



Available online at <http://jgu.garmian.edu.krd>

Journal of University of Garmian

<https://doi.org/10.24271/garmian.2023.10288>



Polyphony in Poetry: A Study of selected English and Kurdish Modern Lyrics

Ibrahim Ali Murad

English Department, College of Education, University of
Garmian, Kurdistan region of Iraq

Article Info

Received: July, 2022

Revised: July, 2022

Accepted: August, 2022

Keywords

theories, genre,
polyphony, modern,
comparative.

Corresponding Author

Abstract

The matter of polyphony in literature is not a new one since it has been stressed and shown throughout the history of literature in general and the English one in particular though clear theories were not produced about this aspect in the pre-modern ages. Michael Bakhtin's theories in this respect, then, may be the loudest hearable voice. Yet, his focus upon one specific genre of literature renders his theories doubtful in a way. The present research is an attempt to show whether or not this polyphony is applicable in the other genres, especially in poetry and more specifically in the lyric poetry. So, this is the hypothesis of the study and its practical part will try to provide clues as responses. To achieve this goal, the work examines some post-modern English and Kurdish poetic texts; thus, aiming at another deduction besides the first one, i.e., the range of the existence of this aspect in the Kurdish post-modern poetry beside the English one. The study therefore, takes a comparative turn for this purpose. It encompasses two sections. The first one will tackle the concept of monophony versus polyphony with reference to Bakhtin's ideas in this respect; while the other section studies in some detail, polyphony in some English and Kurdish lyrics. To illuminate the case and critics' views about it, the researcher uses a number of up-to-date English and Kurdish sources, and then the concluding ideas along with a list of works cited will appear at the end.

1. Introduction

I. Polyphonic Voices in Theory

The matter of monophony and polyphony in literary texts, whenever mentioned, takes the mind automatically back to the Russian philosopher, critic, and literary theorist Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895-1975) who is regarded by critics and writers as “the most important Soviet thinker in the area of human sciences and the greatest literary theorist of the twentieth century” (De Man:99). The problematic and confusing point in his ideas is that the focus of his theory fell mostly on the novel among the literary genres at the cost of its elder sister, poetry. The strangeness and unpopularity of his thought to the English readers was due to the fact that, as Holquist states, “Bakhtin’s style, while recognizably belonging to a Russian tradition of scholarly prose, is, nevertheless, highly idiosyncratic” (xvi). This idiosyncrasy is also supported, indirectly, by the great critic, historian, and professor, Ian Watt (1917-1999) in his influential book *The Rise of the Novel*. According to Watt, “the function of the language is much more largely referential in the novel than in the other literary forms; that the genre itself works by exhaustive presentation rather than by elegant concentration” (33). It is true that in some forms of poetry, the language has a more emotional function than the referential one; yet, this should not be a rule for divorcing poetry totally from any other function including the referential one, since some of the masterpieces of the English and other poetries are in epic, dramatic, and historical forms where multivoicedness prevails like the case in the novel. But for Bakhtin, the story is completely otherwise and he believes that poetry in general lacks the multi-voices seen and met in the novel. This means that poetry for him is a piece of art locked in the past and

not open to progress and development as far as discourse is concerned. Nevertheless, Bakhtin himself acknowledges the fact that dialogism cannot be confined to the novel and that poetry in all its forms can have that characteristic. For this reason, he philosophizes upon ‘words’ and ‘concepts’: “an active understanding, one that assimilates the word under consideration into a conceptual system, that of the one striving to understand, establishes a series of complex relationships” (Qtd in Holquist: 282). Thus, he is referring clearly to a kind of internal dialogism, one that can encompass not only every literary genre, but every utterance at large.

A poem in fact, like its composer, is a living entity open to exchange and treatment among a number of characters each one of whom can have a thumbprint over its message and goal. The poem is, further, prone to social context of its recital and receipt as well; it is recited by someone at a specific social and even psychological situation that calls for much attention and scrutiny, sung or read by someone else with the same points in mind. It is, therefore, polyphonic in principle and reality in its different forms including even lyrical poetry, a form that suffered greatly from Bakhtin’s critique. The reader, context, social and psychological state of the receiver or reader and, in fact, all the other accompanying elements are relevant to the poem and integral to its production. In this respect, James De Sullivan writes:

I insist that there is no text at all without some sort of artefact or performance, something available to the senses. Even if there is some unitary lyric language at the heart of the poem, we must encounter it through the codes of the artefact that bears it and the social context, the semiotically rich situation in which we encounter it. Our encounters with poetry are always heteroglot; they always lie within a

series of quotation marks (Qtd in Scanlon & Engbers: 141).

By this conclusion, he could be put in the state of not only responding to but even rejecting Bakhtin's antagonism towards poetry in general and the lyric in particular. Poetry in fact like Bakhtin's favorable genre, i.e., the novel, can show the word's internal and external dialogism, albeit not as straightforward as the novel, at least as far as lyric is concerned. Dialogism, then, should not be taken on the surface level of its denotation as it is the case with Bakhtin who thinks that "the world of poetry . . . is always illuminated by one unitary and indisputable discourse" (286); rather, it can encompass a host of other associations including self-consciousness, answerability, and addressivity. It could be for these reasons that Bakhtin contradicts himself and reluctantly acknowledges the features that he long attributed solely to the novel, to poetry as well, "we continually embrace as typical the extreme to which poetic genres aspire; in concrete examples of poetic works it is possible to find features fundamental to prose" (Ibid:287). These self-contradictory tendencies and stark inconsistency ask for minute attention and accurate observation where a kind of agreement may be achieved; and this is the main point of this present attempt and work.

II. Polyphonic and Multivocal Modern English Lyrics

It is established that the modern and contemporary poetry tends to simplicity and colloquiality in its mode of expression to guarantee the widest range of recipients for its message; and this goes along Bakhtin's concept who states in this respect, that this characteristic "is essentially a phenomenon of interrelation and interaction" (284). This interrelation and interaction necessarily pave the way for the modern poet towards what

Bakhtin liked to call 'novelization' since it frees him from the restraints of form, rhythm, rhyme, and a host of other classical and neo-classical elements. This development provides the modern poets with wider spaces and opportunities because it enables them to include different themes, subjects, techniques, and most importantly, different voices. What is interesting in the modern and contemporary polyphony is its existence in the heart of a supposedly unitary-voiced form of poetry, the lyric, in all its varied types like the mask lyric, the dramatic monologue, the expressive lyric, the dramatic lyric, hymns, psalms, and sonnets, to mention just a few kinds. This non-popular existence is achieved through the poet's strategy in building up the poem through equalizing the different and conflicting voices within the text where the persona's voice, the poet's voice, and the recipient's one, are struggling for power. It is this strategy that embodies the modern and contemporary poems and transforms them into novelized poems as Bakhtin liked to nominate.

The Irish woman poet Eavan Boland (1944 - 2020) exemplifies this concept well in "The Harbour" from *In Time of Violence* (1995). She starts the poem in the way Bakhtin's favoured genre, i.e., the novel starts: "This harbour was made by art and force. / And called Kingstown and afterwards Dun Laoghaire" (Boland: 246). The unidentified speaker of these two lines and the stanza at large, is supposed to be the poet herself speaking in a poetic language and seems as a unitary self-to-self speech; yet, it encompasses more than this superficial image. Beside the speaker's voice and point of view, there are other explicit and implicit views that could be deduced from the intended message of the poem. The implicit poetic voice supposes at least an understood recipient or target which is literarily called addressee; and this is what

Ismail Garba means when he states that “in addition to the speaking person, there is always the presence of the person spoken to. Any response or its expectation arising out of that person being spoken to, may be seen as an implicit point of view which is noticed more or less within a given poem” (241). Boland’s voice, then, is shared by the hidden and unheard voices of the addressees. The opening stanza, however, does not make that possibility clearly noticeable, since even the much expected ‘lyric I’ in the poem does not make any show and this keeps the reader at a loss about the real voice of the poem. But the neutral beginning is suddenly interrupted by an ‘us’ instead of the normally expected ‘lyric I’ in the second stanza “Lord be with us say the makers of a nation. / Lord, look down say the builders of a harbour” (Ibid).

Boland is aware of the kind of poem she penned, yet it seems more than a dramatic monologue that is originally intended. The unidentified speaker of the first stanza, supposedly Boland herself, is replaced by a broader voice of the pubs. This sudden transformation takes the identity of the poetic speaker into a further complicated stage. Between the voice of the completely hidden speaker in the first stanza and the further complicated ‘we’ of the second one, critics may not be able to find a point of agreement. The identities of ‘the makers of a nation’ and ‘the builders of a harbour’ confuse the matter even greater. Boland’s diction, here, is of little help; the base verb ‘be’ and the imperative ‘look down’ least illuminate the characters of ‘the makers’ and ‘the builders’ respectively. So, the relationship between the poem and its characters or people witnesses an incessant change and development through the characters’ treatment of and reactions to the moving scenarios of the drama of the events

there. The opening line of the poem discloses this interaction as Lucy Collins states, “The harbour conveys the dichotomy of safety and risk; made ‘by art and force’, it reveals Boland to be increasingly attuned to the necessity of these two processes’ (42). The speaker’s art, then, stands opposite to the complicated denotation of the other party’s force, which forms a cycle in the overall assembly of voices in the poem. The matter of addressivity, here, is understood within the general image of the conflicting voices among whom the addressee remains a crucial point of attention and interest, since it decides to a great extent, the aim and influence of the message sent. But it is not always easy to disclose that addressee as William Waters states, “who is speaking (or writing) to whom, in what context? It is difficult to answer these basic pragmatic questions with respect to a poem . . . In an important sense, after all, whether a poem can be said to address its reader depends as much on the individual reader as it does on the individual text (Qtd in Scalon & Engbers: 99).

This view is seen, here, in Boland’s equivocal beginning and it is extended to the second stanza and, in fact, to the poem as a whole. It is in the final stanza where the burgeoning speaker comes to the fore:

And by me. I am your citizen: composed of
your fictions, your compromise, I am
a part of your story and its outcome.
And ready to record its contradictions.
(Boland: 214).

The first-person speaker, here, again calls for much scrutiny as the quote above alludes to. The appearance is, however, accompanied by an elusive apostrophe in a second person singular or plural. But before that, a lyric poet, most critics agree, tries to show that he/she is addressing himself/herself; yet, in most of them, the apostrophic addressee complicates

and even refutes their claim. Even if the first-person speaker, here, is the poet; still the character of the apostrophic 'you' is in need of observation and inspection. It has no clear voice in the way the speaking 'I' does; yet the whole case and the significance of the poem lies there. This closing stanza reveals some internal dialogue within the self where the apostrophe replaces one of the conversing selves.

This 'I' and 'we' dichotomy covers many of Boland's poems in different collections. In *Object Lessons: The Life of the Woman and the Poet in Our Time* (1996) for instance, the title of the poem touches upon the same concept where the duality of the Self-Other inhabits the innermost of the 'lyric I'. The maneuvering 'object' in the title 'Object lessons' does not pave the way anywhere towards the intended message and therefore, attaining its depth needs much clairvoyance. The second person addressee of the opening lines promises some clues: "It was yours / your coffee mug. Black / with a hunting scene on the side (Ibid: 167). Yet, Boland keeps the identity of the addressee unknown throughout the poem; thus, creating a kind of marriage between the lyric 'I' and the intended addressee which forms the outer image of the poem on the one hand, and the growing self-awareness and self-division in her psyche on the other hand. Lucy Collins stresses this aspect when she writes "Boland's interest in the hidden lives of her female relatives, and the composite nature of women's identity more generally, is matched by a growing awareness of the self-division that is an inevitable part of this identity" (28). The self-division above was most probably caused-as it could be inferred from her career- by objectifying women in life and literature, including herself, in her early life on the one hand; and feeling of estrangement that haunted her in London and even at home in Ireland on the other hand. The apostrophic

'you' in the first and the last stanzas of the poem which ensures a dialogic identity to the poem, is in fact an emblematic lyrical feature since it stands to the 'other' self, the 'other' that Boland tries to get rid of.

This duality or multiplicity of voices inhabits most, if not all, modern lyrics though, may be, without drawing much attention by critics and writers. The African-American poet, dramatist, essayist, critic, and activist LeRoi Jones/ Amiri Baraka (1934- 2014) is one of the writers, a number of whose poems disclose this feature. "An Agony. As Now" from *The Dead Lecturer* (1964), is an example in case. The poet starts the 45-line lyric with a quite unusual title that is split into two parts separated by a period, hinting at a kind of duality. But it seems that his psychological status pulled him towards a spontaneous beginning in a fit of rage and explosion; taking into consideration that the poem was written in 1964, a critical period in his life which was associated with the Civil Rights Movement led by Malcolm X (1925-1965). In his *Autobiography*, the poet describes his social status at that time beautifully:

So, this was a time, I think, of transition. From the cooled-out reactionary 50's, the 50's of the Cold War and McCarthyism and HUAC, to the late 50's of the surging civil rights movement. And I myself was a transitional figure, coming out of the brown world and its black sources but already yellowed out a bit by the Capstone employment agency on the Hill" (128).

All the quoted extracts from Baraka's poetry that follow, come from Paul Vangelisti, (ed). *Transbluency: The selected Poems of Amiri Baraka / LeRoi Jones* (1961-1995).

It is against this background that Baraka starts the poem with: "I am inside someone / who hates me.

This psychological complex is of critical significance for understanding the implicit

message behind the poem. The essential question, here, is related to the identity of the opposite character of the 'lyric I' who encompasses him. If the 'lyric I' is Baraka himself, then he should suffer from some type of schizophrenia. He actually was torn between the neutral and humanist person he liked to be in the first half of Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Notes on the one hand, and the black revolutionist he turned to as a result of the daily maltreatment and oppression he and his people used to face on the other hand. The next few lines illuminate this split further:

I look
out from his eyes. Smell
what fouled tunes come in
to his breath. Love his
wretched women.
(LL. 3-6).

The third person singular whom he looks out from, is no more than the other side of his own character; his outer self which 'hates' him. This hatred takes the shape of the songs he sings, the poems he recites, and the 'wretched' woman he loves. The internal dialogue is extended throughout the poem and the sternness of the speaker's emotion forces the third person singular to a more direct second person one in the fifth stanza, "The yes. You will, lost soul, say / 'beauty.' Beauty, practiced, as the tree" (LL. 29-30). The apostrophic 'you' is the antagonist to whom the speaker is an opponent. The silent 'you' seems to be as active as the 'lyric I' because it provokes the voice and emotion of its rival.

This internal battle started within Baraka's psyche as early as the beginning of the 1960s when he began a severe struggle to get rid of the white side in his psyche because, as Kristen Gallagher writes, "a belief common to Black nationalists of the era was that many who are phenotypically black are ideologically white,

therefore, divided against themselves" (www.jacket2.org). This double-identity caused Baraka a great deal of complication and numerous internal dialogues where the two sides of the same person are at war through non-stop disputes and clashes. The 'lyric I', here, is transformed into a killed and killer simultaneously; the speaking psyche at the time of composing the poem is toiling hard to kill his own past. The result of the psychological conflict, if succeeded, will be the birth of a new one, and consequently, a death is a must to enable the desired birth.

In "Letters and Numbers" from *Black Magic* (1969), the battle develops more, where the black Baraka challenges his own white self: "If you are not home, where / are you? Where'd you go?" (Baraka: 136). The split seems harmful and serious and causes the speaker much agony and suffering in retrospect; it is this severe combat that pushes him towards a decisive step or at least a decisive interrogation, "I can't say who I am / unless you agree I am real" (Ibid). The lines prove the existence of an obvious addressivity where the first-person speaker supposes and expects some kinds of response and so, it stands at odds to Bakhtin's view that "monologue is speech that is addressed to no one and does not presuppose a response" (Qtd in *Batstone*:100). Even if a lyric 'does not presuppose a response', it is part of the process of overhearing and enjoying the poet-speaker's voice which targets his/her psyche and consciousness that is, consequently, a form of internal dialogue, and this is exactly what the reader of "Letters and Numbers" faces from the first glance; double voices within, which are at war or opposition with each other and pulling in opposite directions. This discrepancy that forms the shape of the 'lyric I's' psychology, transforms the poem from a Bakhtinian monovocal entity into a dialogic and even multi-

voiced cry in search of his real identity and character. The speaker's status could be analyzed from another perspective; the addressee is Baraka's Afro-American people and he is seeking their approval of whether or not he actually regained his real black character. The apostrophic address shows clearly what a complicated situation the speaker is in. He has to find real addressees in order to reach the reality that he is desperately looking for; and to win that goal, he has to become a member of the addressees' group; a destination he is not sure that he won or yet; that is why he is looking for an external consent about it.

In these two poems, and in fact in all his transitional period poems between 1960 and 1967, the poet is in a continuous search for his real identity; so, as Walton Muyumba states, "his transitional poems articulate blackness as a process of othering {italics is the writer's} the self (27).

This process is progressed further in "The Liar", again from *The Dead* lecturer. The beginning of the poem shows the speaker's confusion about his own social status, "What I thought was love / in me, I found a thousand instances / of fear" (LL. 1-3: 113). Reminiscent of the beginning of "An Agony. As Now", the speaker is still afraid of his other self; afraid of the inconsistency between the internal and the external characters within him. The psychological conflict is intensified in the concluding lines of the poem, where the implicit dialogue replaces or shares the explicit inner battle:

When they say, "It is Roi
Who is dead?" I wonder
Who will they mean?
(Ibid).

These lines confuse the status further with respect to the character of the first-person speaker and the third-person plural speaker as well. Which 'Roi' do 'they' refer to as dead? The

ascending young moderate American persona who did not have any idea about the ongoing racism at home? The grown-up man who is discharged from the Air Force? The Beat LeRoi? The Greenwich Village activist? Or the Black Arts Movement activist?

That confusion is stretched even to the 'lyric I'. Is it the American White punks who consider 'Roi' as 'dead' or his Black people? But the case does not make a great difference to the readers who are aware about Baraka's career and its incessant inconsistency; since the poem belongs to the transitional period of his literary occupation where his alien character was torn between the two extreme poles. The free indirect speech, here, moves the reader or the opposite party, intrinsically, into a position where he/they are in a state of being part of an implicit dialogue. The direct discourse of addressivity is, then, received and reflected by an indirect discourse of answerability.

This dichotomy prevails in many other of Baraka's poems throughout the different stages of his poetic career, especially in his *The Dead Lecturer* and after, since "Most of the poems in *The Dead Lecturer*, then, deal with the poet's efforts to abandon his bohemian voice and replace it with a stronger and more ethnic and political voice. He looked for a functional and committed art as an instrument to serve the oppressed minority" (Murad: 235). One stark example from that collection is "Black Dada Nihilism". The poem, many critics of the Black Arts Movement assert, indicates Baraka's speedy movement towards black nationalism to the extent of extremism. Some critics attack the poem's political rhetoric and accuse it of weakening its aesthetic aspect, and there is reality here; yet, the further reality is that these two aspects do not accept dichotomy in Baraka's case, since his political development was accompanied by a parallel aesthetic one. It

was that very political development that generated multiple-voiced and agitating aestheticism like "Black Dada Nihilismus:

Black scream
and chant, scream,
and dull, un
earthly
hollering. Dada, bilious
what ugliness, learned
in the dome, colored holy
sh** (i call them sinned
or lost
burned masters
of the lost
nihil German killers
all our learned
art, 'member
what you said
money, God, power,
a moral code, so cruel
(Vangelisti: 99).

The different pronominal referents, here, are of critical significance for the overall message of the poem and its addresser Vs. addressee (s) implications. In addition to the guaranteed 'lyric I', the pronominal voices swing among I, our, you, and we by the end of the poem. The least problematic referent, there, could be the 'I' that is attributed to the 'lyric I' of the poem as a whole; while the 'you' and the 'we' call for much attention and interpretation. Some critics take the message on its face value and think that "the poem is addressed to Black nationalist Weltgeist, hence the litany of black rebels" (Kim: 347); an interpretation that is endowed with a great range of predictability, taking into consideration Baraka's ascending black consciousness and the struggle of his African - American people against the oppressive white dominance at that period. But minute scrutiny at the contents tell that the matter of the poet's audience remains allusive like the allusive style

of the poem itself. Lines like "Come up, black dada / nihilismus. Rape the white girls. Rape / their fathers. Cut the mothers' throat" (Ibid: 98) support Kim's view above; yet the poem is not so straightforward to be taken in and consumed by the black masses who were, in the main, the rank and file of the American society due to their historical and cultural status there. The message could be internal; where, the addresser and addressee are combined within one conflicting soul, especially that Baraka himself acknowledges this split or internal conflict in his Autobiography, "It was as if I had two distinct lives, one a politically oriented life, with a distinct set of people I knew and talked to, the other the artsy bohemian life of the village" (168). This internal conflict is discerned further through the contradictory beliefs in the same concept and status. The money, God, and power that are considered moral by the young neutral Baraka, are perceived as 'sinned or lost burned masters of the lost nihil German killers', by the Baraka who is in a transitional period and on a move towards black nationalism. These allusions can be perceived only by the learned and discriminated side of Baraka's psyche more than the wide black pubs that some critics regard them to be the addressees of the hallucinating speaker of the poem. This trend prevails in a large number of Baraka's poems especially in those written in the transitional period onward in his poetic career.

III. Polyphonic and Multivocal Modern Kurdish Lyrics

As far as the lyric as a genre, forms a great range of the Kurdish modern poems; the matter of the existence of monophony and polyphony in it, like the case of the Irish and American examples above, is prone to discussion and scrutiny. One of such poems is titled 'Bagha' and written by the poet, activist, and politician Nabard Jaff (1948- 1994). The poet had come in

touch with the English language and Persian literature when he was a student in Tehran university, and this enabled him to become familiar with the English poetry either directly or through the translated texts into Persian or Arabic that he learned better when he lived in Baghdad in the 1960s.

The title which can be translated as 'whoredom' refers to the corruption that, according to him, is historically associated with Baghdad, especially during the eras of the Umayyad (661–750 C.E) and Abbasid (750 – 1258) dynasties, while the poem as a whole is the reflection of the 'lyric I's' crying out against his status and consequently his people's status under the rule of the personified Baghdad; therefore, he starts it with an address to the apostrophic city:

I will snooze in your bosom,
With bosoms on sides of
The numb and grave Tigris,
And knit my life's toil. *
(Jaff: 13).

*This and all the other Kurdish extracts that follow are translated by the researcher himself.

Reminiscent of Baraka's poem above, the 'lyric I' is addressing the personified and apostrophic Baghdad; the capital of, he wants to stress, every type of corruption and misery his people suffered and suffer from. The poet wants to establish an effective communication or an exchange of ideas with his audience and consequently with his society as a whole; an implicit communication veiled under the shelter of addressing the silent and non-reactive Baghdad. This 'veiled' and explicit address infers that the versification, here, is simply an engagement in an efficient and influential dialogue with the poet's society. The 'lyric I' of the poem can be said to play the contradictory roles of subject and object as the Kenyan linguist and critic, Njogu Kimani (b.1964) states

in his influential book *Reading Poetry as Dialogue: An East African Literary Tradition* "it will be noted that the speaker can be both a subject and an object of a discourse in so far as he or she is capable of distancing the inner self from the outer self. The inner self in that case becomes an 'other' (inverted comma is mine). What can be witnessed in such situations is an objectification of the self in order to establish a dialogic relation with the self" (Qtd in Egya: 82). This objectification takes another form in the following lines:

On a Mount top
Siachamana,
Was emotionally invoking
In my heart
spark and Heat.
He said: Oh, brother,
Where are you heading
On this lengthy road?
To a slip-up
You're betrayed.
(Jaff: 33).

The imaginary interaction and communication, here, moves the lyric altogether into a dialogic sphere and the speaker into an object rather than a subject. The abstract 'Siachamana' (which is a folkloric song in one of the dialects of the Kurdish language) is no more, here, than the 'other' in Kimani's statement above, i.e., the persona's innermost or inside character that addresses the other side of the same persona, a psychological conflict clarified in Baraka's poems above. The internal conflict, then, is between, to use Freud's nomenclature, the Eros and the Thanatos of the persona's psyche expressed in a scenario-like image. The invocation kindles the hidden internal war in him where the pure folkloric side of his psyche stands opposite to the oppressed and modernized side that is subject to a process of

objectification. The personified 'Siachamana' plays the role of a speaker within a speaker, especially that 'he' addresses a 'brother' in an attempt, it seems, to dissuade him from befriending and embracing a city and a residence where he is already 'betrayed'.

The complex internal conflict leads the poet and consequently the persona or the 'lyric I' to a decisive step that results in leaving Baghdad altogether and going to Kurdistan Region, the homeland of the personified 'Siachamana' and the 'lyric I's' own homeland as well. In this, the word 'betrayal' could be considered elemental and far reaching, when the speaker addresses Baghdad through a third voice in the poem:

A vigilant, black-eyed girl,
A woeful, black skirt girl,
Harsh and active
Says: a day on the way,
I'm sure that day,
Will come for the future of this Baghdad.
On that day
An oppressed guy,
Simple and silent
Will put an undecorated quest
To the blind eyes
Of the castrated literati,
She asks and says:
Since our city
Calmly
Like a warm and soft kiss,
Was melting,
.....
What did you bring to this city?
What did you plant in history?
(Ibid: 40-41).

The extract seems to be reflecting what James William Johnson calls "the lyric of emotion and feeling" (qtd in Scalon:8). It also can reflect what the poet Gregory Orr (b.1947) states about the self and the lyric I: "We are creatures whose volatile inner lives are both mysterious

to us and beyond our control. How to respond to the strangeness and unpredictability of our own emotional being? One important answer to this question is the personal lyric, the 'I' poem dramatizing inner and outer experience (4).

The speaker in the above lines seems to be caught in a crisis of both the inconvenience of his present status and the impulsiveness of the future one. His mouthpiece, the Baghdad girl, foreshadows what will happen to the then present ruling system exemplified by the metonymic Baghdad. The prophesy is based upon the harsh and ill-treatment of the successive ruling systems in Baghdad back from the time of the Caliphates up to Saddam Hussein's regime when the poem was composed. The representing voice does not complain only against what has been done to the peoples throughout the history of that country and empire; rather it stresses the normal and expected result of such conducts. And this, necessarily, reflects the speaker's all over awareness about the history of his people and the other peoples who were ruled by the personified Baghdad on the one hand, and his firm belief in the certainty of the dying out of such compartments on the other hand. It is this belief and prophesy that pushed the speaker towards another move which is expressed through a direct address:

Tonight, I will tear
Your sky's wrap,
Will sweep wish's sweat
Like Babak¹
With my blood.
Tonight, I consciously
Will be an eagle... and leave you.
Will sing with a full throat
Over Zagros²
An Ahura hora³
(Jaff: 84-85)

1: A Persian person who rebelled against the Arab's rule for (22) years, and when he was captured; the Abbasside Caliph, Al Mutassim ordered his hands to be cut before hanging him. He rinsed his pale face with his bloody hands saying to his captive: I know that because of losing too much blood my face has turned pale, so, I swept it lest you should think that my pale face is because I am afraid of death.

2: A series of mountains in the Kurdish parts of Iraq, Iran, and Turkey.

3: Originally a hymn sung for the worship of Ahura Mazda, the supreme divinity of the Zoroastrian faith.

The persona turns, once more, to an active subject in a state of rage and abhorrence against the personified, the oppressive, and the symbolic capital at the same time. But the frustration does not push the persona to react in a way that can be equivalent to the act itself; rather, it suffices just to make him be carried away from the center and source of the cruelty, i.e., Baghdad to where he can enjoy a relative freedom and pleasure where he can sing 'Over Zagros' the cultural folkloric song, 'An Ahura hora'. These lines draw a clear separating line between the poet-persona and the subjectified and personified oppressor which is no more than Baghdad, the center and source of all the miseries the persona and his people suffered from. And this step happened in reality because the poet left Baghdad and settled in Erbil, the capital of Kurdistan Region.

Jaff's contemporaneous, Abdulla Pashew (b. 1954) follows a similar path and strategy in a good number of his lyrics, especially the patriotic and the love ones. In "Acknowledgement" composed in 1992 from *The Cloud is My Horse and Mountains My Stirrup* (1980-2005), he creates the speakers and receivers within himself and his own body: "My hand told its fingers: / Let you be cut in the

field / But not to be bought" (202). Although the free indirect speech of the first line seems as if the poet-persona is distancing himself from the action and interaction within the poem; yet, the reality is quite contrary. The metonymic strategy is used to enable a smooth dialogue between the poet-persona and his innermost and conscience. Raising fingers, for the poet's purpose here, is a symbol of resistance and rejection of any unwanted act or decision and so, they should either be raised or amputated 'in the field'. This 'either' 'or' probability, the poet-persona wants to stress, is the only strategy he believes in but not the only one that exists; rather, fingers can survive amputation if their owners are ready to give up the rights for which they were raised in the beginning, but the poet-persona does not advise this strategy as an escape from punishment or ill results. In fact, he puts this last chance at the place of zero expectation, since he does not believe in abandonment of rights for any reward whatever it is.

The poet-persona refers to another internal argument where the mouth and tongue are the key players. Unlike the opening stanza which was a tercet; in this one, through a Cinquain, mouth and tongue are in an indirect ordering and ordered debate:

My mouth told the tongue:
I am proud of yer chattiness,
Don't hesitate,
Speak on,
Otherwise, I'll cut you off.

(Ibid: 202-203).

Although talkativeness is normally an unwanted and unliked feature, it becomes a completely desired one here because it stands opposite to being silent and inactive in occasions that necessitate shouting and crying out against injustice and oppression. The poet's people were suffering greatly due to Saddam

Hussein's regime and its procedures against the semi-independent region of Kurdistan in northern Iraq after it was liberated from the Iraqi troops in 1991, especially its economic sanctions, in addition to its prior atrocities throughout many years against the people of Kurdistan. So, the addressee could be every Kurd wherever he/she lives and every non-Kurd who lives in or belongs to Kurdistan; whereas the addresser is the poet persona not the metonymic mouth. This ambiguity which is the characteristic of the majority of the Kurdish poetry, plays an essential role in the poet's intended message as one critic remarks: "in the modern poetry, including the Kurdish one, ambiguity includes ideological resistance and rejection and the poet uses it to raise his resistant and rejecting voice" (Mahmood: 185).

A deeper interpretation of the extract could bring about yet further voices beside those of the interactive metonymic participants and the poet-persona's voice. The speaker, here, could be any Kurd who raises voice against atrocities and oppression, and if so, the 'my' that opens the two previous stanzas, the poet-persona, his hand and his mouth, are independent speakers and voices in this supposedly univocal poem.

This multivoicedness in lyrical poems is carried even further in myriad poems by another Kurdish modernist poet, Haseeb Qaradaghi (1929-1997). Like his contemporaries, he enriches his lyrics with voices of different characters related to the events he experienced personally or those he witnessed. In an emotional short lyric entitled "My Hand" for instance; multivoicedness, addressivity, and bitter taste of the persona's feeling are comingled. The poem, composed on January, 28 of 1988 seems to foreshadow the catastrophic events that shocked not only the poet and his people but the world at large when Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq bombarded

the Kurdish city of Halabja and a large area of other towns and villages in Kurdistan region chemically. The atrocities of the regime that much preceded that huge event, were sufficient enough for the poet to foresee and expect such disasters. The persona, most probably the poet himself, addresses his own hand: "I told my hand: why / whatever pen I make you carry / you start shuddering?" (Qaradaghi:159). The time span of the period when the poem was penned tells much about the status of the persona's psyche and innermost that pushed towards reflecting what was going on deep in his soul. The harsh treatment the poet's people were subjected to by the tyrant regime then and his inability to give it mouth openly, force the speaker to be answerable to it through a maneuvering strategy and this is what one critic of Bakhtin's theory seems to express, "despite Bakhtin's focus on dialogicity {sic} and heteroglossia as primary ethical modes of utterance, poetry's very tendency toward monologicity {sic} may paradoxically enable its ethical stance . . . the poet must become answerable for every element of the act of his poetic utterance (Eskin: 387). Qaradaghi's answerability in the poem, here, takes the form of externalizing the internal where the pen discloses what the innermost of the man likes to publicize. It is the same desire for answerability that extends the externalized internal message through which the personified pen expresses what the real person intends: "He said, please / beside your spot / look, look, what do ye see / hands without finger / fingers are cut off" (Qaradaghi: 159).

Whose fingers are cut off? By who? Why? These are less relevant to the topic of the work. What is relevant is who is the addresser and who is the addressee? Who is the ignorant person who seeks information and who is the knowing party who is supposed to provide the answers? The

conflict is, in fact, internal and the dialogic nature of the poem does not refute its monologic compartment since two opposing parties compete in it though only on the face level and so, the poem just like its likes, encompasses both monologism and dialogism simultaneously in addition to addressivity, answerability, and multivoicedness.

This conflicting and confusing interconnectedness gives this poem and every other one where it occurs, a sense of internal battle where opposing forces are at war and the matter of deciding the winner is usually problematic which asks for deep and careful interpretation. Yet, the one sure case in it remains the idea that within the lyrics that are supposedly monologic, dialogic and multivoiced conditions peep out.

Conclusions

After tackling a number of poetic texts by modern and postmodern poets from different social and political backgrounds and even different continents, some understanding was accumulated in regard to the existence of voice(s) in the poems under study. One of the outstanding inferences of the study is related to the social, political, racial, and even psychological backgrounds of the composers of the poems that affected the nature of the texts and the different voices that arise out of the seemingly one-voiced composition. The reflection of the political, social, and even psychological status of Evan Boland, Amiri Baraka, Nabard Jaff, Abdulla Pashew, and Haseeb Qaradaghi respectively seems to be critical in the different conflicting voices that can easily be deduced if the bodies of the poems are studied deeply. In other words, the study stresses that such backgrounds were at least one of the reasons of multivoicedness that are seen in the studied texts because it is supposed that the internal conflicts that

replaced explicit and direct dialogic confrontations between the lyric I of the poems and the opposing party, is a natural result of the inability of the speakers in the poems to directly and openly address the oppressor or the tyrant that he/she is furious at. It is also concluded that the strategy of using implicit speakers or actors in the poems is achieved on purpose for reasons that are related to the different backgrounds of the poet that are referred to earlier.

The other finding of the work is that Bakhtin's hesitation and indecisiveness as to the absence or presence of dialogism in poetry is clearly a result of his conclusion that poetry cannot be banned from the dialogism that he exclusively attributed to the Novel. The concept of 'novelization' he used is certainly a maneuvering way out of the strict situation he put himself in by restricting dialogism only to the novel. A further finding of the paper is that the range and clarity of multivoicedness in the studied texts lies more in the Kurdish ones due to the severe oppression the poets and consequently their people suffered from in the Iraqi part of Kurdistan by the successive Iraqi regimes until 1991 when Kurdistan got a relative freedom as a result of driving the Iraqi forces out of the region. That situation was a great obstacle that prevented the poets from expressing what they felt and suffered openly. And the dates of composing the Kurdish poems studied here, in the middle of the 1980s, prove the accuracy of this viewpoint better. This conclusion can serve in the case of Baraka's poems as well but to a lesser range and degree due the difference between the political situations of the Kurds in Iraq and the African-Americans in the USA.

References:

- 1- Bakhtin, M. M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Edited by Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press. 1981. Print.
- 2- Baraka, Amiri. *Autobiography of LeRoi Jones*. New York: Freundlich Books. 1984.
- 3- Batstone, William W. "Catullus and Bakhtin: The Problems of a Dialogic Lyric" in *Bakhtin and the Classics*, by Robert Bracht Branham. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2002. Print.
- 4- Boland, Eavan. *New Collected Poems*. London: W.W. Norton & Company. 2005. Print.
- 5- Borakayee, Sidiq. *Mezhwe Wezhai Kurdi (History of the Kurdish Literature)*. Vol.3. Erbil: Aras Printing Press. Iraq. 2010.
- 6- Collins, Lucy. *Contemporary Irish Women Poets*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press. 2015. Print.
- 7- De Man, Paul. "Dialogue and Monologism". *Poetics Today*. Duke University Press. Vol. 4. No. 1. 1983. Pp. 99-107.
- 8- Egya, Sule Emmanuel. "Poetry as Dialogue: A reading of recent Anglophone Nigerian poetry". *e- cadernos*. CES. Vol. 12. Issue. 12. 2011. Pp. 75- 92.
- 9- Eskin, Michael. "Bakhtin on Poetry". *Poetics Today*. Vol. 21. Issue. 2. (Summer 2000). pp. 379-391
- 10- Gabra, Ismail B. "The Critic, the Text and the Context: Three Approaches to Carol Ann Duffy's 'Psychopath'". *Neohelicon*. Vol. 28. Issue. 1. 2006. Pp. 239-252.
- 11- Gallagher, Kristen. "On LeRoi Jones, Preface to a Twenty-Volume Suicide Notes". 2010
- 12- Holquist, Michael (ed). *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*. Texas:University of Texas press.1981. Print.
- 13- Jaff, Nabard. *Bagha (Baghdad)*. Hawler (Erbil): Chapkhanai Roshinbere (Cultural Publishing Press). Iraqi Kurdistan region. Iraq. 1993. Print.
- 14- Kim, Won-gu. "In the Tradition: Amiri Baraka, Black Liberation, and Avant-Garde Praxis in the U.S.". *African American review*. Vol. 37. No. 2/3. Amiri Baraka issue (Summer-Autumn 2003). pp. 345- 363.
- 15- Mahmood, Azad Ahmad. *Buniati Zman La She'ri Hawcharkhi Kurdida (1985-2005)*. (Language Structure in the Kurdish Contemporary Poetry, 1985-2005). Erbil: Haji Hashim Press. Iraq. 2009.
- 16- Murad, Ibrahim Ali. *The Beat Generation: A Socio-Political Study*. Kermanshah: Kermanshah Publishing Press. 2019. Print.
- 17- Muyumba, Walton. "Improvising over the Changes: Improvisation as Intellectual and Aesthetic Practice in The Transitional Poems of LeRoi Jones/ Amiri baraka". *College Literature*. Vol. 34. No.1(Winter 2007). Pp. 23-51.
- 18- Orr, Gregory. *Poetry as Survival*. US: University of Georgia Press. 2002. Print.
- 19- Pashew, Abdulla. *Haspim Hawra U Rkefim Chia (1980-2005) (The Cloud is My Horse and Mountains My Stirrup (1980-2005)*. 4th Edition. Erbil: Rozhhalat Printing Press. Kurdistan/ Iraq. 2014.
- 20- -Garadaghi, Aza Hasseb and Hakeem Mala Saleh (eds). *Farhangi Kham (Grief Dictionary)*. Vol.2. Tehran: Tehran Printing Press. 2019. Print.
- 21- -Scanlon, Mara & Chad Engbers (ed). *Poetry and Dialogism: Hearing Over*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. 2014. Print.
- 22- -Vangelisti, Paul (ed). *Transbluency: The selected Poems of Amiri Baraka / LeRoi Jones (1961-1995)*. New York: Marsilio Publishers. 1995. Print.
- 23- -Watt, Ian. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding*. Los Angeles: University of California Press. 1976. Print.