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**ECO-KILLING OF NATURE: A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE OF
GIEVE PATEL'S ON KILLING A TREE**

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Abstract:

The inter-relationship between literature and the environment is called as Eco-criticism. The bond between nature and man has been there since the day of the evolution of human species. Nature is provided with the essential elements for human survival; the basic needs of the human are satisfied by the environment. The present paper throws the light on the concept of eco-killing the nature for man's greed which is beautifully expressed in Gieve Patel's poem On Killing a Tree. Through this poem, he brings out the present reality of nature, and states how the modern man has manipulated it. In his poetry, he interknits both the nature and human greediness. The images he uses are very common but the ideas, which the images contain, are very intellectual with a broad sense.

Keywords: *Literature, Environment, Nature, Eco-killing, Greediness, Indian Poetry, etc.*

Indian Poetry in English is appealing not only in its themes but also in method and style. In theme, it deals with the variety of human emotions and social manners. It skillfully delineates the patriotic zeal for infringement the shackles of slavery, the age-old tradition, rites, habits, mysticism and a theme of pious bliss and harmony, a strong affinity to rootedness and nostalgic touch to tradition and motherland which foster and nourish the sentiments of the poets in particular and familiar rank and file in general. In the early hours, poets are very much reliant on the British counterparts. They are inclined by the approach of the Romantic and Victorian poets. The modern poets like A. K. Ramanujan, Kamala Das, Jayanta Mahapatra, Nissim Ezekeil, P. Lal, Shiv K. Kumar, Pritish Nandy, O. P. Bhatnagar said good bye to the early traditional images and symbols and they replaced some harsh and solid images of day-to-day reality which are full of complexities and ambiguities. They also supplied with ironies, paradoxes, oxymoron and occasionally certain rules and regulations of morphology and syntax to appropriately conform to the reaction of the characters and situations.

The poets of the 1980s and 1990s in many ways pull out the concerns of their predecessors. City life, everyday humdrum, violence that marks Indian life today, suffering at both the personal and social level, and relationships are the central concerns of Indian poets. "A great writer, in writing of himself, writes of his age", says T. S. Eliot. This famous maxim of Eliot holds good with all types of writers whether they are novelists, dramatists, or poets. The writers live in the society, see the



situations carefully, and then, they present the societal picture after the process of filtration. This is what Eliot means when he points out the distinction between the man who suffers and artist who creates. Literature is generally known to be the mirror of society; but it is, in fact, incredibly different from the mirror; it is not a photographic presentation of life, still it is realistic in the sense that it gives an idea of life that is more real than reality itself.

Nature is omniscient. It can be a creator, preserver, protector as well as destroyer. Nature holds an unsurpassable place in one's life. The bond between nature and man has been there since the day of the evolution of human species. Nature is provided with the essential elements for human survival; the basic needs of the human are satisfied by the environment. According to Mark Q. Sutton, a theorist, the human needs are food, water, medical system, reproduction, and social life. As literature scrutinizes human life it has recorded the importance of nature in it. Any Literature which deals with nature is called as Green Literature. In the United Kingdom, the study on green literature is called as Green studies, whereas in the United States it is called as Ecocriticism. Criticism which combines literature and ecology is called as Ecocriticism or Green studies. According to Cheryl Glotfelty, "Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and physical environment" (Barry, 239). It is an umbrella term which covers various ecological theories like anthropocentrism, ecofeminism, ecocentrism, etc. The term Ecocriticism was first used by William Rueckert in his essay entitled *Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism* published in *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* by Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm in 1978.

It was derived from two Greek words *oikos* and *kritis* meaning house and judge respectively. Ecocriticism serves as a bridge between literature, nature and human beings. Many poems in Indian English literature deals with nature and the attitude towards nature in those poems were that of pastoral impulse, an aesthetic appreciation of nature or a philosophical and mystic towards nature.

Gieve Patel is a renowned poet and playwright in Indian English literature. He is one of the leading members in Green Movement, where a group of writers voice out to guard nature through their literary writings. Most of his poems disclose an eco-conscious and anthropocentric views on nature. *On Killing a Tree* is a famous ecocritical poem that insists to resolve problems on nature which is in endangered condition. The beauty of nature is symbolised through a tree and its devastation for man's selfish desires are clearly unveiled in this poem.

The arrival of modernization and globalization has perceived rapid environmental adversity due to deforestation, mining, exploration of oil or survey of minerals, expanding human habitations, growth, and expansion of urban areas, etc. The progress of ecological threats and catastrophes has terrified the ecologists and a band of ecology conscious poets have come up voicing their protest and pondering the past glories of the region. The poet admires the strength and durability of a tree. It is not easy to kill a tree like cutting the tree with the knife. When we uproot a tree from the earth, it explores its strength.

It takes much time to kill a tree,
Not a simple jab of the knife
Will do it. (Lall, 01-03)

The tree grows in the wealth of our Mother Earth. Then it matures into a big tree by absorbing all nutrients from earth. It is the supplier of oxygen for human existence. It gives all kind of productive things and fulfils man's greediness.

It has grown
Slowly consuming the earth,
Rising out of it, feeding



Upon its crust, absorbing
Years of sunlight, air, water,
And out of its leperous hide
Sprouting leaves (Lall, 01).

The above lines portray the life of tree and its growth on earth. Then the verses show how the tree is killed by man for his usage. According to Patel, it is a cautious act of murder which is well planned by mankind to use the sources from tree for his material greed. His simple style and conversational words in the poem carve the image of slaying tree in the minds of readers. The poem demonstrates the cruel nature of man for annihilating Nature. The act of slaughtering a tree is equal to the murder of a person and considered as sin. The same kind of idea is explored by Tina Morris, the 20th century British poet who made people to realise the importance of trees. The verses clearly explore the conservation of nature and prove that the life without trees is impossible for mankind.

They did not tell us
what it would be like
without trees.
Nobody imagined
that the whispering of leaves
would grow silent
or the vibrant jade of spring
pale to grey death. (<https://www.englitmail.com>)

Patel shows how man destroys tree and plunder it for resources.

The root is to be pulled out –
Out of the anchoring earth;
It is to be roped, tied,
And pulled out - snapped out
Or pulled out entirely,
Out from the earth-cave, (Lall, 21-26)

As an environmentalist, Patel gives an alarming signal for man's survival and gives message that preserving nature sustains all living species in the planet.

Thus, the concern for the environment and ecology as presented in these poems not only mirrors our personal and cultural attitudes towards the environment, but it also serves to shape a formative opinion among the masses towards the preservation of nature, environment and ecology. Through this poem he brings out the present reality of nature, and states how the modern man has manipulated it. The image of tree used in this poem is very common but the ideas, which the images contain, are very intellectual with a broad sense. Thus, poem possess a substantial thematic core, clear visualisation of scene, compact and arresting presentation of incident, evocative imagery and an impressive unity of tone and effect.



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