



## Patriotic Poetry and Social Engagement: A Cross-Cultural Study of Jessie Pope's "Who's for the Game?" and Lami'a Abbas Amara's "Baghdad, You Are"

Asst. Prof. Shubbar Abdul Adil Mousa

University of Kufa - College of Arts -Iraq

[shubbar.alhamadani@uokufa.edu.iq](mailto:shubbar.alhamadani@uokufa.edu.iq)

**Abstract.** This detailed investigation combines a study of patriotic poetry with social engagement by comparing Jessie Pope's "Who's For The Game?" and Lami'a Abbas Amara's "Baghdad, You Are." and Lami'a Abbas Amara's "Baghdad, You Are." Through their separate cultural origins these poems establish separate perspectives about nationalism together with societal war consequences. Jessie Pope releases "Who's For The Game?" During World War I this poem showcases propaganda ideals through nationalistic messaging which simplicity and persuasive techniques create enthusiasm for national warfare. Through "Baghdad, You Are" Lami'a Abbas Amara depicts Baghdad as an emotional symbol which represents both cultural identity and its spiritual essentiality. The study examines these poetic works through cultural perspectives to analyze their role in mirroring society yet reveals how poetry enables opinion formation and prompts nationalism while analyzing patriotism's societal norms regarding warfare. An investigation into sacrifice alongside duty identity and loss across these literary pieces seeks to establish poetry's capabilities as a cultural fulfillment tool for social public commentary.

**Keywords:** Patriotic poetry, Jessie Pope, Lami'a Abbas Amara, National identity, War poetry, Cultural significance.





**المخلص.** تتناول هذه الدراسة الشعر الوطني مع الارتباط الاجتماعي خلال مقارنة قصيدة الشاعرة الإنكليزية جيسي بوب " من لالعة " وقصيدة الشاعرة العراقية لميعة عباس عمارة " بغداد أنت " ومن خلال أصليهما الثقافيين المختلفين انتجت هاتان القصيدتين منظورين منفصلين حول مفهوم الوطنية وعواقب الحرب الاجتماعية. كتبت جيسي بوب قصيدتها ابان الحرب العالمية الأولى حيث جسدت قصيدتها مفاهيم الاعلام والدعاية من خلال ارسال رسالة وطنية باعتماد تقنيات البساطة والاقناع لاشعال بمشاعر الحماسة لدى الشباب وزجهم في الحرب . بينما جسدت الشاعرة لميعة عباس عمارة في قصيدة بغداد انتي الرمز العاطفي الذي مثل كلا من الهوية الثقافية واصولها الروحية. كما تتخصص هذه الدراسة هذان العمال الشعريان من خلال المنظور الثقافي لابرار دورهما في عكس صورة واضحة عن المجتمع وعن إمكانية الشعر في تشكيل الآراء وتجسيد البعد الوطني والتأثير في فكرة الحرب. كما تظهر مفاهيم التضحية وهوية الواجب والخسارة إمكانية الشعر وارتباطه الاجتماعي من خلال هذه الاعمال.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الشعر الوطني، لميعة عباس عمارة، الهوية الوطنية، شعر الحرب، الأهمية الثقافية.

### Introduction

Patriotism or national consciousness as a topic in poetry is a multifaceted issue that raises the question of an individual's relationship to their nation, culture, and history. There are the following aspects of identification: cultural memory, language, individual and collective identity, political conditions, emigration and deportation, environment and geography, memory and history, unity, and heterogeneity. It follows that poets borrow from their nation's experiences, history, and legends or develop a sense of culture through historical occurrences, symbols, and customs (Sillitoe, 2015). In turn, language and dialect can be a powerful mode of claiming national identity, making use of native or regional dialects as a method of breaking through to the viewer. The clash between individual and collective identity is a topic that may involve themes of exclusion or assimilation. Nationality is associated with issues such as colonialism, war, and oppression; thus, poets may either condemn or endorse their country's political climate. This case shows that there is room for



unity and diversity in a nation– that there must be room for the many voices that comprise the whole country (Urys et al., 2021).

Cultural, social, and political messages, values, and beliefs are first expressed and passed down through poetry. Throughout the centuries and across the nation, poets have employed their material to critique the societies they live in and embrace patriotic sentiments. Two women, Jessie Pope, a British poet who wrote in the first half of the twentieth century, and Lami'a Abbas Amara, an Iraqi poet of the twenty-first century, perform this function of poetry in radically different ways. Because of the differences in culture and history, both authored works are primarily concerned with nationalism, warfare, and social change. Although Pope's poetry was viewed as British propaganda of World War I, Amara's poems interpret political and cultural issues of Iraq to provide a critical insight into the themes of patriotism and resistance. This work also seeks to compare their poetic voices and thus understand their works as mirrors or windows into their worlds.

Jessie Pope became an amazon of World War I poetry, whose judgments encouraged young men to join service and fight for the motherland. She has authored some works, including "Who's for the Game?" and "The Call," despite their more straightforward word choice, rhyme, and meter, urged readers to act gallantly. At the pinnacle of her working career, Pope was considered a pretty helpful war propagandist of the kind who wrote pitches that advocated for war as noble. But her work has since transformed into a controversial one. Scholars have argued that despite being one of the most famous pieces of war literature, Pope situates himself in a diametrically opposite camp from war poets such as Owen or Sassoon (Smith, 2021). This binary accentuates the contradictions between the romanticized image of nationalism and warfare, again, which this writer loves to explore.

However, the great contemporary Arab poet Lami'a Abbas Amara's work naturally responded to the upheaval and often portrayed the conflict. Uncertainty is the essence of the people of Iraq. Her poems include "I Am Iraqi," a hymn to the homeland, and "Baghdad, you," an ode to the nation traumatized by political repression and social injustice. Living in an age of war, revolution, and dictatorship, Amara's aesthetic and political voice enunciates tropes of hope and survival on the national level while grounding them in the personal. That work is especially valuable for the representations of gender because it is a socially oriented narrative that presents women in the context of Iraqi nationalistic struggles against oppression (Shalaby, 2023). Despite being





a loving wife and mother, Amara's voice is a more questioning and complex version of patriotism than Pope's.

### Historical and Cultural Context

Different cultural and historical backgrounds were a determining factor in these poets' writings. Jessie Pope was a British poet and journalist for the first year of the Great War. Her poems are linked to jingoism and a militaristic narrative to join and glorify war. Published in popular magazines like Punch, Poems like "Who's for the Game?" and "War Girls" establish Pope's adroit portrayal of nationalism in early twentieth-century Great Britain. To the public, she was an inspiring woman using poetry instead of politics to empower women. Still, critics accused her of trivializing the theme of war, a message of warfare not as dark as War poets such as Wilfred Owen presented (Ferguson, 2018).

When considering Pope's work, one must focus on the British wartime mentality and its media and literary contributions. Another aspect of her work reflected the Edwardian period conservatism, unpacked through gender roles; women were supposed to play supportive roles in the war through encouragement, not fighting. Jessie Pope began writing poetry during the period that saw a lot of nationalism and militarism in Britain during World War I. The war was considered somewhat a just and rightful cause, which is how the government defines it. Thus, propaganda actively promoted The people's struggle, and Pope's poems fit into this national call to arms (Todman, 2020). Not only did her verses encourage enlistment, but they were firmly rooted in the social norms of the time regarding gender. Since women could not fight in most cases as the demand for the war increased, they became the supportive force for the men, encouraging them to go to the front line.

On the other hand, Lami'a Abbas Amara was a famous poet of Iraq and one of the key personalities in modern Arabic literature. The social-political instability of Iraq was the major where she wrote her works, which frequently addressed issues of identity, social justice, and politics. Amara, a poet from Baghdad, Iraq, focuses on the versatile social structure of the country and the effects of colonialism, modernization, and civil war. In her poems like "I Am Iraqi" and "To Iraq," Amara reads political oppression and social injustices to paint an alive and emotionally Charged picture. Her work appeared when Iraq changed from a monarchy in 1958 to several years of political turmoil under authoritarian regimes. This case is evident since she is a female poet in a strictly patriarchal society; thus, her writing attains cultural relevance (Ahmad, 2019).





Amara's poetry conveys the history of Iraq in the 20th century, which Amara vividly depicts as an age of colonizing influence, political upheavals, and wars. Amara was active at a time when Iraq was undergoing all sorts of changes as it tried to come to terms with external pressures and internal cleavage. Her works focus on issues such as authoritarianism, corruption, and the human price of war and share a social commentary on her nation's problems (Al-Dabbagh, 2005). Unlike Pope, who used poetry to support the mainstream nationalistic existing culture, Amara, on the other hand, uses poetry to resist the mainstream culture advocating for change, mainly in terms of justice and equity.

#### **Patriotism: Through A Call to Arms vs Through Grief and Loss**

Jessie Pope (1868-1941) was an English poet during the Great War. She wrote many poems encouraging British men to join the war. "Who's for the Game?" is one of the poems in which she describes the war service through her poem. It should be noted that the poem aims to teach patriotism among young men and glorify the war. Using her unambiguous techniques, Pope builds a basis for an appeal to the nation's pride and thus equates patriotism with virtue and performance. This picture is painted with words in a lively, rhythmic, and merry key, and the author does not hesitate to ask questions directly to the reader (Araujo, 2014).

The first stanza of the poem is a series of questions,  
Who's for the game, the biggest that's played,  
The red crashing game of a fight?  
Who'll grip and tackle the job unafraid?  
And who thinks he'd rather sit tight?" (Pope, 1916, p. 27).

One feels that Pope built an air of prestige, enthusiasm, and "who" as a tag for community mobilization by deploying rhetorical questions. Claims of patriotism and allegiances were repeatedly manifested in marching and drilling to support the notion that patriotism is an action people must do. It is not merely a call for recruitment but a drama of nation-making for boys to volunteer and be patriotic and heroic by joining the army. The poem shows that enlisting in the military is good or heroic.

On the other hand, Lami'a Abbas Amara's poem "Baghdad, You Are," composed in 1977, has a far easier tone of patriotism. While the war in poetry by Pope seems to be something to behold and proudly look forward to engaging in, Amara's poem depicts the deep, profound pride and feelings of sticking to the land that she grew up in. That is why Amara's patriotism was in the glory



of the fight not to be away from the motherland. This poem defines Iraq as a mother and her land as a sacred grave she wishes not to leave. She describes her spirit of sorrow and patriotism by saying,

أَقُولُ سَاهَجِرُ كُلَّ الْعِرَاقِ وَلَسْتُ بِأَوَّلِ صَبِّ هَجَرَ  
فِيهِتَفُّ بِي هَاجِسٌ لَا يُرَدُّ... مَكَانَكَ، إِنَّ الْمَنَايَا عَبَّرُ  
هَنَا تُقَتِّلِينَ... هَنَا تُدْفِنِينَ، أَمَّا السَّرِي فَمَنَايَا أُخَرُ  
وَتَعْصَفُ بَغْدَادَ فِي جَانِحِي... أَعَاصِيرُ مَنْ وَلِيهِ لَا تَذَرُ (عمارة، 2021، ص.238)

I say I will abandon all of Iraq, and I am not the first to abandon  
A haunting obsession calls out in me... your place, for death is the  
ultimate crossing

Here you are killed... here you are buried, but the secret is another  
fate

And Baghdad is swept away by... hurricanes of madness that spare  
no one (Amara, 2021, p.238)

The verses provide an example of how the poet expresses emotional suffering concerning the state of affairs in her country and how the speaker feels despair. This is because the phrase used, namely, 'I say I will abandon all of Iraq,' shows the Iraqi's disappointment with the nation. The speaker's almost spectral fixation on Iraq appears to be being pitted against a very real wish both to escape that place and its hold. The first reference to death as the last crossing was for death is the ultimate crossing where death becomes the final crossing, and here it is presented as the physical and emotional bearings of war. The only desire is painted as hurricanes of madness that touch everybody in Baghdad, and the epithets, violent insanity, show the reader the relentless violence that is breathing in the Arab region.

Throughout her poem Pope presents patriotism by means of multiple intricate components. She recognizes genuine national service together with actual sacrifice yet she reveals opposition to military operations due to private gain incentives and violent alliances. Pope conducts an analytical examination of war participation between cynical observations and profound insights to encourage readers about patriotism's actual meanings while examining enlistment motives. Through its dual presentation of traditional patriotic values together with their corruption the poem generates a critical examination of patriotism itself. She says,

Who'll toe the line for the signal to 'Go!'  
Who'll give his country a hand?  
Who wants a turn to himself in the show?  
And who wants a seat in the stand?



Who knows it won't be a picnic – not much-  
Yet eagerly shoulders a gun?  
Who would much rather come back with a crutch  
Than lie low and be out of the fun? (Pope, 1916, p. 27).

The verses establish patriotic sentiment through their presentation of military actions as ethical service and exceptional experience. The text employs logical arrangement to represent warfare as an athletic contest which plays to human competitiveness. Participation in war equals helping your nation thus becoming the militant alternative to deserting your national responsibilities. War appears in this piece as both an entertaining spectacle and an engaging combat performance which draws troops from brave volunteers and leaves abstaining citizens to watch from the sidelines. War is depicted through a poetic parallel which places extreme physical war consequences against the notion of "fun" to say pain can be better than being mocked as a useless do-nothing. The character who decides to lie low presents three major characteristics to the world: cowardice alongside selfishness and anti-patriotism. These negative traits match the community's early 20th-century narrative while praising selfless service for the nation. Throughout the poem the poet utilizes a masculine worldview to present war as an exciting and playful endeavor that aligns with standard male obedience to national demands. As a result of cultural norms the poetic speaker privileges masculine ideals because his primary audience includes male readers who equate patriotism with joining the military. The decision to answer the "call" prevents both men and patriots from being who they truly are which elevates the poetry's emotional power.

While patriotism according to Lami'a Abbas Amara represents a profound emotional relationship between people and their sacred cultural and historical city. Patriotic sentiment emerges through poetic visualizations which unite love and pride with grief while showcasing how patriotic feeling grows from a city's shared heritage and its lost splendor. Through thematic analysis people examine the poet's depiction of patriotism through loss and grief by using cultural and eternal elements of Baghdad to express national mourning about conflict-damaged cities (Rohde, 2010). She recites,

وبغداد قيثارتي البابلية... قلبي وهُدبي عليها وَتَرُّ  
لها في فمي سحرُ كُهانها وآثارُ ما قبلوا عليها حَجَرُ  
وما رصدوا كوكباً وكوكباً وما ميزوا الكونَ خيراً وَشَرُّ  
تراثُ ترمَخَ بالطيِّبيات وبالمجد منها إلي انحَدَرُ (عمارة، 2021، ص. 238)  
Baghdad, my Babylonian lyre,





My heart and lashes are its strings.  
It holds in my mouth the magic of its priests,  
And the traces of what they kissed upon its stones.  
They charted star after star,  
And distinguished the universe's good and evil.  
A heritage steeped in blessings,  
And glory descended from it to me. (Amara, 2021, p.238)

From the outset Baghdad appears as a "Babylonian lyre which ties together the speaker's heart together with skin." Through his use of the lyre as a symbol the poet establishes Birmingham as both a central cultural and artistic locus of self-identity. Through the mystical linking of her heart to the strings of lashes the poet demonstrates how Baghdad forms a core fundamental aspect of her emotional substance while being integral to her physical form. Through this image the poet establishes patriotism rooted in strong shared social pride. \_services as its notes now express sorrow which reflects Baghdad's distress. Through poetic language the poet presents Baghdad as a place that preserves both a rich background of history and an honorable legacy from ancient times. Beyond lamenting the destruction of the physical city the poem articulates loss for the depleted cultural legacy it represents.

Jessie Pope shapes a forceful patriotic vision through direct speech along with emotional appeals which combine with imagery of nationalism to create a moral duty \_Loaded with conviction. The national entity comes to life through Pope's words which elevates military enlistment to focus on both loyalty and bravery as the highest form of patriotism. Through its blend of personal responsibility and a shared national identity the poem creates patriotism as an intensely emotive and deeply personal ownership. The admirable depiction of war serves aims of propaganda in this literary piece. She says,

Come along, lads –  
But you'll come on all right –  
For there's only one course to pursue,  
Your country is up to her neck in a fight,  
And she's looking and calling for you. (Pope, 1916, p. 27)

During World War I Jessie Pope employed patriotism in her poem to persuade young men to join the armed forces through lines "Come along, lads – / But you'll come on all right – / For there's only one course to pursue, / Your country is up to her neck in a fight, / And she's looking and calling for you." Through conversational speech and powerful words the poem generates feelings of patriotic responsibility while expressing urgent danger so that





listeners will join the war effort. According to the author the military service becomes natural and essential while fulfilling the country's requirements. Through its singularity the "one course" reveals the poem's propagandistic nature by presenting national participation as both a clear loyalty marker and recipient of battlefield honor. Your country exists in a raging battle as she fights while submerged high in the depths of danger because she requires emergency assistance. The conflict requires urgent intervention since it has reached the point where the country fights up to its entire neck. The last line commands direct emphasis on individuals as the country looks for their participation through calling. This work lacks exploration of the war's complex challenges together with its dangers and essential sacrifices because it simplifies combat into a clear matter of national loyalty versus personal cowardice. The propagandistic nature of this recruitment approach matched the romanticized military service depictions which shaped early World War I British recruitment efforts.

On the contrary, through love and recognized pride and sorrow Lami'a Abbas Amara sings of Baghdad in her poetic work to celebrate patriotism while showcasing the enduring beauty and rich cultural heritage of the city. The town's population faces communal grief because of wartime involvement. Under the poet's perspective patriotism maintains two compelling aspects—it encompasses both expressions of sadness about past losses and defensive signals of resilience. The devotion to protect and rejuvenate Baghdad's heritage demands much deeper than blind patriotism brings because it springs from authentic emotional bonds. The poem shares enduring universal qualities which explore national resilience alongside deep patriotic anguish and affection in times of national tragedy. She says,

وبغداد أنت، إذا شط بي مزار لواني إليها القدر  
حصائد المروءات من بدرها وريق أنيق رفيف الصور (عمارة، 2021، ص.238)

Baghdad, you are my destination,

When fate bends my journey toward you.

The harvest of noble virtues from its moon,

And a delicate grace adorned with refined images. (Amara, 2021, p.238)

For Lami'a, Baghdad stands central to the cosmic and ethical order because it has established itself as both intellectually important and significant in moral and philosophical ways. Through emotional pain the poet displays a hopeful perspective about Baghdad while it functions as both a guiding light and the desired home that completes his return. Through celestial and artistic





language the poem ending focuses on Baghdad's beauty while stressing its ethical greatness and artistic majesty. The splendid beauty of Baghdad remains vulnerable because violence and chaos from war threaten to break its delicate core before it permanently suffers destruction.

### Conclusion

Through patriotic poetry people actively display their ideas about national pride alongside obligations and sacrifices and identity formation. This cross-cultural research explores the different perspectives presented in Jessie Pope's World War I inspiration "Who's for the Game?" A comparative analysis of Jessie Pope's "Who's for the Game?" and Lami'a Abbas Amara's "Baghdad You Are" evaluates the distinct perspectives on patriotism while exploring their roles as social commentators in their historical contexts.

Jessie Pope wrote down "Who's for the Game?" During wartime propaganda historian Jessie Pope uploaded "Who's for the Game?" which urged military enlistment by promising valor-based glory to hopeful volunteers. Through a persuasive style and basic terminology the poem makes war appear as an exhilarating competition which allows fighters to demonstrate their patriotic bravery to the nation. During conflict the social environment pressured men to respond to patriotic duty which led Pope to create verses that celebrated battle as heroic while disregarding actual war experiences.

Through her perspective Lami'a Abbas Amara analyzes patriotism in "Baghdad You Are" while the poem explores both her intense personal connection and painful bereavement for her homeland. Through personification Baghdad emerges as a spiritual center which becomes a powerful symbol of the speaker's profound bond with their native land. Amara conveys the essential nature of heritage along with personal identity through sharp visual language while sharing reverence for Baghdad's historical record. The work memorializes Baghdad through its cultural evolution while expressing concern for the possible destruction of its historical glories as a way to link military unrest to the nation's confiscated spirit.

A thematic analysis of these two texts demonstrates that patriotic literary works serve double functions through their examination and worship of cultural identification. The propagandistic approach Pope uses in "Who's for the Game?" Through this approach emotions get manipulated and war becomes heralded in order to encourage support for military actions. Through its lens the poem offers only surface considerations of patriotic values by celebrating heroic action without acknowledging war's difficult realities.





In contrast to Amara's "Baghdad You Are" the poet depicts patriotism with a deeper emotional grasp by exploring cultural and affectionate bonds which connect citizens to their land. Throughout the poem the author examines heritage losses while celebrating national spirit which strengthens even during times of hardship. Through crafty poetic language with vivid images and emotional depths Amara reminds readers of revolutionary values by immersing them in scenes celebrating historical significance and national pride.

The collection shows how patriotism exists at the convergence of both societal developments and governmental structures. Through his poetry Pope joined the early twentieth-century wartime propaganda networks that used poetic messages to build community support for military operations. "Who's for the Game?" Through literary expression the author demonstrates how art creates public attitudes and supports national commitment along with volunteer service to society.

Using poetry Amara explores how cultural survival and strength emerge as responses to threats against his identity during periods of national disorder. Poetry shines as an eternal force which safeguards both the national memory and the spirit of entire nations throughout periods of chaos and social displacement. The poem showcases patriotism as a universal experience of the heart through its nostalgic language and its powerful visual descriptions which go beyond historical limits.

This analysis reveals important insights from Jessie Pope's "Who's for the Game?" through comparison with Lami'a Abbas Amara's "Baghdad You Are." The comprehensive analysis of "Baghdad You Are" by Lami'a Abbas Amara and "Who's for the Game" by Jessie Pope reveals how patriotic writings function simultaneously as cultural articles and civic reminders and personal reflections. Through their exploration of national identity and allegiance and sacrifice the works reveal essential insights about human spiritual depth and patriotism in diverse cultural spaces. The various poems through their distinctive narrative approaches showcase how art produces enduring effect to stimulate agreement as well as foster revolutionary ideas unto achieving a more harmonious compassionate egalitarian world.

#### References

- [1] Ahmad, F. J. (2019) Women and Writing in Modern Iraq: An Anthology of Modern Iraqi Women Poets. Saqi Books.
- [2] Al-Dabbagh, A. (2005). Poetics of exile and identity: the case of modern Iraqi poetry. International Journal of Arabic-English Studies, 6(1), 5-





14.

- [3] Araujo, A. D. (2014). Jessie Pope, Wilfred Owen, and the politics of pro patria mori in World War I poetry. *Media, War & Conflict*, 7(3), 326-341.
- [4] Amara, L. A. (2021). *The Full Poetic Works*. Dar Al-Ma'rifa Al-Jadid. Beirut, Lebanon.
- [5] Ferguson, N. (2018). *The pity of war: Explaining World War I*. Hachette UK.
- [6] Pope, J. (1916). *Simple Rhymes for Stirring Times*. C. Arthur Pearson.
- [7] Shalaby, R. (2023). Narratives of Survival: Gender and Nationalism in Iraqi Poetry. *Journal of Contemporary Middle Eastern Studies*, 49(2), 98-114.
- [8] Sillitoe, P. (2015). Jessie Pope and the Politics of First World War Poetry. *The Poetry Review*,
- [9] Smith, A. (2021). Rhyme and Recruitment: Jessie Pope's Role in World War I Propaganda. *Journal of War and Cultural Studies*, 34(2), 145-161.
- [10] Todman, D. (2020). *The Great War: myth and memory*. A&C Black.
- [11] Urys, T., Kozak, T., & Barabash, S. (2021). National identity: formation and realization through poetry. *Wisdom*, (1 (17)), 146-161.
- [12] Rohde, A. (2010). Revisiting the republic of fear: Lessons for research on contemporary Iraq. In *Iraq Between Occupations: Perspectives from 1920 to the Present* (pp. 129-141). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.

