

On Killing A Tree

Gieve Patel (1940-)

➤ ***'And it is done'- Explain***

In this exquisite poem Gieve Patel provides picturesque description of the total destruction of a tree. Man realizes from the inner sanctum of his heart that neither a simple jab of knife nor hacking and chopping can shrew a tree. Killing a tree is a mammoth/huge work it has to be uprooted. So the tree is roped, tied and pulled out. It has to be slayed, chopped, hacked from the earth. Finally to put last nail in the coffin, it is seasoned beneath scorching sunshine, torrential rain. In thick and thin weather it is browned, hardened, withered. By doing all these hanky panky the killing of the tree is completed. The above quoted words highlights, exfoliates man's satisfaction in destroying nature ruthlessly. Writer in an ironical way, glorifies man's expertise as knave killer who kills his own future by killing/slaying trees.

➤ ***How does the poet personify the tree in the poem?***

Through figure of speech personification writer has humanises tree and has infused some human qualities in the so called lifeless tree.

In this particular poem writer has considered Tree as human being, it grows and sustains slowly by consuming the earth, absorbing sunlight, air, water from mother nature. Being germinated it pierced and peeped out from crust. In this way it raises its head and grows to kiss the sky. In this poem the bark of tree is compared with leprous skin/hide, leprosy is a disease which affects human being not tree, this is also instance of personification. Tree has the sensation, that is why it is inflicted with pain when it is hacked and chopped. It has also bleeding bark which heals naturally. In a nutshell we can say that killing of tree is portrayed in such an intense way that can be compared to ruthless killing of human being. Combining all these we can say that, this poem in an ideal example of personification.

➤ ***What is the symbol of tree here?/ What Tree symbolizes here?***

Writer has messaged his message in a symbolical undertone in this poem. Tree is symbol of life here, like human being it grows only to die, rather only to be killed.

Tree is the inextricable part of nature and the man is heralding his own ruin by digging his own grave by slaying them mercilessly. Tree helps us in numerous way but in spite of being generous to them we are killing them for our short term benefit. The words like 'hack', 'chop', 'jab', 'kill', 'withering', 'intensifies' ruthlessness heinous avarice of human being. In spite of being chopped and killed it doesn't surrender or give in, its bleeding bark will heal, bear new leaves, grows to its former size, brings new life, green twigs, small boughs is the herald of hope. Despite all intricacies and hazards it makes its head high and straight which stands for fairness. The root of the tree symbolizes "Never say die attitude", strength, security. The entire poem in under lying way symbolizes cruelty of human being which distorts natural equilibrium.

➤ ***Title of the poem/Central idea***

The killing of the tree symbolizes ironical fate of a tree. Tree is generous to us but we the human being out of greed and avarice is slaying them. Mere jab and chop can not kill the fountain of life (tree) but it has to undergo plenty of infliction, cruelty before being killed. It is to be uprooted, snapped out. After being annihilated it has the power to rejuvenate, so to kill it entirely they are to be 'scorched', 'choked', 'browned', 'hardened'. The poet has treated the tree as sensitive organisms. He has attributed living quality of a human being to a tree, it has portrayed biological dogma by Charles Darwin 'Struggle for existence', to ooze out sensitivity sensationalism pathos, writer has given a vivid intricate detail of slaying of tree. Thus the title ironically draws out man's utter callousness, cruelty and sadistic pleasure in killing trees and distorting natural equilibrium. So the title is apt and suggestive.

➤ ***Why does the poet describe the killing of tree in such graphic detail?***

Profound concern and duty to maintain natural equilibrium is oozing out in this poem. Here in this poem Patel treats the tree as living organism. Fathomless greed, avarice, selfishness, herald hazard to trees. Through each and every phrase and words of this poem Patel has raised his voice against reckless, ruthless rigorous killing of trees. To ooze out sensitivity, sensationalism pathos, writer has given a vivid intricate detail of slaying tree. The poet has bleed blood and gushes tears, enchanted uttered agony through the use of words and expressions like- 'hack', 'chop', 'jab', 'kill', 'pain', 'bleeding bark'. Thus nude, heinous, cruel attitude of human being is exposed through vivid portrayal of killing of tree.

➤ ***Irony of the poem***

The poem has reached to a charismatic dimension with the invocation of irony in that particular poem. The writer has described tips and toes of killing tree very intricately and in detail form. The killing of tree appears to be a ceremonial task but there is a profound irony under the garb of painful death. Here the tree becomes a metaphor of homicide and suicide. It is ironically pathetic that we the so called most intelligent animal, human being are killing our bosom friend, tree which bestow us with bontious beauty & essentiality. In reality we are digging our own grave and beckoning our doom. The tragic irony becomes more intensifies when Gieve gave word for word description for pulling out of roots (of the tree) to ensure its martyrdom .

➤ ***Bring out the significance of leprous hide***

Poet has incorporated/introduced constituent of personification to intensify his poetical capability. The leprous hide has been used as sort of medical metaphor and innuendo. The expression is expressively ironical. Leprosy usually eats away the flesh and distort normal growth and equilibrium. But on the contrary , here Leprous hide is a source of growth. It bears the leaves that produces food and sustenance. Here the expression is not a symbol of decay & destruction but of growth that sort of juxtaposition is one of the chalice bearer of modern literature.

➤ ***'Root to be pulled out!'"So hack and chop, but this alone won't do it"--- why hack and chop won't do it?***

Hacking and chopping can not shrew a tree in complete fashion and manner. They may cause profound infliction for the time being and affect the tree, but only these will not sufficient enough to kill the tree for 'bleeding bark' will heal itself. From that odd place life manifests , & one day small twigs will be converted into small branches. And if unchecked it will resemble the size of the Mohicans. Through this implication 'hack and chop' , ' but this alone won't do it' , writer has implicitly wishes to vent out that killing of tree is a mammoth work, for it also holds life which he has treasured underneath its bosom.

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