

Two Literary Heralds Of Nature - William Wordsworth and Peerzada Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor: A Comparative Analysis

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ABSTRACT: Born in and raised at different periods, locations, one to scenic region Cockermouth, Cumberland and the other to beautiful valley Kashmir, both the locations are replete with enchanting and most absorbing natural sceneries and forms famous all over the world, possessing the highest temptation-quotient that the sensitive souls like them can't afford to go unaffected and keep their papers blank and pens capped. The greatest treasures of the nature have ineffaceably shaped the mental makeup and poetic oeuvre of both these versifiers of nature.

The present study attempts to bring forth the treatment of Nature in the poetry of two geographically, culturally and linguistically different poets William Wordsworth and Kashmiri language poet Peerzada Ghulam Ahmad the latter popularly known as Mahjoor (Trans:Marooned, Cast aside). Their poetry has nature as the main thrust. These poets have depicted the nature in her vivid colours sung in most sonorous sounds with conforming style although they differ considerably on other aspects like, among other differences, the former being a believer of pantheism and the latter, undoubtedly, not. They deal with Nature with distinctive thematic concerns. They are differently but sufficiently influenced by Nature and almost worshipped its diverse forms.

KEY WORDS: Geographically differently, Marooned, Thrust, Temptation- Quotient, Ineffaceably, Versifiers, Pantheism, Oeuvre

INTRODUCTION: Of the recognized languages of J&K State, Kashmiri language was originally a branch of prakrit languages or one of the Prakrits of Sanskrit with the admixture of words and phrases from many dialects spoken on the borders of the valley, Prakrit assumed the form of new vernacular, Kashmiri. Kashmiri is the only language of Dardic Aryan group (a sub group of the indo-Aryan languages that has a rich literature. Kashmir is especially close to Shina language. At present it is written in Devangiri script and Perso - Arabic script. At present the language is proud to have myriad poets who enriched its literature in diverse ways. Among the poets of New Kashmir period Mahjoor is ranked as the greatest who like William Wordsworth gobbled everything the Mother Nature had to offer. Both these poets share the ability to bring out the hidden wisdom and pleasures of natural objects around them.

Peerzada Ghulam Ahmad who adopted ‘Mahjoor’ as his poetic pseudonym was born on 11th August in 1887, at a scenic and naturally beautiful village called Mitrigam in the district of Pulwama(J&K) was a patwari by profession . He is a 20th century poet of Kashmir , like the 19th century Romantic poets of English literature, he certainly created a world of his own which was not absurd or merely fanciful but was a world in which he felt closer to the earth and the common man of the valley. And he also believed that the imagination stands in the same relation to the truth and reality. He in the style of William Wordsworth depicts Nature in his poems and puts deep and hidden meanings in the objects of Nature and also at times gives spiritual interpretations to Nature. Like in the style of Wordsworth he wrote many lyrics romantic in taste and with the depiction of nature as their background. One among these famous lyrics is ‘Bage Nishat ke Gulo’ the verses of which please and became popular throughout valley . The following eternal verses of the poem remind us about the richness and beauty of our land.

“Bage- Nishat ke Gulo. Naz karan karan walo.....

Sael Daluk ch wuch bahar- Bage- Nishat wa Shalimar”

Trans :

O, Flower of Nishat Bagh,

Come with your graces,

Come with your laughter,

Come showering pearls !

When you entered the garden,

The kusum kissed you,

The yemberzal glowed with passion.

Come filling glasses !

See, spring has comes

To Dal, Nishat and Shalamar,

O, use these my aching eyes as boats !

Come rowing across ! ,(Trans. by Triloki Nath Raina.)

Mahjoor has a deep interest in the bounty of nature in Kashmir and he invariably depicts the scenic gardens, moors, forests, waterfalls, rivers, lush green fields and mountains as a source and means of conveying his heartfelt emotions and messages to awaken his countrymen to raise their voice against all kinds of injustices and ills perpetuated against them. He expresses his emotions like this,

“Bulbulan Dup Gulls Hussan Chi Pur

Keyha wanai, zew chai ne, su chui kasur.”

Trans.

The nightangle says to the flower, “ Your beauty is matchless ,

But alas , your being tongue less is your guilt”. ,(Trans. by Mohd.Nageen.)

He express his patriotic fervour in the poem “Walo Ho Baag-Wano” (Arise, O Gardener) and stresses upon his fellow countrymen to decorate their nation and land with flowers which symbolizing their apt traditions based on honesty ,truthfulness and dignity. He says,

“Wala Ho Bage-wano Naw Baharukh Shan Paida kar
Pholan Gull Gat Karan Bulbul Tututhi Samane Paida Kar”

Trans. Arise O, gardener! Create the glory of spring!
Make flowers bloom and bulbuls sing - create such haunts!
The dew weeps, and your garden lies desolate;
Tearing their robes, your flowers are distracted.

Breathe life again into the lifeless flower and the nightingale! ,(Trans. by Triloki Nath Raina.)

In other beautiful poem, “Gulshan Watan Chu Souni” again employing natural imagery Mahjoor expresses his love for his nation and breathes out the idea symbolically and that too with sincerity and pride that there is nothing dear to him than his nation and he wishes fervently it to prosper and become a dignified nation.

The bulbul sings to the flowers:
'A garden is our land !'
The hyacinth says to the violet,
'Why are you hiding thus ?
Come down from the woods to the garden !'
A garden is our land.

Mahjoor believes that love of one nation should be the prime duty of every one.

Love for one's Nation
Makes one's life very rich and very full! ,(Trans. by Triloki Nath Raina.)

The other messenger of Mother Nature ,William Wordsworth (1770-1850) born in Cocker-mouth,Cumberland ,England part of the scenic region in north-western England known as the Lake District ,is the highest priest of nature ,truer and more tender than that of any English poet before or since. He expressed in “London, 1802”, the fears that people have lost the humanity, purity and nobility of their souls because they are corrupted by the artificial society in the cities and become immoral when they distance themselves from nature by living in cities. This poem is a claim for social change which comes out from Wordsworth`s love for his nation and society:

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower

Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet the heart. (London 1802)

Mahjoor's poetry perceived and expressed the romantic existence of the daily life of an ordinary man and the land he belonged to.

O golden oriole, winter's gone,
Gay spring has come again !
Step out and feast your weary eyes
On the myriad flowers abloom. ,(Trans. by Triloki Nath Raina.)

His contribution in simplifying the poetic language into simple syntax made him as the poet of Kashmir, he loved the majestic mountains of the land, he also cared for the flora and fauna.

Come to the garden early, and mark
Who helps keep flowers in trim,
And makes them - bloom ere break of dawn ,(Trans. by Triloki Nath Raina.)

Like in Wordsworth's 'language of men' his poems composed in peoples' language using their syntax and their diction in the backdrop of rhythm seen in the nature Mahjoor was perhaps the only versifier of Kashmir who depicted his concern for nature and human values even in his love poetry.

Separation withered up the yemberzal,
But love has brought her back I
She will love you over again,
Offering her eyes at your feet !
II .O rose, you blossomed in my life,
When my world was young and gay ,(Trans. by Triloki Nath Raina.)

For William Wordsworth too, Nature implies comfort just seeing viewing her landscapes. Wordsworth sees nature as an eternal and sublime entity. She has divine characteristics and is a road to freedom. Wordsworth views man and nature as complementary elements of a whole, recognising man as a part of nature.

“I have felt
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy
 Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
 Of something far more deeply interfused,
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
 And the round ocean and the living air,
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.”

(Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey)

It is good to mention that when one of Mahjoor’s poems, “The Country Lass” was shown to Rabindra Nath Tagore by the well known Indian writer, Devindra Satyarthi, Tagore was deeply impressed by this poem and he got it published. Tagore called Mahjoor “the Wordsworth of Kashmir” (Zahoor Ahmad Mir page.214). We see in Mahjoor’s “Country Lass” much in common with Wordsworth’s “The Solitary Reaper”. Indian writer and actor Balraj Sahani the man who acted in the documentary film *The Shair -e-Kashmir* said about Mahjoor’s popularity with the masses, thus.

“When his work takes him to the capital he walks through the streets unnoticed. And, yet his songs and his poems are the cherished property of every man, woman and child, living between Baramulla and Pir Panchal. If Mahjoor writes a poem today, it will be on the lips of the populace within a fortnight. Children on their way to school, girls thrashing rice, boatmen plying paddle, laborers bending in their ceaseless toil, all will be singing it.”

(Balraj Sahni , Vishva Bharti Quarterly Nov. 1938)

Mehjoor ranks among the finest writers of natural poetry. Like Wordsworth he includes descriptions of nature in his poems and describe the world around him in writing for a purpose.

The garden is ablaze with diverse hues.
 O bulbul, behold these flowers
 In the assembled gorgeous court!
 Yemberzal, rose, pomegranate blossom
 And hyacinth - each magnificent!
 What a lovely roll of colours!
 The sensual lover dotes on colour -
 The evanescent beauty of spring.
 His friendship dies when the bloom is gone....
 Come to the garden early, and mark
 Who helps keep flowers in trim,
 And makes them - bloom ere break of dawn,

What keen expectancy fills the air?
The well-groomed beds and the flowers
That strains their eyes on the bush!
A drink of morning dew relieves
The heart that's bowed with grief -
It's only the garden where the sick get healed.
The morning breeze wafts abroad
Praise of the beauty self flowers,
Which fills all lovers with longing?
One with music in his soul
Alone can diagnose pain,
And grade flowers in this saffron field. ,(Trans. by Triloki Nath Raina.)

Mahjoor's attitude towards Nature is one of armed and amicable true and mutual respect. He recognizes and insists upon the bounties of nature as essential for a world weary common man as intimately as the great English poet, Wordsworth.

A drink of morning dew relieves
The heart that's bowed with grief -
It's only the garden where the sick get healed. ,(Trans. by Triloki Nath Raina.)

Similarly In the poem "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" William Wordsworth writes about a "green pastoral landscape" (l.158). He too shows nature to be a gentle, nurturing force that teaches and soothes humanity and he claims that:

"Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her."

(Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, 122-123)

Wordsworth assures that even being alone in the world he feels in company being around nature. And he see not at nature through sensual only but slowly progresses to imaginative appreciation :

"I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze."
(I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud, 1-6)

However, there is almost nothing of the mystic in Mahjoor's poetry. He does not seek in Nature either a sense of oneness with all created things or union with God. There is nothing pantheistic in his view of nature. Mahjoor unlike William Wordsworth sees no pervading spirit in the natural impersonal and unfeeling. Though he at times seems closer as he says in one of his poem "*Mahjoor, your poems and speech must show you Not as a florist, but as a flower. Then only can you claim flowers.*" He does not formulate a theory of Nature or of man's relationship with Nature. Both the poets believe that man should live in harmony with Nature. Mahjoor personified birds, animals, vales, lakes, glens, meadows, trees especially flowers of Kashmir in his poems. Lets see how Mahjoor connects himself to rose:

I am unburdening my heart to the rose,

For I may never get a chance to speak. ,(Trans. by Triloki Nath Raina.)

Like Mahjoor ,Wordsworth too sees nature as part of his life and the poet reflects this idea in his poems through the personification of the elements of nature allowing them to have powers and characteristics that only humans possess and it also makes the poet soul feel connected with nature. In these two examples we can observe how Wordsworth has given to the flowers human features such as breathing, enjoying or dancing and how he connect his soul to them just for being part of one of them, for being part of nature.

And then my heart with pleasure fills,

And dances with the daffodils.

(I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud, 23-24)

"And 'tis my faith that every flower

Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,

Their thoughts I cannot measure:—

But the least motion which they made

It seemed a thrill of pleasure."

(Lines Written in Early Spring, 11-16)

As we can observe in some poems, Wordsworth feel comfortable when remembering these memories which he had in connection with nature. Rewriting his memories and converting them into poems is a way of forgetting all his loneliness or all his fears, he says that even in the worst moments of loneliness he can find happiness just closing remembering him in that situation.

"Five years have past; five summers, with the length

Of five long winters! and again I hear

These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs

With a soft inland murmur.—Once again

Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,

(Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, 1-10)

“For oft, when on my couch I lie
 In vacant or in pensive mood,
 They flash upon that inward eye
 Which is the bliss of solitude;
 And then my heart with pleasure fills,
 And dances with the daffodils.”

(I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud, 19-24)

Mahjoor uses Nature to a great extent in his poetry, and of course it is the nature of Kashmir. Through his close observations of nature Mehjoor shows his deep love for it, comes right out and sings its praises. He always portrays nature in a friendly light, never seeing it in anything cruel. In his lyrics and fantasies Mehjoor shows his interest in Nature throughout his poems on the seasons, flowers, fruit, the moon, the stars, the sky, and particularly in rural scenes. In his character portrayals he uses nature to set off his characters. His characters are usually rural anyway, their background being that of rural as is evident from his poem ‘Country Lass’ Thinking about the poet William Wordsworth is thinking about Nature. For Wordsworth nature implies different meanings but all of them became part of his entire life. He experienced nature from his earliest years till he grew up in the Lake District and was influenced by the power of its landscape. Wordsworth living in nature, surrounded by all its beauty and magnificence was a way of escape from the horror of the cities that were becoming industrialized to the freedom of nature. Wordsworth believed that having a harmonious relationship with nature helps individuals connect to both the spiritual and the social worlds. As we can observe in his poem The Prelude, Wordsworth is showing us how a love of nature can lead to a love of humankind.

“To none more grateful than to me; escaped
 From the vast city, where I long had pined
 A discontented sojourner: now free,
 Free as a bird to settle where I will.”

(The Prelude. Book I, 6-9)

Unlike Wordsworth Mahjoor is neither a transcendentalist nor a pantheist. He uses nature as a background. He usually begins a poem with an observation of something in nature and then moves toward a connection to some human situation or concern. He uses nature as metaphor. He observes something in nature and says this is like that. He leads you to make a connection, but never forces it on the reader. Read on a literal level, Mahjoor’s poems always make perfect sense. His facts are correct, though shrouded in poetic terms. But he is not trying to tell nature stories nor animal stories. He always uses these facts metaphorically implying an analogy to some human concern.

We love a shady tree and wish
 It were to live for ever,
 But axe the one that gives no shade

Even if it's the proudest pine ! ,(Trans. by Triloki Nath Raina.)

The reader may or may not be reminded of the same thing that the poet was thinking of when he wrote the poem, but he hopes the reader is close. Mehjoor`s poetic impulse starts with some psychological concern and finds its way to a material embodiment which usually includes a natural scene.

Breathe life once again into the lifeless flower and the bulbul (nightingale)!

Rank nettles hamper the growth of your roses.

Weed them out,(Trans. by Triloki Nath Raina.)

The poetry of Wordsworth and Mahjoor springs from specific areas. The subjects of Wordsworth's poetry are universal, and are true of all people of the world. Mehjoor wrote about ordinary people- farmers and workers were the subjects of his poems. Woods, flowers, mountains, pastures, birds and trees showed up frequently in his poems. The rural landscape form the gist of his poetry. Because of his genuine interest in and love for rural people, Mehjoor emerged ultimately as a most sung poetic sage of Kashmir. "To Wordsworth Nature appears as a formative influence superior to any other"(Cazamian) Wordsworth believed that nature is nurse ,guide and teacher to an individual and meddling with its natural way of influence can lead to great loss he says:

One impulse from a vernal wood

May teach you more of a man,

Of moral evil and of good,

Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which nature brings

Our meddling intellect

Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of

Things:-

We murder to dissect. (The Tables Turned)

Wordsworth in Prelude book 2 presents the connectedness of nature with religion ' I content with my own modest pleasure, and have live with God and Nature communing'(228-431)he emphasized his belief in the omnipotence of Nature and God . Here it is pertinent to mention that Mahjoor has deep faith in the power and supremacy of God and his Messenger (saw)and believes that the salvation of man from all kinds of woes and miserable conditions is possible only by surrendering one`s will to God. Interestingly even this devotion and spirit by Mahjoor is expressed by him through the medium of natural imagery. The following verses validate this :

Sahibo sath chum mae chaeni

Wath mae aslich haawtam.....

Shabnamik paet aaftabs koot kaal kar intezaar

Ged nichay anware poshun seet sule wuznawtam.

Trans: O God, I look to you for help

Show me the righteous path

Not like dewdrops which wait for the sunrise till long

But like the blossoms that bloom at dawn, let me awake so soon. (Trans. By Mohd Nageen)

Though there is need and provision for further research on both these poets to bring out their unique and distinctive yet different treatment of Nature in their poetry, it is evident that both the poets have mastery to bring out the hidden treasures of Nature. One is considered the regional the other the universal singer of Nature. Wordsworth looked at nature through the prism of pantheism and transcendental perspective which rendered his poetry more philosophical, demanding having imagination operational at all levels while as the Kashmiri born Mahjoor's treatment of Nature is more sensual and moderately imaginative, straightforward and simple but not trivial. They don't clash but take their respective unique ways to the treatment of Nature which is central to their poetry. They are notable in their simple yet sensitive style and lyricism. They belong to two different regions, periods, cultures and write in two different languages bringing forth the messages, while sitting in her lap, of single Mother Nature.

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