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Non-Human Characters as Carriers of Environmental Ethics and Spiritual Wisdom in Rumi's Fables: A Deep Ecological Reading

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how Rumi uses non-human characters (animals, elements, plants) to convey environmental ethics and spiritual wisdom in selected fables from The Book of Rumi (2018). The study adopts a qualitative and interpretive approach and uses Arne Naess's theory of Deep Ecology (1990) as the single theoretical framework. The focus of the study is to highlight the role played by non-human beings in examining the human-nature relationship. The analysis shows that Rumi has always provided voice, power, and moral status to non-human beings, animals, plants, and natural things, allowing them to stand against human domination and claim their existence. The fables are based on narration, metaphor and emotion as a means of ecological and moral understanding. Naess's concepts of the Ecological Self and Self-realization, essential value, criticism of anthropocentrism, symbiosis and interdependence provide a philosophical lens to analyze Rumi's spiritual language as ecological wisdom. The selected fables show that non-human beings speak, judge, resist, teach, mourn, and participate in relationships of dependence and care. This study shows that the fables of Rumi are a way of spiritual teaching and a kind of ecological collection, directly related to the contemporary environmental crisis, linking classical Islamic mysticism with the environmental philosophy of today. Finally, the study confirms that Rumi's fables encourage humility, compassion, interdependence, and a more respectful relationship with the non-human world. It also shows that Rumi has always provided voice, power, and moral status to non-human beings, animals, plants, and natural things, allowing them to stand against human domination and claim their existence. The selected fables show that non-human beings speak, judge, resist, teach, mourn, and participate in relationships of dependence and care. Through these characters, spiritual wisdom is connected with humility, relationship, care, and recognition of the value of life.

Introduction

Global warming, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, and systematic ecological decay are the increasing environmental tragedies of the world. These catastrophies call for a critical re-evaluation of the cultural, intellectual, and spiritual systems on which humans are conditioned to relate to nature. It can easily be maintained that the roots of this crisis are mainly cultural and philosophical. The common human-centered viewpoint keeps people distinct from and superior to nature, justifying the exploitation of the non-human world, which needs to be managed and controlled. In this era, there arises an urgent need to spread out the scope of ecological thinking beyond modern scientific and Western philosophical traditions. Pre-modern wisdom

literatures, particularly those based on spiritual and mystical traditions, provide rich, alternative approaches to knowledge that emphasize interconnection, humility, and respect for all forms of life. Among these, the works of Jalal-ul-Din Rumi (1207-1273), a 13th-century Persian Sufi poet and mystic, are notable for their philosophical depth and poetic brilliance. Rumi's Masnavi-ye-Ma'navi, is a large didactic poem consisting of fables that impart Sufi ideas through storytelling. There is much potential in Rumi as a source of ecological wisdom.

The Book of Rumi (2018) is a translation of English fables of the Masnavi; this study is dedicated to it. The tales are full of symbolism and moral lessons. These also hold a detailed account of the natural world, as well as its relation to humanity. Non-human things such as animals, trees, rivers, winds and others are not mere metaphors or the background scene, but are living things that have voice, wisdom and moral stance. The illusion of human superiority over nature is repeatedly criticized in the stories of Rumi, and they are relevant to modern ecological concepts. A distinctive feature of Rumi's writings is his representation of the natural world as an interconnected and meaningful community rather than a passive background for human action. Animals, trees, rivers, mountains, the wind, and other natural elements frequently appear as speaking characters possessing intelligence, moral awareness, and spiritual significance. Such portrayals challenge anthropocentric assumptions by emphasizing that all forms of existence possess intrinsic value within the divine order. Human beings are therefore portrayed not as rulers of nature but as participants in a harmonious and interdependent universe where every creature reflects aspects of divine wisdom.

Rumi wrote in the thirteenth century, his narratives consistently promote values of balance, coexistence, humility, compassion, and responsibility toward the non-human world. His fables criticize greed, pride, domination, and excessive attachment to material power while encouraging harmony between humanity and nature. These ethical concerns resonate strongly with Garrard's concept of ecocriticism and Arne Naess's philosophy of *Deep Ecology*, which recognizes the intrinsic value and interconnectedness of all life forms. Consequently, Rumi's fables can be understood not only as spiritual teachings but also as ecological narratives that challenge human-centered worldviews and advocate a more respectful relationship with nature.

The present study therefore considers Rumi as more than a mystical poet or religious thinker. His literary imagination offers a philosophical framework through which environmental ethics can be explored using symbolic narratives. The selected fables from *The Book of Rumi: 105 Stories and Fables that Illumine (2018)* demonstrate how storytelling functions as an argumentative strategy that persuades readers to reconsider their relationship with the natural world. By integrating spiritual insight with ecological consciousness, Rumi's literary contribution remains highly relevant to contemporary discussions of environmental sustainability, ecological responsibility, and the ethical coexistence of humans and the non-human world.

The study is relevant since it is a creative synthesis of contemporary environmental philosophy and classical Sufi literature. It demonstrates that spiritual stories are profound ecological arguments and disputes the notion that ecological thinking is a modern Western project by demonstrating that premodern wisdom traditions are interconnected, have their own fundamental value and are humbler towards nature. The research assesses nature through the literary and moral standpoint by providing freedom and a voice to the non-human figures in the Rumi fables. Finally, the research offers an innovative approach to environmental ethics because it introduces a connection between spirituality and ecology. It is a valuable addition to literary criticism and environmental philosophy since it asserts that the ancient wisdom can guide the current endeavors to a sustained environment.

To analyse how Rumi employs non-human characters (animals, natural elements, and plants) to communicate environmental ethics and spiritual wisdom. How does Rumi use non-human characters (animals, elements, plants) to convey environmental ethics and spiritual wisdom?

Literature Review

Valera (2018) makes an attempt to re-immerse Naess' concept of the human ecological self, which bases itself along the principles of deep ecology. “Naess proposed the concept that humans can extend our understanding and concept of self to fully embrace nature, and this will help in the promotion and acquisition of environmental recognition” (Valera, 2018, p.661). This research analyzed the concept under the notions and perspectives of identification and self-realization. It shifts our prospects and mannerism for thinking about and approaching the concept of environmental ethics. This research argues that we can start with the existence and concept of human, and then we can view the formation and existence of ethics with this understanding. This also helps us to fully comprehend and internalize the existence and concept of the relationship between humans and nature, and how we have acquired the power and authority to control nature while still fully and fiercely protecting it. It presents the concept of deep ecology with a stronger and personal insight. It demonstrates that protecting the environment is not just about the principles and philosophies; it is about essentially feeling at home and understanding our place in the world. Such an approach carries great potential for changing the way environmental ethics work, making them human, while making

humans more ethical through an experience based upon an encounter with our relation to Earth. The importance of gaining knowledge about our true selves and where exactly we fit in.

In the research paper written by Breivik (2021), the research focuses on the subject of outdoor activities with relevance to today's ecological problems; thus, climate change and biodiversity. In the research paper, the major argument made is that those individuals that have a great interest or a great passion for nature related recreation or activities such as hiking or climbing need to rethink their nature-related activity patterns; thus, particularly if the activity requires use and needs equipment that contributes to ecological problems. For instance, the research provides the following example: Friluftsliv; a traditional Norwegian conception that focuses on the nature of being outdoors for the sake of being outdoors; not for the sake of competing.

Oladi (2023) provides a fascinating ecocritical and phenomenological reading of Rumi's narrative by using Henry Corbin's concept of the imaginal. The concept matches with growing spiritual ecocriticism or ecosoul framework that stress upon inner ecology, relationship, and the ethical aspects of perception. He uses Rumi's Story of The Parrot and the Merchant as an allegory for soulful listening. This technique rejects fixed beliefs in favour of cultivating a pluralistic and active self. The translation of the Persian phrase *gooshe jan sepordan* (surrender the soul's ear) as a dialogical framework connects sensory experience and spiritual clarity inside the imaginal space, revealing Corbin's claim that this domain is existentially real instead of fictional. The study contributes to interdisciplinary discussions that link poetics, pedagogy, and ecological wisdom. It provides a counter-model to practical education and forms of knowing, insofar as listening is defined as an active, transformational, and devotional practice.

Dolatabadi (2023) examined the "pedagogy of rhetoric" in the first book of Molavi's (also spelled as Rumi's) famous poem, "Masnavi-ye-Ma'navi." It particularly examined it as "a masterpiece of spirituality" or "a morality book." This paper, on the other hand, examined the author's use of questions as cognitive and affective tools to encourage awakening through the author's intention. It particularly examined Islamic literary works from the aspects of education and rhetoric, as opposed to the religious or literary ones.

Jami, M. H., & Hassan, M. (2024) examined Rumi's life and his main work, the Masnavi-ye-Ma'navi. The research provides Rumi with a placement within the context of the times and culture, showing the strong influence that his experiences played on not only the work itself, but also on the philosophical perspective that he demonstrated within it. The body of work that Rumi has to offer has always been divided into those who view him on a religious level and those who view him on an intellectual level, as he shows both religious depth and poetical creativity within the works that he did produce. The focus that the body of work takes within this level is on the way that he used the tools of allegory and parable to describe highly complex concepts within the world of the metaphysical, and the desire that the soul must have to be united with the Divine. The research shows Rumi as a Sufi teacher and a literary pioneer, leveraging the continuation that Masnavi shows as it attempts to create a better world through the channels that it stimulates in the world.

Research Methodology

The philosophical approach adopted in this study is an interpretive approach where reality is created and understood by means of human experience, language, and discourse. The study has adopted qualitative research approach which is usually for exploring cultural texts like Rumi's fables representing, constructing, and potentially transforming human relationships with the non-human world. The primary data for this study are textual, specifically selected fables from The Book of Rumi. This study employs a case study research design, with the primary case being the collection of fables. The sample of 12 fables of the chosen text with the themes of human-animal relations, human-nature difference, and ecological wisdom is the primary data of this study. For the present article, the analysis is narrowed to the non-human-character dimension of the thesis. The study is based on the ethics and existential philosophy of deep ecology as suggested by Naess. Deep ecology is an environmental philosophy that confronts anthropocentric worldview and its foundations. Naess differentiates between the narrow-egoistic self and the expanded ecological Self (with a capital 'S'), which identifies the wider community of life. *Deep ecology*

claims that all living beings, regardless of their utility to humans, have an importance. The selected fables are read through Naess's concepts of Self-realization, essential value, criticism of anthropocentrism, symbiosis and interdependence.

Analysis and Discussion

The analysis focuses on the selected fables to examine the themes of human-animal relations, human-nature difference, and ecological wisdom. The fables are analyzed through the role of non-human characters and their relationships with human beings and the natural world. The analysis further interprets these representations through Naess's concepts of Self-realization, essential value, criticism of anthropocentrism, symbiosis and interdependence. Through close reading of the selected fables,

the study explores how animals, plants, and natural elements speak, resist, teach, mourn, and participate in relationships of dependence and care.

The Chickpeas fable offers a striking metaphor in which a pot of boiled chickpeas cries out in agony to the cook, begging, “You’ve bought us, we’re yours, why set us on fire now?” (Rumi. p.195). In response, the cook explains that their pain is essential to their conversion into food because they cannot serve their function without the fire. Cooking is used as a metaphor for spiritual purification through difficulty.

“You’ve bought us, we’re yours, why set us on fire now?” (Rumi. p. 110).

According to Naess's deep ecology, the story is a criticism of anthropocentric attitude, which states that non-human life exists only to serve human purposes. The chickpeas' voices, which are typically ignored in literal culinary practice, are personified here, showing their ability for suffering to facilitate humans. Naess's idea of essential value states that all living things have importance regardless of their use to humans. Rumi breaks the cultural silence surrounding plant exploitation, inviting radical identification with even the most unnoticed aspects of the environment by giving the chickpeas a voice. Naess’s concept of Self-realization is indirectly shown, as the cook representing humanity, must understand that his identity is together in a shared network of existence. The fire, often a symbol of divine trial in Sufism, becomes an ecological metaphor for the destructive but transformative forces humans impose on nature. Forces that leads to ecological disruption instead of moving forward.

The Merchant and the Parrot is the story of a merchant who owns a parrot and decides to visit a distant market. Before leaving, he asks the parrot if he has a message for the region's wild birds. The parrot voices an appeal, telling them the extent, he longs for the freedom of the forest. When the merchant reaches the market, he delivers the message to a group of wild parrots. When one of them hears the imprisoned parrot's sadness, he falls dramatically from the tree. The merchant returns home and tells his parrot, who collapses and appears to be dead. Grief, stricken, the merchant opens the cage to remove the body, causing the parrot to resurrect and fly away, having pretended to be dead in order to obtain freedom.

“My dear master, my heart really desires nothing from my motherland. But, should you come across a group of parrots like myself, would you please convey my greetings and tell them that I’m trapped in a cage in Persia, and I miss them terribly.” (Rumi. p. 10).

According to Naess, the parrot's pretending death is an expression of Self-realization. The caged parrot's thinking about the wild birds, represents a deep metaphysical relation that is above physical isolation. Apparrently, it desires for bodily freedom, but actually for a revival to an outer world completing the biosphere. The scheme, inspired by the wild parrots, is a non-violent opposition against anthropocentric dominance, asserting the Naess' vision of a peaceful and symbiotic life. The merchant, as a symbol of human authority and control over nature, becomes an unknowingly freedom provider, which means that ecological balance can be restored through knowledge and indirect action, even within exploitative systems. The action of the parrot mirrors the ecological concept that is profound in its tendency, as it places itself in the ecological whole, rather than apply force.

The Mosquito and the Wind shows a moment of pride and humility in nature when a mosquito, sitting above the wind, brags about its own power. Hearing this, the wind temporarily stops, allowing the mosquito to fall helplessly to the earth. Then the little creature realises that its imagined might was an illusion, actually supported only by forces which are greater than itself.

“Great prophet, you are the most just ruler; you deal fairly and equally with every creature who comes to you, no matter if it’s human, fairy, fish, or bird!” (Rumi. p. 111).

Naess (1990) sees the mosquito as the threats of a conceited anthropocentric perspective. The pride of the mosquito is human capacity to believe that man can be superior to natural forces where he views himself as the superior being over the forces of nature. Its downfall is really a metaphysical crumbling of a sham self that does not a realise its weakness and dependence on other parts of nature. Conversely, the wind is the big life-supporting forces of the biosphere on which existence is possible however uncontrollable. As the wind blows off, it gives us a valuable ecological lesson that the real power lies in non-violent involvement rather than self-thinking. The mosquito's realisation reflects Naess' concept of Selfrealization, which is the process of exceeding the ego and match with the essential value of all beings and natural processes. Only humility can help getting genuine ecological wisdom.

The Water Carrier’s Donkey narrates of a donkey who carried two pots that were similar but one was broken and the other was not. Each day, the water carrier to his home takes the route through the river and the cracked pot spills water, as compared to the other pot that is full. The leaked pot regrets the fact that it cannot serve its purpose. The water carrier admits that he knew about the crack at the beginning and had seeded the walkway on the side of the broken pot.

“Even if I’m a lowly donkey, I’m still one of Your creations! Why should there be such a difference between me and these other four-legged relatives of mine?” (Rumi. p. 154).

Naess (1990) explains that the actual ecological knowledge can be observed through a thorough comprehension of one as a part of a dependent system. First humiliation of the broken pot points to the humanistic thoughts that judge only results and excellence. The water carrier symbolizes the ecological Self which aids in the perception of possibility. His consideration of planting plants with the leaky passage shows that he knew a lot about nature, whereby garbage serves as food. It focuses on diversity and co-existence as key values. The flowering of the failed pot proves that nature often has inefficiencies that reproductively play unknown roles. The donkey that is not commonly mentioned in the fable represents non-human productions in human economies. The emphasis of Garrard on the role of the animals in the cultural literature is the focus on making the creatures like the donkey become invisible saviors of the human beings. Nevertheless, the story of Rumi, placing emphasis on the emotional experience of the pot, indicates the whole process of load, mobility, and exchange indirectly. The Water Carrier Donkey is a narrative logic that undermines the anthropocentric ideals and fosters the ecosophical perspective. The narrative comes out as a silent yet radical ecological statement, a message that in the conscious creation of interdependence lies the true sustainability.

Catching Donkeys narrates the unsuccessful story of a man who was trying to trap wild donkeys by imitating the braying. He is sure that he can make them closer to him by imitating their voice, and he will be able to hear them. The donkeys run away, knowing the pitch in their voice was not true and fleeing safely. The exhausted and battered man does not realize that it is impossible to build a meaningful relationship through imitation or oppression.

“The shameless king has ordered all donkeys in town to be confiscated!” (Rumi. p. 156).

According to Naess' (1990), the man's failed try shows the limitations of an egoistic relationship with nature. He argues that environmentalism highlights control, usefulness, and manipulation, and deep ecology, which further advocates for a fundamental change in wisdom through Self-realization. Man's mimicry shows the shallow ecological impulse, using nature without its actual identification. His braying merges from desire to own and dominate, instead of friendship. Ecological knowledge comes out of an expanded sense of self that connects with non-human life. The wild donkeys represent nature's power and innate importance, which cannot be fooled or controlled through mean imitation. Their flight is a form of resistance to anthropocentric interruption, confirming Naess's claim that all beings have the freedom to progress in their own way, regardless of human intent.

Cow on a green Island tells a simple but significant story that a cow is placed on a beautiful, isolated island rich in grass and water. It grazes pleasantly at first, but then it worries that what if the grass runs out and if the boat that carried it never returns with more. The cow lives in constant tension, unable to enjoy the moment, without thinking its abundant surrounding.

“But every day there’s plenty of fresh grass again for me to consume, and I do so happily. The supply never vanishes, but I don’t seem to have any faith in it.” (Rumi. p. 158).

According to Naess's (1990), the cow's worry symbolises a lack of Self-realization, which is a major component of his ecosophy. He distinguishes between the narrow egoistic self, focused with control and survival, and the extended ecological Self, which is concerned with the well-being of all life. The cow remains psychologically separate from its environment, despite being physically surrounded in abundance. Its fear of future scarcity stops it from being involved in the island's current wholeness, which acts as a metaphor for the Anthropocene human experience. Modern industrial society, like the cow, functions on a logic of ongoing collection and cautious scarcity, without considering living on a planet with abundant resources. Naess states that the real ecological well-being is produced on the basis of profound affinity with the natural systems rather than ownership and mastery of them. The island being a self-sustaining micro-ecosystem symbolizes the natural reproduction potential of the Earth which has been concealed by the ego sense of scarcity. The fact that the cow could not live in peace shows the inability of humans to realize that the ecological harmony involves a shift in thinking, that is, the fear should be replaced with the trust and the control by the partnership. The fable deals with the necessity to reconsider human relationships with non-human life. Rumi brings to life the inner struggle of the cow and makes it have the perception and emotional dimension. The island is turned into a character, an affectionate, peaceful space, which the cow fails to comprehend as a relationship. This is the theory of essential value according to Naess, the value of the island is calculated based on the capacity of the island to survive and to keep developing, rather than by its use to the cow. As demonstrated in the story, sustainability commences with a change of mindset. The book Rumi tells us of the importance of letting go of the ego in the face of fear and coming back to the current wisdom and that is as valuable to the world as it is to the soul.

Three Fish narrates the story of three fish, One, Two and Three who find out that a fisherman is interested in placing his net in their pond the following day. The first fish senses the danger and runs to another body of water. The second fish devises a

brilliant plan to dodge the net, hiding among the reeds and moving quickly. The third fish refuses to leave. The first and second fish survive the following day due to their actions and strategies, while the third gets captured in the net.

“One of the fish, however, who was more intelligent than the other two, became suspicious and thought it best to leave the pond as soon as possible.” (Rumi. p. 134).

According to Naess's (1990), the three fish represent different levels of ecological wisdom. Naess's deep ecology highlights Self-realization through active identification with the ecosystem and a dedication to the well-beingof all life. The first fish represents the deep ecological narrative of intervention and relocation in the face of existential threat, a realisation that non-human animals have control and the right to find conditions favorable to life. Its swift departure is according to Naess's idea that ecological well-being requires foresight, activity, and a rejection of acceptance of damage. The second fish shows the active position by displaying intellect and activity, which Naess links with a mature ecological Self. The third fish's fatal attitude opposes the fundamental principles of deep ecology. It’s not leaving the place indicates a separation from the environmental community. Naess criticises this viewpoint as a lack of responsibility, because deep ecology does not promote passive acceptance of pain, even if it is presented as fate. The inherent value of life, which is a fundamental standard in Naess' ecosophy, requires action to save it instead of surrendering to loss.

The Fly who thought she was a sailor tells of a fly sitting on a ship's mast, believing she is steering the vessel across the sea. She brags about her own power with each gust of wind and movement of the waves. She realise She was never in control onnly after the ship lands and she is left behind. She was being propelled by forces far larger than herself.

“I’m sailing away on the sea. I’m the captain of this ship, and what a perfectly seasoned navigator I am! Who dares to stop me now?” (Rumi. p. 9).

According to Naess' (1990) the fly's delusion that she is in the controlled position on the mast, reflects humanity's false belief in dominance over natural processes. Like the fly, modern industrial society frequently mixes technological advancement with mastery, unable to acknowledge that human survival is fully dependent on large and powerful ecological processes such as the carbon cycle, photosynthesis, ocean currents, and climate systems. One of the ideas presented by Naess is Self-realization, which states that this deception of egoism should be dismantled and proposes that authority should way to engagement. The ecological judgement expressed by the fly being pushed to relocation is parallel to the ecological judgment of the human, where real wisdom starts with the recognition of insignificance and interdependence on the other in the biosphere. It is on that basis that one could then advance toward a profound ecological ethics based on humility and natural value.

The Sound of the Splash fable talks about an experience of high observation and existential awakening. One of the men is walking by a river and he only hears the splashing of water on the rocks. He sees it as sound, some natural murmur. Another person, however, pauses, listens intently, and proclaims, that it is the sound of the world's longing. The identical physical process, the splash, is viewed in two very different ways, as an indifferent sound, and as a cry of universal wish.

“For a thirsty man, the sound of the splash is like the music that raises the dead on Judgment Day!” (Rumi. p. 40).

According to Naess (1990), the fable highlights the difference between shallow and deep ecological wisdom. The environmental disaster is largely philosophical instead of technological, a failure of perception rooted in anthropocentrism. Naess thinks that Self-realization, the realisation of identity with the whole life, is the essence of ecological ethics. The auditor who perceives the longing of the world identifies himself with it; in fact, he does more than merely interpret the sound symbolically. The splash turns into a shout of the universe as a whole, its intentions are for the full harmony and recovery of the mutual relations. This is an act of profound listening, a metaphysical action that proves right what Naess says, that all beings have a certain value, and the ecological knowledge that can actually be achieved is a result of having a comprehensive view of reality rather than a disjointed scientific perception. The fable is a critique of what is perceived by Garrard to be the drawback of scientific rationalism in environmental discourse. Science can measure the physical part of water and the frequency of sound, but it is unable to discover the internally concealed spiritual part of the splash. As is stated in one of the fables of Rumi, ecological knowledge does not simply consist of data; imagination, humility, and love are all necessary to attain such knowledge. It is the story that turns into an invitation to hear the silent pleas of the Earth that are to be discovered not only through the idea of identification as Naess gives it, but also through such parts that Garrard focuses on, such as dwelling and judging. It implies that the ecological liberty commences with profound perception and not entirely with policies.

The Cow and the Grave is a fable of a cow that misfortunes a grave yard and starts to cry. On inquiring her why she is sad, the cow replies that she can see bones there. She believes that it is the remains of other cows like her and laments how they are suffering and what will become the lot of all living things. This instance of empathy, where an animal laments over its own and believes that death turns the cemetery into a humanist rather than an interspecies level.

“Gracefully, the bird circled in the air, and just as gracefully he landed nearby. Slowly and gently, he let the dead crow roll out of his beak onto the ground.” (Rumi. p. 143).

Naess (1990) further opines that the grief of the cow is representative of the profound ecological rule of identification, projecting the narrow ego into the ecological Self. According to Naess, authentic environmental ethics emerge from a genuine sense of relationship with all forms of life. The cow mourns because of a deep instinctive relation with the bones it sees, recognizing them as the remains of beings who once lived and then died. This act of sorrow crosses species barriers and supports Naess' idea that all life has essential value regardless of its importance for people. The graveyard, which is usually connected to humans only, is transformed into a shared space of ecological remembrance by the presence of the cattle. The cow's mourning is not unreasonable, it is a show of ego-realization, in which the particular ego melts into a greater network of existing, recognising the continuity of life and death across species.

The Cow and the Grave is a moral thesis on animal humility and human ecology. The narrative breaks the myth of human distinctiveness through the identification framework of Naess and the study of the anthropocentric tropes of Garrard. It implies that environmental literacy starts with the capacity to mourn over the whole life and death process of all living creatures caught in this cycle. The fable by Rumi leaves his spiritual grounds to give out a universal ecological fact that the actual human life needs compassion.

The Peacock narrates the tale of an arrogant peacock, who complains to the God that although the nightingale sings softly and is cherished because of his voice, he is compelled to scream and is repudiated because of his nasty cry. He argues that his lovely tail is useless because it can't generate music. God responds that he was given beauty in his tail, and that the nightingale was given song. Every creature has a unique gift and advises him to stay happy with what he has received.

“You’re still distracted by my superficial beauty! Can’t you see that it’s because of these feathers that I’ve had to bear so much pain?” (Rumi. p. 147).

According to Naess's (1990), the peacock's sorrow represents a loss of identification and Self-realization. According to Naess, ecological wisdom provides a sense of self that helps in understanding one's place within a variety of living beings present in this world. The peacock's unhappiness comes out of an egoistic mindset as he compares his worth to the nightingale using a human-like criteria of value based on importance and acceptance, as the humans run after the materialistic objects. This indicates the humans try to rate species based on their importance or aesthetic value to them. Naess's deep ecology states that all life has essential value, regardless of function or shape. God's response recalls Naess' principle that world is moving on the basis of diversity and variety in it making it more balanced and beautiful. The beauty of the peacock, like the voice of the nightingale, is a beautiful state of being instead of just a decoration. Actual Self-realization comes from accepting one's own unique place in the ecological variety. In conclusion, the fable eliminates the myth of human uniqueness and argues for a revaluation of all life by employing Naess' concept of essential worth and Garrard's criticism of anthropocentric representation. It suggests that ecological harmony begins with gratitude, for oneself and others, rather than with transformation. Rumi's story contains eternal wisdom, variation and the very essence of creation.

In The Ants and the Calligraphy, a man writes religious text on paper; an ant colony begins to traverse the paper, as an unfamiliar terrain of precipitous curves and deep gorges rather than a text of God. Calligraphy's graceful curves are impassable valleys to the ants, as are the delicate writing style. They struggle to understand what a writer considers as beauty and meaning, but instead experience it as a difficult and dangerous landscape.

According to Naess (1990), this story demonstrates the basic limitation of the human perspective and the importance of identification for meaningful ecological comprehension. Naess argues between the restricted human-centred point of view and the wide ecological Self, which emerges out of the association of experiences and the reality of other living things. The writer, absorbed in his human world of symbols and religious meaning, is completely blind to the reality experienced by the ants. His calligraphy, appears to be an unknown and dangerous environment, for ants, which he thinks as a product of human culture and spirituality. This division shows Naess' criticism of shallow environmentalism, which frequently sees nature as a background for human activity. The experience of the ant shows the totally other, yet no less valid method of living in this world. Their struggle to travel the page demonstrates their own sort of Self-realization within their own biological zone. The story suggests that ecological knowledge requires a conscious effort to transcend the human total view and picture the world through the eyes of the other, confirming Naess's view that all beings have a unique importance and their own manner of progress. The fable acts as a metaphor for human development, cities, agriculture, and technology, often affecting the earth in ways that are harmful to other species, as their needs and perceptions are ignored. The story forces the reader to consider who gets to define the meaning of place. A writer perceives art, while the ants considers it a landscape. There is no single objective reality. The fable removes the illusion of human perceptual superiority by using Naess's idea of identification and Garrard's

criticism of anthropocentric living. It suggests that a long-lasting relationship with the Earth requires technological change and a deep shift in wisdom.

The findings across the selected fables indicate that Rumi repeatedly uses non-human characters to make ecological wisdom visible through experience. The parrot seeks freedom, the mosquito learns humility, the fish responds to ecological limits, the peacock learns to value diversity, the ants experience the world from a non-human perspective, and the chickpeas are given a voice that makes human use of nature ethically visible. Through these characters, spiritual wisdom is connected with humility, relationship, care, and recognition of the value of life.

Discussion

The findings across the selected fables indicate that Rumi repeatedly uses non-human characters to make ecological wisdom visible through experience. The parrot seeks freedom, the mosquito learns humility, the fish responds to ecological limits, the peacock learns to value diversity, the ants experience the world from a non-human perspective, and the chickpeas are given a voice that makes human use of nature ethically visible. Through these characters, spiritual wisdom is connected with humility, relationship, care, and recognition of the value of life.

Naess's deep ecology gives the idea of Self-realization and essential value offering a philosophical lens to analyze Rumi's spiritual language as ecological wisdom. Where Western thought often separates humanity from nature, Rumi a deep relation in it. The ego's illusion of separation is the root of suffering and ecological problems. Freedom, fulfillment, and wisdom come through the relationship with the larger network of life. Rumi's fables act upon this process repeatedly as the parrot returns to the forest, the fish returns to the sea, the cracked pot finds purpose in its leak.

The third research question examined Rumi's use of non-human characters as carriers of wisdom, control, and ethical wisdom. In all the selected fables, animals and natural elements are not presented as only symbols but they are given importance. They speak, judge, resist, teach, and mourn. In The Bird's Advice, a bird warns a fish not to leave the water. The fish ignores the advice, nearly dies, and is saved only by the same bird's help. Here, non-human beings possess foresight, care, and authority, which are the qualities often understood only for humans in Western narratives. The story confirms that wisdom comes out of relationship with one's natural element. Even plants are given moral position. In The Chickpeas, boiling legumes cry out in pain, forcing the cook to reflect upon their morality that why are they burning them.

The earlier researchers have made significant efforts in unraveling the poetry of Rumi, his mysticism, and his literary styles, mostly using nature as a setting or a symbol. The present research is new in its nature as it treats nature as a subject, with voice, value, and moral position. The past scholars saw Rumi as a poet of the spirit, the present research calls him as a messenger of ecological unity. The above analysis doesn't replace earlier readings, it moves out of them by showing that actual spirituality lies in taking care of all creatures present on Earth, whether they are small or large, without considering their level of importance.

Conclusion

This study analysed selected fables from *The Book of Rumi (2018)*by applying Naess's Deep Ecology (1990) to examine how Rumi uses non-human characters to convey environmental ethics and spiritual wisdom. Through close reading, this research reveals that Rumi's stories do much more than offering spiritual allegories, they present a fine and deep ecological viewpoint that criticises human superiority over nature by promoting respect for all elements of life. The researcher explored how Rumi used non-human characters, animals, plants, winds, rivers, and other natural elements, to convey spiritual and environmental wisdom. Rumi's fables function through narrative, metaphor, irony, and emotional impact. The parrot's wish for freedom is a criticism of human control over other species. The mosquito and the fly reveal the illusion of power over natural processes. The Water Carrier's Donkey shows interdependence and the possibility of transforming what appears to be failure into beauty and life. The Bird's Advice gives a non-human being foresight, care, and authority. The Chickpeas give voice to plant life and create moral reflection.

The analysis confirms that Rumi's fables are not limited to human-centered moral teaching. Animals, plants, and natural elements are given importance, voice, emotional experience, and ethical significance. Naess's concepts of Self-realization, essential value, criticism of anthropocentrism, symbiosis and interdependence help explain how these characters become carriers of environmental ethics. The fables encourage humility over control and relationship over fighting. They belong to a pre-modern wisdom tradition that sees the Earth as alive, communicative, and sacred.

This study demonstrates that Rumi fables are neither moral fables nor spiritual metaphors, but are ecological arguments in narrative form. Their criticism of anthropocentrism is based on the importance of all life, both human and non-human. They

encourage sustainability, voice, control, and wisdom of non-human beings, encouraging the reader to hear, sense, and relate to more-than-human world. The fable is an exceptionally strong literary genre of ecological logic.

We should have more than statistics; we should have imaginations, compassion, and visions as the world confronts more than ever before with ecological issues. The fables of Rumi give all three. They remind us that we are a part of a great living world. They call us to hear, and in hearing them, they guarantee us that we shall reconnect here and now to a deeper relationship. Therefore, the fables by Rumi are essential nowadays as they were eight centuries ago.

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