

VIEWING KIRAN DESAI'S HULLABALOO IN THE GUAVA ORCHARD THROUGH THE LENS OF ECOCRITICISM

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ABSTRACT

This research paper explores the literary work of Kiran Desai, specifically her novel "Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard," through the critical framework of Ecocriticism. The novel presents a rich tapestry of characters and narratives set in the fictional Indian town of Shahkot, offering a unique perspective on the intricate relationship between human beings and the natural world. By employing ecocritical analysis, this study examines how Desai's narrative explores environmental themes, portraying the complex interplay between Nature, culture, and society. The research begins by providing an overview of Ecocriticism as a theoretical framework, highlighting its relevance in understanding literature's engagement with environmental issues. It then delves into a comprehensive analysis of "Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard," focusing on vital ecological themes such as the contrast between urban and rural spaces, the symbolism of the guava orchard, and the representation of human-nature interactions. By closely examining the novel's characters, settings, and narrative elements, this paper elucidates how Desai's work underscores the significance of ecological consciousness and sustainability in contemporary society.

Furthermore, the research explores the broader implications of Desai's ecological perspective in the context of postcolonial literature. It investigates how the novel challenges dominant Western narratives and offers an alternative viewpoint emphasizing the importance of local ecosystems and indigenous knowledge systems. Through Ecocriticism, this study illuminates how "Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard" contributes to the ongoing discourse on environmentalism, cultural identity, and global interconnectedness. In conclusion, this research paper demonstrates that Kiran Desai's "Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard" is a compelling work of literature that engages with pressing environmental concerns while providing insights into postcolonial identity's complexities. Viewing the novel through Ecocriticism reveals the depth and richness of Desai's ecological imagination, highlighting the novel's contribution to the broader conversation on the intersections of literature, culture, and the environment.

Keywords: Kiran Desai, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*, Ecocriticism, Environmental themes, Human-nature interactions, Postcolonial literature

I. INTRODUCTION

Man's growing mistrust in traditional knowledge and the degradation of ethical norms in his conduct that appreciate the importance and holiness of the natural world and urge conservation have contributed to the proliferation of ecological challenges facing the globe today. Deep Ecology is a philosophy that guides human behavior to prevent self-destruction by promoting harmony between humans and the rest of the natural world. As a reaction to the current ecological and environmental crises, literary critics have turned to Deep Ecology to examine "literary texts with reference to the interaction of human activity and the vast range of 'natural' or non-human...". "The study of the relationship between literature and physical environment". The non-human world is considered as the other and exploited by man in several modern Indian English novels, such as Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997), Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004), Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland* (2013), etc. Reading these works via an ecocritical lens suggests that they all absorb a sense of environmental responsibility. *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* by Kiran Desai is another example of a modern Indian English fiction that takes environmental concerns seriously.

According to the Routledge Literary Terms Dictionary, Ecocriticism is defined as,

"The examination of literary works in light of the myriad of 'natural' or non-human phenomena that weigh upon the human experience, including but not limited to questions of fauna, flora, terrain, environment, and weather."

Ecocriticism, in reality, refers to examining a literary work about the problems of the modern environment and ecology. 'Ecocriticism essentially launches a call to literature to link to the challenges of today's environmental catastrophe.' "The critical and pedagogic broadening of literary studies to include texts that deal with the non-human world and our relationship to it," as Kansas State University's Christopher Cokinos puts it in his position paper "What Is Ecocriticism". Ecocriticism is an analysis of a literary work from a global perspective. It aims to raise people's ecological awareness by investigating the relationship between a work of literature and its setting.

An American organization now supports Ecocriticism called the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE), founded in 1992. ASLE's official website features,

"The mission of ASLE is to encourage and support research and creative endeavors in the environmental humanities and arts. Our goal is to create a diverse group of people who care about the environment and work together to promote environmental justice, ecological sustainability, and educational opportunities."

Similarly, the Organisation for Studies in Literature - India (OSLE-India) is a platform for advancing Ecocriticism across Asia, focusing on India.

The term "ecological consciousness" is made up of two different concepts: ecological and awareness. Since ecology is defined as "the science that deals with the relationship between groups of living things and their environment", its adjective form, "ecological," means "the relation of a group of living things to their environment." To be "conscious" is to be aware of, or to know about, anything happening to or with oneself or one's immediate environment. To be conscious of one's environment is, in this context, what is meant by the phrase "Ecological Consciousness." In other words, how everything functions in our eco-system, what benefits we get from it, and whether or not it is in danger.

Although the Renaissance in England petered out about the year 1660, its fundamental principle of 'humanism' has persisted in the minds and actions of people across the globe ever since. Unfortunately, the society we live in today is coping with a warped version of this 'humanism,' known as Anthropocentrism. An anthropocentric view of the world as a blank slate that can be used to further the human race at the expense of all other living things. Consequently, "Anthropocentrism" refers to the belief that humans are the most significant species on Earth. In reality, the Greeks popularised and spread this human-centred worldview. According to the Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms, "the Greeks were the first to focus on 'Man-Apart' i.e., humanity divorced from the physical environment in which the species subsists." According to scholars in environmental studies, Anthropocentrism is the primary driver of environmental degradation.

Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard is a book that considers environmental issues at several levels. Sampath Chawla, the novel's protagonist, regains a link to the non-human world that has been lost to the other characters. Sampath feels the sting of the ecological disaster acutely. His concern for the Shahkot monkeys is palpable. Conversely, the story exposes the readers to the pervasive Anthropocentrism of the narrative's other characters. There are two ways to experience the novel's ecological heart. The novel's rich green language and Sampath's perspective on the non-human world are reminiscent of a Wordsworthian vision of Nature, in which the outdoors is a place to find solace and calm. Second, the novel's other characters' anthropocentric viewpoints reflect man's apathy towards the natural world. When seen through an ecocritical lens, the work makes the compelling case that genuine serenity can only be found in Nature. In contrast, man's pursuit of tranquility in isolation from Nature always leads to unhappiness.

Kiran Desai uses vivid visuals to describe the beauty of the outdoors. In these lines, you can smell the petrichor hanging about Shahkot in anticipation of the season's first rains. Kulfi stared in incredulous delight as the clouds drifted in from the east, reached the trees at the town's edge, and then moved on. The coming fragrance of rain spiked the air like a flower. The work is permeated with a soothing air of the natural world, which is conveyed via the language. The narrative also highlights the natural ability to cure itself. When things go out of whack, Nature fixes them. There is room for humans and non-humans on Earth, and the former can only exist with the latter for a while. The interaction between Man and Nature ought to be symbiotic. Everything gets a second shot at life when the weather changes naturally. After heavy rain in Shahkot, the novel's narrator says, "Soon the winged ants would be flying, and lizards would grow fat on dozens of multiplying insects." This passage exemplifies the transformation and vitality of Nature. Green, sensuous fungi and mold would increase, and hordes of mushrooms would colonize the space beneath the sink.

II. ECO-CRITICISM IN HULLABALOO IN THE GUAVA ORCHARD

Ecocriticism criticizes literature that portrays humans as distinct from their natural environment: Kiran Desai's eco-focused book, Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard. Man's relationship with Nature is fundamental. It impacts man and motivates him to adopt a greener lifestyle. "The universe's driving force is the interplay between man and Nature, thought and the material world. They have a domino effect, causing "an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure" due to their actions. Without nature, living is pointless since it teaches us all we need to know.

The tale is set in and around Shahkot, where there is a guava plantation. Sampath, our protagonist, is tired of city life and finds solace beneath a large guava tree in an orchard on the outskirts of Shahkot after being suspended from his post office job. Sampath is an outdoorsy kind of guy. To him, Nature is a whole. Sampath, written off as useless in his hometown, reveals himself as a man of profound understanding. A tree baba is born out of him. Nature shapes his whole demeanor. Sampath can decipher Nature's hidden messages because he understands their significance. He throws himself entirely into the natural world. As Bill Devall and George Sessions put it, "Deep

ecological sense of self requires a further maturity and growth, an identification which goes beyond humanity to include the non-human world". One of ecosophy's central tenets is that we may merge ourselves with the more significant "Self" that sustains all life. "A wave of peace and contentment overtook him" When Sampath climbed a guava tree. He may relax and let go of the stresses of this incomprehensible world in the natural environment. His physical form becomes weightless, and his spirit awakens. Being one with Nature allows him to expand his mind to take in the world. How much this meant to him. At this vantage point, neither too high nor too low, "he felt weightless for the first time".

Sampath's self-assurance grows as he reconnects with Nature. That "the most sweet and tender, the most innocent and encouraging society may be found in any nature object" is One of Thoreau's most insightful observations in Walden. In the biosphere, all organisms and their environments are interdependent. Sampath experiences this bond. He considers how the lives of monkeys, birds, and insects are intertwined with his own. His friendship with the natural world elevates Sampath's character. In his new home, Sampath finds peace, quiet, isolation, and the most important thing of all: Nature. Being in Nature with other people completely changes him. He preaches like a great philosopher. The knowledge of the world is crammed into his few utterances. Desai uses symbolism to express Sampath's oneness with Nature. In the middle of the uproar, Sampath vanishes, and a much larger guava with a brown mark matching Sampath's birthmark is placed on his empty cot in his stead.

Sampath Chawla, the protagonist of Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard, is a family and professional failure. He was unmotivated and cared little about anything other than following his whims and desires. Sampath cherished his alone time with his gadgets, which allowed him to forget about his job at the post office and his restless evenings at home, even though he was tortured at his home and place of employment.

Sampath was troubled and unlike other people since he had become tired of his usual way of life. Since he could fulfill so little of his potential, he saw his existence as "a never-ending flow of misery". He wanted to learn more about the subjects that interested him. For example, during the wedding of his chief's daughter, Sampath was tasked with restocking the serbet glasses. The labor itself was tedious, though. As a result, he decided to explore the property, which brought him into a room crammed with bridal accessories. Sampath's spirit brightened as he took in the exquisite scents of rose water, musk, mothballs, marigolds, and baby powder. He wrapped himself in the lengths of cloth, clutching the pink, green, and yellow hues to his face. He wore a nose ring and looked through the jewelry box of a distant relative. Sampath lighted a lamp so that he might be seen in his finery, and he transformed into a magnificent bird, taking him far, far away to another dimension. Within this context, Sampath had a sudden, intense need for a world that existed only in his imagination, and he finally left his room, dressed to the nines. He took heart from the buoyant atmosphere and the weightless sense. He plunged into the fountain, showering the women with water. Sampath, misunderstanding the crowd's yells for expressions of adoration, began to undress, causing widespread chaos. As a result of his bad behavior, he was fired from work and sent home. Sampath, though, had had enough of his profession and their impoverished lifestyle. He just wanted some room to himself.

Sampath left his community, motivated by the idea of breaking free. He climbed a guava tree in an orchard, surrounded by lush vegetation and crisp air. Sampath sensed the stillness that had been kept between its branches, and as he nestled among the trees, he saw that his lifelong idea of an orchard had been spot on. His thoughts were consumed by it, and he worried whether he'd ever be able to get enough. Sampath reasoned this was the path to wealth and the life of a king. He wanted nothing more than to take it down in one wonderful gulp, to make it a permanent part of his being. Oh, if only he could trade everything for this luxury of stillness, to be able to stay with his face held towards the afternoon like a sunflower and learn everything there was to know in the orchard, from the bristling of leaves to the smell of the Earth thick beneath the grass to the names of the fruit trees. Finally, at the age of 51, Sampath felt he had arrived. Sampath's fascinating appreciation for Nature is on full display here.

Hiding out under a guava tree, Sampath found himself unexpectedly living as a hermit. His words, Nature, and the vibe in the orchard all contributed to his reputation as the Babe, who was revered for his austerity and simplicity. However, Mr. Chawla, Sampath's father, was capitalizing on his son's fame to enrich the family business. Sampath's fame spread until the monkeys discovered the orchard. The monkeys were at first unimpressed, but as Sampath turned their foul tricks around on them—hooting, wailing, and rolling his eyes—they came to see him "as the nucleus of this bountiful community they had come upon". But things went awry when the monkeys' newfound need for booze brought back their old bazaar routines. Because of this religious divide, law and order issues quickly became a significant concern in Shahkot. One party advocated for removing the monkeys to protect Monkey Baba and the hallowed Nature of the site, while the other wanted to preserve the sacred animal. Sampath, on the other hand, was sure that losing the orchard's monkey population would mean the end of all jokes and playful competition. However, the day had come to capture the monkeys and ship them off to a distant location from where they would never return and would be unable to get any alcoholic beverages.

Sampath saw that the orchard had lost its ambiance and that his existence there was in jeopardy since the soft nights had stopped. Nothing had changed in the orchard since he'd visited initially, yet he needed help finding someone to offer assistance. The orchard had started to resemble the chaotic, disorganized, and unpleasant environment he had left behind. The weekly growth of the stinking waste spilling down the slope and the unsightly ads that damaged the nearby trees only worsened things. The clamor and buzz of furious voices reminded him of his former town life.

Sampath did not feel ready to let the band, which included his mother and the monkeys, disband. The narrator explains that his favorite business in the orchard was being eliminated. They should have noticed his love for monkeys. What they didn't realize was how little he cared about anybody. Why didn't they leave him alone with his peacefulness, beloved monkeys, and lovely scenery so poorly and filthily destroyed by advertisements, noise, dirt, automobiles, buses, and trucks?

This is how Sampath depicts Nature's fall from its former glory. The orchard's once joyful resident now regrets the absurdity of the place's metamorphosis.

Sampath was instructed to descend the tree on the scheduled day of the monkey-trapping operation. But he realized that if he descended once, he would never have to ascend again. Sampath eventually came to terms with the fact that he was stuck and desired freedom. Sampath had first fled to the orchard for solace and alone but was soon followed by his family and an immense crowd. Now that he was up in the tree, he had no idea how to get down, and he doubted he could find a setting as conducive to his creative process as the orchard had been when he first arrived. Thus, Sampath's body was discovered in his mother's stockpot.

III. CONCLUSION

It is observed that, Desai advises his audience to see Nature as the ideal and genuine refuge from urban life, pollution, and industrialization. Therefore, she stresses a rural outlook on the natural world. In this way of escaping, we are responsible for restoring the natural world as active agents of a new period by communing with and inside it. As a result, Indian writing in English becomes a part of the globalizing process, serving as a means to develop innovative forms of thinking and argument in support of ecological concerns. This research demonstrates that the literary method of Indian postcolonial (or rather global) Ecocriticism is crucial in this critical intellectual shift.

Desai's story underscores Ecocriticism's romantic image of Nature as a being in quest of the safety of belonging somewhere, drawing attention to the significance of globalization. This is a standard tool for postcolonial authors who want to make peace with their feelings of alienation: as a global citizen, every person has an innate urge to feel like they belong somewhere. Many diasporic postcolonial authors have elaborated on this topic, and we have shown that an ecocritical approach supported by Heidegger's idea of dwelling offers a fresh route towards attaining newer forms of identity in the postcolonial, or rather global setting.

Finally, it could be argued that reading contemporary literature through an ecocritical lens helps Western readers realize the importance of looking at different cultures, and it reaffirms the need to (re)read postcolonial texts in the light of new approaches that will help us recover lost universal values of existence and coexistence in the modern world. Therefore, postcolonial and globalized literatures are increasingly acknowledged as a transnational and international link.

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