ISSN E: 3006-1466
ISSN P: 3006-1458
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
CJSSR

CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW

Vol.04 No.01 (2026)

PASTORAL POETRY IN ENGLISH AND URDU: TRADITION, TRANSFORMATION, AND MODERN PERSPECTIVES

انگریزی اور اردو میں راعیانہ شاعری: روایت، تغیر اور جدید تناظرات

Amna Anwaar. Dr. Munir Abbas Sipra
1 MPhil, University of Southern Punjab Multan.*
Email: amnaanwaarswl@gmail.com
2 Lecturer, Department of Urdu, KIPS Head Office Lahore*
Email: munirsipra9810@gmail.com

Abstract:
Pastoral poetry traditionally centered on shepherds, rural life, and the harmony between humans and nature, has played a significant role in world literature since antiquity. From the Greek idyll to the English Renaissance eclogue and from Arabic-Persian nature traditions to Urdu's distinctive poetic evolution, pastoral literature has continually reshaped its themes to reflect the social, cultural, and ecological contexts of each era. This research paper examines the historical roots of pastoral poetry, its thematic and stylistic features, and its development across the literary traditions of English and Urdu. The study places special emphasis on Urdu literature, analyzing poets who incorporate landscape, seasons, rural scenery, and nature symbolism in their works. Through close textual readings, thematic comparison, and scholarly references, the paper demonstrates that pastoral poetry, though transformed by modernity, remains an enduring mode of expressing nostalgia, ecological sensitivity, and human longing for simplicity and natural harmony.Pastoral poetry is one of the oldest forms of literary expression, originating from humanity's earliest engagement with the natural world. It is traditionally defined as poetry that idealizes rural life, shepherds, landscapes, and nature, offering a contrast to the complexities of urban civilization. Historically, pastoral poetry emerged as a literary mode that not only celebrated the serenity of the countryside but also used it as a symbolic space to critique social structures, express philosophical thought, and explore human emotions.
The pastoral tradition developed prominently in ancient Greek and Roman literature, flourished during the European Renaissance, and expanded into global literary cultures, including Persian and Urdu. Although each tradition has its own stylistic nuances and cultural metaphors, the underlying pastoral impulse remains intriguingly similar to an aesthetic return to nature.
In the context of Urdu literature, pastoral poetry forms a subtle yet meaningful component of poetic expression. While Urdu is known primarily for ghazal, romanticism, and classical urban themes, many poets have drawn deeply from nature imagery, rural landscapes, and agrarian aesthetics. This paper examines the evolution of pastoral poetry across major literary traditions, followed by an in-depth analysis of pastoral themes in English and Urdu poetry.

Keywords: *Pastoral Poetry, Nature, Shepherd, Mountains, Rivers, Solitude*

Introduction

Pastoral poetry occupies a central position in English literary history as one of its most persistent and adaptable modes. Traditionally associated with idealized rural life, shepherd figures, and natural harmony, pastoral poetry has often been misunderstood as merely a description of simple nature or escapist fantasy. In reality, pastoral poetry in English literature has consistently functioned as a sophisticated cultural form through which poets explore social tensions, artistic identity, moral values, and humanity's relationship with nature. As Raymond Williams observes,

ISSN E: 3006-1466
ISSN P: 3006-1458
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
CJSSR
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
Vol.04 No.01 (2026)

pastoral writing frequently constructs an imagined countryside that stands in implicit dialogue with contemporary social realities.

This paper examines pastoral poetry in English as a historical continuum rather than a fixed genre. By tracing its development from Renaissance imitation of classical models to Romantic transformation and modern re-evaluation, the study demonstrates how pastoral poetry responds to shifting attitudes toward nature, labor, and human consciousness. The discussion focuses on major representative poets Spenser, Wordsworth, Keats, Hughes, and Longenbach, whose works illustrate key stages in the evolution of English pastoral tradition.

In earlier periods of literature, especially in the works of poets like William Wordsworth, pastoral poetry reflected a deep and sincere relationship between human beings and nature. At that time, human life was closely connected with the natural world. The countryside, green fields, rivers, and simple rural life were not only physical surroundings but also sources of emotional and spiritual satisfaction. Nature was considered a friend, a guide, and sometimes even a healer for the human soul.

The line *"A thing of beauty is a joy forever"* expresses the idea that true beauty never loses its value. It continues to give happiness and comfort to human beings across time. This thought is closely connected with the spirit of pastoral poetry, where nature is presented as a source of peace, harmony, and spiritual nourishment.

Classical Origins and the Formation of English Pastoral

English pastoral poetry is deeply indebted to classical Greek and Roman literature, particularly the works of Theocritus and Virgil. Theocritus's Idylls established the pastoral setting as a rural space inhabited by shepherds who sing of love, rivalry, and loss amid natural surroundings. Virgil's Eclogues further refined pastoral conventions by introducing political allegory, nostalgia, and the contrast between rural peace and urban corruption. These classical texts shaped pastoral poetry as a symbolic mode rather than a realistic depiction of rural life.

During the English Renaissance, poets consciously adopted and adapted these classical models. Edmund Spenser's The Shepherd's Calendar marks the formal establishment of pastoral poetry in English. Organized around the twelve months of the year, the poem presents shepherds who discuss religious reform, moral decay, and poetic ambition within an idealized rural framework. While the setting appears simple, the poem engages deeply with contemporary Elizabethan concerns, demonstrating how pastoral poetry functions as a vehicle for indirect social commentary.

"A gentle Shepherd sate beside a spring,
All in the shadow of a bushy brere,
That Colin hight, which well could pype and sing,
For he of Tityrus his songs did lere." (1)

(*The Shepheardes Calender*, "Januarye")

Similarly, Christopher Marlowe's *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love* offers an idealized vision of rural pleasure, emphasizing leisure, love, and abundance. The poem's exaggerated promises reveal the artificiality of pastoral idealization, a feature that later poets would increasingly interrogate. Renaissance pastoral poetry thus establishes the countryside as an imagined space shaped by artistic and ideological needs rather than empirical reality.

ISSN E: 3006-1466
ISSN P: 3006-1458
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
CJSSR
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
Vol.04 No.01 (2026)

Romantic Pastoral and the Revaluation of Nature: William Wordsworth

The Romantic period represents a decisive shift in the development of English pastoral poetry. Nature is no longer treated merely as a decorative background or symbolic retreat but as a vital source of emotional, moral, and spiritual insight. William Wordsworth plays a central role in redefining pastoral poetry by grounding it in lived experience and ethical reflection.

In poems such as *Michael* and *Lines written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey*, Wordsworth presents rural life not as an untouched paradise but as a space shaped by labor, memory, and loss. In *Michael*, the poet evokes the pastoral landscape through simple yet resonant imagery, grounding the pastoral scene in both natural beauty and human toil. His pastoral vision emphasizes the dignity of ordinary rural people and the formative influence of nature on human character. Unlike Renaissance pastoral poetry, which often idealizes leisure and escape, Wordsworth's pastoral acknowledges hardship while affirming nature's capacity to nurture moral awareness.

"Beside the springs of Dove,
When love lies listening to their murmuring sound,
And hears them call her name." (2)

(*"Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle"*)

Wordsworth transforms pastoral poetry by shifting focus from idealized shepherds to real rural laborers. Nature is no longer decorative but spiritually instructive. The ploughboy and milkmaid symbolize harmony between human labor and the natural world. Wordsworth's pastoral thus becomes democratic and philosophical, emphasizing emotional authenticity and moral growth.

John Keats and the Aesthetic Pastoral

John Keats further expands the scope of English pastoral poetry by infusing it with sensuous richness and philosophical depth. While Keats inherits Romantic interest in nature, his pastoral poetry differs markedly from Wordsworth's moral emphasis. In poems such as *Endymion* and *To Autumn*, Keats constructs pastoral landscapes that are intensely aesthetic and emotionally immersive.

Keats's pastoral poetry often intersects with the sublime, blending calm rural scenes with profound reflections on time and human limitation. Keats's pastoral imagination transforms nature into a space where beauty and impermanence coexist. This fusion of pastoral serenity and philosophical intensity marks a distinctive contribution to English pastoral tradition.

"O for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green." (3)

(*"Ode to a Nightingale"*)

Keats's pastoral is aesthetic and sensuous, rooted in an imagined countryside rather than lived rural experience. Nature functions as a means of escape from suffering, mortality, and industrial modernity. Unlike Wordsworth's realistic pastoral, Keats presents an eternal and idealized landscape, reflecting the Romantic longing for permanence and beauty.

The Breakdown of Idealization: Ted Hughes and Anti-Pastoral Poetry

In the twentieth century, English pastoral poetry underwent a radical transformation as poets challenged traditional idealization of rural life. Ted Hughes represents a decisive break from

ISSN E: 3006-1466
ISSN P: 3006-1458
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
CJSSR
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
Vol.04 No.01 (2026)

Romantic pastoral conventions. His poetry rejects sentimental representations of nature and instead portrays the natural world as violent, indifferent, and governed by instinctual power.

In poems such as *Hawk Roosting* and *Pike*, Hughes depicts animals as embodiments of raw energy and dominance. Nature in Hughes's poetry is not a moral guide or aesthetic refuge but a force that exposes the fragility of human values. This approach aligns with what critics describe as antipastoral poetry, which dismantles the illusion of harmony traditionally associated with the countryside.

"I drown in the drumming ploughland, I drag up
Heel after heel from the swallowing of the earth." (4)

(*"The Horses"*)

Hughes radically redefines pastoral poetry by rejecting sentimental rural imagery. Nature is violent, elemental, and indifferent. The countryside becomes a site of raw instinct and survival, not peace. Hughes's pastoral reflects post-war anxieties and ecological consciousness, offering a dark, anti-pastoral vision that contrasts sharply with classical harmony.

Hughes's work reflects modern anxieties about humanity's relationship with nature, particularly in an age of industrialization and ecological crisis. By confronting the darker aspects of the natural world, Hughes redefines pastoral poetry as a mode capable of expressing ecological realism rather than idealized escape.

Post-Pastoral Reflection: Arcadia in Contemporary English Poetry

Contemporary English pastoral poetry continues to revise the tradition through self-conscious reflection and restraint. James Longenbach's poem *Arcadia* exemplifies a modern post-pastoral approach. While invoking the classical symbol of Arcadia, the poem avoids nostalgic idealization and instead focuses on artistic discipline, silence, and attentive presence.

In *Arcadia*, the pastoral setting becomes a space for reflecting on the act of artistic creation itself. Nature is not appropriated or romanticized but carefully observed, suggesting an ethical relationship between the human subject and the natural world. This reflective pastoral aligns with Terry Gifford's concept of the post-pastoral, which emphasizes ecological awareness and resistance to naïve representations of nature.

"This is Arcadia,
not the place we imagined,
But what remains after imagining
has done its work." (5)

In *"Arcadia,"* Longenbach deliberately revises the classical pastoral ideal. Arcadia is no longer an untouched rural paradise but a concept shaped by memory, language, and loss. The poem reflects contemporary pastoral concerns: the tension between inherited literary ideals and ecological reality. Unlike Spenser's or Keats's idealization, Longenbach's Arcadia exists after disillusionment, marking a late-modern, reflective pastoral mode.

The history of pastoral poetry in English literature reveals a continuous process of adaptation and reinterpretation. From Renaissance idealization to Romantic introspection and modern ecological critique, pastoral poetry has remained a flexible and intellectually rich mode. While its

ISSN E: 3006-1466
ISSN P: 3006-1458
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
CJSSR
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
Vol.04 No.01 (2026)

outward features, shepherds, fields, and seasons have changed over time, its central concern with the relationship between humanity, nature, and art persists.

By examining key poets such as Spenser, Wordsworth, Keats, Hughes, and Longenbach, this paper demonstrates that English pastoral poetry is not a static genre confined to rural imagery but a dynamic literary form capable of engaging with philosophical, social, and ecological questions. Its endurance within English literature testifies to its capacity for self-renewal and critical relevance.

After discussing the harmonious relationship between human beings and nature in traditional pastoral poetry, it is also important to examine how this relationship gradually transformed in later periods of English literature. In classical pastoral poetry, nature was seen as a friend and a source of peace, beauty, and spiritual comfort. However, with the development of industrial society and the growth of urban life, the balance between humans and nature began to weaken. Many poets started to express concern about humanity's growing distance from the natural world. Their poetry reflects a shift from harmony with nature to conflict and destruction.

An early indication of this change can be seen in the poetry of William Wordsworth. In his poem The World Is Too Much with Us, Wordsworth criticizes the materialistic attitude of modern society. The poet argues that human beings have become so absorbed in worldly concerns that they have lost their spiritual connection with nature. He writes:

"The world is too much with us; late and soon,

Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers."(6)

These lines suggest that people are overly concerned with economic activities and material gain. Because of this obsession with "getting and spending," they ignore the beauty and spiritual value of the natural world. Wordsworth therefore presents one of the earliest literary warnings about the weakening bond between humans and nature.

During the Victorian period, this concern becomes more intense. The poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins reflects a deep awareness of the damage caused by industrialization. In God's Grandeur, Hopkins describes how the earth has been affected by human trade and labor. He writes:

"Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil."(7)

Here the poet suggests that the earth has been marked and exhausted by continuous human activity. The repeated phrase "have trod" emphasizes the long history of human exploitation of the natural world. Hopkins presents nature as something sacred that has been damaged by industrial progress.

A similar sense of loss appears in another poem by Hopkins, Binsey Poplars. In this poem, the poet mourns the cutting down of beautiful poplar trees near a river in Oxford. Hopkins expresses his sorrow in the line:

"All felled, felled, are all felled."(8)

The repetition of the word "felled" conveys shock and grief over the destruction of nature. Through this simple yet powerful expression, the poem shows how human intervention can permanently destroy natural beauty. The loss of the trees also symbolizes the broader loss of harmony between humans and the environment.

This deterioration becomes even more severe in modernist poetry. A powerful representation of environmental and spiritual decline appears in The Waste Land by T. S. Eliot. In this poem, Eliot presents a barren and lifeless landscape that symbolizes the crisis of modern civilization. The

ISSN E: 3006-1466
ISSN P: 3006-1458
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
CJSSR
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
Vol.04 No.01 (2026)

fertile landscapes celebrated in pastoral poetry are replaced by a dry and desolate environment. Eliot writes:

"Here is no water but only rock

Rock and no water and the sandy road."(9)

These lines portray a harsh and empty landscape where life seems impossible. The absence of water symbolizes not only environmental dryness but also the spiritual emptiness of modern society. Through this imagery, Eliot suggests that modern civilization has become disconnected from both nature and spiritual values.

Thus, English poetry clearly reflects a transformation in the relationship between humans and nature. While classical pastoral poetry celebrated harmony and friendship between human beings and the natural world, later poets increasingly depict a world where this balance has been disturbed. Nature is no longer only a peaceful companion; it has also become a victim of human progress, industrial expansion, and environmental neglect. This literary shift illustrates how changing social and economic conditions have altered humanity's relationship with the natural environment.

Urdu Pastoral Poetry

In Urdu poetry, pastoral elements did not emerge as a formally labeled genre in the Western sense, yet nature, village life, seasons, rivers, fields, birds, and pastoral imagery occupy a significant place in both classical and modern Urdu poetry. Urdu pastoral poetry reflects indigenous cultural sensibilities, Islamic aesthetics, Persian influence, and South Asian rural experience. This paper explores the development, themes, forms, and significance of pastoral poetry in Urdu, highlighting major poets and their poetic treatment of nature and rural life. From classical ghazal poetry to modern nazm, nature remains a central expressive medium through which poets articulate love, loss, labor, spirituality, and resistance.

Classic Pastoral in Urdu Masnavi tradition

In addition to the ghazal and nazm, the **masnavī (mathnavi)** occupies a significant position in Urdu literature as a narrative poetic form capable of sustained description. Due to its extended structure and flexible rhyme scheme, the masnavī allows poets to present detailed depictions of natural landscapes, seasonal change, gardens, rivers, and rural life. As a result, it becomes an important vehicle for pastoral expression in Urdu poetry. Unlike the lyric intensity of the ghazal, the masnavī offers spatial and temporal continuity, enabling poets to situate human emotion within a broader natural environment. Nature in the Urdu masnavī often functions not merely as background but as an active narrative force, shaping mood, symbolism, and ethical meaning.

The pastoral imagination in Urdu is deeply indebted to Persian poetry, particularly the imagery of *gul o bulbul*, gardens (*chaman*), spring (*bahar*), breeze (*naseem*), and flowing water (*joo-e-rawan*). These motifs laid the groundwork for a symbolic pastoral mode rather than a literal shepherd tradition.

Mir Hasan's *Sihr-ul-Bayan* is one of the earliest and finest examples of Urdu masnavī in which nature plays a central aesthetic role. The garden at dawn, the gentle breeze, and blooming buds create a pastoral atmosphere of harmony and anticipation. Nature here prepares the emotional space for human action, echoing classical Persian and Indo-Islamic garden aesthetics. This pastoral environment aligns the narrative with ideals of beauty, order, and emotional balance.

عجب حسن تھا باغ میں جلوہ گر کہ ہر گل کی تھی اس کے منہ پر نظر

چمن اس گھڑی بر سر جوش تھا گل و غنچہ جو تھا بے ہوش تھا

ISSN E: 3006-1466
ISSN P: 3006-1458
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
CJSSR
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
Vol.04 No.01 (2026)

معطر ہوا اور گل کا دماغ　　کہ مہکا تمام اس کی خوشبو سے باغ
درختوں پر اس کی پڑی جو جھلک　　زمرد کو دی اور اس نے چمک(10)

In *Gulzar-e-Naseem*, Daya Shankar Naseem constructs an idealized pastoral world dominated by gardens, flowing water, and abundance. The garden (*gulzar*) functions as an Urdu equivalent of Arcadia, symbolizing cultural refinement and moral harmony. The emphasis on fertility, shade, and flowing canals reflects a utopian pastoral vision, distancing the poem from urban or historical conflict.

دو مرغ تھے بیٹھے اک شجر پر　　مادہ لگی پوچھنے کہ او نر
میں تجربہ کر چکی ہوں جہاں کا　　کھلتا نہیں کچھ طلسم یاں کا
مادہ سے سن کے بول اٹھا نر　　ہے طرفہ طلسم اس جگہ پر
وہ پیڑ جو حوض پر لگا ہے　　طوبیٰ سے خواص میں سوا ہے
پہلے تو یہ لال پھل کو کھائے　　انسان کا رنگ روپ پائے
پھر توڑ لے اس کے سبز پھل کو　　پھل کچھ اسے دے رہے گا کل کو
جس شخص کے پاس وہ ثمر ہو　　ہتھیار نہ اس پر کارگر ہو(11)

The Urdu masnavī tradition significantly enriches the pastoral dimension of Urdu literature. By offering space for elaborate natural description and narrative development, masnavīs such as *Sihr-ul-Bayan*, *Gulzar-e-Naseem*, and *Zahr-e-Ishq* demonstrate that pastoral expression in Urdu is not confined to lyric poetry alone. Instead, it unfolds across narrative landscapes, where nature becomes a sustained presence shaping human experience, cultural ideals, and literary imagination.

Progessive and Modernist Pastoral: N.M Rashid and Faiz Ahmed Faiz

After the masnavī, the nazm emerges as one of the most effective poetic forms for sustained reflection on nature in Urdu literature. Unlike the ghazal, which often treats nature metaphorically, the nazm allows poets to observe, describe, and critically respond to the natural world in a continuous and discursive manner. Through the nazm, Urdu poets move from celebratory and idealized depictions of nature to socially and ecologically engaged representations, especially in the modern and contemporary periods.

Modern Urdu poetry marks a crucial transitional phase in the representation of nature. While classical Urdu poetry often used natural imagery symbolically or decoratively, modern poets increasingly employed nature as a social, philosophical, emotional, and political medium**.** From Nazir Akbarabadi's folk realism to Iqbal's ethical symbolism, Akhtar Shirani's romantic pastoralism, and Faiz Ahmed Faiz's anti-pastoral modernism, nature becomes a dynamic and ideologically charged presence.

This evolution reflects broader historical shifts: colonial encounter, industrialization, political upheaval, and the emergence of collective consciousness. Consequently, pastoral harmony gives way to conflict, loss, and resistance, anticipating contemporary ecological concerns.

In modern Urdu poetry, Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Noon Meem Rashid mark a decisive shift from descriptive or pastoral representations of nature to a symbolic and conceptual use of natural elements. For both poets, nature is no longer an autonomous or harmonious presence; instead, it functions as a system of signs through which political, psychological, and existential meanings are

ISSN E: 3006-1466
ISSN P: 3006-1458
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
CJSSR
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
Vol.04 No.01 (2026)

conveyed. Elements such as night, dawn, seasons, darkness, and light are repeatedly employed as symbols rather than scenery.

In the contemporary period, global warming, environmental degradation, and air pollution are intensifying simultaneously, making ecological preservation an urgent global concern. In earlier literary periods, global warming was not perceived as a critical issue; consequently, poets did not explicitly engage with environmental crises in their works. Instead, literature largely focused on exploring the harmonious relationship between human beings and nature, portraying the natural world as a source of beauty, sustenance, and spiritual renewal. However, in modern literary discourse, this relationship has undergone a significant shift. Contemporary poets increasingly raise their voices against environmental destruction and global warming, articulating anxiety, resistance, and a sense of responsibility toward the natural world. This transformation reflects a broader ecological consciousness shaped by the realities of climate change and the pressing need to protect the environment for future generations.

درختوں کی شاخوں کو اتنی خبر ہے
کہ اُن کی جڑیں کھوکھلی ہو چلی ہیں،
مگر اُن میں ہر شاخ بزدل ہے
یا مبتلا خود فریبی میں شاید
کہ اِن کرم خوردہ جڑوں سے
وہ اپنے لیے تازہ نم ڈھونڈتی ہے !(12)

N. M. Rashid's nazm uses images of nature to express moral weakness and inner loneliness. The branches of the trees are shown as aware that their roots have become hollow, turning the tree into a symbol of a society whose foundations are no longer strong. Even with this knowledge, the branches keep searching for nourishment from the same damaged roots, which suggests self-deception and lack of courage. Growth in the poem feels artificial rather than healthy, based on illusion instead of real strength. There is no sense of unity or renewal; each branch struggles alone. Through this symbolic use of nature, Rashid presents a modern pastoral vision that reflects decay, isolation, and spiritual unrest.

یہ داغ داغ اجالا یہ شب گزیدہ سحر
وہ انتظار تھا جس کا یہ وہ سحر تو نہیں
یہ وہ سحر تو نہیں جس کی آرزو لے کر
چلے تھے یار کہ مل جائے گی کہیں نہ کہیں
فلک کے دشت میں تاروں کی آخری منزل
کہیں تو ہو گا شب سست موج کا ساحل
کہیں تو جا کے رکے گا سفینۂ غم دل(13)

Faiz Ahmad Faiz's *"Subh-e-Azadi"* marks a decisive departure from the conventional pastoral vision of harmony, renewal, and pastoral peace. Traditionally, pastoral poetry celebrates the dawn

ISSN E: 3006-1466
ISSN P: 3006-1458
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
CJSSR
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
Vol.04 No.01 (2026)

as a symbol of natural regeneration, hope, and the restoration of balance between human life and the natural world. Faiz deliberately subverts this inherited pastoral ideal by presenting a dawn that is "stained" and "night-bitten," thereby transforming a familiar pastoral symbol into a site of ideological disillusionment. Faiz's modern pastoral is therefore not rooted in fields or shepherd life but in ideological struggle and emotional exile. He transforms pastoral poetry into a vehicle for political and existential critique, where nature no longer offers escape but bears witness to collective pain. In doing so, Faiz aligns with modernist reinterpretations of pastoral, where the genre becomes ironic, symbolic, and deeply self-conscious.

Symbolic and emotional Pastoral: Tasadduq Husain Khalid

In the trajectory of modern Urdu poetry, Tasadduq Husain Khalid represents a significant yet often understated voice that deepens the symbolic and emotional treatment of nature. While Faiz politicizes nature and Noon Meem Rashid internalizes it as an existential landscape, Khalid presents nature as a silent witness to humanity's growing alienation. His poetry reflects a fractured relationship between human beings and the natural environment, marked by loneliness, loss, and emotional disconnection.

کیا کہا فطرت تیری غم خوار ہے؟
وہم،
دھوکا،
رحم کے قابل ہے تیری سادگی
علم اشیا کے امیں!
کائنات دہر میں تنہا ہے تو!
یہ پہاڑ، رفعتوں کے، عظمتوں کے رازدار،
دور تک پھیلے ہوئے
وادیاں، لہلہاتے کھیت دامن میں لیے
مرغزار، آبشار
ان پہ تو مرتا ہے
اپنی جان تک دینے کو تیار ہے

سامنے کی ان چٹانوں سے اگر تو گر پڑے
چور ہو زخموں سے جسم نازنیں
سسکیاں لیتے ہوئے دم توڑ دے
ایک بھی پتی نہ ہو گی تیرے غم میں سوگوار
پھول ہنستے ہوں گے
چشمے گائیں گے
تارے کھیلیں گے

ISSN E: 3006-1466
ISSN P: 3006-1458
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
CJSSR
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
Vol.04 No.01 (2026)

چاند ناچے گا
خوشی میں جھومتے ہوں گے درخت
تیرا ہونا اور نہ ہونا ایک ہے ان کے لئے
کائنات دہر میں تنہا ہے تو
کس قدر تنہا ہے تو!(14)

The poem repeatedly emphasizes that the relationship between humans and nature is no longer reciprocal. Mountains, valleys, fields, waterfalls, and meadows once symbols of nourishment and shelter are now portrayed as emotionally detached. This detachment is not natural in origin but historically produced through human actions such as environmental destruction, exploitation of resources, and disregard for ecological balance.

The poet implies that nature's silence is a response to human violence. Because humanity has disrupted the natural order, nature no longer recognizes human life as central or sacred. This represents a clear post-pastoral vision, where the myth of harmony is replaced by confrontation and estrangement.

Tentative Hope and skepticism in Akhtar ul Iman's Pooetry

Akhtar-ul-Iman occupies a distinctive position in modern Urdu poetry due to his plain diction, introspective tone, and psychological realism**.** In his nazm *"Umeed (Hope)"*, natural imagery does not function as decorative pastoral scenery; rather, it operates as a symbolic framework through which the poet explores inner uncertainty and fragile hope**.** The poem reflects a modern consciousness where the bond between humanity and nature is tentative but not entirely broken.

آسمان کے دامن میں
شب کے تیرہ آنگن میں
دیکھ کر ستاروں کو
رات کی بہاروں کو
سوچتا ہی رہتا ہوں
اپنے جی میں کہتا ہوں
میری صبح فردا بھی شاید ایسی روشن ہے(15)

Unlike classical poets, Akhtar-ul-Iman does not idealize nature as nurturing or moral. Instead, nature remains indifferent, allowing the poet to project his inner emotions onto it. The imagined brightness of tomorrow's morning represents conditional optimism in a troubled modern world. Dawn is symbolic but uncertain. The poem reflects modern alienation where hope survives quietly. Thus, nature functions as a mirror of the human mind rather than a source of harmony.

Psychological and Existential Pastoral: Munir Niazi

Munir Niazi's poetry often reflects human restlessness and inner turmoil. His poems depict a person who is constantly moving, searching for a better environment, and longing for peace**.** Unlike classical pastoral poets who celebrate harmony between humans and nature, Munir shows a modern human caught in uncertainty and longing**.** Nature in his poetry is both a mirror and a guide. Beautiful landscapes, gardens, rivers, and seasons are described, but they rarely bring

ISSN E: 3006-1466
ISSN P: 3006-1458
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
CJSSR
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
Vol.04 No.01 (2026)

lasting comfort. Instead, they highlight what the human heart is missing**.** His poetic voice expresses anxiety, yearning, and dissatisfaction, suggesting that humans struggle to find balance in life.

یوکلپٹس کے پیڑ کے اوپر
ٹھٹھرے تاروں کے پھیلے جنگل میں
چاند تنہا اداس پھرتا ہے
یوکلپٹس کی سرد شاخوں سے
ٹھنڈے جھونکے لپٹ کے روتے ہیں
یوکلپٹس کے پیڑ کے نیچے
خشک پتے ہوا میں اڑتے ہیں(16)

This poem reflects restlessness, loneliness, and the search for peace, which are central themes in Munir Niazi's poetry. The eucalyptus trees, with their cold branches, create a chilly and distant atmosphere, symbolizing emotional isolation. The stars "paused" over the forest and the moon "wandering alone and sad" reinforce the sense of solitude and existential unease.

The cold gusts embracing the trees and weeping suggest that even nature is expressing sorrow, yet this sorrow mirrors the human condition of anxiety and longing. Dry leaves flying in the air indicate movement and instability, symbolizing the restless human spirit searching for a comforting environment.

The poem blends natural imagery with emotional states, showing that Munir Niazi uses nature not merely for decoration but as a mirror of human inner turmoil. The lonely moon, the cold branches, and the restless leaves all work together to create an atmosphere of melancholy and wandering, highlighting humanity's quest for peace and belonging in a world that feels indifferent.

Ecological Consciousness in Modern Urdu Pastoral: Majid Amjad

Majid Amjad is one of the most important poets of modern Urdu poetry, known for his existential reflections, urban alienation, and ecological awareness. Amjad portrays a world where human actions have disrupted natural balance. Nature is often depicted as wounded, endangered, or indifferent, reflecting both environmental and emotional crises.

بیس برس سے کھڑے تھے جو اس گاتی نہر کے دوار
جھومتے کھیتوں کی سرحد پر بانکے پہرے دار

گھنے سہانے چھاؤں چھڑکتے بور لدے چھتنار
بیس ہزار میں بک گئے سارے ہرے بھرے اشجار

جن کی سانس کا ہر جھونکا تھا ایک عجیب طلسم
قاتل تیشے چیر گئے ان ساونتوں کے جسم

گری دھڑام سے گھائل پیڑوں کی نیلی دیوار

ISSN E: 3006-1466
ISSN P: 3006-1458
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
CJSSR
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
Vol.04 No.01 (2026)

کٹتے ہیکل جھڑتے پنجر چھٹتے برگ وبار

سہی دھوپ کے زرد کفن میں لاشوں کے انبار
آج کھڑا میں سوچتا ہوں اس گاتی نہر کے دوار

اس مقتل میں صرف اک میری سوچ لہکتی ڈال
مجھ پر بھی اب کاری ضرب اک اے آدم کی آل(17)

This poem portrays the destruction of nature by human greed and violence**.** The opening lines describe a canal surrounded by fertile fields and flourishing trees, once protected and vibrant. The imagery of "twenty years standing" and "dancing fields" conveys the long-standing harmony and vitality of this natural space.

The poem exemplifies Majid Amjad's modern ecological consciousness, where human exploitation has broken the bond between humanity and nature. Trees, fields, and canals are no longer symbols of life or harmony; they bear witness to violence and loss. The work blends environmental critique, existential reflection, and vivid natural imagery, making it a foundational example of post-pastoral Urdu poetry.

Urdu pastoral poetry, like its English counterpart, originally celebrated the harmony between humans and nature. Classical poets, such as Nazir Akbarabadi, depicted seasons, gardens, rivers, and rural life as sources of beauty, joy, and moral guidance. Nature was seen as nurturing, abundant, and closely connected with human life. These early works often reflected community life, spiritual values, and aesthetic delight, presenting an idealized vision of the natural world.

With the rise of modern poetry, the pastoral tradition in Urdu underwent significant changes. Poets like Allama Iqbal and Akhtar Shirani began to use nature symbolically, as a reflection of strength, morality, or emotional depth. Iqbal emphasized mountains and deserts as metaphors for selfhood and discipline, while Shirani celebrated aesthetic beauty and romantic longing.

In the mid and late-twentieth century, poets such as Majid Amjad, Munir Niazi, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Noon Meem Rashid, and Tasadduq Husain Khalid shifted the focus further. Nature became a mirror of human anxiety, existential isolation, and environmental loss. In Amjad's and Khalid's poetry, trees, rivers, and landscapes are often depicted as wounded or indifferent, highlighting the broken relationship between humans and the natural world. Faiz and Rashid used natural elements symbolically to explore political oppression and psychological alienation, reflecting modern social and existential realities.

In contemporary Urdu poetry, pastoral imagery continues to evolve. Nature is no longer simply a source of comfort or aesthetic pleasure; it is a space for reflection, protest, and ethical concern. Poets draw attention to environmental destruction, loneliness, and the consequences of human greed, creating what can be called post-pastoral or eco-conscious poetry.

Overall, Urdu pastoral poetry has moved from celebration and idealization of nature to symbolism, critique, and existential reflection, reflecting the changing social, cultural, and ecological conditions of the modern world. It shows how poets have continuously adapted traditional forms to address contemporary realities, making pastoral poetry a dynamic and evolving literary tradition in Urdu literature.

ISSN E: 3006-1466
ISSN P: 3006-1458
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
CJSSR
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
Vol.04 No.01 (2026)

References

1. Spenser, E. (1579/2008). *The Shepheardes Calender*. In J. Cummings (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of Edmund Spenser* (pp. 45–78). Oxford University Press.
2. Wordsworth, W. (1805/2004). *The Prelude*. In S. Gill (Ed.), *William Wordsworth: The major works* (pp. 233–414). Oxford University Press.
3. Keats, J. (1819/2009). *Ode to a Nightingale*. In E. Cook (Ed.), *John Keats: Poems* (pp. 289–291). Oxford University Press.
4. Hughes, T. (1967/2003). *The horses*. In *The collected poems* (pp. 77–78). Faber and Faber.
5. Longenbach, M. (2012). *Arcadia*. In *The iron key: Selected poems* (pp. 143–144). W. W. Norton & Company.
6. Eliot, T. S. (1922). *The waste land*. London: Boni & Liveright. (P. 24)
7. Hopkins, G. M. (1918). *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. London: Humphrey Milford. (P. 66)
8. Hopkins, G. M. (1879). *Binsey poplars*. In *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. (P. 58)
9. Wordsworth, W. (1807). *The world is too much with us*. In *Poems in two volumes*. London: Longman. (P. 147)
10. Hasan, M. (2007). *Sihr-ul-Bayan*. Anjuman-e-Taraqqi-e-Urdu. (P.79)
11. Naseem, D. S. (1990). *Gulzar-e-Naseem*. Anjuman-e-Taraqqi-e-Urdu.
12. Rashid, N. M. (2011). Kuliyaat E Rashid. Lahore, Pakistan: Kitabi Dunia. (P198)
13. Faiz, F. A. (2011). Nuskha-e-Haiy Wafa. Lahore, Pakistan: Maktaba-e-Karwan. (P234)
14. Khalid, T. H. (1984). *Halqa arbab e Zouq*. Majlis-Taraqi-Adab. (P46)
15. Eman, Akhtar ul. (1961). *Yaadien*. Metro Printing Mumbai. (P99)
16. Niazi, Munir. (1994). *Taiz Hawa Aur Tanha Phool*. Gora Publishers.(P11)
17. Amjad, Majiid. (2011). *Kulliyaat-e-majiid Amjad*. Farid Book depot.(P352)