

Call for Book Chapters

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Trees and Environment in Literature and Cinema

Kashyap Deepak

Mahatma Gandhi Central University

This proposed study examines how trees move beyond their biological existence and become human-like figures in literature and cinema. Across cultures and historical periods, trees are frequently represented not merely as elements of nature but as friends, lovers, companions, husbands, wives, ancestors, and even mating partners. In several Hollywood and Asian movies from the 1990s onward, the tree symbolises a “living witness,” a monument on which lovers inscribe their beloved's name in a heart. Italo Calvino's [*The Baron in the Trees*](#) (1957) is about a child who climbs a tree and decides not to come down; likewise, Kiran Desai's [*Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*](#) (1998) is about a man who spends a long part of his life in a tree. Disney's cartoon series [*Adventures of the Gummi Bears*](#) is about a family that lives in a tree and makes a special juice, Gummiberry Juice, that instantly boosts the characters' physical power. Such representation challenged the conventional divide between the human and the non-human and invites us to rethink the relationship between trees and humans. The Indian movie [*Sati*](#) (1989) is about a girl married to a tree, while *A Serious Wedding* (2015) is the opposite: a man married to a tree. In Girish Karnad's directed movie [*Cheluvi*](#) (1992), the tree transcends natural subject matter and takes on a semi-human form as a girl slowly becomes a tree (half-human, half-tree), and a similar thing happens in [*Am Groot*](#). Ruskin Bond's stories “The Man Who Loved the Trees”, “The Cherry Tree”, “The Neem Tree” and “Grandfather's Private Zoo” explore the theme of protecting trees. Jean Giono's [*The Man Who Planted Trees*](#) (1953) is about a man who planted trees and restored greenery to a barren land. Rudyard Kipling's Mowgli in [*The Jungle Book*](#) was living among the jungle animals, often resting and jumping from tree to tree using vines and branches. Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay's Bengali novel [*Aranyak*](#) (“Of the Forest”) is about his experience in the jungle with trees.

Rather than viewing trees as passive background objects, the study explores the ways they are endowed with emotions, agency, desire, memory, and social roles. These representations are not simply examples of fantasy, let alone symbolism. Instead, they reveal a changing cultural understanding of human and non-human. Trees become active participants in stories, questioning anthropocentric assumptions and suggesting alternative forms of relationality and coexistence. Buddha is associated with a [*Bunyan tree*](#) under which he gained enlightenment, and Lord Krishna climbed a Kadamba Tree near the river Yamuna after the Vastra Haran of the Gopis. In movies like [*Tumbbad*](#), [*Bulbul*](#), *The Wailing*, and *Sleepy Hollow*, a Gothic or supernatural spirit inhabits trees that can haunt humans. Whereas folklore traditions see peepul, Banyan, Tamarind, Oak, or yew trees as dwelling places for spirits, and even use some trees as sites for sacrifice.

Through the theories of post-humanism that challenge the idea that humans occupy a privileged position over other forms of life and question the constantly renegotiated boundaries between humans, animals, plants, and technology. Herein, the theory of ecocriticism can be used to depict how literature and cinema represent nature and human relationships. Meanwhile, anthropomorphism defines the attribution of human characteristics to non-humans. Through close readings of selected texts and films, this book aims to demonstrate that trees are not mere natural beauty but complex characters that reshape love, companionship, kinship, and embodiment.

Theme

- Tree in literature: poetry, epic, cinema, comics, cartoons and graphic novels
- Natural beauty, an emblem of love
- Partner: lover, companion, friend, husband, wife
- Ecology: Resting, lovers' meeting point, playground, home for birds
- Relationality and coexistence of humans, animals and birds
- ecocriticism and anthropomorphism
- Site of worship, festival places, and resting places, the site of sacrifice
- Gothic: fear, spirit, half-human, ghost, and supernatural
- Tress in the folk of various states and countries
- Theory: anthropocentric, post-humanism, ecocriticism, eco-feminism, anthropomorphism
- Dalit Ecologies: anti-theory, hate towards environmentalists, protest site, save tree movement,

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Bibliography

Concilio, C., & Fargione, D. (Eds.). (2021). *Trees in Literatures and the Arts: HumanArboreal Perspectives in the Anthropocene*. Lexington Books.

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