



IRAQI  
Academic Scientific Journals



العراقية  
المجلات الأكاديمية العلمية

ISSN: 2663-9033 (Online) | ISSN: 2616-6224 (Print)

**Journal of Language Studies**

Contents available at: <https://jls.tu.edu.iq/index.php/JLS>



## A Comparative Analysis of the Concepts of War in the Poetry of Thomas Hardy and Abdullah Pashew

**Assist. lecturer. Roshna Ahmed Muhamad\***

English department /College of Education/ university of Garmian/Kurdistan

[roshna.ahmed@garmian.edu.krd](mailto:roshna.ahmed@garmian.edu.krd)

Received: 1 /2 / 2024, Accepted:3 / 3 / 2024, Online Published: 31/ 3 / 2024

### ABSTRACT

Twentieth century witnessed marvelous uprisings and revolutions, besides the two world wars. This continuous unrest led some British poets to portray the real scenes and what they really observed and felt toward wars and they started questioning, protesting and, sometimes, celebrating the nature and purpose of the conflicts. Both of Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) and Abdulla Pashew (b.1946-present) expressed the struggle between human beings and they ennoble wars for their legitimate impulsions, and at the same time, they deprecate the spurious pretexts to provoke wars.

Hardy, due to the First World War, tried to depict the reality of the war that either glorifies or ruins the mankind in most of the times, while Pashew shows glorification of wars against the dictatorship as a defense for his homeland (Kurdistan) in one side, and he also condemns it when the blameworthy civil war happened during nineties among his

\* **Corresponding Author:** Roshna Ahmed, Email: [roshna.ahmed@garmian.edu.krd](mailto:roshna.ahmed@garmian.edu.krd)

**Affiliation:** Garmian University - Iraq

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nation in the other side. So, both denounce and venerate wars depending on certain reasons and vindications. The study aims at examining the poems in a comparative way to show the differences and the similarities between the two nations understandings about the case of dealing with wars long ago and even the recent times. The paper is divided into two main parts each to show the concepts of war first with the British poet Thomas Hardy in his selected poems (“The man He killed”, “Christmas 1924” , “The Drummer Hodge” , “A wife in London”) . The other main part is to show the concept of war with the Kurdish poet and his selected poems (“The Lost Solider”, “The Unseen”, “I do not Understand”, “Two Faced or Sided”), then the paper ends up with the conclusions that are the findings of the study to illustrate more precisely on the major outcomes been found during the study.

**Key Words:** British, Kurdish, Destruction. Warfare. Sufferings. History.

تحليل مقارن لمفاهيم الحرب في شعر توماس هاردي وعبد الله به شيو

م.م. روشنا احمد محمد

جامعة كرميان

### المستخلص

شهد القرن العشرين انتفاضات وثورات رائعة، إلى جانب الحربين العالميتين. دفعت هذه الاضطرابات المستمرة بعض الشعراء البريطانيين إلى تصوير المشاهد الحقيقية وما لاحظوه وشعروا به حقًا تجاه الحروب، وبدأوا في التساؤل والاحتجاج، وأحيانًا الاحتفال بطبيعة الصراعات والغرض منها. لقد عبّر كل من توماس هاردي (1840-1928) وعبد الله باشو (مواليد 1946 إلى الوقت الحاضر) عن الصراع بين البشر، وهما يعظمان الحروب لدوافعها المشروعة، وفي الوقت نفسه يستنكران الذرائع الزائفة لإثارة الحروب.

حاول هاردي بسبب الحرب العالمية الأولى تصوير حقيقة الحرب التي تمجد البشرية أو تدمرها في أغلب الأحيان، بينما يظهر باشو تمجيد الحروب ضد الدكتاتورية كدفاع عن وطنه (كردستان) في جانب واحد. . كما يستنكرها عندما وقعت الحرب الأهلية المذمومة في التسعينات بين أمته في الجانب الآخر. لذا، فإن كلاهما يدين الحروب ويقدها بناء على أسباب ومبررات معينة. تهدف

الدراسة إلى دراسة القصائد بشكل مقارن لبيان أوجه الاختلاف والتشابه بين الأمتين محاولاً فهم حالة التعامل مع الحروب منذ زمن طويل وحتى في الآونة الأخيرة.

ينقسم البحث إلى قسمين رئيسيين يعرض كل منهما مفاهيم الحرب أولاً مع الشاعر البريطاني توماس هاردي في أشعاره المختارة "الرجل الذي قتله"، "عيد الميلاد عام 1924"، "الطبال هودج"، و"زوجة في لندن". أما الجزء الرئيسي الآخر فهو عرض مفهوم الحرب مع الشاعر الكردي وقصائده المختارة "الجندي الضائع" و"الغيب" و"لا أفهم" و"وجهان أو وجهان". ثم تنتهي الورقة بالاستنتاجات التي هي النتائج التي توصلت إليها الدراسة لتوضيح أكثر دقة لأهم النتائج التي تم التوصل إليها خلال الدراسة.

**الكلمات الدالة:** بريطاني، كردي، دمار. الحرب. معاناة. تاريخ.

## INTRODUCTION

War under different historical conditions can be a means for different types of perspectives. Thus certain communities will have different voices leading to different genres providing people with a frame work for understanding the complex dynamics in order to explore different reasons, consequences and ethical considerations of the war concept.

Thomas Hardy was a great novelist as well as being a poet; he himself said that his talents were all sprung in his poetry although he wrote twenty five novel works too. There are a lot of silent features in his poetry such as religion, nature and love but he was also known as a war poet thus it is necessary to study the biographical aspects of Thomas Hardy's life because he observed a number of wars as well as he felt the real pain and bad consequences that may a war leave on people. Hardy was a deeply reflective man (Millgate, 2022: 3).

He had reached a full consciousness about wars through his wide and minute observations, although he was not confessing his feelings directly unless through his poetry, for him the mission of poetry was to record impressions not convictions, but Hardy was very good at recording any event that was happening around him he was not neglecting any important ones, so was the case with the wars, the poems that are chosen

ones in this study are; Christmas 1924, The man he killed, A wife in London and The Drummer Hodge (Williams, 2019: 5).

Thomas Hardy was born at Upper Bockhampton, on second June 1840. Great experiences first go back to his parents and their rural backgrounds, then his trails to study Greek by himself although he had great encouragements in hand starting with John Hicks, William Barnes and Horace Moule, and his great chance that is overly mentioned like a gift from the world of literature for him is that he lived and experienced two ages one finishing( the victorian age) and the other still to come (the modern age) again flourishing with chances of double missions in his messages (Diniejko 1997: 71, 99).

Hardy's three collections of poetry, mostly about his homeland and great events in his life concerning marriages, loss of loved persons and the Wars especially well flourished in his short poems giving him a feeling of pessimism and tranquility. He visited German and English wounded soldiers from the World War 1 battle field and affected him very deeply, felt the brutality and the cruelty of the War and how mankind are living in a continuous loss of individuals while they do not feel their real status, they live in a disaster.

Hardy's death (11<sup>th</sup> January 1928) was felt as a loss, not only of a unique figure in literature because of his age and eminence, but also as a snapping of the last link with the nineteenth century, and he was mourned as "the last of the great Victorians".

The same case with the Kurdish poet Abdullah Pashew he was born in a district nearby Erbil-Kurdistan, lived and seen the most civil wars that happened within his nation, caused him to leave the country and live in exile, but still he was able to share the consequences through his poetry . (Vilasini & Paul, 2018: 39)

He believed in the power of the Art and literature to convey the real life of people in mean times perceiving the sorrow and the grief for his nation and the whole world's catastrophe. According to Pashew "The poet is more than a poet in Kurdistan." Which means that Kurdish poets are the poets of the people who writes for the society and the political administration but not for themselves. (Vilasini & Paul, 2018: 42)

His themes contain all about the beauty of Kurdistan nature and the problem of the classes among his society especially after the different sequences of uprisings of the Kurdish people to different countries such as Iran and Syria even though it ended with the case of the sever civil war among the Kurdish people, and this notion gave the poet a deep feeling of sorrow towards the brotherhood of the parties in Kurdistan. (Ali, 2019: 159)

### **THE CONCEPT OF WAR in HARDY'S POETRY**

Hardy's life span of eighty-eight years had witnessed so many major conflicts, he personally knew those men who participated and fought at Waterloo, at Inkerman, at Sedan and at Passchendaele. He also served as a drummer boy in the Crimean War thus covers the concept of war from a philosophical perspective and as a real observer in the World War 1 and the Boer War; the result gave him a real experience. Altogether with his fellow poets like Wilfred Owen, Robert Graves, Richard Aldington, Wilfred Gibson and Siegfried Sassoon; he is to be called a war poet (McCourt, 2021: 231,234).

Hardy lived too close to the events and knew about the agony of war and it is destruction of the individuals in a welter of blood or slaughtering. Hardy was consistent, he left no event to pass him thus he wanted his poetry to be as a hope finder for the mankind in his pessimism and agony that human being are living in because Hardy was feeling very sad about everything even the small creatures around him, with having such an inspiration the outburst was great pieces of poetry at the wright time of any event that is why his war poems are called topical ones.

Hardy wrote "The Man He killed" to express the struggle between human beings especially in those poems that were inspired by the Boer War in the end of the nineteenth century and World War 1 in the twentieth century, he rejected the nationalism often occurred during the war time focusing on the reality of the war that is ruining the mankind in a way that even they rarely know that the war is destructive and therefore is not promising any hope (Dowling, 2017: 17):

Had he and I but met  
By some old ancient inn,

We should have set us down to wet  
Right many a nipperkin!

Yes; quaint and curious war is!  
You shoot a fellow down  
You'd treat, if met  
where any bar is,

Or help to half a crown. "The man He killed 1902" (Ibid)

Hardy wrote this poem in 1902, the year that the Second Boer War ended. He explores the issue of the ordinary man plunged into the irrational situation of war. This poem is written as if it were a conversation, or at least, one half of a conversation. This puts us, the readers, into the position of the person the soldier is talking to and makes his side of the conversation very immediate. It's being spoken directly to us.

The structure is a sawn-off syllogism. The first quatrain starts 'If'; the second "But". But where is the solution? If there is one, it's 'Yes; quaint and curious war is!' In other words, what is the point? You kill a man who, in any other situation, you would have offered a drink to. In the last quatrain, 'war is' is rhymed, ironically, with 'bar is'. The first quatrain dwells on the fact that the two of them would have had a drink together if they'd met by an inn. The second states baldly that 'I shot at him as he at me' (Bennett, 2018: 31). The last quatrain shares the brutality of war (first two lines) with friendly drink together (in the last two lines).

Hardy expresses a similar view of warfare in "Christmas 1924" here attempting the idea of the Christian religion, Hardy deals with its disillusionment even at the foundation of the church; showing that Christ is not meeting the fulfillment of the mass in the modern world:

"Peace upon earth!" was said. We sing it,  
And pay a million priests to bring it.  
After two thousand years of mass

We've got as far as poison-gas "Christmas 1924" (Ibid)

This very short poem talks about the disillusionment followed by the World War 1. The world failed to progress over the course of Christian era, but has in fact become more and more violent and developing newer and fouler weapons of warfare.

Another poem about warfare in his poetry in which is the most famous one is "The Drummer Hodge" it was published in 1899; Hodge is granted a name and an identity far from being an anonymous soldier, he has no conventional burial ceremony such as he would have had at home. Hodge becomes a part of a foreign land that in which he stayed not so long in but now he lies forever there and the night stars are shining over him (Mcarthur, 1989: 41):

They throw in Drummer Hodge, to rest  
Uncoffined- just as he found:  
His landmark is a Kopje- crest  
Will Hodge forever be;  
His homely Northern breast and brain  
Grow to some southern tree,  
And strange-eyed constellations reign  
His stars eternally. "The Drummer Hodge 1899" (Ibid)

Hardy wrote this poem when he heard that a Dorchester boy reported killed in the Boer War, he felt sympathy for him thus he created this not entirely fictional character. Hardy believed in the idea that the body of the unconfined boy will be reincarnated in trees and flowers where he was left unburied.

Continuing talking about the destructions of the war Hardy goes to those persons who are left waiting for their sons, father, husband, memories or any one from the family who are participating in the war and how they are going to feel and face the loss and the pain of that agony and grief, covering such feelings of coldness over beloved persons is very clear in:

She sits in the tawny vapour

That the Thames-side lanes have uprolled,  
Behind whose webby fold-onfold  
Page full of his hoped return,  
And of home-planned- jaunts of brake  
and burn  
In the summer weather,  
And of new love that they would learn. "A Wife in London 1899" (prost, 2018. P, 45)

This poem portrays simply the frailty of human being. No matter how much confident a person may be tomorrow is never granted. In a moment death can snatch a person leaving others to mourn in their absence. This woman is waiting for her husband to come back and he also was in a hope to go back and live a lovely summer with his wife but suddenly everything destroyed with a bullet light and all which was remained of him was a letter written by his own hands few moments before his death.

### **THE CONCEPT OF WAR in ABDULLAH PASHEW's POETRY**

Abdullah Pashew was born and raised in Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan. However, at a young age he moved to the former Soviet Union in pursuit of further studies, thus starting his life long journey through exile as he would live in various places through his life time such as Libya, and Finland where he still resides to this day.

Pashew's poems are short and to the point, and are often critical of corrupt internal and external forces that have come in the way of establishing a Kurdish nation state. (Pashabadi, 2020: 155). His poetry is full of chosen words to mean those intentions to fit the current case of the people before and now, besides he uses the philosophical language with the historical incidents to picture an idea perfectly with a daily used language of the people to give chance to everyone to understand his art. In his poetry collection (There passes not a single night without dreaming about you) in a poem "The Lost Solider1978", he describes the holiness of the Kurdistan land saying that if any one (a president of the other countries) comes to this land searching for a grave to put a wreath. He could put it



everywhere because every piece of this land had faced difficulties and sacrificed for its freedom:

When a delegation travels somewhere  
To visit my grave of a missing soldier  
They bring a wreath  
If a delegation visits my country  
Asking about missing peshmerga grave  
I reply sir on the banks of every stream  
On the floor of any mosque  
At the door of any house, church, or cave  
On the top of each mountain's boulder  
Beside every tree in this home land  
On each tract of land  
Under every inch of the sky  
Do not be afraid to bow your head a little and lay your wreath  
"The Lost Soldier1978" (Abdullah 2016. P, 90)

Pashew's famous works mostly include poetry collections: "There passes not a single night and am not Angry of You1972", "There passes not a single night and am not Dreaming about You1976", "The Diaries of a Thirst Poet 1969", "The Beginning of the Civil War 1993", "A broken Idol 1968", "Twelve Lessons for Children 1970", "Tears and Wounds 1968", "Planting Lightening's 1991". Till now he is portraying every action about his nation concerning the bad deeds of the different parties and blames them for the misfortune of the Kurdish nation, and never thought to be away from them due to his different reactions. (Abdullah, 2016:,93)

He participated with the peshmerga (Kurdish soldiers) against the attacks of the Iraqi regime (first with regime of Abdull Kareem Qasim in 1958-1963, then with Sadam Hussien regime in 1975) towards the Kurdish nation to deprive them from their normal life and freedom. Thus the Kurds and the poets stayed in a continues state of struggling for their rights throughout the long history, and those times were the most difficult experiences for the poet to portray as lively as possible poems ever in his career by using

political expressions very bravely to go against the demand of the Iraqi regime. Although he was not alone in this case other poets like ( Bekas, Goran, Hemin, Hardi, Dillan, Dildar, lateef Halmat, Anwar Gadir, and the last but not the least is Pashew) were active characters to write about the real life time and being of the nation. (Ali, 2019: 158)

Those attacks were more outer factors for Pashew to make him feel agony for the nation but the most affecting was the civil war between the brotherhood of the Kurdish parties within the nation itself overall the Kurds have had a very difficult life so it is not necessary to break the oath of staying together . Since the parties left their path and destroyed the future of the Kurds as a whole leading to the death of almost all the people and forcing them to hang out with difficult life conditions so Pashew uses the harsh language to address the parties for the misleading of the nation, although caused him different criticism on his poetry but he did not stop attacking as the most popular Kurdish living poet. From his collection “The Beginning of the Civil War 1993”:

I have come back from the unseen  
Come to tell you that  
This country is never going to be  
Without the sound of hoof prints  
Without the sound of boots  
Until if you are the bridge  
We are slaves, will stay slaves

Until pickpockets and thieves are the leaders “The Unseen 1993” (Abdullah, 2016. P, 91)

Examining the poetic language of this poem, it is clear that the poet is feeling very upset and he is not feeling very well psychologically for his homeland, he quotes that “I blame every one, for sake of our unity and freedom”. He is not binding himself to any ideology unless the crucial rights of the nation, people have to reflect carefully towards the historical changes to be able to overcome the obstacles on the way of being one united nation, the nation have not to depend on the thieves and the cheaters to lead them instead they should define their own future, unless they are going to lose their long and

suffering history ever, he concludes the poem by a kind of advice for the people. (Omer, 2019: 220)

In another poem Pashew declares for the real meaning of the fact behind the civil war and the waste of time that people investigated the loss they faced, the poem is from Pashew's collection called "Planting the Lightning 1991" Agonizing the years of struggling that had been gained by force and torture, but some forces are destroying the truth and making the soldiers to forget their bloody past:

Truth is like a butterfly,  
Want to see;  
Light the lantern.  
You are a slave, how you could change  
Thousands of curses  
Be upon you and your oldest brother  
A peshmarga is a soldier  
To his brothers refuge  
Will point his gun?  
You know who you have killed  
What was he, was a peshmerga

Was the supporter of the road."Ido not understand 1983" (Ghafaree, 2002. P, 142).

Here he is addressing the importance of the Kurdish soldiers (peshmerga) during the years of hanging out in different conditions to illustrate a destiny for their people depending on their past experiences. Pashew is asking those questions surprisingly, how could a peshmerga kill his brother, why, and for what? He is wishing for their unity, because all peshmerga are from the poor families and sharing the same destiny. (Ghafaree, 2002: 139). Again in this unique piece he illustrates the civil war in a very painful way concerning the use of guns, pistols and bullets by the brothers within the same nation against each other. (Abdullah, 2016: 159)

Pashew's poems are easy to understand but not sometimes to give the same exact meaning that he wants from the first reading or the surface. From his collection "Planting the lightning 1991". Pashew's irony is illustrated to picture the poem as a conversation

between himself and somebody else thus to create a story via to tell his people that it is no longer time to kill each other. (Azeez, 2006: 223,224)

In the night I saw in my dream  
The grave of the haji (pilgrimage)  
I bowed down  
Kneeled for him  
And said oh Haji, we are worried  
He lowered his head  
Put his hand on his heart

And said! "be a wiseman bring me back to live"

I said: "My lord I am not Jesus, how can I do it, say?"

He said: "bring me out of here, and burry being two faced in my place" "Two Faced 1978" (Abdullah, 2016)

In this poem he uses symbolism and the dramatic irony to make his feelings stronger, a religious symbol like Jesus Christ gives the idea that he can bring back people to life again, to mean a way to save people from injustice, and the symbol of other Kurdish poets like (Haji Qadri Koye) who was long ago a symbol of nationalism and eager to prove a change with this deadly disease of the nation in which they are against each other.

War is not only changing the political and economic relationships within the nation but also can change the literary language and the portrayal of warfare. This can happen to different nations similarly as with British and Kurdish at the same time because each had faced different historical wars lead the countries to destruction and remorse and made both Hardy and Pashew to have their own reactions according to their experiences in the real war circumstances.

## **CONCLUSION**

Literature is a way to express any feeling towards historical changes during the life time of the poets; it is a means of making progress in the social changes in future for different sgenerations. War or historical events could be taken as powerful themes by the poets to interchange the sense of nationalism and the sacrifice for the nations ever.

Haedy and Pashew are not just portraying war as the basic factors to destroy the human race physically and mentally, but also clarify that there is not any suitable compensations for people's sorrow and grief. At the end war is understood to be destructive and indifference.

The Kurdish people throughout their long history there must have been an obstacle which made them face oppressions each time. Although the Kurdish and British cultures and identities are very different but the warfare outcomes are of the same destructive causes for the nation's progress and wellbeing. Thus with different use of style and terminology both Pashew and Hardy tried to compose pieces of sad poems to show the bad side of the world wars and the civil wars.

Both Pashew and Hardy are showing the picture of sacrifice the same way in their poems "The lost Soldier" and "Drummer Hodge", reasoning the same cause to participate in the wars and to be left behind even after the bloody moments before the death of a Kurdish or British soldier. Along with this similarity, even differences could appear because these two nations are quite different from each other in their environment, culture, and historical dimensions.

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