

The Woman in the Poetry of the Knights

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Abstract

The study was based on the depiction of women in the poetry of knightly poets. Women are often in a position of reverence, respect, and their status with men is great and their relationship is close. So knightly poets set out to clarify this image, full of their enthusiasm and heroism, and confirming their victory in the presence of women from many aspects, showing the Impact of Love Is in their souls in their way, which is filled with chivalry and courage. Despite their preoccupation with battles and fighting, the role of women remains endemic in their souls, hearts, and poetry.

Keywords: *Woman, Knights, Woman*

INTRODUCTION

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all worlds, and peace and blessings be upon the best of creation and the master of messengers, Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings be upon him and his family. Without further ado.

During the era of pre-Islamic ignorance (Jahiliyyah), women held a unique status that was reflected in the mirror of literature. They had a prominent presence in the poetry of poets in general, and in the poetry of knights, in particular. Women possessed distinct characteristics in the knights' poetry.

In this research, we will explore the symbolism of the beloved woman in the poetry of the knights, delving into the signs and attributes that knights used in their poetry, which held special significance within their poetic language and lexicon. Women played the roles of witnesses, partners, and beloved ones, sharing both the spiritual and material aspects of their lives. These women were a source of inspiration and motivation, occupying a significant space in the knights' lives, a reflection of which can be found in their verses.

A Place of Reverence, Admiration, and Respect

In the era of pre-Islamic ignorance, poetry primarily revolved around what can be termed as the "beloved woman." Poets were content with depicting both the physical and chaste aspects of love. They excelled in describing a woman's physique at the beginning of their verses, then delved into portraying the agony and pain caused by infatuation for the poet.

Most poems from the pre-Islamic era centered around this theme. However, contemporary poetry moved beyond focusing solely on women, opening its arms to encompass all aspects of their lives, both private and public. Love experiences for many became just an initial station marked by artistic imitation. Love's language transformed into a form of cathartic release.

In the poetry of the knights, women held a distinct and elevated status. It was common for individuals to be associated with their mothers, and the pagan deities were often named after female figures, signifying fertility and abundance.

During their time, women were the embodiment of love, desire, admiration, and passion to the extent that some were infatuated to the point of obsession. An Arab was once asked about his identity, to which he responded, "I am from a people who, when they love, they die." A young girl overheard this and exclaimed,

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"By the Lord of the Kaaba, he is from the tribe of Bani 'Adhr, known for their intense infatuation and love for women."

This sentiment is exemplified by the story of 'Antarah, who would draw near to his beloved with his blood spilt in battle, and he would say.

"By my love for you, O Gazelle

I will not complain of the wounds inflicted by spears and swords."

In the poetry of the knights, the woman was cherished and held in high esteem, serving as both a source of inspiration and a symbol of unrelenting love.

I mentioned you, and the spears are like eager lovers,

Dripping the blood of India from my veins.

I wished to kiss the swords because they shone.

Like the bright beams of your smiling neck.

Antarah possessed all the qualities of chivalry, not only in his skill with horses but also in the profound human connection he shared with his noble bay horse. This unique bond between them has garnered admiration from critics. His dialogues with his bay horse illustrate the essence of chivalry and its pursuit of perfection. It is a chivalry that empathizes with the steed, a horse worn out from countless battles, which he converses with and confides in.

This chivalry is what drove him to stand firm on the battlefield. He neither flees nor turns his back, for he is a hero, a knight, and a leader. How could he flee when he is the first to strike with his "Muhannad?"

It is worth noting that bravery, the pride of every Arab, and valor, are attributes shared by both men and women, whether rich or poor, tribal or individual. Women used to accompany the warriors. For instance, the warrior Amr ibn Ikrimah, upon seeing women trembling with fear and uncovering the beauty of his beloved Lamees, found his determination strengthened. He saw no course of action but to attack the enemy and confront them, saying:

When I saw our women inspecting the slain with ardor,

And Lamees appeared like the moon in the sky when it shines.

I descended like their ram, and saw no contest with the ram,

And her beauty appeared as though it were a serious matter.

the noble poet 'Amer ibn Tufayl exalts in his bravery and courage, as well as in his poetry for his wife. He says:

If a mother asks which knight is yours,

Haleel, when his battle cry resonates and Khaathamawa rides.

I surpass them in brave sallies and determination,

And when the battle roars, I charge with strength.

Love poetry among the knights is inherently intentional, not artificially contrived to pique the listener's interest. The poet indulges in romantic verses to express his feelings and seek the favor of his beloved with the charm of his words, just as he would with his noble deeds and valiant accomplishments. The poetry of the knights, especially exemplified by 'Antarah, is characterized by its elevated moral standards, transcending base desires and vulgarity. In this poetry, we find abundant expressions of longing, inner reflection, and discussions of yearning, all while remaining far removed from obscenity and frivolity. It represents a mature, pristine love that flows through the soul and soothes a heart wearied by the rigors of military and social life.

He would say:

"This is a poem by Dar, which I have composed,
And you, for him, are a path of beauty and delight".

In another stanza, he says:

"Ask, O daughter of the paternal cousins, about me,
For the tribes of Kaleb have come with wealth and abundance.
They blend like the mixing of the sea beneath the clouds,
From the impact of the galloping hooves.
Fly away like birds with quivering wings on their backs,
The kidneys tremble between the flanks and the spines.
In poverty, I have left behind among them,
Bones and flesh for the predatory eagles".

These verses reflect 'Antarah's poetic skill and his expressions of admiration and love for his beloved. His poetry is filled with vivid and evocative imagery that captures the essence of his emotions and experiences as a knight and lover.

The fusion of romanticism and pride, along with military heroism and love, presents a profound symbolic contrast. The knight is not merely a ruthless warrior living for bloodshed and carnage; rather, he harmoniously combines his love and pride in a single motive. The same source drives both the expressions of love and pride within the same individual. Love arouses the sentiments of exuberance and pride, while the poet's pride in his battles deepens the affection his beloved has for him. These intertwining themes cast their shadows over his valor, courage, and dedication to protecting his beloved and his people.

The Relationship Between Man and Woman in the Poetry of the Knights

The Relationship Between Man and Woman in the Poetry of the Knights is deeply rooted and interconnected. Since the dawn of creation, when God created Adam (peace be upon him) and desired to provide him with a companion to alleviate his loneliness, the bond between man and woman has been a fundamental aspect of human existence. They lived together as pairs, inseparable and linked through the instincts of gender, procreation, and everlasting affection.

In the poetic tradition of the knights, women were never far from their lives. They served as inspirations for their valor and poetry, providing strength and tenderness on the battlefield and during moments of emotional reprieve. Women were the human element sharing their struggles, a powerful source of their courage, and a robust catalyst for their chivalry. They were depicted through various symbols and terms, assuming roles as mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters in their poetic works. They were integral to the creation of the epic narrative and were influential figures within their poetic contexts.

In the life of the poet 'Antarah ibn Shaddad, his beloved 'Abla is portrayed as both a lover and an object of affection. For her, he engages in battles and defends his people. 'Antarah's love for her elevates his emotions and deeds, causing him to rise above his surroundings. He does not glance at other women or follow his base desires; he seeks no one but his one true love, 'Abla. She embodies the qualities of the beloved woman who fills his eyes and heart, a compensatory emblem for the insecurities he wrestles with.

He says:

"I avert my gaze when my neighbor becomes visible to me,

So that I may conceal my neighbor's dwelling.
I am a man with noble character, and I am a generous one,
I do not follow the desires of my reckless self.
If you ask 'Abla about me in this regard,
She will inform you that I desire no woman but her.
And I shall answer her, whether she calls for me or not,
And I will assist her and save her from what afflicts her".

'Abla, the beloved, was indeed a motivating factor in 'Antarah's life, an essential element behind his courage and an unyielding aspiration. She played a significant role in his desire for recognition, lifting him from the ranks of the enslaved to the stature of nobility. The love bestowed by women upon heroes often serves as a driving force behind valor and inspiration for poetic composition. It empowers individuals to rise above themselves, transcending the limitations of their social status.

He says:

"O 'Abla, I sought the depths of an abyss
With my soul, which your age has never witnessed.
In it, there are resplendent stars, if seen,
You would admire them after adornment and kohl.

These verses reveal 'Antarah's deep affection for 'Abla and his willingness to undertake extraordinary feats for her. His love for her is an inspiration, propelling him to perform great acts, and his poems reflect the beauty he sees in her, capturing her essence with vivid and captivating imagery.

There was a miserly woman who blamed him for favoring a particular horse over his others, providing it with camel milk. In response, 'Antarah highlights yet another aspect of his pride in his chivalry and mental fortitude, saying:

"Do not mention my dowry and the food I provided,
Or else your skin will resemble the hide of the striped hyena.
Verily, the grazing area belongs to it, and you are foul,
So moan as you wish, and then turn away.
The wise man lies, and the cold water of Shayn (a well),
If you are looking for an answer, then go away.

The previous examples demonstrate the presence of women in the poetry of the knights as the primary motivator and influential psychological factor in the hearts of the knights. They act as soothing agents that calm the inner turmoil of the poets, akin to the tranquilizer used by the poet to soothe his agitated and conflicting soul.

Antarah also remarked:

'Abla was amazed by a youth, unkempt,
Wearing tattered clothes, pale as a washed corpse.
His hair was disheveled as if a bird had perched on his head,
His face was colorless, not adorned or washed.

He only donned armor when he was fully equipped.

And that's how every concealed truth is".

There is an image that Antar presents of himself, wanting to evoke it in his beloved. It is the image of the loving knight. However, this image does not have the desired effect on Abla, and he is surprised by her reaction when she laughs and says there is no good in him. He rebukes her with the words, "As if you have never been delighted," and he portrays her turning away from him with a questioning disapproval, "How did her eyes stray?" This action embodies the mistake he sees in his beloved's behavior, and then he describes himself as a generous and brave knight. These words reveal Antar's anger and disapproval. He returns in a humiliated manner, threatening with deprivation, and seeks to appeal to his beloved and gain her reconsideration and communication. He refuses to accept the young women who try to approach him.

He says:

"O Abla, how many a predicament I have confronted

With the same courage that your years cannot dissolve.

In it, if the shining brilliance had witnessed its beauty,

I would then take up after beautifying and adorning.

Either you see that I have solved it,

and anyone who is the object of adoration dissolves the ties of adoration,

or a tribe as huge as your clan. On the back of horses, they are prepared".

Antar's longing for Abla and the image of her witnessing the knights' valor is evident in their poetry. This time, Antar connects his love for Abla with the battles he encounters. He acknowledges his love for Abla, and his love's heroism is apparent in the battlefield. He mentions actions such as "doubted, sought, excelled," and emphasizes the law of living, saying:

"So I doubted this, with the desire that, with that,

and with the mention of the unparalleled sword,

And I sought their leader, cut his vein,

and killed from them every young man and the elderly".

In another stanza, the woman becomes the place of complaint and longing to reveal a tender heart that aspires to life. He finds solace in his beloved and turns to her, lamenting the pains of battle and societal struggles. He escapes to her in the harshness of the desert and the chaos of battles. When he sees a female camel in his society, he, who is fed up with a harsh, fiery society filled with battle, blood, and terror, uses it to express his feelings and pain.

Oh Abla, hasn't my suffering increased?

Today, your people have intensified my torment.

And the desire for you grows every day,

Just as my gray hair increases in my youth.

I've complained about life's changes because of you,

I've wasted my life in torment.

This is a clear indication of the woman's significance in the knight's life, which grows in an escalating manner as suffering and cruelty intensify.

His words become more tender, sweet, and pure as he expresses his complaints to his beloved. It's evident that his love for her increases as his suffering deepens.

He says:

"I encountered the enemy and protected some,
They lost me and didn't watch over my well-being.
Plead for us, Abla, on the day we faced
The tribes of 'Amir and Bani Kalab.
I left many a knight, laid to rest,
Their white robes stained without being dyed.
He moves his leg in terror, and within him,
The spears' fangs gleam like meteors.
We killed hundreds of free men,
And thousands in the valleys and plateaus" .

The woman becomes the poet's partner when he distances himself from his people, even when they refuse to support him. Yet he remains loyal to them, their honor, their integrity, and their victory.

The poet's recounting of heroic deeds in the presence of his beloved is clear evidence of her significant place in his heart. He portrays himself as a gallant, loyal, and courageous knight who remains loyal to his people and maintains his position as the victorious knight over the enemy.

He says:

"And how many knights have I left,
Resting their heads on dusty grounds without their turbans. "

In this, there's a clear reference to criticizing the knight, replacing the dyed robes with bloodstains. An important aspect of Anther's poems is that they reveal a poet with delicate feelings, expressive words, full of powerful emotions, deeply in love with his beloved. Sometimes he describes her, sometimes he risks conversation with her, and at other times he indulges in playful fantasies with her. This particular passage is a beautiful expression of profound emotions, intense love, sincerity, and a level of commitment that might make it hard to believe it's coming from a knight but rather from a young, passionately in love man.

Another calls his beloved in a lovely, heartfelt manner that reflects affection and fondness:

"O Abla, have the times caused us to forget
And has our love now become distant?
We are still young and have not grown old,
And time has not brought us anything new.
Our weapons are still sharp;
Our swords are like iron.
So seek out the men of Fazara,
With the noble knights of Khubud" .

Women play an important role in the poetry of the knights, which shows their passion and concern for them. The knights fight for their comfort, mention them in times of difficulty and exhaustion, all of this tied to their chivalry and valor in battle. However, these poems also reflect the knights' awareness that women share their lives, experiences, and hardships, as well as their joy and solace after the arduous days of combat filled with death and suffering.

CONCLUSION

We reach the understanding that women had a profound and significant impact, occupying a prominent place in the poetry of the chivalrous poets. They influenced the poets even before they expressed their feelings in poetry. Women appeared in a position of reverence and adoration in the verses of these poets, and their relationships with the chivalrous poet had a profound influence on his innermost feelings, which was reflected in his poetry. The poets intertwined their romantic expressions about women with their valor, battles, and discussions of sacrifice and heroism.

Their words were filled with yearning, longing, and complaints about women, despite the hardships and challenges in their lives and hearts. The structures of their verses narrated their chivalrous tales, mixed with their expressions of love and their feelings towards women. In conclusion, women were an integral part of every aspect of their poetry.

Results

The presence of women¹² | Page as a central element in the poetry of chivalrous poets.

The veneration of women by chivalrous poets in their verses.

The inclusion of women in all aspects and purposes of their poetry.

The reliance on women to guide the themes of longing and complaints in their poetry.

The incorporation of discussions about women in the poetry of chivalrous poets, despite their valor.

Recommendations

Direct further research towards the role of women in the poetry of chivalrous poets.

Shed light on the reverence of chivalrous poets towards women.

Study the love that chivalrous poets held for women.

Explore the amalgamation of chivalrous poets between their love for women and their valor and heroism.

Direct studies towards the chivalry of the poets that delve into their love for women.

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