

The Educational Poetic Text Directed at Children in Algeria: The collection "The Garden of Angels" by Salah Eddine Bawya as a Model

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Abstract

Children's literature is regarded as the fundamental cornerstone that children depend on for their language and intellectual growth, whether through personal learning or as part of school programmes that incorporate this literary form. This is because of the linguistic resources it offers, which are within the child's cognitive capabilities and intellectual development. Hence, our discourse will initially focus on the essence of children's literature and thereafter evaluate the appropriateness of children's literature compilations in Algeria as educational materials targeted towards children/students at different academic stages.

After conducting thorough investigation, we have chosen specific poems from the anthology "The Garden of Angels" authored by the Algerian poet Salah Eddine Bawya. These writings are originally lyrical texts intended for a young audience. During our presentation, we will focus on the key attributes of the texts from "The Garden of Angels" and analyse a selection of these texts to evaluate their suitability for students at different educational stages, with a specific emphasis on the middle school level as defined by the Algerian educational curricula.

Keywords: Poetic text, educational literature, children's literature, educational values, middle school education.

Introduction:

The development of a child's personality is influenced by the cognitive, educational, moral, and artistic stimulation they experience. Hence, the criticality of choosing educational books for pupils at every level of education cannot be overstated. The significance of this is amplified for middle school kids because of the delicate nature of this transitional period, as children migrate from childhood to the emotionally, mentally, and cognitively fluctuating stage of adolescence. Considering these criteria, the choice of instructional texts should attempt to instill a specific set of values in learners, which they can then apply to their social and daily lives. Therefore, we selected a poetry anthology titled "The Garden of Angels," which has a deep influence on the learner/child's character. This collection falls under the category of "children's literature." This anthology comprises a diverse selection of literary compositions centered around social, educational, and religious moral subjects, specifically tailored to the targeted age group.

This assortment facilitates the provision of educational texts including a wide range of subjects that furnish the kid with spiritual, educational, and behavioral enrichment. During this stage, the child is acquiring knowledge, which they will then apply to real-life situations, tackle social issues, or cultivate a refined artistic sensibility. This artistic progression may be evident in linguistic texts, enhanced by a unique vocabulary.

1. Regarding the concept of children's literature:

Children's literature is widely regarded as an educational, instructional, linguistic, moral, and cultural endeavour aimed at children. The exact definition of this phrase differs among critics and different schools of thinking. The association between children's age group and the type of issues addressed can occasionally be influenced by language and age. Children's literature encompasses a wide range of written material intended for children, including stories, scientific content, plays, educational material, and many forms of media such as books, periodicals, radio programmes, television shows, cassettes, and more. These resources are considered as children's literature (Abdel Fattah, 2000, p. 18).

Children's literature is a dynamic genre in modern literature that is specifically targeted at a certain stage of growth in a person's life, as seen from the perspective of the age group. The text is authored by adults specifically for children, incorporating a range of prose and poetry styles that are appropriate for the children's audience and their level of understanding. It adheres to the established criteria for writing literary works for children, focusing on content that is relatable to them rather than being about them. Oral and folk

tales are crucial sources of childhood literature in any language. Literary writings, in all their various forms, have the purpose of fulfilling ethical, educational, artistic, and aesthetic functions (Zallat, 2000, p. 64).

The core premise of the previous theory revolves upon the youngster being the beneficiary of reading. Children's literature is specifically aimed at children and is not centred on or written about them. It draws its subjects from the philosophy, values, practices, and traditions of society.

Naguib Al-Kilani creates what he refers to as "Islamic children's literature," which he views as a form of artistic expression that is deeply impactful and influenced by the values, principles, and beliefs of Islam. He believes that this literature serves as a fundamental basis for shaping a child's mental, psychological, emotional, behavioural, and physical development, as well as enhancing their comprehension abilities. (Ben Slama, 2009, p. 12). According to Ahmed Naguib, children's literature can be categorised into two types: "general" literature and "specific" literature (Naguib, 1991, p. 279). General literature refers to any form of knowledge specifically targeted towards children, with the intention of being read directly by the child. Specific literature refers to artistic works that provide aesthetic pleasure to readers, children, or learners. It can take the shape of poetry or prose and can be delivered through written or oral means.

Children's literature is distinguished by its wide range of subjects and the multitude of knowledge and experiences it provides. "Children utilise this knowledge to effectively navigate future experiences in an environment characterised by love and encouragement. They develop problem-solving skills, adapt to valuable information, and effectively handle disappointment and frustration as they strive to discover innovative solutions" (Ahmed, 2020, p. 35).

Children's literature encompasses various forms such as poetry, stories, short stories, tales, and theatre. It covers a wide range of subjects and provides a psychological and social environment that encourages and nurtures creativity through interaction, assimilation, and absorption. This environment promotes the development of talents by fostering tolerance, emotional warmth, love, and democracy. Children's literature plays a significant role in shaping a child's cognitive, emotional, and skillful growth during their developmental stage (Shehata, 1994, p. 12).

Children's literature equips the younger generation with the necessary skills and knowledge to confront any future difficulties that may emerge. Children frequently experience the events they read or hear about, actively seeking potential answers. These scenarios can either conclude with a positive outcome, as desired by the children, or they can have a sad conclusion, which helps youngsters develop the ability to confront all potential situations in the future. This enables students to situate themselves within a "problematic situation" that subsequently serves as the foundation for classroom instruction and efforts to identify solutions.

2. A detailed analysis of the collection's contents:

2.1. Collection Threshold

The poetry anthology for children, "Garden of Angels," features a subtitle, "Poems and Songs, Poetic Stories, Operettas for Children," which highlights the varied and diverse themes and styles found in the collection. This selection provides educators with the option to select from a range of subjects that have diverse levels of language complexity and vivid visual representations, all of which are appropriate for the cognitive capacities of young students at this developmental stage.

The collection's cover features a selection of bright, conspicuous, and varied light colours. These colours highlight the fundamental colours in the artwork, such as red, white, green, and yellow, as well as some secondary colours like orange, brown, and purple. This corresponds to the garden motif, which encompasses many, cohesive, and vibrant hues. Typically, the sight of a garden evokes happiness, alleviates sorrow, and fosters delightful explorations within its confines. The poet's intention was to inspire the child/learner to delve into the diverse texts in the collection, enhancing their language and cognitive skills, and sparking new ideas in their curious minds at this stage of development.

The cover illustrations (Bawiya, 2020, p.1) depict numerous toys typically found at amusement parks, such as merry-go-rounds with horses. These illustrations capture the joy and delight experienced by youngsters as they ride these merry-go-rounds, simulating the thrill of riding an actual horse. In addition, circular swings are adored by children as they provide them with a sensation of soaring through the air. In addition, the expansive Ferris wheel elevates individuals to great heights and lowers them in a smooth manner, providing them with an aerial perspective that unveils concealed and unfamiliar sights, surpassing their limited physical stature. Additionally, there are other balloons of all sizes and colours available, giving each youngster the opportunity to select their desired size and favourite colour.

The poet's intention was to create a collection of poetic writings that would offer children and learners a range of scientific, linguistic, artistic, and cognitive fun, similar to what one might experience at an amusement park. However, these texts would be diverse in theme and carry significant meaning. Every individual learner has the ability to discover the specific knowledge they are searching for inside these writings.

2.2. Collection Contents:

The poetry anthology, predominantly targeted towards a young audience, explores a wide range of issues. The first threshold a child enters after leaving the family home is the kindergarten. This environment aims to provide alternative knowledge that may not be available within the family, which primarily offers love and care. Additionally, it seeks to define the qualities that every child who wants to excel should possess in order to be considered a "Successful Boy". The anthology explores a range of subjects, encompassing:

The Family Cornerstones, consisting of the mother and father, are discussed by Bawiya (Bawiya, 2020, p22). Children gain insight into the significance of parents, cultivate love and gratitude towards them, and endeavour to assist them, while recognising the elevated position bestowed upon them by God, by engaging with a collection of poems titled "My Mother," "I Love My Mother and Father," "God's Peace Upon You, My Mother," and "Good Morning, My Father." The source "Electronic Devices" (Bawiya, 2020, pp. 18-19) discusses the topic.

The compilation explores several electronic gadgets that youngsters come across in their everyday routines, elucidating their functionalities and advantages, while also highlighting the potential detriments of over utilisation. These poems encompass works such as "The Television," "I Have a Radio at Home," and "The Mobile Phone."

The article titled "Trees and Their Benefits" (Bawiya, 2020, pp. 45-46) discusses the advantages of trees. The book showcases several fruit-bearing trees found in various habitats and elucidates their advantages through poems such as "The Palm Tree" and "The Tree."

The topic of occupations is discussed in Bawiya's work (Bawiya, 2020, p. 56). The book presents different occupations that are crucial for human existence, including the "Doctor," portrayed in a manner that corresponds to children's views and comprehension of this esteemed and demanding career. Furthermore, it underscores the need of revering the teacher's image and presents an idealised depiction of this someone who diligently endeavours to enlighten others by eradicating ignorance, as depicted in the poetry "My Teacher."

Religious Practices and Their Locations (Bawiya, 2020, pp. 37-42):

The book explores religious rituals and their importance, including prayer and its indispensability, fasting and its merits, and the celebration of Eid. This is done through the use of poetry such as "I Pray," "To the Mosque Courtyard," "Ramadan," and "Eid Has Come."

Patriotism (Bawiya, 2020, pages. 49-55): The text explores the significance of patriotism, drawing a parallel between it with a nurturing mother who cares for her children. It underscores the necessity of safeguarding one's nation and refraining from any actions that may pose harm to it, whether in scientific, moral, or practical terms. This is expressed through a collection of poems with diverse names, including "I Am Algerian," "I Love Algeria," "I Adore My Homeland," "Anthem of the Homeland," "We Are Cubs," and "The Scout, an Example of Sacrifice."

The source "Arab-Islamic Identity" (Bawiya, 2020, pp. 57-58) discusses the topic. The collection seeks to cultivate the Arab-Islamic identity by conveying its essence through the themes explored in various poems and songs specifically targeted towards children. These include titles such as "The Arabic Language," "Arab," "Palestinian," "Al-Aqsa," "Iraq Will Remain," "We Will Love This Land More," "For Peace Against War," "The Sun of Freedom Will Not Set," and "Omar Al-Bashir." The primary objective of these works is to imbue the younger generation with a strong sense of the Arab-Islamic identity.

- Literary Narratives: These materials are appropriate for children and learners of all ages, regardless of their varying levels of cognition and language skills. They contain multiple meanings and dimensions, ranging from superficial to profound, which may require concentration and contemplation. Nevertheless, the literary and artistic language they use can be easily understood by novices. The collection features several fables such as "The Donkey and the Pond," "The Fox and the Safe Forest," "The Cat and the Mouse," "The Snake and the Cow," and "The Little Rabbit." It concludes with an educational poetic operetta titled "My History is

the Greatest Miracle" (Bawiya, 2020, p. 90), which proudly recounts Algeria's illustrious history and achievements.

3. Proposed Educational Text Model and Its Linguistic and Cognitive Suitability:

Upon careful examination, perusal, and meticulous scrutiny of the diwan (a compilation of poetry), we have chosen the poem titled "My Teacher" for its melodic and sonorous delicacy, as well as its profound connotations. The poet expresses in this poem:

"The instructor... My instructor, Ah, the most exquisite symphony on my palate!
Oh, the most exceptional individuals who imparted knowledge to me, Knowledge is the Muslim's means of growth.

He imparted knowledge to me about subjects I was unfamiliar with, Using the writing instrument...

He instilled in me a passion for acquiring knowledge, And sincerity in verbal communication.

Furthermore, in order to have a strong desire for success and achievement,

With knowledge surpassing the celestial bodies.

In order to lead a life as a Muslim,

Upholding my principles,

Fascinated by my teacher,

I am proud of my character.

I construct the future in which I shall reside.

Using my upper limb and hand.

I acquired knowledge from my teacher.

Science has a crucial role in enhancing our understanding.

If I acquire information,

I hold it in higher esteem than any other acquisition.

Oh, steward of the earth,

The moon shines brightly in the darkness of the night.

The doors of my school have been opened.

During the season.

Congratulations to you, esteemed educator,

Ah, the most exquisite symphony on my palate.

Lack of knowledge is a lethal ailment.

Knowledge is the most effective remedy." (Bawiya, 2020, p 28-29).

The evaluation of this poem corresponds to the goal of instructing the Arabic language in middle schools in Algeria. It is imperative to allocate a suitable section in the new textbooks for contemporary literary genres, such as the novel, short story, free verse, drama, and so on. This will enable our children to become familiar with these artistic forms. (Ministry of National Education, 2016, p. 4). Here, we suggest this lyrical composition for educational analysis in the classroom.

3.1. Linguistic Analysis of the Poem:

The poem predominantly employs commonplace vocabulary that is readily recognisable to students in their second year of middle school, so enhancing their comprehension of its connotations and enhancing their appreciation of its melodic qualities. Nevertheless, individuals may come across unfamiliar words, thereby enhancing their lexicon and language proficiency. Some examples of Arabic words are "الورى" (referring to worldly life), "متيمًا" (meaning charmed), "شيمى" (referring to character), "عَظْمْتُ" (meaning I gained), and "طوبى" (referring to congratulations). Therefore, the curriculum successfully accomplishes its objective of equipping learners with skills that they may apply in different oral and writing communication scenarios (Ministry of National Education, 2016, p. 3).

Furthermore, the poem incorporates an inclusion or quote, as per the terminology used by the learner/child, in the third verse:

"He educated me in areas where I lacked knowledge, using the medium of writing."
This enhances the learner's/child's practice in utilising the memorised passages and quotations they have previously learnt. Furthermore, this sample is taken from the Quran, namely from a surah that is commonly encountered by youngsters or learners of this age group. This provides individuals with a feeling of familiarity about the meaning of the text, as well as a knowledge of its cognitive value in relation to its linguistic value.

3.2. An Analysis of the Significance and Principles of the Poem:

The poem contains profound insights and principles that learners should internalise in both (Kahwal, p 10) their academic and practical endeavours. These include showing profound respect and admiration for their teachers, and consequently, directing their efforts towards attaining the envisioned goals for their generation.

The poem's themes centre around its title, "The Teacher", which represents the main source of inspiration from which the pupil acquires principles of knowledge, ethics, morals, and life. Since enrolling in school, the term that students frequently mention is the one that the teacher introduces to them, providing new knowledge and dispelling their previous ignorance. In addition, the instructor imparts a collection of beneficial principles in life and fosters the development of religious, ethical, linguistic, and national identity in them. The instructor serves as a luminary or beacon, guiding individuals towards the attainment of perfection. They are the initial individuals to arrive at school, responsible for making arrangements to receive the pupils, and the final ones to depart, guaranteeing a promising future for them. Hence, it is crucial to demonstrate affection, admiration, and gratitude towards the teacher. They have the right to be recognised as the most captivating sound sung by the pupils, since they are the ones who eliminate ignorance with the soothing and exquisite remedy of knowledge.

3.3. The values discussed in the text/poem are:

The poem encompasses a wide range of ideals, incorporating religious, ethical, social, educational, and artistic qualities that foster the development of the learner's imagination. Included in the group are:

3.3.1. Beliefs and principles related to religion:

The importance of learning is highlighted by its association with becoming a Muslim ("and knowledge is the Muslim's provision"), emphasising the duty to acquire knowledge during one's entire life. Furthermore, the verse "Read" (Iqra) from the Quran, which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and promotes the acquisition of knowledge, is mirrored in the third stanza of the poem, echoing the opening of Surah Al-Alaq:

"He imparted knowledge to me through the use of the pen."

Moreover, the act of pursuing knowledge is portrayed as a method by which Muslims uphold their principles:

"To adhere to the principles of Islam and uphold my core beliefs." (Bawiya, 2020, page 28)

3.3.2. Cultural norms and beliefs that guide individuals' behaviour and interactions within a society:

These manifestations are evident in the learner's perception of the teacher, who is seen as the epitome of excellence. This suggests the frequent recurrence of this expression and the delight that comes with it, as the teacher is regarded as the most exemplary servant for the nation and its citizens. Since a result, they occupy a prominent role in society since they assist young people in developing their community in terms of morals, religion, and intelligence. (Kahwal, p.19) This is due to the fact that knowledge is the most valuable asset an individual can obtain in life, and this is precisely what the teacher has acquired.

3.3.3. Pedagogical Principles:

Without a doubt, the true education of an individual is the knowledge and skills they acquire within the confines of their educational institution, in the company of their fellow students. This setting is widely regarded as the most participatory for learners, where a multitude of behaviours and personalities emerge, which teachers strive to refine. Teachers instill ambition in their students.

"To possess knowledge that surpasses the stars."

Furthermore, they underscore the imperative of upholding religious principles, since they serve as educational limits for individuals, safeguarding them from straying into unfavourable pathways (Kahwal, p.19). Consequently, individuals acquire the ability to value and honour interpersonal connections. Furthermore, a strong emphasis is placed on integrity in all transactions. An essential educational attribute is the comprehension of the intrinsic worth of knowledge. Learners cultivate a profound affection for knowledge, persistently commit to it, and persevere despite its difficulties, all recognising that it is the most valuable resource they can own throughout their lives.

"You, the most excellent among my teachers, have bestowed upon me knowledge, which serves as the sustenance for a Muslim." (Bawiya, 2020, page 29)

3.3.4. Ethical principles:

The poem emphasises the moral significance of promoting disciplined learning, which fosters love, honesty, and a genuine concern for others.

"He instilled in me a passion for acquiring knowledge and a commitment to always speaking the truth."
(Bawiya, 2020, page 29)

The objective of formal education is to cultivate moral principles in children by enhancing their understanding of written or spoken content. Therefore, the teacher's guidance at this stage promotes the practice of actively listening to descriptive and narrative speeches, enabling students to deduce underlying values and attitudes. (Kahwal, p.16), after demonstrating comprehension and engagement, one proceeds to engage with the subject or concept.

➤ Core principles and beliefs that are widely held and considered important at a national level: The love for one's homeland stems from a deep sense of religion, and it is the primary lesson that a student grasps when they recognise the significance of information and education. Hence, the poem affirms and strengthens its significance, depicting a more optimistic prospect for the individual who chooses to go on the journey of acquiring knowledge. A patriot has a strong sense of attachment and loyalty to their native place, experiencing a deep sense of satisfaction and honour in being a part of it. They actively work towards the growth, progress, and promotion of their homeland, relying on their own strengths and the resources available within their community rather than depending on external assistance.

"Captivated by my native land and its moral excellence."

I will construct it throughout my lifetime, utilising my hands and wrist." (Bawiya, 2020, page 29).

3.3.5. Aesthetic principles:

The poem's tune is melodious, rendering it reminiscent of a song that is effortless to connect with, acquire, comprehend, and commit to memory. This enhances the learner's lexicon by introducing new terms or revitalising ones that may have diminished. The poem also includes linguistic constructs that the student acquires and utilises, such as:

"Value honour above material rewards; you are blessed." (Bawiya, 2020, page 29).

Furthermore, the final stanza of the poem showcases a unique linguistic and artistic structure, incorporating a captivating poetic image that resonates with the learner's grasp, comprehension, and interpretation. This image is presented in the form of a simile:

"Ignorance is a pernicious ailment, while knowledge is the most effective remedy." Ignorance can be likened to a pernicious ailment that ravages the intellect, eradicating the fundamental principles of society, life, ethics, and proper nurturing. However, the remedy for this problem is knowledge, which is metaphorically shown as an ointment. An ointment is characterised by its gentle texture, lack of hazardous properties, absence of adverse effects, and typically high efficacy. It possesses the ability to effectively and painlessly cure ailments, injuries, or illnesses, making it a valuable source of knowledge for those who understand its worth.

These competences correspond to the ultimate competencies established by the Algerian school system through formal education, particularly in relation to the skill of comprehending spoken language. This exercise enables the student to engage in analytical and mindful reading of diverse prose and poetic texts, make informed evaluations of them, and creatively incorporate them into their own writing style, utilising a range of suitable resources in relevant communicative contexts. The reference (Kahwal, p.17).

Conclusion

- We attempted to introduce a suggested written modification aimed at middle school students in the context of an educational poetry blog primarily targeting children. This blog, titled "The Garden of Angels," is created by the Algerian poet Salah Eddine Bawiya. This was accomplished by analysing the literary model and harmonising it with the child's educational, linguistic, and moral requirements, which include religious, social, moral, artistic, and national values, among others.
- Upon observation, we have determined that it fulfils the language vocabulary, meanings, educational and linguistic ideas, as well as life and scientific knowledge requirements of children or students at this stage of life. This resource aims to answer the wide range of inquiries that a child may have at this stage of development, while being appropriate for their cognitive abilities and sensitive to their intellectual preparedness.

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