

Bridging Nature and Transcendentalism Through Poetry: Athar Tahir's Poetry and Thoreau's Ideals

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Abstract

The study seeks to investigate transcendentalism in and through nature, to discover oneself and the truth behind him. As a result, various seasons and natural elements depict his inner turmoil. Athar Tahir's poetic collection, *Just Beyond the Physical* depicts communion with nature, influenced by the Romantic literary movement. The sound, musicality, and image depiction draw him closer to the romantics. Furthermore, he extends nature beyond its physical existence. Thoreau presents a version of "applied" Transcendentalism. The concept of nature is central to this thinking, not just the more abstract Emersonian notion of nature, but a wild nature beyond humans. Words and phrases with the concepts of wildness and wilderness are gathered using qualitative analysis, and they are then equated with man and transcendentalism. Thoreau's essay *Walking* serves as the pivotal point for the research, wherein he emphasizes the importance of mobility and walking in the wilderness. This research examines Thoreau's view of walking as a form of transcendence as he famously stated, "Wildness is the preservation of the world."

Keywords; Thoreau, Transcendentalism, Athar Tahir, Walking, Wildness, Wilderness.

Introduction

"Just Beyond the Physical" demonstrates his connection to the natural world. The Romantic literary movement influenced Athar Tahir as the tone, melody, and narrative of the vision, he more closely resembles romantics. Furthermore, he transcends the environment's physical form and discovers his individuality and the truth underneath by transcending the forest. As a result, the "seasons" and settings reflect his inner turmoil. Tahir is a prime example of the mystic writer's quest for meaning and purpose. The verse evokes the gloom and absence that resides in the shiny "pearliness," which is likely the first step toward awakening. He is fond of creating the conventional poetry (Tahir, 2024, p. 1). Tahir's poetry reflects an appreciation for creativity and artistry. Despite its sparseness, the volume contains exquisite poetry about the changing seasons,

landscape, and nature. However, he had a somewhat depressing impression of this seaside city, which was growing beyond his grasp (Shamsie, 2006).

“Wilderness” is the only remaining area where civilization, which is riddled with earthly diseases, has not completely consumed the planet. This is the only place to escape the negative effects of urbanization and industrialization brought about by modernization. In this light, "wilderness" serves as the best remedy for our human natures, a haven from which we must eventually return to save the earth. Thoreau wisely observed, "The world is preserved in its wildness" (Cronon, 1996, p. 7) . He had a wealth of knowledge on topics such as hope, the meaning of "success," the benefits of journaling, and the importance of aging. In "Walking," the author aims to remind readers of the connection between movement and spiritual life, which has been drained by modern society (Popova, 2015, p. 1) . The late nineteenth-century movement known as transcendentalism revolved around the concept of nature and its relationship to human life. Emerson's theories, particularly Walden's, which advocated abolition, individualism, and opposition to civil authority, had an impact on it. Thoreau, another influential member of this movement, emphasized the importance of geography in America, as well as the need to simplify our understanding of nature. The Transcendentalist ideology is a multifaceted set of ideas aimed at bringing spirituality and rational thought together. It's influenced by "Plato's idealism and religious concepts from Unitarianism and Calvinism." The original concept emphasized a supernatural energy within each individual that is connected to the natural world and can alter societal structures and human behavior (Nichols, 2020, p. 3).

Research Methodology

Thoreau views "walking" in the bush as a transcendent experience, emphasizing the importance of movement. He believes that, while wildlife has a delicate charm that leads us in the right direction, we are still prone to making mistakes. Our concept is still not well defined. "Wildness" is inherent in life, and the "wildest people are the most alive." A person who pushed on relentlessly would always find themselves in a new country or wilderness, surrounded by the raw materials of life. Their presence is refreshing. All wonderful things are "free and wild, and the savage's wildness" is a subtle metaphor for the terrible ferocity that decent "men and lovers" encounter (Thoreau, 1862, p. 22). He pens, "I have faith in the woodland and the darkness when

maize sprouts. We need to infuse our tea with arbor-vitae or hemlock-spruce" (Thoreau, 1862, p. 32).

"Life consists with wildness. The most alive is the wildest. Not yet subdued to man, its presence refreshes him. One who pressed forward incessantly and never rested from his labors, who grew fast and made infinite demands on life, would always find himself in a new country or wilderness, and surrounded by the raw material of life. He would be climbing over the prostrate stems of primitive forest trees. In short, all good things are wild and free. There is something in a strain of music, whether produced by an instrument or by the human voice, take the sound of a bugle in a summer night, for instance, which by its wildness, to speak without satire, reminds me of the cries emitted by wild beasts in their native forests. It is so much of their wildness as I can understand" (Thoreau, 1862, pp. 57-58).

Literature Review

Turner's book, "The Abstract Wild," argues that conservation areas are not truly "wild" and that the term has been misused to become meaningless. He points out that some people mistakenly believe that "wilderness is the preservation of the world." He emphasizes the essence of "wildness" rather than the location itself. It's crucial to distinguish between "wildness" and "wilderness," even though "wildness" has historically been synonymous with "wilderness." "Turner thus asks, "How wild is our wilderness?" He answers that due to a combination of size, outside and inside pressures, etc., most wildernesses, particularly Wilderness Act wilderness, is not very wild at all." He further elaborates, "This loss of the wild and the loss of direct experience of the wild are the central themes of his book. Turner says the heart of the matter is that wildness [is] objectified and filtered through concepts, theories, institutions, and technology" (James, 2007, p. 17).

Emerson's ideas are radical, with a strong emphasis on the human being and the relationship between nature and man. His views had a significant impact on individuals, such as the abolition of slavery, gender equality, and educational reform. He is not a coherent doctrine, but rather a collection of interconnected ideas that have resulted in a broad "transcendental" perspective. He believed in an inner deity and "nature" that connects humans to the larger universe (Nichols, 2020, p. 2). The concept of "wilderness" has played a significant role in the

environmental movement. However, the concept of wildness has recently become problematized. It has been referred to as a jail, an amusement park, or a culturally produced fantasy. "Wildness" poses functional challenges, especially in terms of independence and maintenance. We now realize that the size of our ecosystems is insufficient (James, 2007, p. 1). Thoreau's outdoor walks were popular among his peers. He spent most of his days and nights "out-of-doors" as a "peripatetic philosopher." This chapter examines the outdoor personas developed by "Wordsworth and Thoreau," who both wrote about their experiences in nature. Walking is a significant action that scholars must define (Moellering, 2010, p. 98).

According to Hess, Wordsworth and his modern supporters' view of nature has led to an environmental coalition of middle-class white experts who prioritize conservation over racial equality. Hess contributed to the emphasis on protecting "wilderness" areas (Scott, 2012, p. 423). This conceptual intersection of "nature, genius, individualized authorial identity, middle-class high culture, and the autonomous deep self" is what he refers to as "the ecology of authorship" (Scott, 2012, p. 2). Conservationists seek to protect the "wilderness," a place that is isolated from urbanization and human civilization. This isolation, like "Wordsworth's," allows for self-discovery. In a broader sense, the usefulness of ecology as a category is challenged, as it is frequently applied as an umbrella word despite its diverse and erratic meanings in society.

Naturalist authors like "Wordsworth" are often assumed to have a broad perspective on the natural world, which is often associated with social values such as "wilderness" and quiet time in the neighborhood (Cronon, 1996, p. 424). The term "wilderness," which has historically been linked to nature and "wildness," has come under fire for missing "wildness" because of things like scale, human demands, and technology. Although the concept of wilderness has become controversial in recent years, it has long been a pillar of the environmental movement. Wordsworth's and Thoreau's love of nature served as inspiration for their famous nature walks. However, with a focus on environmental justice concerns, the environmental movement has moved away from protecting nature and toward protecting wilderness. This change raises concerns about the usefulness of nature as a category and how it relates to particular cultural preferences.

Analysis

"Afternoon" illustrates how important it is to be fulfilled and discover purpose in life. Hour after hour, he searches for significance. Tahir uses the term "deep" in conjunction with "greens." It gives him comfort, he says since the greenery possesses this wild richness. Because the poet views the sky so frequently, the depiction may alter. He could discover the way to solace via frantic, urgent, and crazy searches for the known inside oneself. He sits beneath the desperate efforts time and again, wondering where he last felt fulfilled. He'd seen the sky in that contained region of blue before, and the rich greens provided a peaceful respite from the bright light elsewhere. If he changed the representation, would that help? (Tahir, 1991, p. 18-19). Wilderness is part of the journey to transcend. To transcend the boundaries of reality, the imagination must be as wild as a howling wind and as empty as the night. In "Border Line," Tahir loses himself in his imagination until reality is solidly in front of him,

Learning out into the wind howling
in the pines stand high to
outdo each other, we watched
the night fill hollows
At the crossroads of sun and mist
our eyes unearthed the separate holds
we had locked ourselves so firmly in
so, the parting: you down your track,
I down mine. (Tahir, 1991, p. 13)

Thoreau views walking in the bush as a transcendent experience, emphasizing the importance of movement and the delicate charm of wildness in the wilderness. Wildness is inherent in life, and the wildest people are the most alive. Pushing relentlessly leads to new countries and wilderness, surrounded by raw materials and a refreshing presence. The savage's wildness symbolizes the terrible ferocity encountered by decent people and lovers (Thoreau, 1862, p. 22). "All great men exercise to hear the voice that comes in silence," claims Tahir. To follow their goal, they wait for years. From one location to another, they seek while walking and traveling through the bush. There is no use in sitting stationary. To traverse the unfamiliar "wilderness," one must

be "wild" enough to set aside free time and use their entire being. Everything connected is set aside in the weird "wilderness." whether it's daily tasks, family, or work.

The ego is the center of attention. One ought to keep learning how to go "wild" until he can get acquainted with the wildness in him, "Sayyid Ahmed Shaheed / For silence to speak to him he had, till / now, waited. So, across Hindustan to fill / the area of his dream he went; round / the Punjab, through the Khyber Pass." (Tahir, 1991, p. 10). In "Song," Tahir challenges the idea that walking is physical or that transcendental experiences exist beyond the tangible. Walking beyond the body's constraints is a time-based, transcendental experience where the "dweller is free to walk," free from geographical or temporal boundaries, conceptions, and difficulties. As a result, the wild is uncontaminated and emancipated, yet being wild requires settling into a framework that is not enjoyable for everyone. Despite being in a cage, his song and flight transport him to the past. Tahir said that it flies far and untamed to feel the blazing sun. "Green parrot sing / sing of the days / beyond cage / sing of the singing / children's songs / sing of flight // and a burning sun" (Tahir, 1991, p. 10). In "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," Byron ponders the desolate coastlines and declares that the forests without a way are where joy can be found. Deeper in the ocean, he discovers melodies,

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods

There is a rapture on the lonely shore

There is society, where none intrudes

By the deep Sea, and music in its roar

I love not Man the less, but Nature more

From these our interviews, in which I steal

From all I may be, or have been before

To mingle with the Universe, and feel

What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal (Byron, 2004).

According to Tahir, to withstand the powerful winds, one needs to stay straight like a "rubber tree." He stays patiently to take his wounds while acting crazy. The idea of going crazy is not shown as a one-time event. Instead, it is a continuous task that must be performed during one's life to maintain one's soul. To give them a shape that is to be referred to as wild and pure, older cuts are to be often replaced with more recent ones. According to Tahir, to withstand powerful

storms, one needs to stay straight like a tree. He stands patiently to take the cuts while acting crazy. Being "wild" is not presented as a one-time occurrence. Instead, it is a continuous process that must be followed throughout life to maintain one's inner being.

To achieve a wild and pure shape, older cuts are frequently replaced with more recent ones. Tahir claims he was standing alone on the plantation, like a standing plant, when a woman approached to tap the trees. She drew new strokes on the existing ones with acerbic severity of prolonged quiet, and resin flowed from my fingertips into a clay container, solidifying into lines. The terms "latex" and "sap" describe the process of pressing or juicing, which involves removing the pulp or fluid that is an element's primary component. He claims to have been sliced till latex spilled from his fingers in the words above, and he adds in the lines that follow that the sun remained black until the fungus, like perspiration, enticed the sap to flow. Therefore, in his interaction, nature is perceived to highlight the essence and crux that are inside him. Thus, his quest for the truth drives him insane. Thus, Tahir places a strong emphasis on the notion of sensing the truth's proximity. He can sense his presence because he believes that he is closer to the truth. *"The sun dark / on the crow's wings, or the sweat which forms like fungus on the skin / entices the sap to flow / And I let it flow, faking your nearness"* (Tahir, 1991, p. 9).

Thoreau recalls the screams of wild animals in their natural habitats, illustrating the untamed aspect of the natural world. The author recommends it because she believes in the beauty of woodlands and the gloom that comes with maize sprouting. They believe that the wildest people are the most alive and that life is filled with "wildness." Committed individuals often find themselves in "wilderness," surrounded by natural elements. Everything wonderful is "free and wild." (Thoreau, 1862, pp. 57-58) . Thus, the wilderness within oneself should be conquered with the wildness as that of an eagle. Tahir writes in "Hike," *"Like the eagle / Which traces the mountains / outlines in the air / but rivets its eyes on / the gliding shadow underneath / we preserve, cut our flight / to catch a dream"* (Tahir, 1991, p. 15). In "Other Seasons," silence is portrayed as an untamed and corrosive feeling that sets off the "imaginative...wilderness" and brings the truth downpours. There is an unpleasant stillness where a panorama of rooftops pushes across the monsoon vista, and "low-flying birds" predict rain (Tahir, 1991, p. 47). The author says the imagination appears and vanishes in "Facing the Sky." Like studs, stars search for the wild that lies beneath his deep

darkness until it appears to be within reach. Because of his journey through the deep and gloomy desert, he can now capture the moon.

Late at night,
as I lie facing the sky
letters settle into squares of the mosquito net
words come and go, like sketches
from a child's crayons
Star like pin-heads
provoke nothing
In the dark everything
seems within easy reach
I could stretch my hand
and catch the moon. (Tahir, 1991, p. 22-23)

Conclusion

Tahir explores the concept of wilderness and walking as a means to find fulfillment and purpose in life. He uses the terms "deep" and "greens" to describe the wild richness of the wilderness, which provides comfort and a sense of solace. Thoreau views walking in the bush as a transcendent experience, emphasizing the importance of movement and the delicate charm of wildness in the wilderness. Wildness is inherent in life, and the wildest people are the most alive. Tahir emphasizes the importance of being "wild" enough to set aside free time and use one's entire being in the wilderness. He also challenges the idea that walking is physical or transcendental experiences that exist beyond the tangible, stating that walking beyond the body's constraints is a time-based, transcendental experience where the "dweller is free to walk," free from geographical or temporal constraints. Being "wild" is a continuous process that must be followed throughout life to maintain one's soul.

To achieve a wild and pure shape, older cuts are often replaced with more recent ones. Tahir's quest for the truth drives him insane, emphasizing the notion of sensing the truth's proximity. Thoreau recalls the screams of wild animals in their natural habitats, illustrating the untamed aspect of the natural world. Committed individuals often find themselves in

"wilderness," surrounded by natural elements. The wilderness within oneself should be conquered with the wildness as that of an eagle. In "Other Seasons," silence is portrayed as an untamed and corrosive feeling that sets off the "imaginative wilderness" and brings the truth downpours. The imagination appears and vanishes in "Facing the Wild," highlighting the importance of embracing the wilderness and the wildness within oneself.

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