

Nature and Landscape in Derek Walcott's Poetry

Shaleen Kumar Singh*^{ID}
Associate Professor
Department of English,
Swami Shukdevanand College
Shahjahanpur, U.P. India.

ABSTRACT

The present research paper will examine the role of nature and landscape in the poetry of Derek Walcott, the Nobel laureate and prominent poet of the Caribbean. The aim of the present paper is to explore how Walcott's vivid imagery of the Caribbean environment functions as a stage and character, allowing him to address overarching themes and explore the complex connection between humans and nature with an examination of Walcott's deep-rooted connection with the Caribbean landscape, his masterful evocation of the region's ecology, and his use of nature as a powerful metaphor for various thematic contexts. The paper also discusses Walcott's critical exploration of the ethical dimensions of human relationality to the natural order, calling upon readers to ponder the positionality of the human web within the matrix of life and embrace a transformative narrative centered on cooperation among all living beings.

Keywords: *Caribbean Poetry, Nature, Imagery, Landscape Representation, Ecocriticism.*

Introduction

Derek Walcott, the Nobel laureate and prominent poet of the Caribbean, is celebrated for his lyricism and deep engagement with the intricacies of Caribbean identity, history, and culture. A focal element of Walcott's poetic trajectory is his intricate relationship with nature and the landscape, as the vibrant tapestry of the Caribbean environment functions both as a stage and a character. To that end, this research paper will examine the role of nature and the landscape in Walcott's poetry, focusing on the author's imagery of the Caribbean environment to address overarching themes and explore the complex connection between humans and nature. Walcott's poetry is deeply rooted in the Caribbean landscape of his upbringing, boasting lush tropical foliage, crystal-clear waters, and steep geological formations. From the Saint Lucia hillsides to the Caribbean Sea expanse, Walcott's poems are full of nature's rich scents and sights, talented with vivid descriptions of his sensory world. His attuned and detailed imagery

* Author: Shaleen Kumar Singh

Email: shaleen@sscollegespn.ac.in

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6558-9667>

Received 11 Feb 2021; Accepted 20 June, 2021. Available online: 25 Aug 2021.

Published by SAFE. (Society for Academic Facilitation and Extension)

[This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#)



aims to draw the reader into the palpability of the Caribbean landscape, inviting the audience to experience the author's world through several senses at once. A critic, Maria Cristina Fumagalli observes, “Walcott's verse celebrates the beauty and diversity of the natural world, while also expressing concern for environmental issues and the need for ecological preservation”. (Fumagalli, 2004, p. 175)

However, the imagery of Walcott's nature and landscapes is rarely restricted to the profusion of sensory details. For Walcott, the landscape is not limited just to the scenery. However, it provides the author with powerful metaphors in various thematic contexts. Walcott's landscapes are often loaded with the oppression of human tragedy and the socio-political conflict. His engagement with nature is not limited to its mere description or evocation. Instead, it encompasses a critical exploration of ethical dimensions of human relationality to the natural order. Whether addressing the destruction of natural resources or ecological devastation resulting from uncontrolled industrialism, Walcott constantly addresses the contentious convolutedness between humanity and the other bio-forms of life, calling upon the reader to ponder about the positionality of the human web within the intricate matrix of life and embrace a transformative narrative centered on realising cooperation of all living beings. We intend to trace the conventionalising devices of nature usage, prospective correlations, and thematic projections. Through close-in textual scrutiny and cross-disciplinary scholarship, this paper will attempt to discover how Walcott's nature appeals serve as a refracting medium to experimentalise the variegation of Caribbean life, the spectra of colonial residues, and the impending environmental issues in the area and the global space sympathetically. Hence, we aim to bring context to Walcott's poetic location within his nineteenth-century artistic history, highlighting the reflexive application of nature to his artful and ethical creation. (Hamner 147)

A hallmark of Walcott's poetry is the lush imagery; readers are drawn to the abundance of sensual details, which immerse them in the Caribbean's sensory seductiveness. By emphasising the minor aspects and using descriptive writing that evokes emotions, the author carefully describes the Caribbean's sights, sounds, smells, and textures and creates a grand place that is physically perceptible to the reader. Nature is a powerful metaphor and symbol in Walcott's poetry, filling it with thematic analysis and cultural resonance. The Caribbean's poetic landscape allows the author to create a cultural landscape in which he conveys the Caribbean's history, human feelings, and social conditions. Walcott is convinced that nature

is intrinsically linked to historical memory and the identity of a place. In his poetry, the poet praises the beauty of the Caribbean while walking through its history and regarding the factors that shaped the region, from colonisers to the resilience of its nations. In addition to simple aesthetic pleasure, Walcott is interested in nature for ethical reasons. Thus, *The Harbour* by Derek Walcott can be analysed in terms of nature criticism, which explores the natural world's representation in creating the roles of literary works. Here is an example of how a nature critic would approach this poem: The poem is rich in imagery drawn from the sea, the night sky, and the landscape. Words like “harbour,” “fishermen,” “sea,” “stars,” and “hills” evoke vivid natural scenes. Walcott uses elements of nature as metaphors for human experiences and emotions. The “stillness through which they move” and the “calm hands” symbolise a sense of tranquillity and security. The “bitter and sly sea” and the “crueller than any word” represent the harshness and challenges of life. (Walcott 2)

In terms of nature criticism, the poem implies that nature is indifferent to the struggles and sufferings of humans. The fishermen “do not consider the stillness”, and time “knows / That bitter and sly sea”. (Walcott, *Selected Poetry*, 1993, p. 2) This means that nature – the sea, the stars, the hills – continues to exist regardless of humans' feelings or perceptions. There is a stark contrast between the human domain of feelings that “drown” and the natural landscapes of the sea and hills. The speaker appears to seek understanding or support from nature, but nature remains indifferent and unaffected. The line “time knows / That bitter and sly sea” suggests that nature holds a secret knowledge of truth that humans can never obtain. (Walcott, *Selected Poetry*, 1993, p. 2) Nature can be considered timeless, existing before and after human events without being touched by them, lasting forever. Nature means to the poem a metaphor for beauty and indifference.

In “*To a Painter in England*,” Derek Walcott crafts a poignant meditation on the transformative power of nature and landscape while exploring themes of displacement, longing, and artistic inspiration. Through vivid imagery and lyrical language, Walcott invites readers to contemplate the profound connection between the individual and their environment and the role of art in capturing the essence of place. The poem contrasts the “strict, grey industry” of urban life and the “personal islands” that beckon to the painter's imagination. (Walcott, *Selected Poetry*, 1993, p. 3) Walcott employs Gauguin's longing for exotic locales as a metaphor for the artist's yearning for connection to nature and the sublime. This sets the stage for a reflection on the painter's artistic journey and the challenges of finding inspiration

amid urban decay. As the poem unfolds, Walcott juxtaposes the painter's experience of April in England with his own memories of the Caribbean landscape. While the painter may be surrounded by the signs of spring in the city parks, Walcott evokes a starkly different April in the Caribbean, where the tide burns black, and the leaves crack into ashes from drought. This contrast highlights the painter's longing for the vibrant colors and rhythms of his native land and his struggle to capture its essence on canvas. Throughout the poem, Walcott explores the tension between artistic vision and the limitations of representation. The painter's "imperious palette" may define the postures of the Caribbean landscape. However, it also reveals the inadequacy of art in fully capturing the complexity of experience. Walcott suggests that true grace lies not in explicit representation but in embracing ambiguity and mystery, allowing the landscape to speak for itself and inviting the viewer to find their meaning. In the final stanzas, Walcott celebrates the transformative power of art to reveal hidden truths and awaken the senses. He suggests that the beauty of the natural world transcends mere representation, touching the soul with its silent grace and inviting contemplation of the divine. Through the act of painting, the artist becomes a conduit for this divine presence, offering viewers a refreshed glimpse into the holy mystery of creation.

But the grace we avoid, that gives us vision,
Discloses around corners an architecture whose
Sabbath logic we can take or refuse;
And leaves to the single soul its own decision
After landscapes, palms, cathedrals or the hermit-thrush,
That would inform the blind world of its flesh. (Walcott, Selected Poetry, 1993, p. 3)

“To a Painter in England” by Derek Walcott is a charming poem reflecting his thoughts and feelings about the role of art and nature. In his poem, Walcott meditates on the role of landscape or the beauty of nature in art and its transformative effect on the spirit. As Walcott beautifully and poetically described: "The land transforms you till you become one with that millions, O painter.." It is not easy to overestimate the accidentally important role nature produces on man's soul and mind. Nature is not simply a mirror showing the human spirit and attitudes. Man can perceive the world in different ways. Some people can transform the beauty of nature in works of poetry, stories, or painting. Ultimately, one could think that, according to Walcott, all possible creativity has one source: nature. A Gifted or inspired artist not simply depicts or describes what they see around them but interpret this beauty as the

mirror of the world created by God. And the nature surrounds of “landscape becomes a state of your soul”.

Another major poem, “Ruins of a Great House”, is a profoundly evocative and introspective poem that explores themes of decay, loss, and the passage of time against the backdrop of a crumbling colonial estate. Through rich imagery and poignant language, Walcott invites readers to contemplate the legacy of empire and the complexities of Caribbean identity in the wake of colonialism's collapse. The poem opens with a meditation on human existence's transience, put adjacent to life's fleeting nature with the enduring presence of ruins. The imagery of the “Great House” in disrepair is a potent metaphor for the decline of colonial power and the erosion of imperial grandeur. The poet's reference to Browne's “Urn Burial” further underscores the theme of mortality and the inevitability of decay, as even the mightiest empires eventually succumb to the ravages of time. As the poem unfolds, Walcott explores the physical and symbolic dimensions of the ruined estate. The stones and remnants of the Great House evoke a sense of desolation and abandonment. At the same time, the presence of “moth-like girls mixed with candle dust” suggests the ephemeral nature of human life against the backdrop of imperial decay. The image of gate cherubs streaked with stain adds a haunting touch, hinting at the corruption and moral decay that often accompany empire's decline. Take a look at the graphic landscape:

Farewell, green fields,
Farewell, ye happy groves!
Marble like Greece, like Faulkner's South in stone,
Deciduous beauty prospered and is gone,
But where the lawn breaks in a rash of trees
A spade below dead leaves will ring the bone
Of some dead animal or human thing
Fallen from evil days, from evil times. (Walcott, Selected Poetry, 1993, p. 4)

The evocative descriptions of the natural landscape surrounding the ruins further accentuate the sense of loss and disintegration. The presence of three crows and the smell of dead limes evoke a sense of foreboding and decay, while the imagery of the river flowing obliterates the traces of past injustice, symbolising the relentless march of time and the inevitability of change. Throughout the poem, Walcott interweaves references to literary and historical figures, including Faulkner, Kipling, and Donne, to underscore the broader cultural and

historical context of the colonial legacy. These allusions serve to deepen the poem's thematic resonance and highlight the interconnectedness of past and present, empire and identity.

And when a wind shook in the limes I heard
What Kipling heard, the death of a great empire, the
abuse
Of ignorance by Bible and by sword.
A green lawn, broken by low walls of stone,
Dipped to the rivulet, and pacing, I thought next
Of men like Hawkins, Walter Raleigh, Drake,
Ancestral murderers and poets, more perplexed
In memory now by every ulcerous crime.
The world's green age then was rotting lime
Whose stench became the charnel galleon's text. (Walcott, Selected Poetry, 1993, p. 5)

In the poem's last stanza, Walcott reflects on the legacy of colonialism and the enduring impact of empire on the Caribbean psyche. The reference to “some slave... rotting in this manorial lake” serves as a stark reminder of the human cost of empire, while the juxtaposition of Albion's colonial past with the contemporary reality of Caribbean independence underscores the ongoing struggle for justice and reconciliation in the post-colonial era. Nature and landscape became the pervasive and potent motif in Walcott's poetry.

While reading some of the poems like “Tales of the Islands,” it can be assumed that the natural environment and the surrounding landscape take a significant place in the author's writing. Not being just crucial parts that create an overall atmosphere and add to the meaning of the theme, but turning into a location where the poem is set in the Caribbean, the examples reveal the beauty and cruelty of nature when they are significant to the plot. One of the ways to introduce them to the reader is to provide vivid descriptions and the language that helps to be evocative and make readers feel like they are there. The vivid use of the images of a Caribbean tropical island and that island's nature reflects the beauty and the harshness of existing on the Earth in the Garden of Eden and sometimes in Hell. Thus, through the Intention of the Author and poets, the atmosphere of the event is being transmitted, and a metaphor is being created because, at the beginning, it is impossible to recognise nature. Then, by creating the image and then finding many of its invariants and details, may know

about this phenomenon or any other. The description of the character's physical appearance is followed by the description of the bibliographical appearance of country and island.

Miss Rossignol lived in the lazaretto
For Roman Catholic crones; she had white skin,
And underneath it, fine, old-fashioned bones;
She flew like bats to vespers every twilight,
The living Magdalen of Donatello;
And tipsy as a bottle when she stalked
On stilted legs to fetch the morning milk,
In a black shawl harnessed by rusty brooches.
My mother warned us how that flesh knew silk
Coursing a green estate in gilded coaches.
While Miss Rossignol, in the cathedral loft,
Sang to her one dead child, a tattered saint
Whose pride had paupered beauty to this witch
Who was so fine once, whose hands were so soft. (Walcott, Collected Poems, 1948-1984,
1986, p. 22)

In the above Chapter III, the words “white skin”, “fine old-fashioned bones” create a vivid image of a woman as fragile and beautiful as the rose. However, the image of “flying bats”, and the expression “vespers at twilight” depict the mysterious and figure surrounding this woman. All those details, accompany each other, and the character's beauty is shown near and against the harsh and rugged landscape of Caribbean island. The contrast between character's former elegance and prosperity and her present decline, poverty and misery as “silk supports, her grape-arched palanquins, her calico, his gilded coaches” conveys the thematic idea and that beauty and “passing fancy of silk” have passed, “and nature has grown the weeds of old age”. It is impossible to maintain the beauty and elegance as the island does not choose the object of its devastating power. In Chapter X, the protagonist who thinks of the island in terms of nature and landscape is on the island. Here, the “the writing of foam about the precipices” and “roads as small and casual as twine” The island is imaged as severe beauty and isolation. The character is lonely with the beloved left on the island. The coast serves as a beloved value but, again, without the protagonist and undivided, “the shallow green of the coastal shelf ended the very shore, and lonely roadsteads embraced the

aluminium desolation of the widening Gulf, the slash of a sea, white scars I had never caused, the metallic waters, and the silver glinting of the fuselage”. It is the sea that covers the land, not the latter which the sea or the protagonist cannot penetrate. The salient point about the protagonist's vision of the island is that although it has been left far and behind, the island becomes impenetrable. The sea isolates it from the character, and the image of the distance accentuates the value of isolation. In the second Chapter, the protagonist is physically on the island, but as in the previous excerpt, the description expresses more about the character's senses about the land than about its actual location. Thus, Chapter X is perceived beyond the border of the water. Throughout both Chapters, the protagonist has no knowledge of closeness and intimacy with the island; what he derives from the island is separation. The consequences of the separation are institutionalised in the distance, both as a real and figurative notion. The distance between the protagonist and the island is the central value of both Chapters.

The use of the natural world and environment as metaphorical backgrounds that infuse the poem “A Lesson for this Sunday” by Derek Walcott with additional layers of meaning and, therefore, enhance the complexity of its context allows the author to juxtapose the beauty of the June grass and butterflies in the surrounding environment with such dark realities of the human life as cruelty and the endemic brutality of existence. In particular, it is remarkable that the use of imagery and language in the poem can evoke overwhelming feelings in the reader. One illustration of nature's role in the poem can be found in the opening lines:

“The growing idleness of summer grass

With its frail kites of furious butterflies” (Walcott, Selected Poetry, 1993, p. 11)

This imagery depicts a lazy summer day, where the grass grows freely and butterflies flutter about in the air. The gentle swaying of the grass and the delicate flight of the butterflies create a sense of tranquility and innocence, contrasting with the disturbing events that unfold later in the poem. Walcott further explores the relationship between nature and human behavior through the depiction of the children hunting butterflies:

“Until I hear the cries

Of two small children hunting yellow wings,” (Walcott, Selected Poetry, 1993, p. 11)

In this line, the predatory nature of the children is juxtaposed with the loving nature that would be appropriate in their case. The "yellow wings" that they are looking for are those of a

butterfly, Marshstopa, which is at least as innocent as the lemonade it is trying to reach. Later, the poem concludes that the boys and girls are walking into a forest, elaborating on the idea of beauty concealing dangerous aspects. Thus, the poet simultaneously introduces the idea of nature as a beautiful and welcoming place where people proceed to perform cruel acts and a place where pure-looking things can be dangerous. Another illustration of nature's role in the poem can be found in the description of the girl in the lemon frock:

“The girl, in a lemon frock, begins to scream

As the maimed, teetering thing attempts its flight.” (Walcott, Selected Poetry, 1993, p. 11)

Here, the lemon frock symbolises purity and innocence, set against the violence dealt upon the butterfly. The girl's piercing scream and sight of the maimed butterfly's struggle to fly stir senses of horror and unease, highlighting life's inherent cruelty and frailty's presence. The poem demonstrates Walcott's skilled employment of nature and landscape to investigate complex morality and human conduct themes. Through vivid imagery and evocative language, Walcott invites readers to consider the interplay between innocence and cruelty, beauty and violence, within the context of the natural world's borders.

In Derek Walcott's poem “Conqueror,” nature and landscape serve as powerful backdrops against which humanity's conquest and dominance intricacies are unearthed. Through striking imagery and emotive language, Walcott juxtaposes civilisation's grandeur with ambition's brutality, inviting readers to ponder the interplay between wilderness and civilisation. One may observe nature's role found in the opening lines:

“This bronze, praised flayer of horses, who bred

Direction not valour in armies, has halted

On the crest of a ridge, in drizzling light;” (Walcott, Selected Poetry, 1993, p. 13)

Here, the poet describes a conquering figure atop a ridge, surrounded by the elements of nature. The "crest of a ridge" and the "drizzling light" evoke a sense of ruggedness and raw beauty, contrasting with the figure's imposing presence. The imagery of the conqueror in repose amidst the elements highlights the tension between human ambition and the indifferent forces of the natural world. Walcott further explores the relationship between nature and human conflict through descriptions of the landscape:

“Below him a thin harvest rusts in rain,

Lean flocks come limping to the herder's fife.” (Walcott, Selected Poetry, 1993, p. 13)

This imagery conveys a sense of desolation and hardship, as the natural world bears witness to the aftermath of human conquest. The "thin harvest" and "lean flocks" suggest a landscape depleted by warfare, while the "rusts in rain" evokes a sense of decay and neglect. Through these descriptions, Walcott highlights the toll of human conflict on the natural environment, underscoring the destructive impact of conquest on both civilisation and wilderness. Another illustration of nature's role in the poem can be found in the depiction of the small sparrows:

“Take these small sparrows, witless if you will
That in the frightful glory of this hour
Flirt with that armed mass quiet on the hill,” (Walcott, Selected Poetry, 1993, p. 14)

In this stanza, the poet uses the unprecedented appearance of sparrows to create an image of the biggest human slaughter conducted on a hill. By this juxtaposition, Walcott achieves the purpose of his simple novel to ponder the place of innocence in the fury of human warfare: “The sparrows as large as thoughts went about / in whirl of wings, for the china worm facades / of the armed mass, kept grating hill to dust,” part 3. In other words, the paradox between the indifferent row of parading soldiers and attacking innocuous sparrows is meant to emphasise the vagueness and insensibility of nature toward war. The famous concluding part of the poems depicts the ways by which human ambition, symbolised by the conqueror, emphasised by the use of history and nature in the novel, and undermined by the eternal landscape struggles to conquer nature: “even understatement is obscene, the mountains, / rude, indestructible, mute to our conquests, stay roadblock”. Therefore, “Conqueror” by Derek Walcott perfectly represents the poet's ability to introduce seemingly unprecedented events and the beauty of his simple novels and nature-driven imagery.

Derek Walcott's poem “Missing the Sea” is significant for the fact that, through the description of nature and associated vivid and provocative imagery, the poet tries to express the approximate thoughts, emotions, and experiences of people closely connected with the sea. Indeed, the extensive "wave" in the third part of the poem perfectly represents the overall turbulent flow of the natural flow of sea water, which unfairly and unlawfully steals land. The role of nature can be found in the opening lines of the poem:

“Something removed roars in the ears of this house,
Hangs its drapes windless, stuns mirrors

Till reflections lack substance.” (Walcott, *Collected Poems*, 1948-1984, 1986, p. 63)

Here, the poet personifies the absence of the sea as a powerful impulse that comes to the family. Specifically, how it is done in this case is upsetting the daily routine. The metaphors of the sea “roaring” in the ears of the house and “stunning” mirrors illustrate the dominant presence. The author uses this to show how great the natural world's influence is on the human sense and being. Moreover, Walcott develops the theme of nature and human emotion by using details of the land. This can be seen in the images of “black land glistening/ the sugary women hanging from windows/ with baskets”. The use of various details is put to underline how nature has power over the senses of human beings. Walcott further explores the relationship between nature and human emotion through descriptions of the landscape:

“It hoops this valley, weighs this mountain,

Estranges gesture, pushes this pencil

Through a thick nothing now,” (Walcott, *Collected Poems*, 1948-1984, 1986, p. 63)

The use of nature within the poem demonstrates dislocation. There is evident dislocation because of disorientation within the landscape. The sea is no longer between the valley and the mountain: “Hoops a rallied valley” instead of a sea “weighs,” “the mountain”. On the one hand, the hoop can be associated with a circular motion without a beginning or an end. On the other hand, the word weighs is associated with the pressure of an object on a particular surface. In any way, the nature of this imbalance, the dislocation, is in the absence of the sea. Thus, the poem's central part illustrates nature's significant influence. Naturally, the description of the changes in the landscape can be associated with human emotion in that these faraway things affect people so much. Another pattern is evident because human-related things, including the thick-zag concrete, affect nature, including the giant's causeway and Table Mountain. In conclusion, concerning the use of nature in the poem, it defines dislocation as a lack of proper orientation in the landscape. Mark out the illustration of nature's role in the poem in the depiction of the household:

“Freights cupboards with silence, folds sour laundry

Like the clothes of the dead left exactly

As the dead behaved by the beloved,” (Walcott, *Collected Poems*, 1948-1984, 1986, p. 63)

In a famous poem of Derek Walcott titled "Veranda," nature and landscape serve as symbolic elements that intersect with themes of ancestry, identity, and the passage of time. Using vivid imagery and evocative language, Walcott explores the legacy of colonialism and

the complex relationship between the natural world and human history. One may observe the illustration of nature's role in the description of the veranda:

“Grey apparitions at veranda ends like smoke,
divisible, but one your age is ashes, its coherence gone,” (Walcott, Selected Poetry, 1993, p. 23)

Here, the veranda is taken as a liminal space where the past and present converge. The phrase “grey apparitions” evoke a sense of transience and impermanence, and suggests the passage of time and the erosion of memory and the veranda becomes a metaphor for the colonial legacy, where the ghosts of the past linger amid the changing landscape. Here the poet Walcott further explores the relationship between nature and human history through descriptions of the colonial figures:

“Planters whose tears were marketable gum,
whose voices scratch the twilight like dried fronds edged with reflection,” (Walcott, Selected Poetry, 1993, p. 24)

Here the imagery conveys a sense of nostalgia and loss, as the voices of colonial figures echo through the twilight like dried fronds. The special mention of “marketable gum” and “Victoria's China Seas” stir up the exploitation of natural resources and the economic underpinnings of colonialism. Through these descriptions, Walcott highlights how human history is intertwined with the natural world, profoundly shaping landscapes and ecosystems. An illustration of it can be found in the depiction of the burning house:

“The sparks pitched from your burning house are stars.
I am the man my father loved and was.”

Here, the burning house symbolises transformation and renewal, as the sparks are likened to stars. This imagery suggests a cosmic connection between human existence and the natural world, highlighting the cyclical nature of life and death. The poet in Walcott invites readers to contemplate how nature shapes and reflects human experience, offering solace and redemption amid the complexities of history and identity. Testament of Walcott's poetic sensibilities, "Veranda" is a perfect example of how the poet uses nature and landscape to engage with topics of ancestry, identity and the lasting consequences of colonialism. The poem's vivid imagery and stately language inspire the reader to contemplate the ways in which the beauty of the natural world has long defined the existence of the natives and the

colonisers of the Caribbean by shaping the landscapes and the ecosystems as well as being able to endure the unfathomable time that has passed since their first encounter.

In Derek Walcott's poem "Lampfall," nature and landscape are central motifs that allow the poet to explore the themes of memory, family, and the relation of the human experience to nature. The dichotomy between the serenity of sea and the surging emotions of humankind is displayed through the use of vivid imagery and evocative language. In this way, the poet poses a profound question about the nature of humanity as he attempts to explore the impacts that nature has on human existence. One example of how nature is used in this poem is the image of the sea at lampfall.

"Closest at lampfall
Like children, like the moth-flame metaphor,
The Coleman's humming jet at the sea's edge
A tuning fork for our still family choir
Like Joseph Wright of Derby's astrological lecture
Casts rings of benediction round the aged.
I never tire of ocean's quarrelling,
Its silence, its raw voice,
Nor of these half-lit windy leaves, gesticulating higher
"Rejoice, rejoice..." (Walcott, *Collected Poems, 1948-1984*, 1986, p. 95)

In the given stanza, the author uses the sea to symbolise stillness and the act of being violent; it symbolises the speaker's psychological state. The phrase lampfall brings the picture of twilight quietness and is an object that can be understood. Therefore, the nature around the coast is used to understand the surroundings of Walcott's poem. It serves as part of his work, symbolising things that help a grieving soul stillness and reflection. The connection between nature and human sentiment remains as one continues through the forest, which you see on the opposite cliff. It is used to describe an aid for the soul. This passage describes the scene that Walcott saw while on the cliff. He adds that this nature was used as a therapy for those who are spiritually hurting. This is a component of the poem as it is a part of the smash, and its meaning is tied up with the work of literature. Therefore, it is possible to consider it a part of the roadmap. At night, we heard, "The forest, an ocean of leaves, drowning her children." It marks all the helplessness of life and is an appalling multifaceted sense of the mystic viciousness of existence.

Furthermore, it is and will always consist of the multitudinous reflection on the contrast between death and life. The forest serves as a symbol of both death and life simultaneously. It is compared to an "ocean of leaves," but the reader will get not only the sense of the enormosity of life. However, the leaves "drowning her children". So, we see that the readers will get to think about and subsequently evaluate how nature can be helpful to a person.

“Like you, I preferred

The firefly's starlike little

Lamp, mining, a question, to the highway's brightly multiplying beetles.” (Walcott, *Collected Poems*, 1948-1984, 1986, p. 95)

Here, the firefly has become a transcoding of simplicity and wonder in a world full of hardship and complexities. The comparison with the cars passing by further highlights the difference between the squandered natural beauty and the interconnected loneliness and hostile invasion by nature. Ultimately, the image of the firefly becomes the poet's metaphor, not merely as gaudy and plain as it may seem but full of meaning, describing the fatal longing for the world to return to its relatively simple former state. “Lampfall” reflects Walcott's significant poetic achievement, his delicate sensitivity and masterful skill in exploring the natural world. The poet powerfully invites readers to reflect on how the environmental world can semantically shape and influence the human world.

In Derek Walcott's poem “Ebb,” nature and landscape are central motifs through which the poet examines industrialisation, nostalgia, and the unstoppable time. Using the images created by vivid and evocative means of poetic speech, Walcott shows that while the tide of urbanisation tends to cover up the face of the world of landscape, nature has an infinite time and remains infinitely beautiful. At one point, outside the window of the plane over the surf town, known as the spot, the poet sees the water, the sand, and the waves endlessly bathing the shore: “leaves our suburban shoreline littered with rainbow muck,/ the afterbirth of industry,” (Walcott, *Selected Poetry*, 1993, p. 28) Here, the poet describes the shoreline as a site of environmental degradation, where human activity has left its mark in the form of “rainbow muck” – a stark contrast to the pristine beauty of the natural world. Through this imagery, Walcott highlights the destructive impact of industrialisation on the landscape, underscoring the tension between human progress and ecological sustainability. Walcott further explores the relationship between nature and human intervention through descriptions

of the palm fronds: “The palm fronds signal wildly in the wind,” (Walcott, Selected Poetry, 1993, p. 28) The imagery evokes a sense of persistence and energy as the palm fronds continue to grow and wave despite the urban development that surrounds them. Further, describing the fronds as “wildly” signaling suggests a reminder of the natural world's power in the wake of human intervention. It indicates an invitation for the reader to consider the ways in which nature continues to assert itself and cope with the relentless oncoming nature of urban areas. Readers may check out another illustration of nature's role in the poem can be found in the depiction of the schooner when one reads: “there always is some island schooner netted in its weave/like a lamed heron an oil-crippled gull;” (Walcott, Selected Poetry, 1993, p. 28) Here, the poet describes the schooner as a symbol of escape and freedom amidst the constraints of modern life. The imagery of the schooner “netted in its weave” hints a sense of entrapment, yet the vessel remains a beacon of hope and possibility. Through this description, Walcott underscores the enduring allure of the natural world and the human desire for connection to it. The poem 'Ebb' is a characteristic example of the power Walcott possesses in the employment of nature and landscape for the exploration of decline, wistfulness, and the human soul's vital force. Powerful, evocative images and descriptions make us wonder about nature's role in our lives and to what extent it channels our desires and fears, responding to the encroachment of industrialisation and urbanisation.

Derek Walcott's poem “Nearing Forty” is a beautiful exploration of the poet's introspective journey as he approaches middle age. It seamlessly combines elements of nature and natural landscapes with the poet's thoughts regarding art, ambition, and the pursuit of truth in life. Walcott's vivid natural imagery allows him to underline the more profound motifs of aging, artistic integrity, and the repeatedness in life and creativity. In the poem's opening lines, the poet struggles to describe the “rigidly metred, early-rising rain”. Walcott personifies the rain through it “recounting” and having a “coolness” that “numbs the marrow”. The presence of nature alongside the inability to perceive it underscores the notion, as the poet admits, that “it is nearing forty.” The image of the “weak vision thickening to a frosted pane” reflects on the integrity of the natural world and how it mirrors the poet's journey.

In the next few lines, the poet introduces the “bleak modesty of middle age as a false dawn, fireless and average” metaphor, which he parallels with the sight of dawn and the disillusionment regarding one's pursuit. The poet's “pages stink and nothing can save them now” except “sunlight on a line.” He also wrings them “out” and compares them to “a

bleaching bedsheet under a guttering rainspout.” This image conjures up an honest bedsheet left or lain in the rain to dry alongside the poet's pursuit, humble and truthful, as it appears to withstand the elements. The pursuit of writing can be traced in the metaphor of a definite meteor in the sky.

In the poem's closing lines, Walcott continues integrating natural motifs such as “a dry wheezing of a dented kettle” and “vision narrower than a louvre's gap” as companions to his thoughts. All of his thoughts are paralleled by the “prodigious cynicism” which “plants its seed” and the “year's end rain” which never reaches “the root.” The incredible use of vivid natural imagery allows Walcott to combine profound motifs of aging, artistic integrity, and the pursuit of the truth that are all paralleled by various elements of the natural world. As a result, they are not merely employed but relentlessly support the poem's contemplative and introspective tone by helping the poet to make recurring motifs between natural landscapes and the human ability to create and critique. The poet illustrates the role of nature as follows:

“measuring how imagination ebbs,
conventional as any water-clerk

who weighs the force of lightly-falling rain,” (Walcott, *Collected Poems, 1948-1984*, 1986, p. 136)

Here, the imagery of imagination as a force akin to rain highlights its fluid and elusive nature. The metaphor of the “water-clerk” suggests a sense of meticulous observation and measurement as the speaker grapples with the ebbs and flows of creative inspiration. Through this description, Walcott explores the complexities of artistic expression and how imagination shapes and reflects our understanding of the world.

The poem “The Saddhu of Couva”, written by Derek Walcott, represents a vivid representation of a connection between the natural world and human's spiritual and philosophical views on his existence. Specifically, the theme of nature is central to the poem. The poem is flooded with nature, describing the speaker's soul as “a white cattle bird growing more small over the ocean of the evening canes”. Mark out the ecerpts:

“When sunset, a brass gong,
vibrate through Couva,
is then I see my soul, swiftly unsheathed,
like a white cattle bird growing more small

over the ocean of the evening canes,
and I sit quiet, waiting for it to return
like a hog-cattle blistered with mud,
because, for my spirit, India is too far.” (Walcott, Collected Poems, 1948-1984, 1986, p. 372)

The poet adds:

“And to that gong
sometimes bald clouds in saffron robes assemble
sacred to the evening,
sacred even to Ramlochan,
singing Indian hits from his jute hammock
while evening strokes the flanks
and silver horns of his maroon taxi,
as the mosquitoes whine their evening mantras,
my friend Anopheles, on the sitar,
and the fireflies making every dusk Divali.” (Walcott, Collected Poems, 1948-1984, 1986, p. 372)

It represents how the natural beauty of the fields and the speaker's spiritual reflection on his existence intertwine together. Moreover, particular natural objects are personified to be assigned sacred duties. For example, “the bald clouds in saffron robes met in assembly” reflects that the evening has sacred duties, as well as “the evening touched the flanks and silver horns of his maroon taxi”. Overall, nature is a natural setting for the poem, representing the perfect nature between the environment and human spiritual arrival. Moreover, the mosquitoes that are “whining their evening mantras” and the sighting of the fireflies that look like “the Divali” add more spiritual content to the natural environment described in the poem. Besides, the physical attributes of the speaker, which are “white moustache bristle like horns” and “hands brittle as the pages of Ramayana”, are strongly connected to nature and to sacred texts of Hinduism. The conceptions of time are represented in the description of “the river” that roared in the speaker's mind and the reference to the old age witnessed by the speaker as “the conflagration as fierce as the cane fires of crop time”. The use of the natural landscape as a major environment for the description of the speaker's spiritual arrival adds a peculiar connection between the human spirit and the natural world to the poem.

In the poem “Adam's Song” by Derek Walcott, the poet transports the reader to a world where vibrant natural imagery and landscapes explore the themes of sin, guilt, and the human condition. Nature and its elements and Earth are intertwined throughout the poem, serving as metaphors and backdrops for the underlying existential and spiritual contemplations. This introduction to the natural world's capacity to judge and punish, being “whispers” and “breath” to tarnish one's flesh.” To immediately call to mind the biblical anecdote and nature of the Garden of Eden, tell of Eve “horning God for the serpent”. Moving on to Adam, the poet describes how a man sings “the song against the world he lost to vipers”. Here, the natural element is “vipers,” which in the biblical narrative is the serpent that tempts Eve; the world lost is a paradise in the Garden of Eden: a perfectly natural setting. The “lights coming on in the eyes of the panthers” create an image of a paradise where there is a peaceable kingdom among people and the natural world around them. However, the mysterious and eerie death, “coming out of the trees,” forms a contrast of danger and hazard carried by the violent nature of the world. As Adam goes on singing, the nature is further personified: here, Wattcott talks about the “sleeping sun” and “dew that lies across the night”. Like earlier, the rain is still weeping.

“The song ascends to God, who wipes his eyes:

Heart, you are in my heart as the bird rises,

heart, you are in my heart while the sun sleeps,

heart, you lie still in me as the dew is,

you weep within me, as the rain weeps.” (Walcott, *Collected Poems, 1948-1984*, 1986, p. 303)

However, as the song of Adam soars up to God, the poet makes the metaphorical connection between the natural world and God, who "has a heart" that encompasses birds, dew, and rain. Throughout the poem, Wattcott skillfully mirrors the human world and experience in nature images and elements to create the basis for the deeper and more thorough questions as well as contemplations of sin, sinners' guilt, and, ultimately, human life and seek for spiritual redemption. Herewith, the concluding point of the essay is that the poet exercises natural imagery to point to the interconnections between human nature and beings and the beauty and power of nature.

Edward Baugh, in his essay “Derek Walcott's Naturalistic Vision” states: “Walcott's poetry is deeply rooted in the physical landscape of the Caribbean and evinces a profound identification with the rhythms and processes of nature.” (Baugh, 1986, p. 65) Another critic

Paul Breslin, in “Derek Walcott's Poetry of the Caribbean Landscape,” writes: “Walcott's verse is distinguished by its rich evocation of the Caribbean's natural environment, its flora and fauna, its changing seasons and weather patterns.” (Breslin, 2017, p. 109)

Such analytical opinions have been given to praise Walcott as a great nature poet with a tremendous poetic legacy. Derek Walcott's poems depict nature as a source of inspiration and refreshment of the mind. His poems demonstrate the intricate relationship between the natural and human environment.

References:

- Baugh, E. (1986). Derek Walcott's Naturalistic Vision. In W. B. (Ed.), *Derek Walcott: A Critical Anthology*, . Praeger Publishers.
- Breslin, P. (2017). Derek Walcott's Poetry of the Caribbean Landscape. In J. R. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Poetry* (pp. 108-124). Cambridge University Press.
- Fumagalli, M. C. (2004). The Ecology of Derek Walcott's Poetry. In S. P. (Ed.), *The Caribbean Postcolonial: Social Equality, Post-Nationalism, and Cultural Hybridity* (pp. 173-190). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hamner, R. D. (2003). Derek Walcott's Poetic Landscape. In H. B. (Ed.), *Derek Walcott* (pp. 147-164). Chelsea House Publishers.
- Walcott, D. (1986). *Collected Poems, 1948-1984*. Macmillan.
- Walcott, D. (1993). *Selected Poetry*. Oxford: Heinemann.
- Baugh, Edward. “Derek Walcott's Naturalistic Vision.” (Ed.), William Baer. *Derek Walcott: A Critical Anthology*, . Praeger Publishers, 1986.
- Breslin, Paul. “Derek Walcott's Poetry of the Caribbean Landscape.” (ed.), Jahan Ramazani. *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Poetry*. Cambridge University Press, 2017. 108-124.

Fumagalli, Maria Cristina. "The Ecology of Derek Walcott's Poetry." (Ed.), Shalini Puri. *The Caribbean Postcolonial: Social Equality, Post-Nationalism, and Cultural Hybridity*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. 173-190.

Hamner, Robert D. "Derek Walcott's Poetic Landscape." (Ed.), Harold Bloom. *Derek Walcott*. Chelsea House Publishers, 2003. 147-164.

Walcott, Derek. *Collected Poems, 1948-1984*. Macmillan, 1986.

—. *Selected Poetry*. Oxford: Heinemann, 1993.