



RESEARCH ARTICLE



NATURE AND DIVINITY IN THE SELECTED POEMS OF K. SAREEN RAJ:

A CRITICAL STUDY

Dr. M. D. Hussain ^{1*}, Dr. Fatima Hafeez Unnisa²^{1*}(Assistant Professor of English at VIIT, Moinabad, Hyderabad.)²(Assistant Professor, Sri Indu Institute of Engineering and Technology (SIET), Hyderabad.)Doi: <https://doi.org/10.54513/JOELL.2024.11308>

ABSTRACT

Dr. M. D. Hussain



Dr. Fatima Hafeez Unnisa



What is life without nature, the beauty, the splendor that gives us joy and keeps us moving? Nature is nothing but the reflection of the almighty God, whose presence is felt everywhere. Nature poems celebrate the beauty and complexity of the natural environment, often portraying landscapes, seasons, and wildlife with vivid imagery and emotional depth. They explore concepts of growth, renewal, and decay, mirroring the cycles of life observed in the natural world. They evoke sensory experiences, inviting readers to immerse themselves in the sights, sounds, and textures of the natural world. Through descriptive language and metaphors, the poets capture the essence of mountains, forests, rivers, and skies, portraying them as both majestic and serene. Themes in nature poetry encompass a wide range of emotions and ideas. The present article titled, "Nature and Divinity in the Selected Poems of K. Sareen Raj: A Critical Study" explores the nature poems written by K. Sareen Raj, from the book titled, "Canopy of Heaven," a collection of poems. The article studies the poems "Under the Canopy of Heaven", "The Quiet Land", "The Moon", "The Yellow Garden", and "A Winter Morning". It studies the major themes of Sareen Raj's selected poems, most importantly the mystical element of the divine presence in nature. It critically analyzes the poems and sheds light on the significant aspects of the poems. An attempt is made to understand the harmony, balance found in nature and its significance in human life.

Article history:

Received on : 22-07-2024

Accepted on : 26-08-2024

Available online:27-09-2024

Keywords : *Nature, Biodiversity, Ecosystem, Divinity, Christian Mythology,**Celebration of nature.*



“Nature is too thin a screen ; the glory of the omnipresent God bursts through everywhere”

- *Nature*, Emerson (10)

Nature plays a crucial role in human psychological well-being. A phenomenon known as “biophilia,” suggests that humans have an innate affinity for nature, which can enhance mental health and overall life satisfaction. Throughout history, nature has been a source of inspiration for cultural practices, rituals, and beliefs. Many societies have revered natural elements such as mountains, rivers, and forests as sacred, attributing spiritual meanings and deities to them. Nature holds profound significance in human life across cultural, spiritual, psychological, and practical dimensions. It often serves as a backdrop for myths, folklore, and religious stories, reflecting humanity’s attempts to understand and connect with the divine and the cosmos. The significance of nature is rooted in the deep and ancient connection humans have had with the natural world since the dawn of civilization.

Talking about the presence of God in the nature, Gerard Manley Hopkins in his book, *God’s Grandeur*. In the Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins writes: “The world is charged with the grandeur of God” (17). In Christian faith, the reflection of the divine presence in nature is deeply rooted in the belief that God created the universe and everything within it. This theological perspective sees nature as a manifestation of God’s glory, creativity, and ongoing involvement in the world. James Russel in his book *The Works of James Russell Lowell* says, ‘Nature is the art of God’ (122). The Bible, particularly in the Book of Genesis, describes God as the creator of the heavens, the earth, and all living things. The act of

creation itself is seen as a revelation of God’s character—His wisdom, power, and goodness. Psalm 19:1-4 speaks about the omnipotent God: ‘The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.’ Christian theology affirms both the immanence (God’s presence within creation) and transcendence (God’s existence beyond creation) of God. While God is transcendent—beyond and above all that is created—He also manifests His presence immanently through His creation. This dual perspective emphasizes that God is both intimately involved with His creation and yet infinitely greater than it.

Nature is often regarded sacred in Christian thought because it reflects the divine order and purpose. It serves as a testament to God’s glory, reveals His attributes, and calls humanity to recognize its responsibility as stewards of God’s earth. Nature is regarded as a sacred gift that invites reverence, stewardship, and contemplation of God’s ongoing presence and care for His creation. The intricate beauty and complexity of natural systems, from ecosystems to the human body, are seen as evidence of God’s design. Speaking about the natural world and the reflection of divinity Emerson in his book, *Nature. In Nature and Other Essays* writes, ‘The beauty of the natural world is not a reflection of the divine, but a manifestation of the divine’ (32).

Romans 1 :20 states, ‘For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made.’ Christian teachings emphasize humanity’s role as stewards of God’s creation. Genesis 1:26-28 portrays humans as having dominion over the earth and responsibility to



care for it responsibly and with reverence. This stewardship extends to environmental conservation and sustainable practices, reflecting a Christian ethic of respecting and preserving the integrity of God's creation.

Historically, nature poetry has been influenced by cultural perspectives and philosophical movements. From ancient civilizations to contemporary poets, writers have drawn inspiration from their surroundings to craft verses that celebrate, critique, or meditate upon nature's enduring significance. Poetic traditions from around the world showcase diverse approaches to portraying landscapes and natural phenomena, reflecting regional ecologies and spiritual beliefs. In modern contexts, nature poetry continues to evolve, addressing pressing environmental concerns and advocating for conservation. Poets engage with issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and human impact on ecosystems, using their craft to raise awareness and provoke reflection on humanity's relationship with nature.

The opening poem, "Under the Canopy of Heaven" in the book titled *Canopy of Heaven* written by K. Sareen Raj is a contemplative and evocative poem that explores the profound connection between humanity and the natural world. Set beneath the vast expanse of the sky, the poem reflects on the beauty and serenity of nature, from the illumination of heavenly realms such as stargates to the awakening of the sun. It paints a vivid picture of life under the celestial canopy, where fields are harvested, birds sing, and flowers contribute to a harmonious lullaby.

The poem intertwines the themes of love, sacrifice, and mystery, suggesting that the sky not only shelters but also reveals deep truths about existence. It highlights the interplay between the celestial offering solace and inspiration in the natural world's embrace. The recurring motif of the 'canopy of heaven' (1), symbolizes both a physical and spiritual shelter, where the wonders of the universe and the stories of folklore resonate. The poem celebrates the freedom and unity found in nature, portraying it as a sacred space where individuals find their true selves and connect with a larger, collective essence. Ultimately, it suggests that beneath this celestial dome, amidst the rhythms of nature humanity discovers its most profound sense of belonging and peace.

The next poem, "The Quiet Land" is a lyrical exploration of a serene and enchanting natural landscape. The poem begins with lines, 'It's a quiet land. It's a dream. It's a heavenly abode with enduring stream,' establishing the setting of a place full of tranquility and beauty, describing it as both a quiet land and a dreamlike heavenly abode. Central to this idyllic scene is an enduring stream that flows through the land, symbolizing continuity of humanity and eternal harmony in nature. The poet paints vivid images of the land's visual splendor, mentioning expansive vistas that bring joy to those who behold them. The landscape is adorned with an abundance of flowers which contributes to its hallowed atmosphere, particularly to the peaceful night hours.

'The finches tells the story' (Sareen, 3), plays a significant role in the poem as they symbolically communicate the mystical essence of the land. Their presence add to the overall sense of natural rhythm.



The stillness of noontime and the vibrant presence of flora are depicted as coexisting harmoniously, creating a serene backdrop for contemplation and appreciation. Throughout the ever-changing seasons, nature remains a constant source of wonder and beauty.

The poet describes sunlight through the woods and the leaves responding to the gentle movements of the wind, and the melodic chimes created by autumnal breezes. Here, each season is seen bringing its own charm and contributing to the overarching theme of natural harmony and balance. Spring emerges as a time of renewal and rejuvenation in the poem, characterized by its splendor and vibrant energy. The imagery of drops of water waiting for the 'blessed order' suggests a reverence for the almighty God and the natural cycle of life. The poem celebrates the timeless beauty and serenity found in nature.

The poem, "The Moon" describes the moon in a solitary state, yet enjoying its own company in a bright 'silver little pond' (7), suggesting that there is hope even in the greatest misery. The moon is found observing everything under its realm, the sunrise and storms, and expressing a desire for its existence to be an artistic creation which can remain forever. The moon here acts as a source of wonder for people with children playing under its light, and adults admiring its brilliance. The moon's presence is associated with a gathering of stars that bring hope and divine guidance, symbolized by a 'divine rope' that unites and uplifts us all. Here, the divine rope also symbolizes the flux of nature and human life. It talks about the changes of the seasons and the plurality of life.

The imagery expands to include birds dancing in the sky illustrating the joy of the birds which appears as sweet as 'the nectar of the honey comb' (7). The line, 'It's a treat to the naked eye' (7), talks about the stunning picture which is clearly visible to every living being. The poem concludes with the 'cuckoo singing' with ecstasy and the flowers spreading, 'the wings of eternal love,' highlighting the melodies of life, and the power of love which is ultimately the greatest binding force in human life.

"The Yellow Garden" is yet another vivid and evocative poem that celebrates the beauty of nature through rich imagery and a lyrical tone. Its use of color symbolism, seasonal contrasts, and personification elevates the natural world to a realm of spiritual and emotional significance. The poem invites readers to experience and appreciate the profound beauty and joy that nature can offer, suggesting that such moments of harmony are messages of love and benevolence.

The poem opens with a vibrant image: 'Strewn across the valley of dreams / Glitters the fields of yellow festivity' (21). The imagery suggests a dreamlike quality and a sense of boundless joy. The use of 'yellow' as a central motif symbolizes warmth, happiness, and the fullness of life, with its association with sunlight and the blossoming of flowers. Yellow often represents positivity and abundance, which is fitting given the poem's celebratory tone. The poem references December, a time usually associated with winter, a season of 'festivity,' reflecting Christ's birth. The phrase 'unbridled fervour' suggests that the garden defies seasonal expectations, brimming instead with energy and vitality.



Nature is personified and elevated to a divine status in the poem. Descriptions such as 'The morning sun watch through the mirrors / Of mist and dew' and 'The pleasant aroma of chrysanthus / Cascade the plains, hills and tops' highlight nature's sacred beauty. The use of 'mirrors' and 'epistle of love' suggests that nature reflects and communicates something profound and universal. The language in the poem is lush and evocative, employing terms like 'glitters,' 'festivity,' and 'celestial tune' to create a tone of reverence and delight. The use of 'epistle of love' suggests that the beauty of the yellow garden is not just visually captivating but carries a deeper, almost spiritual message of forgiveness and benevolence.

"A Winter Morning" is a poem that captures the delicate and refreshing beauty of a winter dawn. Through its vivid imagery and lyrical language, the poem evokes a sense of serene celebration as the new day unfolds. The language of the poem is elegant and evocative. Words like 'merry,' 'fragrance,' and 'lingering freshness' (41), create a tone of lightness and joy. The poem is composed in free verse, which allows for a natural, flowing expression of the scene. The primary theme is the celebration of a winter morning as a time of beauty and joy. The poem highlights the freshness and renewal that come with the dawn of a new day.

The poem is rich in visual and sensory imagery, beginning with the invocation to 'Wake up the merry choir.' This line suggests a joyful awakening and sets the tone for the rest of the poem. The 'fragrance of the forest woods' symbolizes the purity and freshness of nature, enhancing the sense of a new beginning. The 'pendant of joy' metaphorically

adorns the 'mountains and skies,' suggesting that nature itself is decorated with happiness and beauty.

The poem centers on the theme of winter, but it does so in a way that emphasizes renewal and delight rather than cold and barrenness. The phrase 'The night has toiled to set a date' anthropomorphizes the night, implying that it has labored to bring about the new day. The 'winter morning concatenated' suggests that the morning is a carefully linked and seamless continuation of the natural order, reinforcing the idea of a harmonious transition from night to day.

The poem personifies elements of nature, with 'fairies' sending 'lingering freshness' from above. This introduces a whimsical, almost magical quality to the scene, aligning with traditional imagery of fairies in folklore as beings who bring enchantment and wonder. The image of 'A dozen roses' shedding their petals to welcome the first rays of the sun is particularly striking. Roses often symbolize beauty, love, and renewal, and their act of shedding petals suggests a gracious and humble acceptance of the new day. The number twelve symbolizes completeness or the cyclical nature of time, adding depth to the symbolism.

The poems of K. Sareen Raj talk about the beauty, complexity, and interconnectedness of the natural world. Through vivid descriptions and evocative imagery, the poems talk about the profound connection between humanity, natural world and the divine presence. The poems capture the essence of a place where beauty, serenity, and natural rhythms converge, offering a glimpse into a sanctuary where one can find solace and inspiration. The poems do not adhere to a strict metrical pattern or rhyme



scheme, which allows for a fluid, free-form expression of the poet's vision. This free verse style complements the theme of natural beauty and the organic. The lack of rigid structure mirrors the natural landscape's unrestrained and spontaneous character.

The poems invite readers to appreciate, protect, and preserve the planet that sustains us all. As mankind's impact on the environment intensify, the significance of nature becomes increasingly urgent. The poet urges the mankind to protect biodiversity, ecosystems, and natural habitats for future generations. He talks about the ethical responsibility to steward and preserve Earth's resources, ensuring a sustainable future for all life forms. In summary, the significance of nature in human life encompasses spiritual, psychological, physical, creative, practical, and ethical dimensions. It enriches our cultural heritage, enhances our well-being, provides essential resources, inspires creativity, and reminds us of our responsibility to protect and sustain the planet we call home. Recognizing and nurturing this relationship with nature is essential for the health and prosperity of the present and future generations.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Nature*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1903. Print.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Nature*. In *Nature and Other Essays*, edited by Brooks Atkinson, The Modern Library, 2000. Print.
- Hopkins, Gerard Manley. "God's Grandeur." In *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, edited by W.H. Gardner and N.H. MacKenzie, Oxford University Press, 1967. Print.
- Lowell, James Russell. *The Works of James Russell Lowell*. Vol. 2, Houghton Mifflin, 1890. Print.
- Raj, Sareen. *Canopy of Heaven*. Evanspub Publishing, 2024. Print.
- The Holy Bible*. New International Version, Zondervan, 2001.