



## Nature as a Mirror of Peace and Harmony in the Post-Modern World: A Comparative Study of William Wordsworth and Muhammad Iqbal Poems

Talha Ghous<sup>1</sup> & Fatima Ghous<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>MPhil Scholar, Department of English, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, Email: [Talha.mtk20@gmail.com](mailto:Talha.mtk20@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>BS scholar, Department of English, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, Email: [Fatimamtk797@gmail.com](mailto:Fatimamtk797@gmail.com)

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#### Corresponding Author:

Talha Ghous

#### Email:

[Talha.mtk20@gmail.com](mailto:Talha.mtk20@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*This paper is a study on the theme represented by nature as tranquil and harmonious in modern and postmodern times. It compares Williams Wordsworth with Muhammad Iqbal through style, linking that with literary languages and landscapes. While these two authors have different focuses on each their related fields, why not equate them to the well-known poets whose string of verses are so valuable today? The paper uses ecocritical, philosophical, and cultural perspectives to probe into crack between these poets' different visions of nature. From what has been discussed above it can be seen that in fact, no matter how far they might be apart culturally or philosophically speaking on this issue still both represent beneficial frameworks for people seeking peace and harmony through reconnection with nature.*



## Introduction

The complex connection between people and the environment has consistently been a prominent subject in global literature, offering writers a perspective to examine societal, spiritual, and psychological challenges pertinent to their eras. Poets William Wordsworth and Muhammad Iqbal, hailing from distinct cultural and historical backgrounds, construct vivid literary environments that delve into how nature can symbolize tranquility and harmony, especially in a society plagued by materialism and internal strife. Both poets experienced considerable social turmoil, with Wordsworth amidst the Industrial Revolution and Iqbal during a time of colonial modernity and political transformation, and they employed nature as a means to critique, heal, and motivate.

## **Literature Review**

Poetry has had a deep connection with nature since ancient times, starting with classical writers such as Theocritus and his pastoral works, moving through the English Romantic period, and reaching into the philosophical poetry of South Asia [Stephen, 2016]. Wordsworth transformed the understanding of nature in his poetry, infusing it with spiritual and educational aspects that transcended its simple aesthetic appeal (Mukherjee, 1977; Hartman, 1975). Iqbal, writing from a South Asian perspective, fused Islamic philosophical themes with Romantic elements, viewing nature as a pathway to both personal and communal enlightenment [Almiqdady et al., 2015; Mir, 2016].

Literary critics often draw parallels between the ways Iqbal and Wordsworth engage with nature, despite their differing religious, cultural, and political backgrounds [Sajjad, 1987; Abbasi & Zarrinjooee, 2015]. Iqbal's initial poetry reflects a pantheistic reverence for nature, which later

evolved into a more human-centric and anti-pantheistic perspective, shaped by Islamic monotheism and his social and political environment [Hoque, 2014]. On the other hand, Wordsworth is often acknowledged as an early eco-critic, frequently seen as the quintessential poet laureate of nature in England [Bate, 1991].

Eco-critical theory underscores the sense of betrayal to nature that has emerged in modern industrial societies, along with its psychological and environmental repercussions for humanity (Glottfelty, 1996; Kaczynski, 1995). Both Iqbal and Wordsworth perceive the spiritual disconnection prevalent in contemporary life and advocate for a return to or engagement with nature as a remedy [Ozdemir, 2017; Mir, 2016].

## **Methodology**

This research utilizes a qualitative, comparative approach to literary analysis, emphasizing a close reading of significant poems by Wordsworth ("The World is Too Much with Us," "The Tables Turned") and Iqbal ("Aik Arzoo"/"A Longing"). Academic references enhance the primary texts, with eco-critical and cultural analysis techniques directing the interpretation [Mir, 2016; Zepetnek, 2003].

## **Analysis**

### **Geography and Identity**

The connection both poets have with nature can be partially attributed to their rural origins Wordsworth from the Lake District in England, and Iqbal from Sialkot, Punjab Mukherjee, 1977]. Their upbringing in rural settings is evident in their desire for tranquility and peace. Iqbal's wish for a modest dwelling in the mountains signifies a sense of nostalgia and discontent with the urban and industrial lifestyle. In contrast, Wordsworth employs a more assertive approach, advocating for deep engagement with nature as a remedy for lifeless intellectualism [Wordsworth, 1802/2004; Qadir, 2010].

### **Cultural and Religious Approaches**

Cultural differences amplify their differing perspectives. Wordsworth's pantheistic view where divinity is seen as present in nature is largely embraced within his Western context [Hartman, 1975]. Iqbal initially entertains similar notions, but his Islamic perspective ultimately emphasizes nature as an ayah (sign) that directs attention to a transcendent Creator, rather than being divine itself [Hoque, 2014]. This distinction highlights a significant philosophical split, even though both poets recognize the educational and restorative qualities of nature [Sajjad, 1987].

### **Nature, Peace, and Harmony**

Both poets employ striking natural imagery to reflect states of inner peace and harmony, suggesting a mutual relationship between humans and the natural environment. Iqbal's verses in "Aik Arzoo" conjure feelings of comfort through mountains, serene trees, and glistening waters, seeking psychological balance [Qadir, 2010]. Similarly, Wordsworth's poetry honors the peaceful order of the sea, wind, and moon, expressing sorrow over the disconnection felt by modern humanity (Wordsworth, 1802/2004).

### **Critique of Modernity and Materialism**

Wordsworth and Iqbal analyze the disconnection caused by industrial and material advancement, attributing it to the spiritual decline of contemporary individuals [Kaczynski, 1995; Umar, 2004]. Wordsworth expresses sorrow over this decline, stating, "The world is too much with us; late and soon, Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers" (Wordsworth, 1802/2004). Similarly, Iqbal mourns the absence of spiritual tranquility and suggests that returning to nature could serve as a solution. Both poets advocate for the natural world as the most effective teacher and healer to counteract the issues brought on by modernity [Benaboud, 1977].

### **Psychological and Social Conflict**

A recurring motif is the tension between the 'social self' and the 'individual self,' intensified by the rhythm and values of contemporary life [Glotsfelty, 1996; Bate, 1991]. Both poets view nature as a realm where disconnected modern individuals can find authenticity and peace.

### **Discussion**

#### **Similarities**

Both poets romanticize nature as a healing sanctuary for spiritual, social, and mental wellness [Mir, 2016]. They perceive balance in nature as a blueprint for societal harmony and promote the idea of retreating, whether physically or mentally, from the distractions of contemporary life [Stephen, 2016].

#### **Differences**

Wordsworth's pantheistic mysticism contrasts sharply with Iqbal's later, more detached theological perspective [Hoque, 2014].

Wordsworth frequently adopts a more vigorous, evangelical voice, whereas Iqbal's approach is nostalgic and reflective, indicating cultural and religious differences [Sajjad, 1987].

### **Conclusion**

William Wordsworth and Muhammad Iqbal though differing in geographic location, cultural background, and religious beliefs both depict nature as a reflection of peace and harmony, which is particularly significant in the chaos of the postmodern, industrialized world. Despite their differing philosophical foundations, their poetic perspectives align in portraying nature as an essential element for reestablishing equilibrium within the self and, consequently, society as a whole. Their poetry remains relevant in contemporary eco-critical conversations and continues to motivate a deeper connection with the natural environment as a means of healing and unity [Mir, 2016].

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