

## A Comparative Analysis of Guo Moruo's (Diqiu, Wo de Mu Qin) Poem "My Mother is the World" and Aşık Veysel's Poem "My Faithful Beloved is the Black Earth"

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**Abstract:** This study looks at two poets that they grew up in different worlds - Chinese poet Guo Mo Ruo (郭沫若) and Turkish poet - and they studies how each of them, in his own way, they uses images of the earth and nature to tell something meaningful of human life. In looking at Guo Mo Ruo's (郭沫若) poem "The Earth, My Mother!" and Aşık Veysel's "My Faithful Beloved is the Dark Soil" the two poems show that themes such as nature, soil, cultural memory and the emotional ties between people and the natural world. Although the two poets come from different cultural backgrounds, for each of them, nature is seen as something more than a place in the literature world and more than the places where life happens. Guo Mo Ruo's (郭沫若) poetry that is "Earth Mother" represents the soil like the beginning of life, as a symbol of vitality and freedom shared by all beings. Aşık Veysel, on the other hand, refers to the earth as "faithful beloved" highlighting humility, fate and the way that all living things eventually return to soil and live again in different forms. Although the two poets come from distant cultures, both poets use meaningful and clear language to show a deep link between people and the natural world. Their poems bring together the sacred values of their traditions and suggest that humanity's bond with the earth reflects a return to our origins and the universal experiences we share.

**Keywords:** Guo Moruo (郭沫若), Aşık Veysel, Image of Nature, Image of Earth, Cultural Memory

### Introduction

#### Literature and Nature in Human Culture

Literature has been one of the most enduring and ancient domains of humanity's relationship with nature since the dawn of existence. Throughout history, while people sustained their lives across diverse geographies, they did not perceive nature merely as a purpose or a component of life. Rather, they regarded it as a carrier of culture and identity, transmitting values across generations. In literary traditions, nature has appeared as a god, a divine blessing bestowed upon humanity, a faithful companion, and at times, a partner in humanity's destiny, depending on the belief systems of the societies in which people lived. From this perspective, poetry has emerged as the most intense, evocative, and symbolic form of expression of the human-nature relationship.

#### Guo Moruo (郭沫若)

Guo Moruo (郭沫若, 1892–1978) was born in 1892 in Leshan, Sichuan Province. His father, Guo Chaopei (郭朝沛), was a respected merchant of considerable cultural refinement and social standing. The family's economic and cultural resources enabled Guo Moruo to be educated under private tutors within the framework of traditional Confucian thought, which decisively shaped his early literary development. As Liao Jiuming (2022) notes, "The natural environment of Sichuan left profound traces on his growth. The grandeur of Mount Emei (峨眉山) and the vigor of the Dadu River (大渡河) became inseparable elements of his poetic memory." His childhood environment and eagerness to read from the age of four and a half laid the foundations of his literary personality.

Educated in Classical Chinese literature, Guo Moruo composed his first known poem in 1904, Village Life Scene (村居即景), consisting of five lines. His 1919 poem Earth, My Mother (地球, 我的母亲) marked a powerful early

example of his distinctive style, addressing themes of nature, humanity, land, and freedom. With the publication of *The Goddess* (女神) in 1921, he established himself as a pioneer of modern Chinese poetry, blending romanticism with revolutionary fervor. His literary output extended beyond poetry to history, drama, essays, translations, and archaeology. Liu Yuanshu (1991) records that Guo Moruo authored more than 40 novels, 20 plays, 16 poetry collections, and 10 essay anthologies (p. 28). His works combined historical consciousness with individual reflection, capturing the spirit of his age. In 1949, he served as President of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and contributed to shaping China's cultural policies. Until his death in 1978, he enriched the literary world with numerous works.

Living through the founding of the People's Republic of China, Guo Moruo carefully observed the challenging social conditions of his time and produced works marked by a distinctive style. The May Fourth Movement (五四运动) of 1919 was a pivotal moment in the transition from classical to modern literature in China. In the same year, Guo Moruo's *Earth, My Mother* reflected Western intellectual influences, challenging feudal structures while foregrounding freedom and the love of humanity and nature. His unique style was recognized by Wen Yiduo (闻一多) in 1923, who remarked: "If there is a poetic style worthy of the name modern poetry, Guo Moruo's works are the most deserving. His poems are entirely removed from classical verse and song. Most importantly, the spirit of his poetry is the spirit of the age—the spirit of the twentieth century." This assessment underscores the innovative nature of Guo Moruo's poetry in both language and form, establishing him as a true innovator in modern Chinese literature. Wen Yiduo further emphasized that Guo Moruo broke free from traditional molds and developed a distinctive artistic language of his own.

### Âşık Veysel

Âşık Veysel (1894–1973) emerged in the early twentieth century as one of the folk poets who secured a place in the literary world. In his works, he sincerely expressed the social values and transformations of his time, as well as the profound bond between human beings, nature, and the soil. He was born in 1894 in the village of Sivrialan, Sivas. At the age of seven, he lost his eyesight due to smallpox. As Çobanoğlu (2003) states, the loss of his vision enabled him to perceive the world not visually but through auditory and emotional senses, allowing him to construct a rich inner world. Encouraged by his father, Karaca Ahmet, he developed his innate poetic talent. With the saz gifted by his father, he articulated the world he perceived with the eye of the soul through the tradition of Âşıklık, adapting it to a new style characteristic of the Republican era, and gained great fame in his surroundings. In his poetry, themes such as love of nature, human love, moral values, and the social problems of the people came to the fore. As Yavuz Bülent Bakiler (1989, p. 15) remarked: "The roots of Âşık Veysel's tree of poetry rest upon metaphysics. The trunk of this tree consists of love poems, while its branches are poems on social themes." This demonstrates that the poet possessed an artistic vision akin to a tree rooted in the soil, offering fruits of love.

Âşık Veysel's literary journey in poetry was nourished by the tradition of folk verse. His blending of the Âşık style of poetry with the cultural identity of modern Turkey revealed his distinctive manner. His poems reflect, in plain language, the serenity of nature, the spiritual realm of humanity, and the inevitable cycle of death and love. His most renowned works include *Uzun İnce Bir Yoldayım* ("I Am on a Long and Narrow Road"), *Benim Sadık Yarım Kara Topraktır* ("My Faithful Beloved Is the Black Soil"), and *Dostlar Beni Hatırlasın* ("Friends, Remember Me"). Throughout his literary life, he composed more than 120 poems, most of which originated within oral tradition and

were later compiled and published. His collected works were brought together in three main volumes: *Deyişler* (1944), *Sazımdan Sesler* (1949), and *Dostlar Beni Hatırlasın* (1970). These works demonstrate that Âşık Veysel's artistic style and language were nourished by the folk literature tradition, while also serving as a bridge between his intellectual world and modern Turkish poetry.

The Turkish folk poet Âşık Veysel is one of the strongest representatives of Anatolian folk culture and the Sufi tradition. His poem *Benim Sadık Yarım Kara Topraktır* interprets nature through the image of the "faithful beloved," portraying soil as both the source of life and the final resting place of all beings, thus the most reliable friend and companion of humanity. In his poetry, soil is not only a symbol of loyalty, compassion, maternal tenderness, and permanence, but also functions as a metaphysical element reminding humanity of its frailty and mortality (İlhan, 2022, p. 34). In the later period of his life, Âşık Veysel taught the saz at Village Institutes, thereby contributing to the transmission of the folk poetry tradition across generations. He participated in various programs on Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) and published his poems in book form. In 1965, he received the Service to the Nation Award from the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM). He passed away in 1973 in his native village of Sivrialan, Sivas.

The conceptual framework of this subject is grounded in the notions of myth, the human–nature relationship, soil, imagery, and cultural memory. In literary texts, imagery enables abstract thought to be transferred into the concrete domain, rendering it visible. In this context, both Âşık Veysel's *Benim Sadık Yarım Kara Topraktır* and Guo Moruo's (郭沫若) *Earth, My Mother* place the image of soil at the center of humanity's spiritual bond with nature and the earth. Eliade's (1963) emphasis on the archetype of "Mother Earth" parallels the depiction of soil in the poems of both Âşık Veysel and Guo Moruo as a sacred entity symbolizing the transition between the cycles of life and death.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the dimensions of meaning in the relationship between the image of soil and myth, Sufi tradition, and cultural memory within the cultural traditions of two different geographies. In this regard, the process of humanity's integration with nature, soil, and the world has been evaluated within the framework of the concept of universal connection.

### **Thematic Perspectives in the Works of Guo Moruo (郭沫若) and Âşık Veysel**

Although the poetry of Guo Moruo (郭沫若) and Âşık Veysel is nourished by different literary traditions, both converge on a common theme by positioning nature not merely as a background element but as a living entity that determines human identity, destiny, and existence. Guo Moruo's romantic and innovative perception of nature and Âşık Veysel's Sufi perspective reflect the cultural values and collective memories of different societies through poetry. This situation can be explained by Assmann's (2011) theory of cultural memory, which emphasizes art as a medium that reinterprets social memory.

These two poems have been examined through the method of comparative literature, and both texts have been reflected in the light of the concepts of cultural memory and collective remembrance. Within the subject, nature and human love are conveyed through metaphors. The primary aim is to reveal how nature functions as a carrier of memory in the works of Guo Moruo (郭沫若) and Âşık Veysel, and to analyze how, in times marked by war, hunger, and deprivation, nature became a symbol of hope, resistance, and rebirth in both cultures. Thus, the study seeks to

demonstrate how nature assumes a carrier function within the intercultural dimensions of literature, analyzing the meanings attributed to nature in different cultural contexts through comparative methods, and showing how these meanings reflect the influence of humanity, society, and belief systems.

### **Social Reflections of the Works of Guo Moruo (郭沫若) and Âşık Veysel**

Although Guo Moruo (郭沫若) and Âşık Veysel grew up in different geographies and historical-cultural environments, their literary works left unique imprints on the value systems of their respective societies. Both poets bore witness to the social transformations of their times and reflected these experiences in their poetry, addressing the complex connections between nature, soil, humanity, and culture within the framework of collective memory.

In Guo Moruo's poetry, particularly in *Earth, My Mother*, the world and nature cannot be depicted merely as a setting in which life unfolds. During China's painful modernization process, nature and soil were understood as fundamental forces sustaining the productivity of society. The poet's image of "mother-earth" reestablishes the bond between human labor and nature-soil, emphasizing social solidarity. Through this imagery, he interprets nature and soil in Chinese culture not only as symbols of fertility but also as sacred processes of existence and as spaces for constructing national consciousness (Magagnin, 2018).

Âşık Veysel, on the other hand, addresses the life of the Anatolian people and their bond with nature and humanity within a profound framework of meaning. In his poetry, the folk tradition merges with the sensibilities of modern literature, opening the door to a new perspective in Turkish literature. In *My Faithful Beloved*, soil acquires spiritual value as both the source of production and labor and as the symbol of the cycle between death and rebirth. This understanding reflects the worldview of Republican-era Anatolian society, integrating its inner bond with nature and soil into a philosophy of labor and a sense of submission.

Although Guo Moruo (郭沫若) and Âşık Veysel drew upon different cultural heritages, both perceived nature and soil as domains of human spiritual maturation. For both poets, nature and soil symbolize the cycle of humanity's journey toward existential interiority. Guo Moruo's archetype of "mother-earth" and Âşık Veysel's symbol of "soil as mother and beloved" articulate the same universal truth despite their distinct cultural origins. These two images become a shared expression of humanity's profound spiritual bond with nature. From this perspective, both poets position nature and soil as reflections of humanity's common values. Through their poetry, they render visible the inner and spiritual unity that humanity establishes with the metaphysical realm. This shared approach defines the way in which soil and nature are understood in the lives of humanity across two different cultures, uniting them on a literary plane.

Would you like me to also prepare a structured comparative table (themes, imagery, cultural context, function of soil/nature) to make the parallels between Guo Moruo and Âşık Veysel clearer for academic presentation?

### **Studies on Guo Moruo (郭沫若) and Âşık Veysel**

Academic research on Âşık Veysel in Turkey has produced a substantial body of literature. It is noted that his simple poetic style, shaped around themes of the world, humanity, soil, destiny, death, and human love, has been the subject of 6 master's theses, 2 doctoral dissertations, 108 articles, and 40 books (Uysal Akman, 2023). In most of these studies, sincerity, simplicity, innocence, and elements reflecting folk culture are emphasized. These features have made his poetry a focal point of scholarly attention. All of the academic works written in Turkey demonstrate that the poet is a

figure who bridges the folk literature tradition with the cultural identity of Republican-era Turkey (Akıcı, 2012; Irmak & Yüce, 2021). Within this framework, Âşık Veysel is regarded both as a bearer of tradition and as one of the symbolic representatives of modern folk identity.

Academic studies on Guo Moruo (郭沫若) reveal that he is not only considered one of the founders of modern Chinese poetry but also recognized for constructing an innovative poetic identity by blending the classical Chinese tradition with modern literary sensibilities. Researcher Cai Zhen (2018), taking into account not only Guo Moruo's published works but also scattered texts, states that he composed approximately 550 modern poems and around 1,040 classical poems, thereby producing a corpus exceeding 1,600 poems (Cai Zhen, 2018). Furthermore, the Guo Moruo Research Yearbook (郭沫若研究年鉴) highlights in a review article that in recent years, more than 100 academic papers have been published on Guo Moruo (Zhang, 2019). Considering China's population, the increasing number of studies indicates that the poet has become a focal point of interest among the younger generation.

According to the findings of all academic studies conducted on Guo Moruo (郭沫若) and Âşık Veysel, both poets strongly reflect in their works the social traditions, values, and cultural heritage of the geographies in which they lived. Thus, it is understood that they constructed distinctive literary identities that reproduce and reinterpret the cultural heritage they belonged to. Analyses reveal that the themes of nature, soil, and humanity in both poets' works are transformed into a framework that gives meaning to identity, memory, and the human–cosmos relationship. When examined alongside academic sources, it becomes evident that the lives and works of both artists converge in common domains. These shared domains—cultural memory, myth, the nature–human–soil relationship, and identity-centered studies—provide a fertile ground for comparative research.

## Method

This research has been conducted within the framework of a qualitative methodological approach, with the analysis of the poems based on the perspective of comparative literature. The comparative literature method aims to reveal common fields of meaning by comparing texts written in different cultural and linguistic contexts in terms of themes, imagery, and ideas. Within this study, the Chinese poet Guo Moruo's (郭沫若) *Earth, My Mother* and Âşık Veysel's *My Faithful Beloved Is the Black Soil* have been examined through comparative literature. In both poems, the imagery of nature and soil has been evaluated within the context of the human–nature–soil relationship, framed by cultural, mythical, and Sufi themes.

The data were obtained from primary sources, namely the poets' original works, and secondary sources, including articles, critiques, and theoretical studies related to the subject. During the analysis, Jan Assmann's (2011) theory of cultural memory, Mircea Eliade's archetypal approach to "Mother Earth," and Roland Barthes' principles of semiotic analysis were employed as theoretical foundations. The aim was to reveal, from a comparative perspective, the relationship between the images of nature and soil and the concepts of humanity, belief, and memory in two different cultures.

### Research Method and Model

This study was conducted in line with qualitative research methods, which allow for depth of meaning and contextual analysis. Particularly in texts such as poetry, which are rich in imagery, the qualitative approach contributes

significantly to uncovering deeper layers of meaning. The methodological background of this study rests on comparative literature theory, which enables the examination of literary texts within cultural contexts. The primary objective of this method is to compare literary works written in different cultural and historical settings in terms of theme, imagery, and narrative structure, and to evaluate cultural particularities through converging narrative forms.

Within this framework, Âşık Veysel's *My Faithful Beloved Is the Black Soil* and Guo Moruo's (郭沫若) *Earth, My Mother* were comparatively analyzed through the themes of soil, nature, humanity, and cultural memory. The texts analyzed and the relevant literature were drawn from primary sources—the poets' original works—and secondary sources such as academic articles, doctoral dissertations, and books. The poems were examined using explanatory and interpretive textual analysis methods, with their concepts, images, and symbols classified and interpreted according to their meanings.

The theoretical framework was evaluated under three main headings: Jan Assmann's (1992) theory of cultural memory, Mircea Eliade's (1963) interpretations of the mythic archetype of "Mother Earth," and Roland Barthes' (1964) principles of semiotic analysis. In line with these approaches, the functions of soil and nature in both poems were comparatively analyzed within the contexts of mythological structure, symbolic representation, and collective memory.

### **Research Population and Sample**

The population of this research is limited to two poems in Turkish and Chinese literature that address the themes of soil, nature, and humanity, particularly those written in the first half of the twentieth century, which explore the human–nature–soil bond in mythical and philosophical dimensions.

The sample of the study was determined within this population using purposive sampling, a technique frequently employed in qualitative research. Accordingly, two representative works were selected: Âşık Veysel's *My Faithful Beloved Is the Black Soil* and Guo Moruo's (郭沫若) *Earth, My Mother*. Both poems were chosen as the sample because they reflect the symbolic meaning worlds of their respective cultural traditions and bring together themes of soil, nature, humanity, and cultural memory on a common ground. In this research, a comparative textual analysis was conducted, and the myths, images, cultural memory, and thematic levels of soil, nature, and humanity in the poems were evaluated.

### **Data Collection Tools**

In order to answer the research questions, the document analysis method was employed. This technique, a qualitative approach, is based on the examination and evaluation of written texts and documents relevant to the research subject according to predetermined criteria. The primary material of analysis consisted of the two poems selected as the sample—Guo Moruo's *Earth, My Mother* and Âşık Veysel's *My Faithful Beloved Is the Black Soil*. To support the theoretical framework, Jan Assmann's cultural memory approach, Mircea Eliade's interpretations of "Mother Earth," and Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis principles were adopted. All these sources were systematically examined through content analysis, and the themes emerging in the poems were comparatively evaluated in terms of symbolic expression and conceptual connections.

## Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through document analysis, with primary sources being the poems themselves and secondary sources including articles, doctoral dissertations, and books. During the analysis process, the data obtained were examined using descriptive and thematic analysis methods. The myths, images, and symbols present in the poems were identified and subsequently evaluated in light of the principles of Jan Assmann, Mircea Eliade, and Roland Barthes. In the final stage, representations of soil, nature, and humanity in the two different cultures were compared, and the poets' shared perspectives on the human–soil–nature relationship were assessed. Through this method, the study revealed how the images of soil and nature integrate with the meanings of human existence at both literary and cultural memory levels.

## Findings and Interpretations

### The Image of Nature

Since the dawn of existence, humankind has been in constant interaction with nature; in order to sustain the quality of life and overcome the challenges encountered in this process, nature has been placed at the center of both cultural and physical existence. Throughout history, it is evident that human communities have perceived nature not only as a vital space for life but also as a carrier of cultural identity and spiritual values. Thus, in the literary world, images of nature often emerge as metaphorical reflections of the bond between humanity and nature. In some works, nature appears through the figure of the mother—nurturing, raising, and embracing with maternal compassion in times of hardship. In other works, nature is symbolized as a faithful beloved, the only entity upon which one can rely with love and trust, while at the same time being positioned as the sacred space where divine truth manifests, the place where the purpose of creation finds meaning.

In Guo Moruo's (郭沫若) *Earth, My Mother* (地球, 我的母亲, *Diqiu, Wo de Mu Qin*) and Âşık Veysel's *My Faithful Beloved Is the Black Soil*, the "image of the world" is central. The Chinese poet Guo Moruo (郭沫若) constructs the modern Chinese image of nature with a universal perspective in his poem *Earth, My Mother*. In this poem, the world is transformed into a universal body through the metaphor of "mother":

“我过去，现在，未来，(Wo guoqu, xianzai, weilai)”

Geçmişim, Şimdi, Geleceğim sensin

“食的是你，衣的是你，住的是你。(Shi de shi ni, yi de shi ni, zhu de shi ni)”

Yediğim aş, giyindiğim libas, yaşadığım yuvam sensin

In these lines, nature appears not merely as a source of life but as an ontological connection encompassing every aspect of human existence. In Âşık Veysel's *My Faithful Beloved Is the Black Soil*, although the word "world" is less directly expressed, many verses treat worldly life, mortality, trial, sustenance, and the realization of truth.

“Nice güzellere bağlandım kaldım, Ne bir vefa gördüm ne fayda buldum, Kazma ile döğmeyince kıt verdi”

In these lines, the world is depicted as the place of fleeting desires, transient joys, and unfaithful relationships. The world does not offer ready blessings; without labor, no return is received. Through the image of a field cultivated by human effort, the poem emphasizes the reciprocal bond between humanity and nature, portraying soil as both the source of livelihood and the foundation of life (Âşık Veysel, 1970, *Benim Sadık Yarım Kara Topraktır*).

“Koyun verdi kuzu verdi süt verdi, Yemek verdi ekmek verdi et verdi”

Here, nature is described as both fertile and conditional. Soil acquires the quality of a living entity that responds unconditionally to labor and effort. In the poem, the image of the world is shaped as both a symbol reminding humanity of transience and mortality, and as a domain earned through toil. In this poetic approach, nature is examined as a fundamental element shaping both the physical and spiritual dimensions of human life. Consequently, in Âşık Veysel's poetry, the world is associated simultaneously with temporality and productivity—an unfaithful yet fertile field.

### The Image of Soil

Soil is one of the most essential elements of both the biological existence of humankind and its spiritual identity. Thus, in literary works, the image of soil emerges as a reflection of the bond each individual establishes with nature, both in terms of imagery and cultural significance. In this way, the works of Guo Moruo (郭沫若) and Âşık Veysel, nourished by different cultural traditions, reveal how the theme of soil is interpreted on both individual and social levels.

In Guo Moruo's (郭沫若) *Earth, My Mother*, soil is expressed through the maternal image, symbolizing humanity's struggle for existence as individuals. The poet treats soil not only as a structure that sustains life but also as a metaphysical force symbolizing the order of the world we inhabit. For example, in the following lines:

“那昼间的太阳，夜间的太阴，(Na zhoujian de taiyang, yejian de taiyin)”

“只不过是那明镜中的你自己的虚影。Gündüz güneşiyle, Gece ayı, Sadece sonsuz aynada yansıyan senin gölgen”

Here, the sun and moon are depicted as reflections of the earth, while nature is portrayed as an active subject in the cosmic order. The poet emphasizes the universal balance that complements the opposition of day and night. There exists a cosmic unity that integrates the opposition between birth and death. This approach aligns with the Taoist conception of the unity of universe, nature, and humanity (Zhang-Cziráková, 2012, pp. 177–179).

The influence of soil is not confined to the earth's surface; it also constitutes the foundation of cosmic life, directing all sources of existence. From this perspective, the sun and moon gain meaning as reflections of the earth and all beings living upon it. Thus, nature is presented not as a small-scale entity within the cosmos but as an inseparable part of the whole.

“我羡慕的是你的孝子，(wo xianmu de shi ni de xiaozı)

那田地里的农人(Na tiandi li de nongren),

他们是全人类的保母，(Tamen shi quan renlei de baomu)

你是时常地爱顾他们。(Ni shi shichang de aigü tamen)”

Senin vefalı çocukların çiftçiler.. Onlara hayranım

Onlar İnsan oğlunu bağrında bakan kollayandır,

Sen de her zaman karşılıksız seven gözetensindir.

Here, soil is depicted as a faithful mother who responds with compassion and love to her hardworking children. The importance of labor, mutual affection, and loyalty to soil is emphasized.

“我羡慕那一切的草木(Wo xianmu na yiqie de caomu),

我的同胞，你的儿孙，(Wo de tongbao, ni de ersun)

他们自由地，自主地，(Tamen ziyou de, zizhu de)

随分地，健康地，(Suifen de, jiankang de)

享受着他们的赋生。(Xiangshou zhe tamen de fusheng)”

Toprağın üzerindeki her bir bitki

Yaşamlarını özgürce sürdürmelerine hayranım.

Onlar benim kardeslerim ise seninde evlatlarıdır.

Var oluşun bir armağanı olarak, özgürce yaşamlarını sürdürürler.

In these lines, the Taoist worldview is evident, where the relationship between universe, nature, and humanity is grounded in love and respect. Soil is portrayed as the mother of all living beings, while plants and humans are depicted as her children. Thus, the idea that “we come from soil and return to soil” is expressed, with soil envisioned as a mother who embraces, protects, and shelters her children.

“我不愿在空中飞行，(Wo bu yuan zai kongzhong feixing)

我也不愿坐车，乘马，著袜，穿鞋，(Wo ye bu yuan zuo che, cheng ma, zhuo wa, zhuan xie)

我只愿赤裸着我的双脚，(Wo zhi yuan chiluo zhe wo de shuang jiao)

永远和你相亲。(Yongyuan he ni xiangqin)”

Gök yüzünde uçmak istemem,

Araba sürmeyi, ata binmeyi, çorap ve ayakkabı giyinmeyi istemiyorum.

Sadece çıplak ayaklarımla,

Özgürce sana yakın olmayı istiyorum.

In these lines, the poet expresses a desire to draw closer to the soil and establish a bond with it. This reflects a perspective of returning to one’s essence, embracing naturalness and simplicity.

“你是我实有性的证人，(Ni shi wo shiyou xing de zhenren)

我不相信你只是个梦幻泡影，(Wo bu xiangxin wo zhi shi ge menghuan paoying)

我不相信我只是个妄执无明。(Wo bu xiangxin wo zhi she ge wangzhi wuming)”

Varoluşumun hikmeti, şahidi sensin.

Sen, ne bir hayal ne de bir serapsın.

Ben cahilliğin ortaya attığı bir düşte değilim.

In these verses, Guo Moruo (郭沫若) treats soil as an ontological concept. The line “Varoluşumun hikmeti, şahidi sensin” conveys that soil is a metaphysical force demonstrating the reality of existence. In “Sen, ne bir hayal ne de bir serapsın,” nature is not depicted as a fleeting illusion but as the clear essence of truth. This perspective presents humanity and soil as two inseparable aspects of the struggle for existence, each validating the reality of the other. It reflects the Chinese philosophical tradition of “天人合一” (Tian ren he yi), meaning the unity of heaven, humanity, and nature. In Guo’s verses, this philosophical outlook is aesthetically embodied, concretizing the bond and existential harmony between humanity and nature (闻一多 Wen Yiduo, 1923).

Furthermore, the second verse includes the expression “梦幻泡影” (mèng huàn pào yǐng), which originates from Buddhist teachings, specifically the Diamond Sutra (金刚般若波罗蜜经), translated by Kumārajīva (2013), considered one of the most significant texts. The sutra states: “一切有为法，如梦幻泡影，如露亦如电，应作如是观.. (p. 32)” (“All conditioned phenomena are like a dream, an illusion, a bubble, a shadow, like dew or lightning;

thus should one perceive them.”). This philosophical approach, central to ancient Asian thought, forms the basis of metaphysical debates on reality and existence, particularly influential during the Tang Dynasty (7th century). Guo Moruo reinterprets the notion of “如梦幻泡影,” rejecting the idea that existence is merely illusion. Instead, he emphasizes that soil, nature, and humanity are not dreams or shadows but the very essence of reality. In these verses, he overturns the traditional interpretation, asserting that life and existence upon the soil represent truth itself.

On the other hand, the Anatolian poet Âşık Veysel treats the image of soil in a simpler and more concrete framework. In his poem *Benim Sadık Yarım Kara Topraktır*, soil is depicted as the only beloved worthy of trust:

“Dost dost diye nicesine sarıldım,  
Bennim sadık yarım kara topraktır.  
Koyun verdi kuzu verdi süt verdi  
Yemek verdi ekmek verdi et verdi”

Here, soil is portrayed as a faithful companion, the source of sustenance and life, embodying loyalty and abundance. Âşık Veysel’s approach emphasizes soil as a tangible, reliable presence in human existence, contrasting with Guo Moruo’s metaphysical interpretation.

In the verses above, soil appears as a faithful beloved who not only provides diverse sustenance to every living being upon it but also hosts them in its embrace after death.

“Âdem'den bu deme neslim getirdi  
Bana türlü türlü meyva yedirdi  
Her gün beni tepesinde götürdü  
Benim sâdik yârim kara topraktır”

In these lines, the poet expresses soil as both the source of human life and the place where life is sustained and ultimately concluded. The line “Âdem'den bu deme neslim getirdi” conveys that soil is the foundation and root of humanity’s lineage, beginning with Adam’s dwelling. In “Bana türlü türlü meyva yedirdi,” soil is depicted as a nurturing force, like a tree deeply rooted in the earth, constantly providing sustenance and protection. The line “Her gün beni tepesinde götürdü” simply expresses soil as the bearer of all beings, keeping them alive through its constant movement and support. Soil carries, nourishes, shelters, and eventually reclaims. It is present at every stage of life. In these verses, the poet conveys humanity’s brief struggle for existence from creation to death in a Sufi style. Thus, soil is positioned as the fundamental matter from which humanity was created, symbolizing a return to essence and closeness to God. Tikdemir (2023, p. 350) notes that in the myths of the Altai and Siberian Turks concerning human creation, soil is described as the first and fundamental element, highlighting its role as a multilayered symbol nourished by both creation myths and Islamic thought.

In the ancient memory of Turkish cultural history, soil is not merely a part of nature but a primordial entity representing the foundation of life. In the line “Benim sadık yarım kara topraktır,” soil is elevated as both a symbol of fertility and a divine guide. As these verses demonstrate, Âşık Veysel’s soil imagery transforms the mythological figure of “Mother Earth” in Turkish culture into his “Faithful Beloved,” thereby becoming both a mythological and divine symbol.

“Her kim ki olursa bu sırta mazhar  
Dünyaya bırakır ölmez bir eser

Gün gelir Veysel'i bağına basar  
Benim sâdik yârim kara topraktır”

As these lines reveal, according to Âşık Veysel, soil is a sacred entity that holds the secret of death. Every living being ultimately returns to soil; however, this return is not annihilation but union with the Divine—becoming one with truth by effacing oneself in God.

### **Cultural Memory**

The ways in which a society transmits its past systems of thought, beliefs, and the symbolic meanings attributed to nature from generation to generation have endured to the present day. According to Jan Assmann, this process of transmission is not merely the preservation of a historical heritage but also an indication of the continuity of cultural memory. Cultural memory is the process by which societies interpret the existence of the world, humanity, and nature, and bring these interpretations to life through symbols and mythology.

Guo Moruo (郭沫若), one of the most renowned poets of Chinese literature, drew upon his own cultural sources to reinterpret the archetype of “Mother Earth” (地母, Di Mu) in his poem “地球我的母亲” (Benim Annem Dünyadır), presenting it as a modern reflection. In this poem, Guo Moruo defines the world not merely as a physical force but as a cosmic power that nurtures and protects humanity and nature. The Taoist concept of the unity of nature and humanity (天人合一) is reinterpreted in twentieth-century cultural memory through the poem “地球我的母亲” (Benim Annem Dünyadır).

“地球，我的母亲！(Di qiu, wo de muqin)  
天已黎明了，(Tian yǐ límíng le)”  
Dünya, benim annemdir.  
Şafak, yeniden senin bağında doğdu.

In these lines, the poet identifies the sunrise with the moment of human birth from the mother’s womb, thereby expressing the spiritual bond between humanity and nature. The concept of “world” here does not signify a mere physical globe but symbolizes a temporary dwelling, a guesthouse where the soul resides after descending into the maternal womb. Through this depiction, Guo Moruo situates nature within a space that connects mother, womb, and memory.

As Jan Assmann defines, cultural memory is the process by which humanity returns to nature, recalling its past and the search for identity rooted in cultural heritage. Thus, “dawn” is not only the beginning of a new day but also a symbol of the rebirth and re-existence of cultural memory. For the poet, the world is the place where existence begins and the mystical domain where memory is preserved—“rahm-ı mader”; one is born, lives, and ultimately returns to the soil, reuniting with the Creator in the memory of the earth.

“从今后我知道你的深恩，(Cong jinhou wo zhīdao nǐ de shēn en)  
我饮一杯水，(Wo yǐn yī bēi shuǐ )  
我知道那是你的乳，我的生命羹(Wo zhīdao nà shì nǐ de rǔ, wo de shēngmǐn gēng)”  
Hal dilim ile senin ihsanlarımı bilirim

Bir bardak ab-ı hayat suyu içerim,

O, senin bağrındaki can suyundur – yaşam kaynağımın çeşitli nimetleridir.

In these lines, Guo Moruo (郭沫若) expresses the existence of a spiritual connection with nature. He realizes that everything offered by the world—air, water, life—is a gift of a mother’s grace. The verb “饮” (yin – to drink) does not merely signify the act of drinking but conveys the idea of absorbing nature like water, feeling its essence in every particle of one’s being. The terms “乳” (ru – milk) and “生命羹” (shēngmìng gēng – various sustenance) describe the world as a mother who nourishes every living being, with humanity as a child sustained by her milk. These depictions represent a pantheistic worldview in literary form: the Creator is not outside nature but present in every particle of it, making every drop of life precious. From the perspective of cultural memory, each sip of water recalls the traces of past generations, the labor of the soil, and the continuity of transmitted culture. In short, nature’s “ab-ı hayat” is also the source of cultural memory.

In Turkish folk literature, the great poet and minstrel Âşık Veysel’s works reflect not only individual sentiments but also the collective cultural memory of the Anatolian people. In his poem Benim Sadık Yarım Kara Topraktır, soil, humanity, nature, humility, and destiny are employed as images to revive cultural memory. His poetry is not merely a reflection of personal experiences but also a narrative style that emphasizes the continuity of Anatolian cultural memory.

“Bütün kusurumuzu toprak gizliyor

Merhem çalıp yaralarımı düzlüyor

Kolun açmış yollarımı gözlüyor

Benim sâdik yârim kara topraktır”

In these lines, soil is not depicted merely as an element of nature but as a symbolic and tangible structure of high spiritual value, representing the cultural memory of the Anatolian people transmitted across generations. Âşık Veysel’s interpretation of soil transcends individual thought, moving toward a collective consciousness. The line “Bütün kusurumuzu toprak gizliyor” portrays soil as a compassionate mother who forgives human faults and conceals them in her embrace. This “Toprak Ana” terminology reflects both the folk tradition and the poet’s unique style. In Anatolian culture, soil symbolizes mercy, purification, and peace, making Veysel the contemporary voice of the land from which he emerged.

In “Merhem çalıp yaralarımı düzlüyor,” the poet highlights soil’s healing and restorative qualities. The Anatolian belief in soil as a source of healing (e.g., türbe toprağı, şifa toprağı, hak-i şifa) is transformed into a spiritual metaphor in Veysel’s poetry. Thus, soil becomes both a physical and spiritual symbol of healing. The lines “Kolun açmış yollarımı gözlüyor” and “Benim sâdik yârim kara topraktır” emphasize the bond between humanity and soil. This bond, within the framework of cultural memory, expresses the poetic unity and interconnectedness of nature and humanity.

“Her kim ki olursa bu sırta mazhar

Dünyaya bırakır ölmez bir eser

Gün gelir Veysel’i bağrına basar

Benim sâdik yârim kara topraktır”

As these verses reveal, for Âşık Veysel, soil is a sacred entity that holds the secret of death. Every being ultimately returns to soil, but this return is not annihilation; rather, it is union with the Divine—effacing oneself in God to truly exist in truth.

In these verses, the poet transcends his individual self and transforms into a link within the chain of cultural continuity. The expression “Bu sırta mazhar” implies an awareness of the divine cycle between life and death. This awareness reflects the Sufi understanding of existence in God (Hakk’ta var olma), articulated here through the medium of folk poetry. According to the poet’s conception of soil, the one who attains its secret may shed material existence but continues to live within spiritual memory.

“Gün gelir Veysel’i bağrına basar”

In this line, death is not understood as annihilation but as union with soil and a return to cultural roots. This expression embodies the folk belief in “Toprak Ana,” the Mother Earth terminology, which signifies rebirth through soil. Humanity merges with soil, finds new life within it, and continues existence. In this quatrain, Âşık Veysel transcends individual disappearance and inscribes into our memory the concrete images that sustain life within cultural remembrance.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Although the Chinese poet Guo Moruo (郭沫若) and the Turkish folk minstrel Âşık Veysel grew up in different geographies and cultures, both reflected the cultural and historical heritage of their societies in their poetry, uniting around shared human values as two ancient artists. In their works, nature, soil, and cultural memory are not depicted merely as physical elements but as poetic reflections of humanity’s spiritual relationship with existence and the universe. For both poets, soil represents a common sphere of life, symbolizing the continuity of death, life, and rebirth. From this perspective, Guo Moruo (郭沫若) and Âşık Veysel position soil not simply as a temporary dwelling for humanity but as a living memory that carries humanity’s roots, cultural identity, and collective remembrance. In their poetry, soil and nature become cosmic mirrors in which humanity turns toward its inner self, embarks on a spiritual journey, and questions the purpose of creation. This approach grants new meaning to the human–nature–soil relationship, reinterpreting humanity’s existential journey and the soil’s perpetual vitality as a meaningful bond between soil and humanity.

The central theme of Guo Moruo’s “地球，我的母亲” (Di qiu, Wo de Mu qin / Benim Annem Dünyadır) is the archetype of “Mother Earth,” which gains new meaning within the framework of Taoist thought and a pantheistic worldview. The poet positions soil as a universal mother figure—one who gives birth, nourishes, and embraces humanity upon reunion. He interprets this orientation toward nature as a process of spiritual maturation leading to universal consciousness. Through this approach, the harmony between soil, humanity, and nature is revealed. In Chinese literature, this perspective transcends the boundaries of modern romantic poetry, becoming a philosophical manifestation of existence. For Guo Moruo, the presence of nature and soil is not merely a vital element but a domain of consciousness that recalls human identity and roots.

In Âşık Veysel’s “Benim sâdik yârim kara topraktır”, the ancient meaning of the “Mother Earth” metaphor is carried into the present, while simultaneously reinterpreting the hardships of the Anatolian people and their bond with the

Creator. The poet's sense of gratitude and loyalty to the black soil is intertwined with human existence and the soil's cycle of renewal. In Veysel's poetry, soil is portrayed both as "yar" (beloved) and "ana" (mother), symbolizing fertility and eternal repose. This eternal repose is not the end of individual existence but rather the effort to find new life within cultural memory. In this interpretation, Veysel surrenders his personal identity to the continuity of nature, allowing us to perceive human mortality as a path toward resurrection.

In the poetry of Guo Moruo (郭沫若) and Âşık Veysel, nature and soil are expressed not merely as places of habitation but as cultural memory spaces that recall humanity's existence, identity, and past. Both artists, nourished by the historical and spiritual heritage of their societies, transformed soil into a revitalized image. In this respect, although their literary works and identities emerged from different geographies and cultures, they succeeded in uniting humanity's universal values through nature. Soil appears in the verses of Guo Moruo and Âşık Veysel through different images, yet in each case, it reveals the deep traces of humanity's bond with nature and soil within cultural memory.

Âşık Veysel's voice merges with the silence of the soil's embrace. In Anatolia's cultural memory, this voice resonates as profound tranquility. Guo Moruo's universal mother image, on the other hand, demonstrates humanity's awareness before nature and soil, as well as its rebirth. Both images reveal the unity between nature, soil, and humanity. This perspective presents, in the poets' works, the ideas of universal wholeness, awareness, and human values.

**As a result of the research, the following recommendations are presented:**

- Comparative studies in the field of Turkish and Chinese literature should examine the shared symbolic meanings of "nature" and "soil" images, thereby analyzing the literary influence between the two cultures within a broader framework.
- In the poetry of Guo Moruo (郭沫若) and Âşık Veysel, cultural memory and a consciousness sensitive to nature are reinterpreted and integrated with contemporary environmental awareness.
- The perception of nature in both artists' works can be sustained in the fields of art and education as a value expressing humanity's desire to unite with the universe.
- For future research, the mythical imagery and cultural memory concepts present in the works of these two poets should be studied together, highlighting the sacred role of nature in both literatures and contributing this perspective to the literary world.
- In future academic contexts, comparative courses on both poets could be introduced at universities.

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