



Review Article

Romanticism vs Nationalism: The Cases of Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale* and Mehmet Akif Ersoy's *Bülbül*

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Abstract

Mehmet Akif Ersoy witnesses the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of Turkey. He voluntarily takes part in the war of independence against Greece and supports Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. He then uses his poetic voice to attack the Turkish nation's enemy and proclaim the new ideals promised by Atatürk and his friends. As a nationalist who cherishes the love and zeal for independence, Ersoy is torn by the ongoing invasion of the Ottoman Empire. Having heard about the Greek invasion of Bursa, the first capital of the Ottoman Empire, Ersoy is mentally depressed. He takes a walk in the countryside to escape and hears the nightingale, yearning hopelessly for the rose. Aggravated by the bird's melancholy, he uses the nightingale as a poetic voice to reflect the trauma of the Turkish nation. John Keats, the English Romantic poet, on the other hand, has been deeply depressed about the death of his father, mother, and brothers. In particular, his brother's death of tuberculosis, following his mother's death, causes trauma and deep grief, and he is overcome by the fear of death. He sees the first signs of tuberculosis in himself, and his health is broken. Like Ersoy, he embodies his heartache and his mental depression in the voice of a nightingale, using it as a poetic voice to express his own trauma.

Keywords: Mehmet Akif Ersoy, John Keats, Bülbül, nightingale, depression

Introduction

In the Divan poetry of Turkish literature, love is a universal subject and is frequently categorised as both physical and spiritual. Physical love is symbolised by the rose, spring, and night. Spiritual love has various symbols such as water, ocean, and light. The nightingale is yet another symbol of love, both physical and spiritual, in conventional Turkish poetry. Rejected by the red rose, the nightingale becomes the symbol of spiritual love and mourns all night hopelessly. It is the embodiment of the lover suffering and crying desperately for the impossible union. Besides, the nightingale has a melodious and resounding voice, especially during the springtime, to announce the renewal and rebirth of the season. The nightingale is a symbol of invocation. It has a free spirit that cannot be restricted, imprisoned, or controlled. Mehmet Akif Ersoy uses

this image in his famous poem "Bülbül" to explore the nation's passion for independence (Dürkaya, 2013, p.853). Like the excessive use of the bird as a symbol of physical and metaphysical entities in classical Turkish literature, the nightingale has long been employed in European literature with many different forms and "appeared in many thousands of poems from Homer to the twentieth century. It acquired an almost formulaic meaning as the bird of spring, of night, and mourning even in ancient times. Later, through its link to spring and night, it also became the symbol of love" (Ferber, 1999, p.136). Comparing "Ode to a Nightingale" and "Bülbül," this paper explores how Ersoy and Keats use the nightingale to reflect personal depression.

Depending on the context and the poets under discussion, the symbolic and metaphorical significance of the bird [the nightingale] may change and become more complex. Early eighteenth-century British traveller to Constantinople, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, writes about the importance of the image of the nightingale to Alexander Pope. She admits the improbability of a translation of the term when she quotes a poem written by Ibrahim Pasha for his fiancée. In the poem, Ibrahim Pasha depicts the nightingale's quest for the rose; however, as Montagu cannot fully comprehend the cultural significance of the symbol in the poem while translating it for the second time, to protect the poetic quality, she feels that it is better to transform the Turkish meaning of the symbol into something more familiar and meaningful in English culture (Baktir, 2016, p.20). She achieves this with the following: "The nightingale now wanders in the vines/Her passion is to seek the roses./I went down to admire the beauty of the vines" (Montagu, 1993, p.76). Montagu writes that the image of the wandering bird with a powerful passion for the rose and the beauty of the vine may compensate for the negative atmosphere but does not reflect the power of love admired and glorified by Ibrahim Pasha. The bird is presented by Keats as the king of silence and night, but with a negative connotation. Night refers to the chaotic and dark atmosphere of *Paradise Lost* in the English context. For instance, in William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the play takes place in the woods, reflecting the chaotic and dark sides of the summer night where identities are mixed, the order is threatened, and peace is lost. In English culture, the nightingale is mainly associated with the night and is regarded as a bird singing at night (Ferber, p.139); thus, it has a negative connotation. In the context of Ibrahim Pasha's poem, the nightingale singing reflects the joy of life and pain of love concurrently. Montagu cannot find any relevant term to write about the feeling of the poet [Ibrahim Pasha] and the cultural context of love. She retranslates the line by replacing the word "nightingale" with "Philomel," which helps her to fully convey the poetic meaning that may fit into the English literary context: "Now Philomel renews her tender strain / Indulging all the night her pleasing pain; / I sought the groves to hear the wanton sing" (Montagu, p.76).

Pope also adopts a similar approach towards the symbol and popularizes the nightingale in neoclassical English literature. The symbol becomes even more popular because of the increasing interest in the Orient shown by Romantic poets. Lord Byron, for instance, uses the nightingale rather than Philomel as a symbol. He employs the symbol using its Turkish equivalent *Bülbül* in his famous tale *The Bride of Abydos* (1835):

A message from the Bulbul bears;
It says tonight he will prolong
For Selim's ear his sweetest song;
And though his note is somewhat sad,
He'll try for once a strain more glad,
With some faint hope his alter'd lay
May sing these gloomy thoughts away.
[...]

A bird unseen –but not remote:
Invisible his airy wings,
But soft as harp that Houri strings
His long entrancing note!
It were the Bulbul; but his throat,
Though mournful, pours not such a strain;
For they who listen cannot leave
The spot, but linger there and grieve,
As if they loved in vain! (*The Bride of Abydos*, p. 245)

Here Byron does not transform the bird into an English context. Instead, he attempts to explore the idea of pain, grief, disappointment, and joy, as reflected in the oriental Ottoman poetic tradition. Thus, he re-appropriates the Turkish symbol into English poetry keeping the original meaning of the symbol as in the following: "the unseen bird"/"entrancing note"/"pours such a strain." Keats also uses the symbol in a similar context, yet he does not include any phrase to refer to "love"; instead, he adopts an approach where he uses the bird to represent his ideals and his desire to escape from reality. The symbol is thus transformed and empowered in the "Ode to a Nightingale."

1. Mehmet Akif Ersoy and “Bülbül”

Of Albanian descent, Ersoy was a Turkish nationalist and very much concerned about the unfortunate situation the Ottoman Empire faced following World War I as a result of multiple invasions: "Bunu benden duyunuz, ben ki evet / Arnavudum... Başka bir şey diyemem... İşte perişan yurdum!"¹ (Ersoy, 2011, p.178). Having composed the Turkish national anthem, he becomes one of the leading figures of Turkish poetry. However, as a nationalist, he dislikes the idea of a nation based on ethnicity; instead, he favours religious companionship. This companionship, however, does not clash with the "millet system" of the Empire, where the minorities living in the territories of the Empire get "the chance to preserve their ethnic and religious identities in peace" (Demirağ, 2005, p.143) alongside Muslim subjects in the community.

Ersoy is faithful to the Ottoman strategy of an imperial union. The idea of a union under the Ottoman Empire is the only way to resist the European colonisation of the lands occupied by the Ottomans. However, he is not free from the European idea of individual freedom. He tries to bring together the imperial goals with the idea of the individual. He believes that the freedom of any individual citizen is possible under a powerful state and law that can protect and tolerate subjects from various religions and ethnicities. Ersoy emphasises national union under the present [Ottoman] empire (Ayaz, 2015, p.35). Writing about the terror and exploitation of the European invaders in "Bülbül," he draws attention to the painful future the Empire's disintegration may cause. He dedicates some of his lines to the local people of Anatolia suffering under the invasion. Thus, the tone of the lines he composes is generally sad, depressing, and the voice desperate.

His poem "Bülbül" (1921) is one of the tragic poems Ersoy writes on the invasion of the historical Ottoman town, Bursa, by the Greek forces (Düzdağ, 2011, p. 430). The news of the invasion of the city spreads across Turkey. Hearing about the attack, he is shocked and lost by the destruction of his land, and the violence Greek soldiers commit in the city. In this mood, he

¹ "Hear me say that I am Albanian / Nothing I can say, behold, forlorn is my country." (All the translations in the essay are the author's).

walks in the countryside for a breath of fresh air. He feels hopeless and sits; then hears the nightingale singing in a mournful tone. Inspired by its melody, he starts a conversation with the bird, speaking about the reason for his anger and melancholy. Ersoy imagines the wilderness of the sites in silence, without intrusion in the late night, then he hears the bird's voice, deep down from afar. Inspired and triggered by the sharp, deep, and melodious voice of the nightingale, he starts composing the following:

Zalâmın sinesinden fişkırın memdûd bir feryad.

O müstağrak, o durgun vecdi nâgâh öyle coşturdu:

Ki o vadiden bütün yer, eninler çağlayıp durdu.

Ne muhrik nağmeler ya Rab, ne mevcâmec demlerdi:

Ağaçlar, taşlar ürpermişti, güya Sûr-i Mahşer'di! (Ersoy, p. 429)²

In classical Turkish literature, the nightingale is depicted as a lover in love with the rose (Durkaya, p.849). Still, because of the thorn that the flower carries, they cannot come together, which is the main reason why the nightingale is so desperate. The voice of grief and desperation comes from the bird of the night, the nightingale who has an everlasting desire to cry out her love for the rose and call nature for the ceremony she recites: "Ne muhrik nağmeler ya Rab, ne mevcâmec demlerdi." Such a call is compared to the Day of Judgement by the narrator. Then, the narrator imagines a metaphysical interaction with the bird, which is later transformed into lines crying not for desperate love but the desperate nation. Exaggerating the semi-divine voice of the bird (Ki o vadiden bütün yer, eninler çağlayıp durdu), the narrator implicitly emphasises the power of rhythm to change the course of nature: "Ağaçlar, taşlar ürpermişti." The bird here is transformed into a living soul wailing for her crimson love: "sinesinden fişkırın memdûd bir feryad." The rhythm and ceremony of the nightingale's song led to the hopeless and painful cry, more heart-breaking than any sad song recited so far.

The narrator admires the power and courage of the nightingale to cry out her love with a beautiful and melodious song. However, the narrator believes that it is all futile compared to his own state of life. The nightingale is now helpless and hopeless because she is rejected by the rose, but she still has home and freedom. Her home is safe and secure from any external threat or invasion. She has a divine kingdom in the wilderness nobody can destroy. Thus, the narrator addresses the nightingale as follows:

Eşin var âşyanın var, baharın var ki beklerdin.

Kıyametler koparmak neydi ey bülbül, nedir derdin?

O zümrüt tahta kondun, bir semavi saltanat kurdun,

Cihanın yurdu hep çiğnense, çiğnenmez senin yurdun!³ (Ersoy, p.429)

Ersoy emphasises the idea of a safe and secure home regarding the nightingale and creates words like "aşıyan," "taht," "saltanat," "yurt." Even though the nightingale has its own piece of land where he can roam freely, and it is far from the enemy's intervention, its grief and mourning

² "A long cry bursting from the chest of the darkness.

That drowned, that stagnant felicity abruptly ectasized:

As from everywhere in the valley, groans ceaselessly gurgled.

Alas! How bitter the melody and how restless the time was:

Trembled the trees and the stones, as if the trumpet of the Judgement Day it was."

³ "-You hope and wait having your lover, nest and spring

What is there to cause bedlam, what's your point?

You ascended to that emerald throne, establishing a celestial sultanate

Everywhere can be walked over except from your homeland!"

never cease. Then, the narrator asks whether it is not futile to cry out for the love of the rose for a nightingale having a safe home and freedom to dominate over nature. Since the primary stress of the poem is about the invasion of the country, through the image of the nightingale, he emphasises the value of homeland for which all free citizens should be grateful. The narrator, who witnesses the destruction, exploitation, and disintegration of his homeland, takes the bird's unhappiness to be illogical and blames the bird for not being grateful. He reflects this as follows:

Hazansız bir zemin isterse, şayet ruh-ı serbâzın,
Ufuklar, bud'-ı mutlaklar bütün mahkûm-I pervâzın.
Değil bir kayda, sığmazsın kanatlandın mı eb'ada
Hayatın en muhayyel gayedir âhrara dünyada.
Neden öyleyse matemlerle eyyâmın perişandır,
Niçin bir katrecik göğsünde bir umman huruşandır?⁴ (Ersoy, pp. 429-30)

He continually uses the bird's mobility to refer to its freedom as no one can control its passage in the sky. The bird does not need space on the earth to feel free. She can fly out to heaven whenever she likes and enjoys the divine freedom she is provided. Why then does the bird cry out? Why then can a little heart produce such a loud and sharp cry? With these rhetorical questions, Ersoy foreshadows the tragedy and depression he will introduce into the poem. He also prepares the scene for the readers. His land that used to be free from any external invasion is now under threat; his mobility is currently limited, and the good old days of the Empire are left behind. Homeless, unsafe, and weak, he feels guilty because he can neither resist the country's invasion nor fight against the enemy. He reflects the present mood as follows:

Teselliden nasibim yok, hazan ağlar baharımda;
Bugün bir hanümansız serseriyim öz diyârımda!
Ne hüsrandır ki: Şark'ın ben vefâsız, kansız evladı,
Serâpâ Garb'a çiğnettim de çıktım hâk-i ecdâdı!⁵ (Ersoy, p.429)

The persona still compares himself to the nightingale. The bird becomes happy again when spring comes, yet the same spring brings the poet no more than grief and suffering because he feels like a homeless madman. The invaders are trampling over the bones [the enemies are destroying the cemetery of the Turks] of the ancestors, and the poet feels guilty and helpless in the present state of the country. Stressing the destruction of the enemy and his own weakness to resist, he takes shelter in the poetic lines and cries out like a nightingale, however, not like the bird of tradition. He does not cry out for unrequited love and the pain it gives; he cries out for the homeland invaded. He feels lost and outcast because he no longer feels free in his own country. He feels that the enemy is stepping into his land, is trampling over his soul; thus, he feels wounded. Ersoy assigns particular value to the land and attributes a divine meaning to the

⁴ "If your brave heart wishes to have a life away from melancholy
The skies, the endless borders can be enslaved by your wings
Neither handcuffs nor any burden can cease you when you fly
For the independent, your life is the most ideal fancy
Then why are your days desperate with laments
Why in your little heart an ocean is fervent?"

⁵ "No consolation I have, covered by autumn in the spring
Today a homeless outcast I am in my own climes!
What a shame is that I am, the unfaithful, coward child of the East
Let the West grind down the honour of my ancestors!"

ancestors; hence, the invasion is compared to the loss of Eden. The spiritual and almost semi-divine bond between the ancestor and the poet is based on the land. The nation is now under threat. The poet, thus, now feels lost, depressed, wounded, desolate, and alienated. The spiritual and physical bonds are no longer visible. Therefore, the suffering of the poet is multiplied, as reflected in the following lines:

Hayalimden geçerken şimdi, fikrim herc ü merc oldu,
Salahaddin-i Eyyubi'lerin, Fatih'lerin yurdu.
Ne zillettir ki: nâkus inlensin beyninde Osman'ın;
Ezan sussun, fezâlardan silinsin yâdı Mevlâ'nın!
Ne hicrandır ki: en şevketli bir mâzi serâp olsun;
O kudretler, o satvetler harâb olsun, türâb olsun!
Çökük bir kubbe kalsın ma'bedinden Yıldırım Hân'ın;
Şenâatlerle çığnensin muazzam kabri Orhan'ın!⁶ (Ersoy, p.430)

The narrator writes that the past is indispensable to the present. The ancestors are given life by the poet, and they all together complain about their children for not being faithful to their memories. There are also religious connotations referring to the land as dominantly Islamic, with which Ersoy again stresses the importance of freedom in parallelism with the image of the sky: "Ezan sussun, fezâlardan silinsin yâdı Mevlâ'nın!" (Ersoy, p.430) Furthermore, he adds that the great heroes of the past, like Selahaddin-I Eyyubi, Osman, Orhan, Yıldırım, and Fatih, are the same spirit that unites the nation. However, now their bones are left to the mercy of the invaders:

Ne heybettir ki: vahdet-gâhı dînin devrilip taş,
Sürünsün şimdi milyonlarca me'vâsız kalan dındaş!
Yıkılmış hân mânlar yerde işkenceyle kıvransın;
Serilmiş gövdeler, binlerce, yüz binlerce doğransın!
Dolaşsın, sonra, İslâm'ın harem-gâhında nâ-mahrem...⁷ (Ersoy, p.429)

He regards the invasion to be an attempt to overrule and ridicule Islamic rule. Thus, the physically invaded land will also be spiritually tortured, the past glory and present state of the nation destroyed by the invasion. Ersoy can no longer feel at home. This is the reason why he attacks the nightingale, who has a safe home and complete freedom. Under such circumstances, the poet feels that the nightingale singing for unobtainable love cannot feel or understand him.

⁶ "Right now I am thinking, my mind is scattered
The land belonging to Salahaddin Ayyubid, to Fatih
What derogation: that church bells ring in the ears of Othman
Azan to be silenced, the call for God to be erased from the skies!
What sorrow: the most glorious past goes to waste;
That mightiness, dominance to be destroyed, to be grounded!
Let there stay a collapsed dome on the grave of Bajazeth;
Trample viciously the magnificent grave of Orhan!"

⁷ "How grandeur: the unity of religion is overthrown stone by stone
Now let the millions of coreligionist, being left homeless, crawl
Writhe in pain the collapsed homes on the ground;
The bodies, thousands, hundred thousands of them, to be chopped!
The infidels walk around the sacred homes of Islam then..."

His suffering is not comparable to that of the nightingale. No bird of love can feel as desperate and as helpless as the poet.

This is the reason why, as a homeless and captive citizen of the disintegrating Empire, he, not the nightingale, shall lament for the land lost: "Benim hakkım, sus ey bülbül, senin hakkın değil mâtem!"⁸ (Ersoy, p.430). The dialogue, which is more like an interior monologue, is the self-evaluation of the poet. Using the nightingale as a symbol, he confronts his conscience and resolves his conflict by persuading himself that he has every right to mourn for the sorrow he faces. Besides, through his conversation, Ersoy emphasises that the land is the symbol and spirit of the past and present. The lines composed upon the country's present state remind all Turks to wake up and resist the enemies. As a poetic voice, he feels responsible for the whole nation and announces a re-awakening. As Ayaz writes, Ersoy reflects this collective pain through his own personality (p.35) and stresses that his soul and flesh are the soul and flesh of the nation.

2. John Keats and "The Nightingale"

Keats's suffering and depression, unlike Ersoy's, are not national. He suffers from poor health and tragedies that befall his family. In early childhood, he witnesses the death of his father. He loses his very dear brother first and then his mother to tuberculosis. The loss of loved ones deeply touches the keen spirit of John Keats, and he takes shelter in poetry to forget about such tragic losses. After his eighteenth year, he started his poetic career, producing superb poems, including many memorable lines. Only twenty-six when he dies, he is compared to Shakespeare by T.S. Eliot⁹, though, at the same time, "No major poet has had a less prodigious origin" than John Keats (Norton, 1979, p.766). Life does not provide more than suffering and disadvantages for John Keats, but his spirit has the potential to overcome all the tragedies.

John Keats has a keen spirit but also a fragile heart. He falls in love with Fanny Brawne and gets engaged. However, the relationship does not develop as expected after Keats has a diagnosis of tuberculosis. Facing yet another setback, he seems doomed to lose everything he loves. In between life and death, he composes his lines to the nightingale. He forgets his painful and tragic fate when he writes because he deeply contemplates the object he is writing. "In Keats's poetry, there is a tension between spirit and matter, vision and existence" (Boulger, 1961, p.244); he combines both of these qualities and "loses his own identity in the fullness of identification with the object he contemplates" (Norton, p.768).

"Ode to a Nightingale" is a romantic poem of the family of *Kubla Khan* and *The Eve of St. Agnes* in that it describes choice and rare experience, intentionally remote from the commonplace" (Fogle, 1953, p.211). At the beginning of the poem, Keats depicts a threshold between the physical and metaphysical world. The poet's voice is from the physical world, and the bird's voice is from the metaphysical world. Though the narrator does not see the nightingale, the *Ode* establishes a dialogue between the poet's voice and the singing nightingale. The narrator listens to the song and glorifies the ceremonial singing of the bird. This singing ceremony awakens deep thoughts in the narrator's spirit and takes him away from the reality of the commonplace. His mind is now lost, and he feels "as though of hemlock [he] had drunk / Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains / One-minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk" (Keats, 1899, p.144). The commonplace is a physical world that the poet should leave behind to access the spiritual world of the bird. The real is distorted, as it must be distorted so that he can endure. The narrator

⁸ Hush! O Nightingale, it is my right to lament, not yours!

⁹ T.S. Eliot argues that Shakespeare and Keats have negative capability. Negative-capability is a special poetic gift very few have.

seems to be weary of the painful reality that has long occupied his thoughts, and now he is provided with access to the world of sacred art where he may find consolation for the memories he wants to escape. In *Ode to a Nightingale*, Keats creates a persona who seems to have caught a glimpse of happiness in the happy song of the nightingale. The *Ode* starts by addressing the bird as a happy fairy of the forest, singing in "full-throated ease." The reflection also transcends the poet who feels inspired by this melodious singing:

But being too happy in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singing of summer in full-throated ease (Keats, p.144)

The forest is the bird's kingdom, and summer is her favourite season. She has the freedom to wander around lightly and be invisible, safe in the heart of the green woods. Nature is full of promises for her, always fresh and generous. The fairy bird is idealised and transformed into the spiritual creature the narrator himself wants to become. If he were the nightingale, he could forget about the painful world of men full of misery and death. The escape from the physical bond and transformation of self is taken further in the following lines:

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim: (Keats, pp.144-145).

Keats's own experience of poor health and the death of his family members would have left everlasting impressions in his memory. Thus, the poet believes that "Man exists in an unrelieved world of pain, boredom, and sensuality, condemned by his nature to view with despair the gap between the actual and the ideal" (Boulger, p.244). The nightingale, on the other hand, has a far better and more superior state of happiness. She does not care about misery and loss. She is safe and almost eternal with her fame. Unlike the bird, the narrator is subject to death, the weariness of old age, and poor health in his life. The lines above implicitly but powerfully reflect the desire to escape from the inescapable tragedy of human life. The narrator believes that one drop of the intoxicating wine may take his spirit away. He then may leave "the world unseen" and "fade away into the forest."

Ode to a Nightingale is a spiritual journey into the unseen world of aesthetic experience that may eventually transform the self into an immortal voice. Death seems to be the most painful and the last phase of this spiritual transformation. It is evident in the *Ode* that the persona is obsessed with death and could not forget and leave the physical realm. Thus, he cannot forgive and forget what death is taking from man. There is no fixed scale for death to catch his prey in a trap; neither old age nor sickness makes up the sole reasons. The beauty of the eyes, the power

of the muscles, and the taste of the sweetest wine will fade away, and nothing new is left over from this destruction. The obsession and disappointment with death are reflected as follows:

The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow. (Keats, p.145)

The poet degrades human fate and physical extinction, believing that he must leave the world behind without leaving any trace that may remind others of himself. No one will remember him, neither friends nor fiends. The narrator takes the last phase of the physical world as the end of life and believes that he could not transform the self into the spiritual world. The spiritual journey of immortality is interrupted and diverted into another realm. The quest is no longer metaphysical but aesthetic. He then finds shelter in the realm of art. Once you are remembered, you are not forgotten, thus remaining forever in the mind of people. Then, the nightingale is transformed into a memorial object of happiness, ceremony, and summer in the *Ode*. Thus, the bird is remembered as such. The mortal bird becomes immortal, attributing mythological value and supernatural features to its presence. The narrator stresses the long life of the bird:

Thou was not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown;
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth; when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn. (Keats, pp.145-146)

The narrator here stresses the historical and aesthetic value given to the nightingale. The value given is both aesthetic and metaphysical. Here the narrator realizes that the bird is not seen, it is in the dark, and he hears only the voice. Man forgets about his own misery in the realm of the idea he develops. The idea of the nightingale is everlasting, not the single physical bird singing in the wilderness. The idea of singing birds has existed from the ancient world to the present. As the narrator suggests, "the sad heart of Ruth" might have listened to the same song he now hears. The same melody might have "Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam/ Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn." The ceremony, the singing, and the magic of fairylands are all attributed to the idea of the nightingale.

Shifting his desire from the metaphysical to the aesthetic realm, the narrator moves between the spiritual and aesthetic experience when he says: "Was it a vision, or a waking dream? / Fled is

the music: —Do I wake or sleep" (Keats, p.146). It shows his inability to internalise the quest and obey the law of fate. The narrator wants to change the fact that there will be nothing left of him in this world one day. The nightingale and his tirade to the bird do not relieve his confusion; in a way, he cannot persuade himself to accept the eternal loss of death. The poet seems weary of the fact that he is not immortal. That is why he becomes half disappointed in the end and says that the nightingale's singing is no more than a "plaintive anthem" (Keats, p.146) that creates discomfort in his heart and mind. The union of the two voices [here nightingale and poet] ends up in failure. The spiritual journey is cut short, and the aesthetic ideals are lost in the wilderness. The *Ode* attempts to overcome the question of death. Even though he regards poetry as a way to stay eternal, like the nightingale of the summer, he is shaken with the reality that nothing will remain immortal, neither the echo of the bird nor the echoing of his words over the earth. Thus, the conflict of mind and the misery of man are left unresolved by the narrator.

Conclusion

Ersoy and Keats both deal with the possibility of happiness and peace of mind in their poems on the nightingale. Ersoy is in pain and suffering from World War I, which resulted in the invasion and disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. He creates the image of the nightingale to compare his state of mind and the present state of the Empire. He admires the bird and glorifies her voice but takes her cry as futile. She has an invisible nature, an immortal name, and total freedom from any physical restrictions. She is concerned and worried only about the coming of the spring. She always has love with her, though physically inaccessible. However, Ersoy has no voice other than what he composes within the space of the lines. He has no land to feel safe and secure; thus, he has no freedom. He feels lost in the present. Reflecting on his inner state of mind and spiritual turmoil, he creates the image of homelessness. Thus, the nightingale and her cry together provide a free space for the poet to escape from the painful reality of the present physically and spiritually.

As a Romantic poet of English origin, John Keats also employs the nightingale to reflect his conflicts. Like Ersoy, Keats first writes about the fame and popularity of the bird. The nightingale of Keats's *Ode* also has a fairy and safe kingdom in the wilderness where she freely flies. Ersoy and Keats give the nightingale similar significance and value. It should reflect metaphysical influence or else embodiment of a literary motif. They both embody the same symbol to question and resolve the conflict. Ersoy personalises the national conflict, using the nightingale to write about his depression caused by the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, Keats uses the nightingale to emphasise his depression caused by the fear of death. Keats identifies himself with "easeful death" and feels depressed.

Ersoy and Keats are both jealous of the nightingale and her state of happiness. Therefore, though they write in different periods and try to express different emotions, both Ersoy and Keats end up in the same place. What makes Ersoy sad is the enemy and its invasion of his beloved land. He suffers mainly from the physical presence of the hostile forces and their activities. Keats is also concerned about the physical presence and threat of an enemy, which is death. He has tasted the pain of death by losing his loved ones, and as a poet, he is concerned about having his name leave a mark. He is desperate in front of the destructive nature of death. He fears he will be forgotten, and the life he led will go to waste. Both poets also envy the nightingale's fame, which has lasted through the ages. In addition to these similarities, there are also some fundamental differences between Ersoy and Keats. Ersoy uses the bird to express his feelings of love for his country; thus, it represents a lover and the dedication and faithfulness of lovers to their loved ones. Unlike Ersoy, Keats uses the nightingale as a symbol to signify his search for immortality. Keats takes it further and attempts to resolve the universal human

predicament; how to overcome death. In the end, the nightingale is transformed by Ersoy and Keats into a symbol for what is inaccessible on earth— peace and happiness.

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