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Thesis Title	ASEEL ABDUL-LATEEF THE MEDITATIVE TRADITION IN MODERN AMERICAN POETRY: A STUDY OF THEODORE ROETHKE, ROBERT BLY, AND JAMES WRIGHT			
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Abstract	<p>Meditation is a devotional tradition which is widely adopted by various cultures. It aims at communicating with the divine to realize wisdom and spiritual peace. Poetry is one of the most suitable artistic means through which the spiritually elevating meditative experience is crystallized into words. The process of meditation is essential to the poets, since they often use the poem as a spiritual exercise in which the true, inner self is uplifted. Meditative poetry, which combines the meditative art with that of the poetic, indicates a prolonged state of concentrated reflection and introspection which results in the realization of self-knowledge.</p> <p>One of the striking features of modern American poetry is the predominance of poems written in the meditative mode. The meditative modern poets in America direct poetry inwardly, toward the unexplored regions of both the self and the American psyche. They make of their poetry a prominent expression of the meditative experience of retrieving powers from the inner levels of consciousness and feelings where spirituality resides. Their meditative poetry equips them with force to fully confront the complexities of modern life.</p> <p>This study is fundamentally concerned with the meditative tradition in the poetry of three major modern American poets: Theodore Roethke (1908-1963), Robert Bly (1926-), and James Wright (1927-1980). The dissertation is divided into four chapters and a</p>			

conclusion.

The first chapter is introductory, dealing with the relationship between the meditative art and the poetic. It traces the appearance of the meditative tradition in the seventeenth-century metaphysical poetry in England. It shows how this poetic meditative tradition became a dominant religious practice in the New World, stemming from the emphasis of the Puritans on the individual's relation with God. The chapter also highlights the process of secularizing meditative poetry at the hands of the nineteenth-century American Transcendentalists. It ends with a review of the meditative tradition as it has been modified by some modern American poets.

The second chapter concentrates on the meditative poetry of Theodore Roethke which assumes the form of a meditative quest. It depicts the poet's psychic rebirth which is the outcome of the long process of inward meditation. Poems for discussion are selected from his earlier volumes, *Open House* (1941), *The Lost Son and Other Poems* (1948), and *The Waking* (1953); and from his later volumes, *Words for the Wind* (1955), and *The Far Field* (1964).

The third chapter sheds light on the poetic meditations of Robert Bly which flourished during the nineteen sixties and the nineteen seventies. The focus of Bly's meditations is the interior of his private self which enabled him to probe the national psyche. Poems for discussion are chosen from his earlier volumes, *Silence in the Snowy Fields* (1962), and *The Light Around the Body* (1967); and from his later volumes, *Sleepers Joining Hands* (1973), *This Body Is Made of Camphor and Gopherwood* (1977), and *This Tree Will Be Here for a Thousand Years* (1979).

The emphasis in the fourth chapter is on the meditative poetic career of James Wright. Through meditation, Wright tried to attain the healing force within the natural world which results in the rejuvenation of his inner powers. Poems for discussion are taken from his earlier volumes, *The Green Wall* (1957), and *The Branch Will Not Break* (1963); and from his later volumes, *Shall We Gather at the River* (1968), *To a Blossoming Pear Tree* (1977), and *This Journey* (1982).

Finally, the conclusion sums up the findings of the study.