



Book Review

Nar Deo Sharma, *Eclectic Eco-Concerns in Stephen Gill's Poetry*. Bio Green, 2022; ISBN: 9789355291653.

Reviewed by

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Nar Deo Sharma is an accomplished academic and a fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain whose background is in the domain of linguistics and stylistics. His oeuvre describes him as a man of wit and grit, and a polyglot. His latest book *Eclectic Eco-Concerns in Stephen Gill's Poetry* is a marvellous contribution to the field of linguistics and stylistics. It is an invaluable ingenious compendium of well-designed critical information assiduously collected from a range of inaccessible sources pertaining to language, stylistics, nuances, ecology, and neology. Additionally, it effectively focuses on eclecticism which is the process of assimilating elements drawn from select doctrines, methods, or styles. Besides being inventive, it is compact and handy. It is dedicated to his grandson and structured around 11 topics with the addition of a Preface, Foreword, Abstract, Appendix and Index. The Preface for the book is written by Dr Daniel Bratton — a co-ordinator in the Department of Humanities at the University of Waterloo, Canada. It elucidates, justifies almost all standpoints, conspicuous features, without overlooking thematic implications.

The author coins the term ekphrastic to evaluate Stephen Gill's poetry. The term ekphrastic etymologically is a Greek expression for 'description'. To make the meaning of ekphrastic more explicit the author cites the example of a detailed description of Achilles's Shield. He later explains the fundamental aspect of poetry, arguing that Stephen Gill's poetry closely resembles works of art and sculpture. The exemplary ekphrastic poems of Stephen Gill showcase heart-wrenching specimens of human detritus — heap of corpses, their limbs cut, rent asunder and scissored, testifying large-scale massacres perpetrated by barbaric terrorists. An analysis of ekphrastic poems reveals forceful protests against inhuman carnage, agonizing intolerance and fanatic frenzy of terrorists. The plight of peace-loving people flashes in the excerpts extracted from the text by the author to validate his testimony, such as "tormenting the bird of peace/with the cigarette lighter of their lust/or the butt of the rifle of their bigotry" (The Flame-27).

An exquisite and delightful foreword written by Prof I. D. Tiwari of Central University

Bilaspur (C.G) — the examiner of Nar Deo Sharma's PhD thesis — attempts to laud the creative/critical acumen and resourcefulness of the researcher for his pioneering, unprecedented scholarly work, and genuine lyrical pursuits by praising his contemporary ekphrastic poetry. Furthermore, the publication proudly boasts an introduction written by Stephen Gill praising the author's many accomplishments, such as his linguistic dexterities, clarity of vision, logical development, noteworthy findings, praiseworthy stylistic devices and data analysis which had until then been left uncharted. *Eclectic Eco-Concerns in Stephen Gill's Poetry* therefore ought to be called a tour de force for it provides meticulous linguistic study of eco-centric poetry which clearly aligns itself to the genre called Eco-Criticism.

The main text comprises: 1) Descriptive research design; 2) Purposive judgment Sampling; 3) Techniques and tools of stylistics; 4) Various interpretations of connotations; and 5) Emotive nuances foregrounded in the symbolic tropes of eco-centric poems. As stated by the author, Stephen Gill coins innovative metaphors, symbolic imagery and in doing so he commands extra freedom to depart from rules of grammar which he refers to as syntactic deviation, while the extra discipline of superimposing special structure on language is termed as semantic deviation. These off-track rules are justified for their contribution to language and novelty of expression in poetry.

Stephen Gill is a diasporic Canadian quadrilingual poet who can speak/write effortlessly in Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, and English. Born on 25th June 1932 at Sialkot now in Pakistan, Stephen Gill took his last breath at the age 89 in Canada. As Stephen Gill's Poetry is symbolic and makes use of terror phenomenon, the researcher offers an exquisite study of major poems to justify the poet's unrestricted use of language, violation of selection restrictions, semantic rules, and syntactically combined lexical elements in a broader perspective. However, what grabs the reader's attention is his sarcasm, irony, desistance, innovative foregrounding of horrible situation and polysemy, that is the multiplicity of meanings simplified succinctly by the researcher. Two poems from epic, namely, Canto-20 and Canto 31 of *The Flame* (2008), are chosen for detailed stylistic study and aesthetic appraisal. These are perfect examples of hazards of depraved ecology. Besides being rich in irony and puns these deftly testify to the poet's predilection for Neologism.

Through devotion, piety, and the belief in superhuman governing agency, religion has the power to moralise humanity into righteousness. Civilizations evolve and become extinct. Inhuman bestiality of fanatic terrorists depicted in well-built language is justified in magnetic methods of linguistic/stylistic devices. There are poems rich in neologisms vividly portraying inhuman postures of fanatic revelry. In these poems each word appears as a construct of distinctive semantic features contrasted and analysed to display the extreme language of religion. This analysis is followed by Haikus/Trillium poems. The author elucidates Haikus both content-wise and form-wise to gain his claim. He traces Haiku's genetic origin in Syllogism/Catechism. In a three-line Haiku, the first line forms the main premise; a proposition. The second is a minor premise, exposition, and the third line advances a critical nuance called Sameha or poetic shock. Trillium simply stands for three-part poems composed mainly on flowers. There is pretty good abundance of trilliums in

Louise Elizabeth Gluck — an American poet who won the 2020 Nobel Prize for Literature and whose flower-poems seemingly speak human language.

Virtue is opposed to viciousness, and it envisages dawn of a historic welfare state where compassion, co-operation, assistance, and mutual trust preponderate. The concluding chapter pronounces peace as a keynote of poetry disrupted by diabolic coercive dealings of terrorists resembling death. The author graciously affirms the need of replacing anthropocentrism by ecocentrism. The Upanishadic prayer “O God! Lead me from darkness to light and untruth to truth” brings the chapter/book to a close.

Bibliography is shared in two legs: Primary Sources and Secondary Sources, followed by an Appendix pertaining to researcher’s oeuvre imparting supplementary topics to the book.