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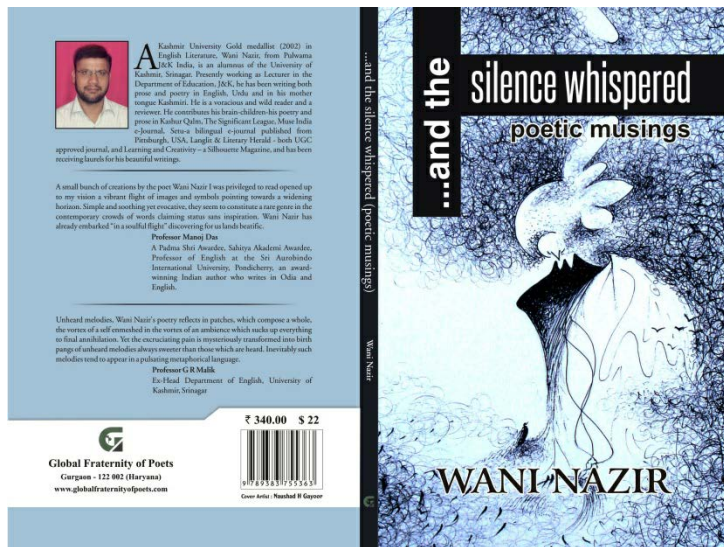


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**Book Name**                 *...And The Silence Whispered*  
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**Reviewed by:**  
**Shabir Ahmad Mir**

T S Eliot, while making his landmark avowal that “*poetry is not a turning loose of emotion but an escape from emotion. It is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality*” This impersonality, he says, can only be achieved by cultivating a historical sense by being conscious of the tradition. For him, the most individual parts of a poetic work may be those which are most alive with the influence of the poetic ancestry

“*...And the Silence Whispered*” by Wani Nazir, a collection of 103 poems, is a pastiche of myriad elements drawn from the varied and variegated sources and molded artfully to produce a blue print of the contemporary world. The poet has strongly adhered to the tradition as described by T.S Eliot by blending dexterously elements from Homer to Beckett to produce a crystal clear view of the world and its mysteries. The theme of existentialism blatantly is explained in his absurdist poem “Charlie Chaplin”. The term “absurd” is applied to a number of works in drama and prose fiction which have in common the view that human condition is essentially absurd as Albert Camus said in “the myth of Sisyphus:

*"In a universe that is suddenly deprived of illusions and of light, man feels a stranger. He is an irremediable exile....this divorce between man and his life truly constitutes of absurdity"*

In "Charlie Chaplin" Wani Nazir writes:

*Come! Make an entry on the stage,  
Come along with Falstaff and other clowns,  
And play the gravediggers scene,  
The whole audience desperately  
Pants for the "comic relief".*

Wani Nazir has allegorically exposed the painful existence of human beings in a world devoid of meaning. The stage for the poet is the world where everybody wishes to pass every second in frivolous ways like Falstaff, a jester in Elizabethan dramas. The poet brings in the 'gravediggers scene' from Shakespeare's Hamlet to expose everyone's death wish in the postmodern world. The only way to escape from the painful routine of life is to beguile yourself by some comic relief. The poet in "**Charlie Chaplain**" has done a postmortem of life on the decentered planet reminiscent of Macbeth's words:

*Life is a walking shadow, a poor player,  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more.  
Life is tale told by an idiot full of fury signifying nothing.*

The employment of the figure of the great jester in the poem underscores the failure of communication between humans in the postmodern world the poet is writing in.

Morality and the ways to achieve salvation, death and resurrection, poetry and its immortality power to achieve peace and recognition, poetry, an escape from the painful sting of death, disillusionment with fatal and lusty regimes, truth massacred and evil rewarded are adroitly handled by Wani Nazir as in "**Carom: fait accompli**":

*Those small circular  
Black and white discs  
And a red one too,  
Sprawled and struck,  
Bounced and rebound,  
On a square board,  
Always echo the words  
Of that English bard's  
Creation, Gloucester:*

*"As flies to wanton boys  
Are we to the gods  
They kill us for their spot*

The cosmic irony is displayed poignantly by Wani Nazir. Like Gloucester the poet tries to get across that we are helpless before the divine schemes and the only thing we can do is to embrace the doom hands down.

Escapism too is one of the major themes in the book. Echoing the very concern Yeats expresses in his "**The Lake Isle of Innisfree**":

*I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,  
And a small cabin built there, of clay and wattles made:*

Wani Nazir longs in "**From my Terrace I wish to Fly**":

*That, if I were a bird,  
I would embark on a soulful flight  
To some undiscovered beatific land,  
Where earth breeds not  
Nettles of animosity and malevolence,  
But rose and jasmines*

The poet wishes to embark on immortal flights on the wings of Yeats' Golden bird, on the linnet's wings to distance himself from the world fraught with nettles of animosity and malevolence. The poet wishes not to become like Icarus, whose hubris let him to bite the dust.

In "**Despondency**" there is a voice vociferating the acute sense of dryness and infertility expressed poignantly by employing words like discordant ripples, parched hearts, cacophonies to expose the spiritual decay of the modern man, reminiscent of T.S Eliot's "**The Wasteland**". Wani Nazir wails over the sense of sterility and desolation the world has been landed into:

*No longer do they [the words of Adhan] soothe the soul  
Or infuse whiffs of spirituality  
Into the parched hearts of people;*

The poem, "**Good Mo(u)rning**" is an elegy on the war-afflicted world where everyday a new blood ceremony is being witnessed by the mute audiences of the world. The poem is fraught with the morbid images of dead bodies, shrieks that pierce through pores of the reader's being and the fragile vows of the politicians, that next day die their own death. Employing the image of

innocence by bringing his son into the warp and weft of the poem, the poet has mustered all the pain and agony world is afflicted with:

*"Wearing his [son] innocent chuckling face  
Little knowing that he does fill,  
His father's so spacious a room,  
With a heap of dead bodies,  
A volley of doleful shrieks,  
And a few bits of broken vows.*

In '**Resurrection**' an emotive poem, the poet '*dissolves, diffuses, dissipates in order to recreate*', thus handles "*secondary imagination*" (as Coleridge puts it) to fill his tarrying canvas with the bewitching colours out of his infertile womb.

*Taking cue from the world "without"  
The seeds of ideas germinated,  
In the soul of my imaginative land  
And it transformed my barren womb  
Into a gushing pool of treasure trove,  
I dipped my pen in its ink  
And filled the tarrying canvas with  
The colours, charismatic and beautiful!*

'**Poet: the Redeemer**' is one of the most striking poems in the collection. We see Wani Nazir, an ardent spokesman of order and justice. The callous treatment of the voiceless, the present uprising in the world including Syria, Palestine and Kashmir, turned into a Senecan theatre, moves the poet to deep anger and bitterness. He produces a clear picture of the causes of this terror and morbidity.

*Syria here, Palestine there,  
France here, the USA there,  
Where human souls are rent apart,  
Along with the world, Kashmir too,  
Where the Jhelum has turned red*

The dissolution is a part of a cycle of history which also guarantees order, joy and beauty. At the end of '**Poet: The Redeemer**', the poet finally puts the responsibility on a poet to reform the world, the one who can create unity out of disunity, order out of disorder.

*It is the poet, ay! It is the poet*

*Who can harbor rays of hope  
In the parched hearts of all the forlorn*

“...*And the Silence Whispered*” is a storehouse of images and symbols, myths and archetypes blended artfully to produce both romantic as well as apocalyptic vision of the world, a rough beast slouching towards Bethlehem.

The book is *a tour de force*, a glimpse of intellectual brooding over the inevitable loss of faith and the meaning of life. The poet’s solitary meditation in evocative surroundings, the haunting mood, self-pity, Victorian elegiac mode etc. blend to produce a complete picture of the world and its people. Resistance is also another remedy the poet suggests to bear the brunt of the world governed by the barbarous politicians. The poet in “...*And the Silence Whispered*” has created a Keatsian notion of negative capability to make peace with ambiguity.

Wani Nazir succeeds in bringing forth a meticulous analysis of the world by employing allusions, conceits, cosmic irony and disillusionment and proves a true spokesman of humanity. The plunge into the verses of the book makes the reader discover some precious pearls to be cherished for long.