

The Image of the Moon as Reflected in the Poetry of Faeq Bekas and Sir Philip Sidney: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to shed light on the poetic imagery which has been the concern of many poets; the image of the moon, this time in the viewpoints of two poets who are completely different in era and culture, but similar in their attitudes towards love and their sufferings from the consequences of love. The most important findings of the research might be the relationship between these two poems in ideas because both of them talk about sickness, sadness, loneliness, pale face, broken heart, rejecting love, homelessness, and hopelessness which can be seen in the poems clearly. Both use the same technique of questioning in their poems which are serious questions to the moon due to her experience. □

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Key words: poetry, image, comparative study, English literature, Kurdish literature □

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Introduction

This research paper is a comparative study of the image of the Moon in Philip Sidney's "To the Sad Moon" and Faeq Bekas's "Ey Mang" (O Moon). The researchers aim at giving some information about two poets, two poems, two different cultures, and especially about the moon which reflects the poets' feelings. The researchers introduce the two poets and analyze their two poems mentioned above. Sir Philip Sidney is a famous English poet in the Renaissance Era. Bekas is a famous Kurdish poet who belongs to the Kurdish Romantic Era. The researchers briefly discuss Sidney's biography, his major works, a short introduction to "Astrophil and Stella", and namely sonnet 31 "To the Sad Moon", an analysis of the poem, and its language. The researchers follow the same procedure in dealing with Faeq Bekas and his poem "Ey Mang" (O Moon). Then the researchers compare between the two poems in terms of the titles, the forms, the language, the themes, and the techniques of questioning the moon.

The paper is followed by a conclusion in which the researchers highlight the major findings of their work. The research paper ends with a list of the works cited.□

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Sir Philip Sidney

The English poet, courtier, diplomat, and soldier Philip Sidney was born at Penshurst, in Kent, on the 29th of November, 1554. Philip was the eldest of a family of three sons and four daughters (Stewart 1). When Sidney was not yet twenty-three years old, he was sent as ambassador to the German Emperor and the Prince of Orange. Upon his return, Sidney attended the court of Elizabeth I. He was also a patron of the arts, actively encouraging such authors as Edward Dyer, Greville, and most importantly, the young poet Edmund Spenser, who dedicated *The Shepherd's Calendar* to him. In 1580, he wrote the long rural romance *Arcadia* (Hamilton 14). While Sidney's career as courtier ran smoothly, he was growing restless with lack of appointments. Elizabeth instead called Sidney to court, and appointed him governor of Flushing in the Netherlands (Wallace 260).

The Lady of May is one of Sidney's less-known works, a masque written and performed for Queen Elizabeth in 1578 or 1579. "*Astrophil and Stella*" is the first famous English sonnet sequence; it was probably composed in the early 1580s. The sequence was a watershed in English Renaissance poetry. In it, Sidney partially imitates the key features of his Italian model, Petrarch (Vincent 29). *The Arcadia* is Sidney's most ambitious work; it was as significant in its own way as his sonnets. The work is a romance that combines pastoral elements with a mood derived from the Hellenistic model of Heliodorus. In the work, that is, a highly idealized version of the shepherd's life adjoins with stories of jousts, political treachery, kidnappings, battles, and rapes. It was published in the sixteenth century. The narrative follows the Greek model (Crossley 193). "*An Apology for Poetry*" (also known as *A Defence of Poesie* and *The Defence of Poetry*) was written before 1583. The essence of his defense is that poetry, by combining the liveliness of history with the ethical focus of philosophy, is more effective than either history or philosophy in rousing its readers to virtue.

In England, the Elizabethan era marked the beginning of the English Renaissance with the work of writers William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Edmund Spenser, Sir Thomas More, Francis Bacon, Sir Philip Sidney, John Milton, as well as great artists, architects (such as Inigo Jones who introduced Italianate architecture to England), and composers such as Thomas Tallis, John Taverner, and William Byrd (Loewenstein 199).

The Elizabethan Era was the most powerful in English history. This "golden age" represented the highest point of the English Renaissance and saw the flowering of poetry, music and literature, and theatre was a distinguishing mark of this era.

"*Astrophil and Stella*" is a sequence of sonnets by Philip Sidney. A sonnet sequence is a series of sonnets on a particular theme addressed to a particular person. The commonest theme is love and in the case of Sidney it was the love story between the poet (Sidney) and Stella. In accord with Petrarch's model it is a conflicting love, full of tenderness and bitterness, hatred and possession (Cooper 64).

Astrophil is the protagonist of the poem, a man modeled after Sir Philip Sidney. The name "Astrophil" comes from two Greek roots: "astr-," meaning "star," and "Phil-," meaning "lover." The "Phil" in the name is also a pun on Sidney's first name, Philip. Stella is the heroine of the poem and the object of Astrophil's desire. The name "Stella" comes from the Latin word meaning "star." On the one hand, the name could suggest Stella's superiority to Astrophil. As a star, Stella is a celestial being, far beyond the reach of a human being like Astrophil. On the other hand, however, as a star, Stella is just one of a million other stars in the skies. She is not unique or, perhaps, not even worthy of Astrophil's attention. Following Petrarch, Sidney composed sonnets rich with Platonic conceits. He gave his sonnets a greater unity by directing them all toward one particular lady and connecting them by a narrative thread. Calling himself Astrophil (or star-lover), he celebrates his great love for Stella. Sidney impresses his reader with the beauty of the eyes of his "star" (Cooper 65).

Sidney feels that love is very ambiguous and wants to know if the moon feels the same way. In the first line, "With how sad steps," Sidney sets the tone of sadness for the poem. His sadness turns into questioning and complaints, but always keeps a sad tone. "O Moon, thou climb'st the skies!" personifies and directs the poem towards the moon. In the next line, Sidney reveals the moon's face and says "with how wan a face", telling the reader of the "man in the moon and personifies the moon even more.

In the first stanza, Sidney introduces his problem of the huge confusion caused by love while staring up at the moon in the night sky. He thinks that the moon is rejected. He personifies the moon as a rejected lover which directly connects them. He asks the moon many questions, not to receive answers, but to get the readers participate and think. The first line sets the tone of depression and sadness for the whole poem. He asks the moon if he relates to the angry and depressive feelings that he feels about his lover who rejects him in the end.

Then he alludes to Cupid shooting lovers with arrows of love in the line, "That busy archer his sharp arrows tries?" Cupid tests lovers and sometimes makes mistakes.

He wonders if Cupid is up in the sky and is still shooting love arrows because he feels as if he is in a hard trial. Sidney refers to the moon to be somewhat like himself.

In the first quatrain, Astrophil observes "how silently" and "with how wan a face" the moon is climbing the sky. He recognizes in its pale face the same lovesickness he himself is experiencing. In lines 3 and 4, he questions whether Cupid's arrows have hit it even in a "heavenly place" (Keach 159).

In the first stanza the speaker, Astrophil, sets the scene by talking to the moon at night about his troubles and sadness. The speaker asks if Cupid, the "busy archer", can hit his arrows to the moon, relying on the old convention that his arrows make those struck fall in love. He suggests that, perhaps even in the highest point of the sky, Cupid's arrows are powerful enough to shoot the moon. Sydney is addressing the issues of love together with rejection and depression. The speaker is expressing his own emotions through the moon.

The speaker begins to ask the moon a series of questions; he is shocked and confused when he concludes that even in 'heavenly place' Cupid is still trying to create love. He may have assumed that in heaven, when close to God and His powers, love would be comfortable and current.

Jokinen argues that Sidney describes the moon's eyes as "long-with-love-acquainted" meaning that the moon has seen and watched over a vast number of lovers in its lifetime in the sky. It has been there forever and that makes him an expert in love cases. Sidney wonders if since the moon "can judge of love," if he can "feel'st a lover's case," meaning if the moon has seen many cases of love, and if he has ever felt feelings of love, or feelings of heartbrokenness, like Sidney (<http://www.luminarium.org>). Sidney says that he "read it in thy looks; thy languish'd grace," seeing the weak and feeble beauty of the moon and senses that the moon knows what he is going through.

Sidney then describes himself as losing grace in the lines "I read it in thy looks; they languish'd grace to me, that feel the like, thy state descries." He looks at the moon and wonders if the moon can be sad for him because he looks fragile too (Keach 159).

In the next quatrain, he concludes that the source of the moon's "long-with-love-acquainted eyes," may be his being lovesick ("thou feel'st a lover's case"). He recognizes its "languished grace" the same as he recognizes it in himself.

Astrophil states that the moon must be able to understand his sadness, because he has been looking down at forlorn lovers forever. The speaker projects his emotions on the moon, and compares the "grace" of the moon moving through the night sky to the moon's sympathy it must have on Astrophil. The speaker maintains that it is the moon who must want to '[decry]'. However it is obvious that it is the speaker who feels the need to make a proclamation and criticises love.

Sidney asks the moon "Is constant love deem'd there but want of wit?" This reveals Sidney's sadness. He is wondering if there is constant love, love that goes on forever with both people loving each other. Sidney says, "Are beauties there as proud as here they are?" He is asking the moon if beautiful women everywhere are as "proud" as the women he has known. He then asks, "Do they above love to be loved." Sidney is wondering if women do not actually love men sometimes, but just love being loved and being taken care of. He asks the moon if women there desire love yet scorn those that give them love, and if they call ungratefulness there a virtue. Although Diana is a perpetual virgin unaffected by love, Astrophil comes to the conclusion that Cupid's arrows were strong enough to make her love and she is therefore suffering from it (Keach 159).

In the third stanza Astrophil asks the moon if his personal situation appears any better from the moon's view in the sky. He also asks if devotion and adoration of a woman are viewed as 'unintelligence' and 'lack of wit' on the moon, as it is on Earth.

Astrophil asks if women on the moon both desire love, and yet, when it is received, throw it away, as they do on Earth. This question, along with the previous questions, give the reader an idea into the situation that Astrophil is experiencing himself, as he is not asking the moon the questions out of pure curiosity, but is asking them out of sadness and heartbreak.

In the sestet, Astrophil draws a comparison between his own position and that of the moon, in such a way as to suggest how absurdly Stella has treated him by rejecting his love assuming that the moon is in love too.

At the end of the sestet, Sidney adds a couplet. In the couplet, he poses the question if the lovers up there are also ungrateful in a relationship and only love

to be loved. Sydney concludes the poem with this series of questions and also uses a rhyming couplet in the form of 'possess' and 'ungratefulness' in order to emphasize the fidelity (Stull 3).

The fact that the moon climbs 'silently' and with a 'wan' face indicates that the speaker feels immense grief for his rejection in love. He has reached the point of desperation, which is highlighted by Sydney's continuous repetition of the word 'how' in the beginning of the poem. This prolongs the sad sound of the poem and echoes the sad mood. The exclamation mark at the end of the second line emphasizes how the speaker feels.

"Sonnet 31," as a perfect example of apostrophe (Cuddon 51), is a direct address to the moon. "O Moon" is a slow phrase; and it is the first time the moon is addressed in the poem. He personifies the moon as a lonely individual who watches over all the lovers on earth while they spend time under the moonlight together.

The alliteration in "long with Love" is very obvious, but worth noting. Somehow those sounds, mixed with others, have a very profound effect. This might be the point to count how many times love and its derivatives occur during the poem

The moon is addressed directly: thou feel'st. Those two words are extremely important, for they sum up all that the poet feels, and, speaking with his voice, expresses that the Moon feels the same. "Tell me" is a continuation of the personification of the moon, or of her "face". This is the only actual imperative in the poem, the only time the poet asks the moon to do anything. It is a request not a command.

Faeq Bekas

Faeq Bekas is the son of Abdullah beg Kaka Hama. The family came to Sulaimani from Qalachwalan. He was born in 1905 in Setak. His father was an officer in the Ottoman army. Faeq spent the first two years of his age in Setak. He caught small pocks when he was three years old. In his childhood his father put him in a religious class. In Sulaimani, Faeq entered a primary school as a third class pupil. He was clever but he left school because of poverty.

During 1930 the revolution of the sixth of September broke out against the regime and he was a leader of that revolution, he was injured and put into prison. He wrote his famous poem (my homeland I remember you ...) in jail (Ashna 15). After his release, he opened a school where he started teaching to earn his living. He died in Halabja in December 18th 1948 and was buried In Saywan hill in Sulaimani.

Romanticism in Kurdish literature strives against tyranny, classical doctrine, and resorts to love, nature, simplicity and purity in life.

One of the Kurdish romantic poets is Bekas, and Bekas's most poems were about the beauty of nature, women, patriotism and reflection. It is said that poems come to him and visit him. Though he spent a miserable life, he wrote smooth, romantic, and happy poems (Khaznadar 576).

There were many Kurdish poets who were influenced by, and contributed to the Romantic Movement, and who succeeded in constructing native Kurdish

Romantic poetry. Among them were Goran, Shaykh Nuri Shaykh Salih, Piramerd, Dlizar, Dildar, Bekas, Baxtiyar Zewar, and later Ahmad Hardi and Kamaran Mukri, all of whom developed their Romanticism in both form and content and used images from nature in a metaphorical fashion. During the romantic period the beauty of nature was the main subject for Kurdish poets. The famous poem written by Faeq Bekas is "ey mang" (O moon), where he talks to the moon which is a good example of reflection and also of the beauty of nature (Ahmad 64).

Bekas looked at the sky and began to talk to the moon very romantically. With a tender reflection, he shows his affliction, pains and troubles to the moon.

At the same time he has been the slave of lovesickness that is the result of his hopelessness and depression.

Bekas asks the moon why it is sad, it could be the same reason that makes him sad too, the poet asks the moon to help him get rid of his troubles because it can listen to him very silently and keep his secret, he talks to it about his love (Amin 52).

In the second couplet, he can see the moon's slow pace and pale face; the moon must feel too and know it from experience. Bekas notes that the moon has always looked down upon all lovers from its high position in the sky, so it must be able to recognize love and judge, so it must understand what it means to love, and how the poet feels.

Bekas also asks the moon about what happened and what has it seen regarding his country and his people and many other things. All these painful things make the moon pale and silent in the sky.

Kwestan Jamal says that the poet begins the conversation between himself and the moon. He tells that both have the same pain or the same sickness, stray, and hopelessness. The moon in the sky is silent and hopeless and he is hopeless and homeless in cities. After that he seeks help to remove his pain because he is always weeping for his beloved. He also asks the moon if its paleness results from seeing so many kings, martyrs, homeless people, weeping eyes and bombarding Kurdistan that make her wan and calm in the sky (66).

Ala'addin Sajadi said that one does not criticize the subject of words or rhyme scheme and the easy or difficult pronunciation, because Bekas used so many rhymes in this poem, also in using words, Bekas used simple words but strong in meaning. The reader focuses on the idea of the poem not on using the language or the form of the poem.

Bekas sadly complains to the moon and says how bravely he met his beloved, stating that he saw many people buried in the garden of life dying in front of his eyes and many martyrs sacrificed their lives for the sake of getting freedom for their country and for their people.

Then Bekas reminds the moon that the sweetheart's affairs, her colorful eyes, her straight locks and bright face are not the concern of someone who is homeless, hopeless, and helpless, and has nothing in this world except a kind heart. He is in love with a beautiful girl but the girl rejected his love. These reasons make him pale and desperate like the moon in the sky.

Faeq Bekas feels pain by his bitter taste of love. He thinks like someone who has some information about astronomy and begins the conversation with the moon. Bekas treats the moon like an unwanted creature, pale and homeless in the sky.

The moon is beautiful and serene but it is alone without its beloved, every day it rises step by step silently but sets down hopelessly because it does not see its beloved or it might be rejected by him.

In this poem Bekas told the moon besides being rejected by his love, he has gone through some horrible situations like the bombardment of his country, killing of his citizens, the destruction of his cities and villages by the enemy, all these reasons together make him pale and have pain in his heart (Sajadi).

According to Rafiq Hilmi, Bekas explains his loveless, friendless, lonely and depressed life and his deep love of her straight locks and how he is entrapped in his sweetheart's affairs. He asks the moon, in this lonely night, to help him and be a good friend to him. This poem is really beautiful but Bekas cares about using strong and new techniques of writing poems. Perhaps these fantastic ideas come to him and create inside him a beautiful image of nature. Hilmi also focuses on Bekas's complaint with the moon and says that this is a very good work that Bekas thinks about as a Kurdish poet to depict such imagery (Hilmi 67).

In the last four lines, like broken-heart lovers, he asks the moon about all the beautiful ladies, kind people, bewitched, lovers, thrones, kings, and famous heroes whom he had not known. Bekas begs the moon to tell him about those cities that were bombarded and the war which killed the poor and unarmed civilians in the dark and cold weather. Finally he asks the moon to tell him about the parents of his dead citizens that sacrificed their lives for his country. He looks at the moon and says that it has watched hypocrisy, lying eyes, deceit and oppression. These things affect the moon and take its senses away from it (Hilmi 68).

The whole poem is built on the basis of similarity between the poet and the moon. Bekas describes himself and says he is hopeless, homeless, alone, and sad on earth whereas the moon is pale, sick, alone and hopeless in the sky. This poem is a great example of apostrophe; the speaker directly addresses an inanimate object which is the moon.

There is a rich use of alliteration in this poem like (çawem, xawem) where, in Kurdish language, two words are close to each other in number of letters but different in meaning and the sequences of letters.

A comparative study

The titles: The titles of the two poems are not so different. Both of them address the moon. Philip Sidney gives the title "To the Sad Moon" but Bekas changes it to "Ey Mang" (O Moon).

The forms: Sidney's poem consists of fourteen lines in iambic pentameter which is called a sonnet.

Bekas's poem on the other hand "Ey Mang" (O Moon) is different from the form of Sidney's "To the Sad Moon" not only in the number of stanzas and the rhyme schemes, but also in the metrical pattern adopted by two poets. Bekas uses one of the metrical patterns of Kurdish poetry which is called 'birga'. This type in Kurdish poetry is called 'kéşi pence' (rhyming finger) each line contains ten lines syllables.

The language: The basic idea or theme of Bekas' poem perhaps is taken from English. One tends to clarify the extent to which Bekas got benefit from Philip Sidney's poem, and whether he only took the theme of the poem or made changes in it.

Bekas notes that the moon has always looked down upon all lovers from its high position in the sky, so it must be able to recognize love with its own eyes, and judge, so it must understand what it means to him to love, and how he feels.

Sidney says: "how silently" and "with how wan a face" the moon is climbing the sky. He recognizes in its pale face the same lovesickness he himself is experiencing. In lines 3 and 4, he questions whether Cupid's arrows have hit her even in her "heavenly place"

Philip Sidney's poem "To the Sad Moon" is an example of apostrophe and personification; he addresses the moon and personifies it, treating it like a human being. On the other hand, Bekas in his poem "Ey Mang" personifies the moon too, and he also apostrophizes it. He begins the conversation between himself and the moon. Sidney also starts with conversation between himself and the moon, too (Salam 66).

Idiomatic language: There are many images in Philip Sidney's poem such as: Moon, skies, busy archer, heaven. Sidney uses these words to describe the feeling of someone who is rejected by his lover and then he wants to free himself from that sad feeling and speaks with someone or something. He talks with the moon and asks why it is pale and weak in the sky. It is rejected love that makes it silent and wan in the sky. Using these words in writing poems is so strong because these images are natural that everyone can see in real life.

On the other hand there are many images in Bekas' poem which are: Moon, heaven, kiblah of lovers, sky, homeless, sleepless, night, loveless, and friendless. Bekas uses these words to describe great images; he combines two different images which are his lover and the fact about the bad things which happened to Kurdish people.

The themes: The central purpose of Sonnet 31 is to express Astrophil's heartbreak over a romantic relationship. The author accomplishes this purpose by having Astrophil question the behavior of women on the moon in comparison to their behavior on Earth. By creating a dark, quiet, and almost depressing scene, Sidney is able to help the reader visualize and sympathize with Astrophil's desperation. The constant questioning of women's motives on the moon helps the reader identify the situation by including personal experiences within the questions.

Sidney successfully sheds light on Astrophil's heartbreaking romance by placing him in a dark and lonely setting and using apostrophe to address the moon in a way which corresponds with Astrophil's own situation.

The theme is developed through contrast between the speaker and the moon. Sidney uses a natural thing which is the moon as a source of sadness, hopelessness, and loneliness.

Bekas, in his turn, utilizes the same theme, he chooses the moon like Sidney, and he treats the moon like a human being because he speaks with the moon and tells it about his sickness, sadness, pale face, hopelessness, and depression.

At the beginning of his poem and at the second part Bekas describes his feelings that, perhaps, are the same feelings the moon has because both of them have the same sickness and sadness. But in the last part of Bekas' poem he describes his pale face and asks the moon a few questions which are about his people and his country because Bekas says to the moon that his lover rejected him, his country was destroyed, his people were killed and he has become homeless, these reasons make him pale and sad as the moon.

The techniques of questioning: Philip Sidney believes that the Moon has the answers to all his questions. He asks, through a series of rhetorical questions, whether “they call virtue there ungrateful?”, or whether “they above love to be loved, and yet?”/those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?”. Sir Philip Sidney believes that the answers to these questions can be found out from the Moon, because the Moon is omniscient. He further believes that the moon “can judge of love”, and can solve his love troubles.

On the other hand Bekas, like Philip Sidney, put some expressions in the interrogative form. There are many successive questions especially in the last two parts of the poem where the lines start with ‘*çen*’ (how many). Bekas also believes that the Moon can solve his troubles because the Moon has a great experience and it always stays in the sky and sees all the lovers.

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Conclusion

Philip Sidney and Faeq Bekas use an aspect of nature which is the moon and the moon is an inanimate object representing many different things to many people. Both poets treat the moon like a human being and they personify and apostrophize the moon.

There is a relationship between these two poems in ideas because both of them talk about sickness, sadness, loneliness, pale face, broken heart, rejecting love, homelessness, and hopelessness which can be seen in the poems clearly. Both poets use the same technique of questioning in their poems which are serious questions to the moon due to its experience.

The title in both poems is the same but there are some differences between these two poems in some ways like: the number of lines, the rhyme scheme of the two poems, the quality of images, the expression, the techniques of using words, and the theme.

Each poet uses various rhetorical devices to present their opinion of the moon. They use these devices to show their admiration of the moon in its grace amongst the other stars. They are in a state of awe when faced by the moon.

Kurdish literature, like literature all over the world, has great poets. In all centuries there are a lot of great poems but there are few researches on those poems. Therefore, the researchers suggest that more studies be carried out about Kurd poets and various aspects of Kurdish literature.

Finally, we hope that this research will enrich the Kurdish library and be useful for all those who read Kurdish literature and English literature.

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الخلاصة

يهدف البحث الموسوم "صورة القمر كما هو منعكس في شعر الشاعر الكوردي فائق بيكه س و الشاعر الانجليزي السير فيليب سيدني: دراسة مقارنة" الى تسليط الضوء على صورة شعرية مازال العديد من الشعراء يتغنون بها الا وهي صورة القمر". الشاعران مختلفان تأريخيا و ثقافيا ولكنهما متفقين في نظرتهم حول الحب ومعاناتهما من رفض الطرف الاخر. ولعلّ من أبرز ما خرجت به مسارات البحث هو العلاقة بين القصيدتين من حيث تغني كلا الشاعرين بأفكار الحزن و الوحدة والشحوب وجرح المشاعرو التشرد و اليأس والتي تبدو جلية للقارئ في القصيدتين . يتبنى الشاعران مبدأ التساؤل في قصيدتهما (بيكه س في قصيدته "تهى مانك" او ايها القمر وقصيدة سيدني "الى القمر الحزين") ، حيث يتجهان الى سؤال القمر اسئلة جدية ذات صلة بمكنوناتهم نظرا لخبرتها في مجال مراقبة العشاق من منزلها العالي في السماء .