



The Post-Pastoral Footsteps in Mohsen Zohrab Beigi's *the Ashy Blossoms*

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ABSTRACT

The excessive curiosity of humans along with the potential for domination supremacy to provide a civilized and comfy territory, has led to a traumatic season in the way we treat the natural environment, and minorities. In literary constitution, not only have the natural fundamentals, including both the ecosystem and its inhabitants been encountered with deforestation, contamination, pollution, dispossession, and even desperation, but also the decency of both women and children as the main objective of this cycle has been violated. This paper investigates how Mohsen Zohrab Beigi's *the Ashy Blossoms*, a poetry collection, chimes a blaring bell to eco-concern discourse known as Post-pastoralism in a way to whether awaken awareness of the both environmental and human degradation, or social responsibilities to harmonize this devastating divide. Therefore, having considered the eco-logical conception, the poet excavates out three out of six overriding components, including an awe-attention to the natural world, the exploiting nature is equivalent to misbehaving women and children, and the creative-destructive processes of both natural environment and humanity

Keywords: Post-pastoralism, The Environmental and Human Degradation, Social Responsibilities, the Eco-Logical Conception,

1. Introduction

Concerning the descent of women, children, the natural environment, species, and other elements caused by man's excessive expectations and automation, Eco-writers and poets have consistently endeavored to find any discourses that can counteract these types of challenges. In this regard, Mohsen Zohrab Beigi, a Persian eco-poet and writer, researcher, and animal rights advocate who was born in a mountainous district named Khoram Abad (1985), in his manuscripts, creatively hires natural origins to depict both muteness and obscurity which are associated with the loss of innocence or the disappearance of sublime values. Beigi's *the Ashy Blossoms* not only can be a literal source of nature-thinking perspective and environmental complications which arouses moral feeling towards the best ethics of humanity in our current epoch but also a path to enhancing social responsibilities and international solidarity in blocking the decline of human societies. It is imperative to incorporate that the poet elaborates the dark sides of child labors life where numerous of them have lost the world of peace and easement and they are subjected to exploitation, addiction, sexual harassment, and compulsory jobs. Therefore, the policy of his poems moves in the direction of Terry Gifford's post-pastoral discourse where the term arose in the wake of the neglecting of the border between urban and rural areas since the harsh sound of knell's automatism and anthropocentrism invite all environmental organisms and innocence's into the era of inevitabilities.

2. Methodology:

Mohsen's poetic elements, including imageries, rhythms, forms, rhymes, paradoxes, metaphors, and etc., traced in both contradictory and magnetic framework, summon the use of the innovative ecological term "post-pastoral" which has triggered a discussion about literature or any narratives " [that] escapes the closed circuit of pastoral and reactive anti-pastoral, and take[s] responsibility for our problematic, responsibility with our natural home ground, from slugs to our solar system, from genes to galaxies, or as Marvell puts it, all that can be encompassed by a green Thought in a green Shade" (Gifford 2006: 57). This redesigned term essentially provides "[an] adaptive pastoral continuity [followed by] a set provisional criteria by which to distinguish texts that lapsed back into a pastoral of the past and those that problematized their engagement with land" (ibid,2012, 78). More to the point, the initial term 'post' goes "[of] being beyond the traps of the pastoral, of being aware of some of the problematic of the pastoral, of pushing into the complexities of celebration and responsibility, of being a part of nature and yet uneasy with relationships of ownership and exploitation" (ibid 74). Additionally, a literary text could be included in certain aspects of post-pastoral provision, but not all of the features must be presented. Thus, through this survey, Mohsen's *the Ashy Blossoms*, will be a practice of losing nature, Innocence, species, civilization, associating with the cultural dominations. However, he tries to proclaim that any sense of ethical superiority is always trying to settle and pacify the chaotic circumstances.

3. Discussion:

3.1. *An Unsolicited Intruder*

The most concentration of *the Ashy Blossoms* is to emphasis on the result of natural deterioration which unequivocally takes the eco-readers attention to the primary perspective of post-pastoral discourse, “an awe in attention to the natural world” (Gifford 1999:151). The following poems *The Wakeful Innocent Eyes* and *The Weighty Spree* from the poetic collection reveal short stories in which pastoral life has started a journey from tranquilities to infidelities when humankind has been pulled down in behaving with natural fundamentals concerning the loss of innocence or what moral principles are squandered owing to the relationship between human and non-human minorities. To begin with, both the first and second stanzas of *TWIE* open up an inspired tide of spring time:

« Just as the radiant rain scratches His nails on dews,
Boughs diffuse them with cherry joys,
Then Squirrels are congregating in bouncing,
While Sun’s spell spikes all the zones of lulls.
With the breathtaking breadth of benign breeze,
All beating souls are being blued in wealds,
Then Squirrels are exposing termless downlights,
While birds above boughs are singing with cheers. » (TWIE lines 1-8)

The poet commences his story with ‘the radiant rain’ an inseparable segment of spring and the blessings where animal species like squirrels are happily celebrating their thanksgiving-day feast because ‘Sun’s spell spikes all the zones of lulls’. Furthermore, their gladness feeling crystallization hits the all apex since ‘the blued beating souls’ are weighty within the ‘cheerful singings of birds above boughs’. In these stanzas, Mohsen elegantly lines up natural beauties such as squirrels, rain, birds, and boughs, in a melodious order, to depict the dreamy land known as Arcadia which “[is] significantly as an alpine region that is cut off all sides by other high mountains. It was the perfect location for a poetic paradise, a literary construct of a past Golden Age in which to retreat by linguistic idealization” (ibid, p. 20).

Moreover, inside the two opening stanzas of *TWS*, the Arcadian platform reminds the greenness epochs of the poet since cheerfulness were of all upper voices:

« Within floated pouncing, the festive sun wakes me up,
To halo the bells of blissful,
To grant me a luminous crown,
As it authenticates my dead-on flown
Beneath luminous light, seven clouds of nine fly my delights,
Kaka Roha blows me up her obeisance,
Being enchanted with her fragrance herbs,
While swaying in Her soft stream,
As I am satisfied with that crown.» (TWS Lines 1-8)

As of the aforementioned stanzas, ‘a luminous crown’ sheds out the ‘luminous light’ of his juvenility where within the heart of Kaka Roha from the Zagros mountainous range, a picturesque rain forest zone symbolically is “[as] an Arcadia of a childhood of innocence and ease, where decency [was] the key value ...” (ibid, p. 43). Kaka Roha reminds a moorland blanketed with oak trees and a plenty of scabiosa and leucanthemum flowers alongside by the needle-shaped sloping cliffs lined the bank of the magical and roaring river. It is tempting to say that ‘the fragrance herbs’ and its ‘soft stream’ have multiplied the beauty of the region, especially the fact that along the dirt path, black rural tents and large herds of the nomads can be seen, which the loving embrace of Kaka Roha has warmly kept them inside it. Therefore, the poet was ‘satisfied with that crown’ since living by the Kaka Roha River has taught the lands of this region, the alphabet of freshness and greenery.



Figure 1: A Spectacular View of Kaka Roha

From the above picture, all the peasant base is "... the perfect location for a poetic paradise, a literary construct of a past Golden Age in which to retreat by linguistic idealization" (Gifford 1999, 20).

On the flip side, Mohsen continues the stanzas of the poems with a weird tune since the peacefulness is signalled by an attendance of an unwelcomed guest. Therefore, in *TWIE*, the third and fourth stanzas take a front against all the excitement of the aforementioned perspectives:

« At the wedding of efflorescence and flows,
 One weird guest guides an ebbed gift of force,
 Then Boughs are being rattled by chainsaws,
 While choppers are chopping them with tools.
 The wedding's sweetness melts into virulence,
 Vows of begging to icky bells,
 Nests to waste through hands of power,
 While buzzing sounds are seizing each cry of knells. » (TWIE lines 9-16)

The poet indirectly grasps the attention of his readers into the ecological consideration when '[a] weird guest' has brought 'an ebbed gift of force', for 'the wedding of efflorescence and flows'. In point of the fact, the 'force' represents the deformation of the ecosphere that results from anthropocentric steps, whether it is human exploration or exploitation., a quick glance of the harsh elements such as 'chainsaws' and 'choppers' basically come from the economic possibilities in which the destructive consequences will be vanishing natural life cycle and loss of innocence. Hence, a numerous of subgroups including the environment, are species animals, are scarified of the dominant reason:



Figure 2: The Destruction of Animals Species Habitats

From the above picture, the 'buzzing sounds' made by chainsaws have taken 'boughs' into the new epoch of cruelties and shadowiness. According to a local news agency, quoted by IRNA, and translated from Persian to English Language,

"About '40 kilometres' beyond Noorabad, after traveling through a rigid and stony road, you will reach a village that now is empty of all trees. [Natives of the region] have reached them into the flames of the fire for the purposes of selling charcoal [and] ...as far as the human feet reach, the trunks of the trees are thrown into the flames, for whatever reason, need, fun or ignore, what the results is the destruction of a natural and national sources". (iscanews.ir)

Mohsen acutely substitutes the squirrel's wedding with the one that its 'sweetness melts into virulence, since the deforestation leads to food scarcity. Undoubtedly, oak is the squirrel's food, and by chopping down the oak trees, they no longer have food to eat, and as a result, the extinction of these animal species is not far of mind. It is pertinent to include that the oak forest is the squirrel's habitat, and if there is no 'oak producer' in their food chain, they are no longer to feed. To raise awareness of environmental crises, there has been a well-known quote by E.O. Wilson, an American biologist: "destroying rain forest for economic gain is like burning a Renaissance painting to cook a meal" (qtd, in Damania and et al., 1). Thus, their 'nests' are wasted through 'the hands of power'.

In the line of these stanzas, the third and fourth stanzas of *TWS*, are also moving to show the darkness relationship humans and the natural environment:

«On the spur of the moment in the weary evening,

The canaries are condemned to embittered singing,

And the dull Sun says: 'My cease-fire is bushed; your soothe is gone,

As life's Leech sucks your bowl's burn.» (TWS, lines 10-13)

Mohsen's proclamation of an 'embittered singing' of 'the canaries' might also be a great sadness of the poet due to the trampled innocence of all natural creatures. That is why, he specifically employs the 'the dull sun' to emphasize that there is no time left for the joys of youth, because the excessive demands of humanity overwhelm the tender souls. Undoubtedly, this gloomy emotion of the poet reveals his orientation against the dramatic effect of industrialization and mechanization since both investigation and exploitation on the Earth, disturb pastoral criteria.

Another embarrassing mirror of the nature exploitation which should be taken into account is the emergence of animals slaughtering for the benefit of humankind. Carol J. Adams in *The Sexual Politics of Meat* argues, "to them [romantic vegetarians], killing animals was murder, brutalizing those who undertake it and those who benefited from it" (Adams, 152). Following the assumed stanzas, Mohsen deliberately sprinkles a can of black paint on the fifth and sixth stanzas since tearing down the animal and species is like drying up the roots of love and purity:

«OOO Kaka Roha, couldn't you see what dimness is again?

Couldn't you catch how dusky bells are ringing?

As I slumber in the Black coffin.

By the hand of darkness faith of mine,

Sorrows are fed by my sight,

And the opening coldness disruption says,

"thousands of untold stories from the road that no one is there, but death and I",

As I growl upon its cold blood.»(TWS, lines 14-21).

Mohsen's imageries of 'dimness', 'black coffin', 'death', 'cold blood', might be designated as absent referent for their physical bodies or more specifically, 'the meat': "... Animals in name and body are made absent as animals for meat to exist. Animals' lives precede and enable the existence of meat. If animals are alive, they cannot be meat. Thus, a dead body replaces the live animal" (Adams, 66). In the world of consumerism, animals are comestible objects, and this means that humankind has full right to include them as meat in their food cycle or what Derrida considers as carnophallogocentric discourse: "[it] connects phallogocentric authority with the ingestion of animal flesh, whether literal or symbolic" (Baumeister, 54). It is shocking to include that nowadays there have been a numerous kinds of animal farms in the world for the purposes of exporting meat, fur, leather, medicine, and etc. As a result, this means that their ultimate fate must be ended with slaughtering under the stated goals of the governments. Below is an accurate picture of the final destination of the species:



Figure 3: How Puerility is Neglected

Not surprisingly, using a rigorous imagination, ‘the road that no one is there, but death and I,’ Mohsen challenges inhuman behaviour and also considers the death of creatures as equivalent to the death of humanity.

However, beyond the aforementioned cruelties, Mohsen in the last stanza», takes his readers attention to the possibilities of reawakening: “the recognition of a creative-destructive equally in balance with [...] growth and decay, ecstasy and dissolution” (Gifford,1999: 153):

«OOO Kaka Roha,

My coffin is hefty tonight,

As is wrapped in the shroud of tight,

Through the darkness that I’d lied

And wishing a sagged flageolet calls out for that delight. » (TWS lines 29-33)

The poet stresses that within the trembling steps to loss of life there would be ‘a sagged flageolet’ which calls for a heavenly compensation. Implicitly, he seeks a utopian zone or a sanctuary away from all exploitative tendencies as he challenges the anthropocentric discourses because he supposes that this cognitive process of death and rebirth ultimately reveals that “all destruction [is] really creation” (Gifford, 1999,153). Therefore, this belief would be a shock to discover that if humanity can abandon idealized aesthetics of nature, it cannot fully live without it.

3.2. *Life’s Leech*

In *the Ashy Blossoms* collection, the restrained and suppressed voices of the natural environment include not only animals and species but also encompass the pure souls of women and animals: “[an] awareness of the exploitation of the planet is of the same mindset as the exploitation of women and minorities” (Gifford, 1999,164). Thus, the following poem *The Subdued Wit* explores how the leech of life sucks the life sap out of children and youngsters and take them away from their pure nature:

«__ “By a hum from Hollow and a Hey within Pain”,

and a rattle in his veins that is sealed from the Rain,

He moans “Is there anyone to howl sin which is guilty of its name?”

Dirty Drained Devil crawls at my door,

With boundless begging to foul my soul,

He rejects me, as He needs a Fool,

But the fault is the fault, flow mistakes since he claims “treason! no more”.

I always paid my dues,

As they all tied up within willful rules, in serving his woeful woes,

But the faults are his choice,

locked in dumb to meet the tight-lipped truths.

Pleasures, merry-bell, blisses in feelings,
 Butterflies, blossoms, or canaries in cheers,
 I always recount the full with appeals,
 But he scrapes them all with his obstinacies.
 OOO Rain, rouse up my sane, nourish my soul,
 Hail in his name, unleash the force,
 Neither shame nor rules,
 As you hold me in the wakeful holes. » (TSW lines 1- 19).

Given an unconventional rhyme scheme, a pattern of aaa bbbb bbbb cccc which promptly became bbbb, Mohsen applies them in a number of argumentative manoeuvres with O sound that capture the heart-breaking moments. The moments when the abounded children and adolescents face to injuries and social problems that hinder their growth and health.

Mohsen's dualistic and perplex voice rooted in the alliterative imagination of employing 'hum', 'hallow', and 'hey', reveals how the ideal childhood of innocent children has been torched where they have been abandoned, suffering, or left on the winding streets. It is painful to include that many of the blossoms, with tired staring pedestrian's hands and pale faces painted with streaks of hot and excruciating sun lashes, invite their steps to disgraceful challenges to earn a few coins, which are supposed to be the nightly bread. In this stanza, by employing the term 'rattle' lied down in the 'veins', he melodramatically moans and criticizes the inclement moments where they have been carrying packages containing chewing gums or omen colourful envelopes, which could be swapped by whether beautiful kites in their hands or cosy and warm resting places. Moreover, both dirty and rough hands as well as handkerchiefs contaminated with dust marks from countless cars show how the path from childhood to adulthood has been passed in the blink of an eye, even though it could be their inalienable right to breath. Therefore, a number of fatal diseases among them are not far from the mind:

Reviewing the literature on the street in different countries has confirmed [that] living on the street causes some normally treatable diseases (e.g. malnutrition, severe wright loss, pneumonia, malaria, nausea) and some problems due to cold air such as sore throat, headache and nasal irritation, skin diseases such as lice and scabies, and sore around the mouth. Long-standing effects of diseases in street children caused damage in the central nervous system, heart, liver, kidney and bone marrow, and consequently these hazards caused a higher risk of mortality among them. (Vameghi and et al., 522)

Additional argumentative interpretation revolves around the entry of 'Dirty Drained Devil' into the children's life, where its's deceptive cane is hidden from the eyes of the parents. It is obvious that the laughter of their peers in expensive cars and in complete comfort can plant the seed of revenge in their hearts and prepare them to move towards all kinds of delinquency rooted in the affirmative question of the poet: "Is there anyone to howl sin which is guilty of its name?". Today, the phenomenon of Juvenile delinquency is one of the foremost challenges of the current societies. Undoubtedly, such a trouble was typical of advanced industrialized countries in recent years, but now it has become global with industrialization and urbanization. Mohsen imaginatively presents the components like 'beg', 'soul', 'mistakes', 'fool', 'treason', to depict that their steps are summoned to unknown pathways where the nature of the human heart will be blemished. Street children are often available in high-traffic areas such as roundabouts, inside narrow alleys, in abandoned houses, however, many of them unintentionally and without the presence and supervision of their family members join various criminal groups such as pickpockets, drug dealers and etc., which enabling them to be the drug distributors, often run by a hostile administration. As a result, it is not surprising that "[under] such circumstances, they fall into patterns of drug abuse in order to cope with their adverse conditions and survive on the streets" (qtd. in Muhammed Bah, 2). More specifically, the sixth line 'He rejects me, as He needs a Fool', incorporates "[those] are identified as the most vulnerable, especially those who cannot resist peer pressure, [therefore], it seems drug addiction has reached epidemic levels across the world and the spectrum of the drug on the drug market has widened considerably, becoming one of the social problems that affect everyone, everywhere, either directly or indirectly and children are no exception" (ibid).

Another challenge that creates an equally bitter experience for youngsters could be online gaming and cyberspace. The poet in the next poem *Reclusion*, tries to inform families about the destructive hazards of these kinds of games. He begins:

«The One that fetches pains,
 Wane them all within the rain,
 If Pain is the bred of grieving,
 Sweet-smelling drops swap them in gracing.
 Remember,
 Weeds always grow fast,
 Cracks squeeze them in racks,
 Roses endure pro-gambler rats,

As Flora laughs with alas.

But if the words are bleeding,

And the Feel lies on the line, baffling,

Back to the walls of blessing,

For Someone who cares about seeding. » (Reclusion, lines 1-13)

Currently, with the surge in the age gap between children and parents to more than one generation, the emotion and communication distance on both sides has also increased. Additionally, in the world of online games, there are whose genres of horror, violence, psycho, while in general, the best magnified candidates can be disillusioned, lonely, and depressed children and teenagers. Intelligently combining the words such as 'pain', 'griefing', 'bred', Mohsen intends to address those with a tendency toward masochism. Hence, one of those games that fall into both critical and destructive categories known as the Blue Whale Challenge.

As a matter of fact, a teenager because of a simple curiosity may enter this psychotic game, but the central focus would be more on self-harm rather than other-harm which very soon leads them to a cycle of death by stimulating a sense of proving a person's courage and ability through the determined comments of the uncharted territory. It is worth knowing that, as soon as self-esteem is targeted, it can be justified to endure the pain of various stages of the game, such as carving a blue whale with a cutting blade in the neck or other body parts. They are really vulnerable and "if a person does not respond to the self-harming practices recommended by the administrators, such administrators threaten and bully the player by the treat of harming their families. Consequently, they are more inclined to take the challenges either good or bad. Their state is so engrossed in the game that they do not even realize that real life is at stake" (Mukhra and et al., 4). The administrators are 'weeds', 'cracks', and 'pro-gambler rats', who 'squeeze' the innocent children and youngsters in a tight stapler for the predetermined purposes. As a result, enduring the unbelievable pains during various rough stages is not for satisfaction or what Mohsen employs the verb 'laugh', but for pressure and indifferences. Although, by employing heavenly metaphors such as 'sweet-smelling drops', 'the wall of blessing', or 'Someone who cares about seeding', Mohsen tries to sympathize with those who see their childhood world in darkness, for him, criticizing any doctrine of mistreatments should be at the top of everyone's agenda. Indisputably, within the suffocation of the society, he seeks for a moral consciousness rooted in transcendental consciousness that increase moral responsibilities.

4. Conclusion:

Concerning the ecological aspects of Gifford's post-pastoral literature, three of six of are widely used in Beigi's *the Ashy Blossoms*, the potential voice of innocent components, whether in the natural environment or community, both marginalized and neglected in materialistic scopes. Conspicuously, at the core of male-dominated orders, eco-system, animal species, women, children, are often disrespected as exploited tools. Mohsen employs a plethora of folklores and shreds of evidence to hint the oppressed and their conditions as long as the male dominated anthropocentric tendencies are justified in many cultural expressions. Furthermore, He seeks an awareness of interrelatedness to bridge the broken link between humans and non-humans. Therefore, inviting all both emotional and unemotional tones to rebuild and protect the new culture are of his primitive longings.

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Abbreviations:

The following abbreviations are used in the manuscript and any other citations are based on the APA principle.

TWIE..... The Wakeful Innocent Eyes

TWS.....The Weighty Spree

TSW.....The Subdued Wit

Figures:

This photo was taken by Poet, Mohsen Zohrab Beigi and is not taken from any particular source. Figure 1

[https:// www.iscanews.ir/news/712839](https://www.iscanews.ir/news/712839) قطع-صدها-درخت-بلوط-لرستان-بر-اثر-اجرای-یک-طرح Figure 2

<https://9jafoods.com/what-is-the-taste-of-crocodile-meat/>. Figure 3