the first English poet to work out the revolutionary structure of imagery that signifies through the romantic poetry. He was renowned by the admirers of poetry for its subtle and delicate language and for his unmatched ability in dealing with metaphors to deliver his intended meaning. One aspect of such metaphor can be seen as an example of flowers in his verses. One of his famous poems is called “How sweet I roamed from field to field” in which he elaborately used flowers : lilies and roses in order to depict emotional condition of the speaker of the poem:

*He shew'd me lilies for my hair,
And blushing roses for my brow;
He led me through his garden fair,
Where all his golden pleasures grow.*

The roses in the lines are said to be “blushing”, a reference to their color and to the way hero is making the speaker feel. Without restricting with simply getting floral photography, a creative mind of the poet try to create beautiful poetry. In just a few powerful words, he is capable of grabbing his readers’ attention, invigorating their senses, whisking them away to that endless flower field or basking in the sun with their hands in the garden. There is just something so intimate about letting imaginations run freely after diving into a poem which can easily noticed during the poem.

When it comes to is “My pretty rose tree”, the flower and the rose tree symbolize a feminine figure. The poetic voice could be interpreted as a man who is a flower “as may never bore”, but he rejects her because he already has a “pretty rose tree”, a rose tree that may be presumed to be loved more than anything else. In the second stanza, the poetic voice tells the female figure of the “Pretty rose tree” about the incident described in the first stanza, but she apparently becomes jealous and leaves him “But my Rose turned away with jealousy, And her thorns were my only delight”. Such an ending may not be expected after the first stanza, where he chooses his “Pretty Rose tree” rather than the flower which was offered to him. It could be argued ten, that the poem goes from a seemingly happy ending to a tragic poem about the abandoned love. It can be best prominent example of symbolism of the flowers in the poem.

Another popular poem with its literary devices by William Wordsworth is called “Lines written in the early spring”. It is a comparison of the state of nature to the state of the mankind. “And this my faith that every flower enjoys the air it breathes”. He is giving a flower the human characteristics of enjoying the air it breathes. Another personification in this poem is when Wordsworth writes: “the budding twigs spread out their fan, To catch the breezy air”. In this verse he is giving budding twigs the human characteristic of spreading out to catch breezy air.

Utilization of flora can also be seen in the poems of John Keats, here we took a glance at his works and try to guess what the author implied by the images of botany.

“Let us commence

*Wisper'd the guide, stuttering with joy, even now.”
He spake, and, trembling like an aspen-bough,
Began to tear his scroll in the pieces small,
Uttering the while some mumblings funeral*

These lines were taken from *Endymion* where the author wanted to demonstrate the shivering state of the guide, with the help of natural image. Naturally, aspen tree is distinguished from other representatives of nature with its tendency to shake its leaves when the wind blows. Similarly, in these lines, the guide was trembling because of the joy. Noticeably, the author employed the natural tendency, to bring the character into the life, encouraging readers' imagination. Besides, comparing human tremble with the movement of branch of aspen tree adds some stylistic color to the poem. In other words, simply the word trembling would not have conveyed emotion. In the book III of this poem, Endymion recalls his days with Cynthia:

Her soft arms were entwining me, and on

Her voice I hung like fruit among green leaves:

*Her lips were all my own, and –ah, ripe sheaves
Of happiness!*

Endymion's love towards Cynthia was unconditional. He was pity on dying alone. But then he remembered that he was not alone. He had Cynthia. Only some days ago she was with him. Her hands were embracing him. Her voice was so beautiful that, all he could do was just hanging loosely like fruit! This is why the author made use of this simile. He did not just mention the phrase "*fruit among leaves*" but he specially indicated "*green leaves*". It can symbolize life, joy and love. The evidence is in the following line: "*ripe sheaves Of happiness!*" We can infer that with her Endymion is alive like "*like fruit among green leaves*".

Conclusion

In conclusion one can say that the interpretation of life and love by flora is special in English poetry of the twenties century. It can be seen that some flowers received a set of positive and collective values such as attractiveness and directness - the importance of life and love, as the embodied and relational nature of the flowers enables people to describe personalities on them. During the investigation, it has

been clearly seen that English poetry flourished in terms of employing flora as a specific indicator of human features. And this branch of literature needs to be further researched to discover new tasks of flowers and plants.

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