

Power of Knowledge:

An International Multilingual Quarterly Referred Research Journal
(UGC Approved Journal Sr. No-45681)



Special Issue of One Day International Conference on

Confronting New Times: Human Nature, Culture & Literature

Volume III- (8th January, 2018)

Organized by

Career Spirit Education LLP, Santacruz, Mumbai (MS)

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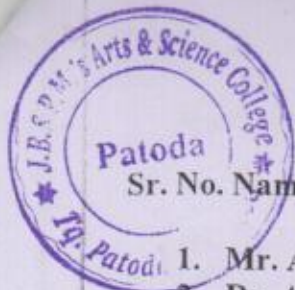
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Various Shades of Landscape and Nature in The Poems Of Keki N. Daruwalla

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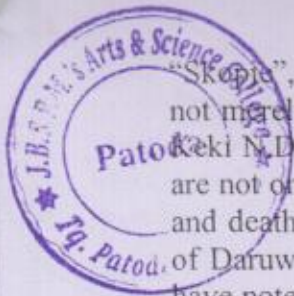
Abstract:

The poetry has remained reflection of nature and places for the centuries. Among the other poets of Indian English Poets, Keki Nasserwanji Daruwalla has obtained a praiseworthy position. He has won the Sahitya Academy Award in 1984 for *The Keeper of the Dead*. He has depicted obvious Indian elements in his verses, particularly in his use of the vibrant colors of landscapes and nature in order to quench his thirst as well as readers appetite of nature and landscape. Like many other romantic poets such as Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Ezekiel, Ramanujan, Daruwalla also took many symbols and images from nature and landscape. Landscape and nature occupy a vital place among the themes of Daruwalla's poetry. This paper aims to ride through some of the pieces from his collections and bring out the various moods and shades of landscapes and nature in his poetry.

Introduction:

Keki N. Daruwalla has contributed significantly to the corpus of landscape poetry. Daruwalla cannot be termed as landscape poet alone. He is also a poet of other genres. Landscape in the poems of Daruwalla has different function. It has sociological function too. The landscape poetry of Daruwalla presents different attitude towards life and human perception. His poem has a sound sense of judgment. He also does not fail to present the violent aspect of nature. Often called a landscape poet, Keki N. Daruwalla has written some of the most powerful and vivid poetry about places. It is, however, somewhat misleading to call a poet this or that only, primarily because such a classification tends to highlight certain elements in a poet's work at the expense of other, possibly equally powerful, elements in his work. Secondly, such a definitive classification militates against the essentially polysemous nature of good poetry. The term 'a landscape poet' does describe Daruwalla, but only partly. Landscape painting, if this extra-literary term can be used for poetry, is one of the many elements in the intricate pattern of his poetry. The poet seeks to transfer to the reader a complete poetic experience. Even in the so-called 'landscape poems' the focus may not essentially be on the landscape as much as on the poet's emotional, intellectual and even moral response to it.

Daruwalla considers himself to be a writer rooted in the rural landscape. The earthiness of his poetry exhibits itself in descriptions which, have a three-dimensional quality. The landscape and the thought are intertwined. A very large number of poems of Keki N. Daruwalla may be called river poems. They mirror both harsh and mild aspect of landscape. There is a great deal of variety in these poems. While it is largely true that much of Daruwalla's poetry can be characterised as "realistic" one cannot run away from the feeling that there is a moral stance in his poetry. His work may not consciously be a social gesture, his ethical preferences are often obvious. In many poems of Daruwalla, religious places have been described. In *Apparition in April*, "Pilgrimage to Badrinath" can be cited as a typical example. The poet's stream of reflection continues as the place takes shape in words carefully chosen to suggest not only the visual aspect of the place but also the sense of smell and feelings of cold. An important aspect of Keki N. Daruwalla landscape poetry is his description of cities and towns. In this class of poems we may mention pieces like "Love in Meerut", "A City Falls",



"Skopie", "Suomenlinna", and "Sixth Moharram, Lucknow". Admittedly, all these poems are not merely landscape poems; they have other equally important experiential strains in them. Keki N. Daruwalla is one of the most powerful poets in this class. His descriptions of Nature are not only vibrant with colour and movement but are also a vehicle for his thoughts on life and death. Daruwalla establishes relationships between Nature and Man. The Nature poems of Daruwalla have many elements that make them pieces of poetic reflection. Many critics have noted that Daruwalla's portrayal of landscape is one of the characteristic features of his poetry. Every poet begins with the reality that lies outside him. His poetry is a response to that reality and as a result of that transaction between Nature and the poet's mind, a certain kind of poetry is born. Daruwalla's landscape poetry is definitely an important part of his *oeuvre*, but to say that he is a descriptive poet will be an oversimplification. A good deal of reflection merges with the creation of sights and sounds and these results in exceptionally powerful poetry appealing to the reader at many levels simultaneously.

Daruwalla's poetry is suffused with the varied aspects of Indian sensibility. His poetry is conspicuous for the vivid and picturesque portrayal of the variegated landscape of North India, its rivers, hills, planes and pastures are beautifully described. In one of his talk he says, "I am not an urban writer and my poems are rooted in rural landscape. My poetry is earthy and I like to consciously keep it that ways, shunning sophistication which, while adding gloss, takes away the power of the verse." Besides In *Two Decades of Indian Poetry* Daruwalla says, "My poems are rooted in landscape. Which anchors the poem. The landscape is not merely there to set the sense but to lead to an illumination, it should be the eye of the spiral. I try that poetry relates to the landscape, both on physical, and on the plane of the spirit." Daruwalla's poetry also shows his maturity, freshness in mind, Indian ethos, sensibility and modern touch and characteristic. So far his six collection of poem have appeared. They are *Under Orian* (1970), *Apparition in April* (1971), *Crossing of Rivers* (1976), *Winter Poems* (1980), *The Keeper of the Dead* (1982) and *Landscapes* (1987).

In this paper writer wish to bring afore the depiction of Landscape and Nature in Keki N. Daruwalla's some pieces of poems. The poem *The Ghaghra in the Spate* presents the terrible aspect of riverscape. The poem reflects the poet's minute observation of the moods and changing colours of the river.

In the afternoon she is a gray smudge exploring a gray canvas.
When dusk reaches her through an overhang of cloud
She is over stewed coffee. At night under the red moon in menses
She is a red weal. Across the spine of the land.

A *Pilgrimage to Badrinath* is a finest nature poems in *Apparition in April*, where Daruwalla mark the picturesque description of mountain piece:

Strong eyes turn northward toward stone and the grey austerity in the stance of hills, the snow-hush under granite skies and the wind biting like the dentist's drill, whipping the mist into a horizon.

Daruwalla's third book *Crossing of Rivers* Contains some remarkable pictures of nightscape, riverscape and emotive connotations. Vrinda Nabar writes, "the River's rhythm is that of life and death, of birth and rebirth, of passion and rejection." The opening poem of this collection *Boat-ride along the Ganga* represents a vivid and realistic description of the Ganga whose banks are littered with flaming pyres:

Slowly the Ghat amphitheater unfolds like diseased nocturnal flower in a dream that opens its petals only at dusk palm leaves parasols sprouting like freak-mushrooms brood over platform that are empty and once more the



pyres: against the mahogany sky the flames look like a hedge of spear-blades heated red for a ritual that bades no good....

Verinag is another notable poem on scenic beauty of the place Verinag. He recalls his experiences of finding infinity and eternity join together one, as Shiva and Parvati. The poet expounds the nature and landscape:

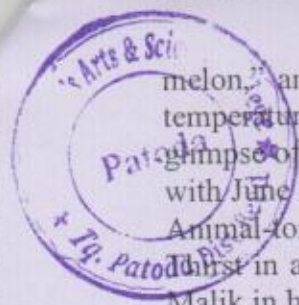
Across the road, mustard-stalks lie heaped in meadows and pear-groves the eye is used to this now, the fields layered with water and mountains axing down two thousand feet deep across the wet sheath the eyes drugged with the willows and waterscape can take no more.....

In the poem '*The Round of the Season*' Daruwalla effectively portrays each and every season and the climate in India. He delineates the seasonal effects on the lives of people. He assesses them chronologically. The seasons *Vasanta* (spring), *Grishma* (Summer), *Varsha* (Mansoon), *Sharada* (Autumn), *Hemant* (Early Winter) and *Shishir* (late winter). He calls *Vasanta* (Spring) the season of illusion because during this period even the natural things do not appear as they should be. It is the season for illusions: night mists turn to drawn haze. The scent of the mango-blossom is there but not the mango-blossom. A bird alights on the leafing lotus bed thinking it is an island. In the poem '*The Round of the Season*' poet tells that there is no season for love making, the changes in season never affect the love making life of humans because love making is not just a combination of two physiques but also a compilation of two human eternal passion. Poet questions to reader that is there any particular season for love making?

Is lightening necessary For those smitten by lover's lightening? Is rain essential? For those wet with each other?

Daruwalla considers himself to be a writer rooted in the rural landscape. R.Parthasarathy quotes Daruwalla in *Ten Twentieth Century Indian Poets*, "I am not an urban writer and my poems are rooted in the rural landscape. My poetry is earthy...." (12) The earthiness of his poetry exhibits itself in descriptions which, according to Gopal Gandhi, have "a three-dimensional quality" (17). In his poem "In My Father's House" Daruwalla describes a winter scene: Nothing is new around this place except the snow, except the quiet monastic vows of wizened bark on skeleton tree. The ribs too are a monastery when seasons do not change within. (6-14) The loneliness is suggested by using words 'monastic' and 'monastery' both of which have been derived from mono, i.e. single. The desolateness of the place has been suggested by words like 'wizened bark', 'skeleton tree' and 'the ribs' where seasons do not change. The stillness is accentuated by: "the high-singing, groaning, whining of the iron-sheet roofs. With failing arms and weird voices, the wind beats on the house like surf. (17-22) All this prepares the reader for the idea of death, suggested by "rotting muscle", a poppy taking "root on a mole" and a tuber "wandering through the eyes". This poem is one of the many instances of the poet's ability to blend the landscape with emotion. After every aspect of the poem has been discussed, there remains a residue of meaning. Such poems underscore the validity of Irving Massey's remark, "The creation of an imaginary world which has substantial reality is a normal and legitimate activity of poetry but the reality of the world so created cannot rest in words, it must be an experienced phenomenon" (128). In the poems of Daruwalla, the experiential component of reality is extremely prominent. In his collection of poems entitled *Winter Poems*, there is a long poem in a sequence called "Hunger-74". In a matter-of-fact style the poet describes the failure of rains: "They sprained their necks looking up for clouds, the light so harsh that corneas started smoking at the edges." (Calendar, Starting with June -1-3) The disappearance of hope is gradual: "First, the clouds flashed past like migratory birds. Then in answer to some unheard utterance from the parched lips of this land they settled like birds come to roost. (Calendar, Starting with June 4-7) In the absence of rain, everything looks ugly. The sun is "sharp and stinging", the moon "a bloated/well-fed musk

→ 10th day



melon," and the stars "lighted ulcers on the sky's belly". The sky is made of "bone". The temperature sinks like "a cement sack". Then comes March - March - hail, and the last glimpse of a lean Orion as he tightens his belt around his emaciated waist. (Calendar, Starting with June 25-27) The April wind is "hyena-mouthed". This wind turns to hot summer winds: Animal-tongues hang out. A woman ends her thirst in a dry well, one babe in each arm-pit. (Calendar, Starting with June 31-32) Keshav Malik in his review of Landscapes compares Daruwalla to "a war-correspondent on the battle scene giving out commentaries from moment to moment" (49).

Conclusion:

Through these poems, he brings out the present reality of nature and states how the modern man has manipulated it. R. N. Sinha say, "His poetry is a response to the reality and as result of that transaction between the nature and the poet's mind a certain kind of poetry is born." The images he uses are very common but the ideas are very intellectual with broad sense. R. Parthasarathy remarks, "when it isn't ornamental, the landscape comes alive as a presence of its own." In a nutshell the poems of Daruwalla possess substantial thematic core, clear visualization of scenes, compact and arresting presentation of incident, evocative imagery and an impressive unity of tone and effect.

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