

## **Ecological Trauma: A Close Reading and Eco-Critical Analysis of Ripples of Our Deeds by Sunday Afolayan**

**Syed Hasnain Ahmad Jilani**

Assistant professor of English, Higher Education Department Punjab Pakistan  
[shaj4455@gmail.com](mailto:shaj4455@gmail.com)

**Omera Saeed**

Ph.D. Scholar & Lecturer, Department of English, Times Institute, Pakistan.  
[omera.saeed@gmail.com](mailto:omera.saeed@gmail.com)

**Ayesha Siddiq**

Ph.D. Scholar & Lecturer, Department of English, Times Institute, Pakistan  
[ayeshasaddiq@gmail.com](mailto:ayeshasaddiq@gmail.com)

**Amjad Hafeez**

Associate Professor of English, Govt. Graduate College Kot Addu  
[theamjadhafeez@gmail.com](mailto:theamjadhafeez@gmail.com)

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### **Abstract**

*The recent industrialized and technologized progress is eroding the environmental integrity. Humans, animals, birds, and other forms of life along with natural phenomena share almost the same ecological trauma. Rather than inhaling oxygen, humans breathe in smog and smoke. Turtles swallow plastic bags taking the latter as jellyfish. Having been deprived of their natural habits, birds and animals live in the middle of nowhere. Not only are the humans distressed but the other living and nonliving objects of nature are being shaken. Sunday Afolayan raises his voice for all. His poem Ripples of Our Deeds tells the story of Ecological Trauma. The ripple effect of modern man's cruel acts against environment structures the motif of the poem. A close reading of this poem explores that the form, symbols, metaphors, images etc. and the sound patterns exhibit the poem's main concerns about environmental degradation and ecological trauma. The close reading of the poem also reveals that the Ripples of our deeds incorporates narrative, descriptive and dramatic elements whose interaction forecasts the traumatic consequences of environmental plight. This paper also explores the eco-critical elements in some poems written in the past to juxtapose them with the poem primarily under analysis to discover the successional concerns of the poets regarding environmental degradation and its effects. Furthermore, this research paper also employs eco-criticism to explore the themes of Anthropocene and Ecopoetics in almost all sections of the piece. By doing so, this paper aims to uncover the motif of ecological trauma accentuated in this poem which echoes the relational triangle between nature, human and literature.*

**Keywords:** Environmental Degradation, Ecological Trauma, Ripples of Our Deed, Ripple Effect, Close Reading, Symbols, Eco-Criticism, MOTIF, Ecopoetics

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## 1. Introduction:

Gabriel Sunday Afolayan is a globally celebrated Nigerian newspaper columnist, educationist, novelist, poet, writer and public affairs analyst. He has more than a score of nationally and internationally published research papers. A number of his literary works have been either nominated or awarded. Sunday Afolayan is a literary activist and community development enthusiast. He is currently the Chairman, Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) and an active participant of various professional, literary and educational organizations. His poems syncretize narrative, descriptive and dramatic styles, flourish an effective practice of prosody, and carry a great variety of themes, and ecological trauma is one of them. This research paper focusses on one of his poems *Ripples of our deeds* which comprises fifty seven lines in free verse. The five sections of the poem contribute to the dramatic style of the poem. Moreover, the story revolves around the baby birds whose tragic fate raises several question for investigation. The story and the diction of the poem are simple; however, the close reading of *Ripples of our deeds* discovers that the form, figures of speech, sound patterns, style, voice and discourse of the poem are rooted in the ecological trauma life of the earth is facing these days. Along with the close reading, this research paper employs eco-criticism to evaluate the significant concerns of the poem that converge on the issue of ecological degradation. *Ripples of our deeds* seems to be a warning that if humans do not revise their anti-ecological actions and behaviour, the ripple effect of their cruelty might be drastic.

### 1. Background of the study:

#### 2.1. Statement of the problem

The problem addressed in this research paper lies in the intimate relationship between human actions and the environment, as interspersed in "Ripples of Our Deeds." This paper also attempts to interpret the poem's symbolism and other literary devices to unearth the gravity of the environmental crisis and its effects on almost all aspects of existence.

#### 2.2. Significance of the study

This study highlights the importance of poetry as a lens through which a poet analyzes the ecologically unethical conduct of modern man and structures a critique on the ecological decay. Secondly, it sheds light on the complex connection between human actions and the ecological trauma faced not only by humanity but also by the entire natural world.

#### 2.3. Research objectives

1. The objective of this research paper is to Analyze "Ripples of Our Deeds" by Sunday Afolayan from an eco-critical perspective.
2. This study attempts to uncover the poem's ecological motifs and ethical reflections.
3. It also aims to explore the effects of human actions on the environment as narrated within the poem with the help of various poetic devices.

#### 2.4. Research Questions

1. How does "Ripples of Our Deeds" employ poetic devices to convey environmental concerns?
2. What narrative, descriptive, and dramatic elements shape the poem's portrayal of ecological trauma?
3. What is the significance of the poem's ecologically ethical voice for comprehending the nexus between nature, humanity, and poetry?

### 3. Literature Review

Nature and its relationship with humans has been one of the primary concerns of the poets. Critics have

also never been inactive in analyzing and interpreting literature for bringing forth the complex relationship of humans, nature and literature. Present day critics and writers took a step further. They spotlighted and analyzed eco-poetry employing the theory eco-criticism. Priyanka Agarwal in her essay “Poetry and environment – the emergence of Eco-Criticism” discusses about the difference and similarities between Romanticism and Eco-Criticism, evolution of nature writing and significance, role and impact of eco-poetry. She says, “eco-criticism has recently emerged as an important theoretical discourse,”<sup>1</sup> (Agarwal, 2019). Today’s global warming, environmental decay, and unethical behaviour of humans towards nature and environment make the critics keener about the environmental and ecological themes and motifs in literature. They explore the ecological trauma presented in literature. They also know the significance of eco-criticism. For instance Alice Hill-Woods in her paper on Anna Kavan's “Ecologies of Trauma: Who Are You? and Ice” says, “ ... both ecocriticism and trauma theory are well-established fields...”<sup>2</sup> (Hill-Woods, 2019) Furthermore, Mark Shelvock, who is a therapist, thanatologist, and teacher, in his essay “What Is Ecological Grief and Trauma?” opines, “things are getting worse and worse each day for our environment...Publicly experiencing ecological grief can be met with active social resistance, as environmental awareness in any capacity threatens modern industrial values and practices.”<sup>3</sup> (What Is Ecological Grief and Trauma? | Psychology Today, n.d.). Moreover, Idrus and Mukahal, in their paper ““Doing” ecocriticism: Oppressions of nature and animals in Philip Larkin’s poetry” opine, “Larkin’s arguments on the human manipulation of nature eventually disrupts the Man-Nature relationship.”<sup>4</sup> (Idrus & Mukahal, 2021). So, today’s critics and writers discuss about the evolution of eco-criticism, trauma theory, the ecologically unethical practices of humans, and analyze poems employing eco-criticism. This research paper, through close reading “ripples of our deeds”, attempts not only to further the current eco-critical researches but also intends to introduce a new dimension of research by aiming how 21st century poets are bringing forth the concept of ecological trauma, being well aware of environmental dilemma.

#### **4. Research Methodology**

##### **4.1. Method and materials**

1. The primary method opted in this paper is the close reading of the poem. This methodology appraises the form, symbols, metaphors, similes, sound patterns etc. in the poem to reveal its environmental concerns and ecological trauma.
2. The evidence-based analysis of the text excavates that ecological trauma is rooted in the consequences of human actions.
3. Scholarly articles, essays, and research papers serve as tributary frames to understand the relational significance of “Ripple of Our Deeds” with of Eco-criticism, Eco poetry and literature.

##### **4.2. Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this paper is eco-criticism and the related theories and concepts like Anthropocene, Ecopoetics, and Eco-Ethics etc. These concepts enables the analysis of this research paper to explore and interpret the ecological trauma highlighted in this poem.

#### **5. Discussion and Analysis**

The first line “They were just shivering”<sup>5</sup> (admin, 2023) commences the dramatic beginning of the poem. Having no antecedent of “They” reflects analepsis that something bad has been done with the baby birds introduced in the poem. Moreover, there is someone or something that made the first group of characters shiver. The second and third lines of the poem further the plight of the baby birds who are crying painfully and helplessly, but they are “Longing for succor”<sup>5</sup>(admin, 2023). The lonely and miserable condition of the baby birds presented in the first section sows the seeds of dramatic style

which embraces the entire poem. The first fourteen lines of the poem, because of the dramatic style, create such a scene that arouses both pity and fear, they pity for the sufferers of environmental degradation and the fear about the tragic consequences of man's unethical behaviour towards nature, as Aristotle says that tragedy, "is an imitation [*mimēsis*] of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude...through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation [*catharsis*] of these emotions."<sup>6</sup> (Britannica, 2019). Along with this dramatic style, the well-knit narrative structure of the poem is also noteworthy. The poem structures a story of ten miserable baby birds whose mother will never come, for she was killed by a cruel hunter. The nature takes revenge and destroys everything. Somewhat similar traces of narrative can be found in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Although the intentions of the captain of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* "... with my crossbow... I shot the ALBATROSS." (Coleridge, 2018) and those of the hunter of *Ripples of Our Deeds* are different, yet the retaliation of nature is almost the same. This similarity stimulates to apply the sieve of eco-criticism on the poems written in the past, and the findings are surprisingly interesting. For instance, T.S Eliot's "The Waste Land" appears to be a notable work that brings forth the traces of ecological trauma. The symbol and images in a part of the poem titled "What the Thunder Said", like: "frosty silence in the gardens", "the shouting and the crying", "But dry sterile thunder without rain", "There is not even solitude in the mountains", "But red sullen faces sneer and snarl", and "From doors of mudcracked houses" reflect the environmental and ecological concerns interspersed in the poem. Apart from these lines, the aridity and barrenness of the landscape seem to exhibit the traumatic aftermaths of human exploitation of nature which resulted into the urban decay. Moreover, the birds in this section represent the interdependence and interconnectedness of man and nature. In the third and the last parts of "Ripple of Our Deeds", twice does the poetic voice become eco-ethical. Almost the same role does the poetic voice performs in "What the Thunder Said" using the words "Datta, Dayadhvam, Damyata". Thus, the past poets, consciously or unknowingly would express their worries about ecological degradation. The present day bards are vocalizing their anxieties about nature abuse more specifically and vividly – *Ripples of Our Deeds* is an example. Combining the dramatic, narrative and descriptive potential of the poem and employing eco-criticism, both the fragility of the natural world and the consequences of harming nature become the exponential currents of the poem.

The symbols in "Ripples of Our Deeds" are well crafted in a sense that they exhibit the thematic variants regarding environmental ruin. For instance, the mother bird seems to signify the protective, soothing and beneficent aspects of nature; on the other hand, the ten baby birds of hers represent the delicacy and vulnerability of the ecosystem. Humans' destructive trespass into nature has been symbolized by the hunter, his gun, and his killing of the mother bird. Eco-critically, the wrathful storm symbolizes the wrath of the potent phenomenal nature whose revenge reflects the destructive consequences of human's anti-environmental acts; moreover, the symbol of "ripples", when decoded with the lens of eco-criticism, reflect the whole scale spread of environmental decay. "Fire" is also a foil symbol of the "storm". Both the symbols combine to strengthen the ripple effect presented in the poem. The symbols in "Ripples of Our Deeds"<sup>5</sup> are interconnected and interdependent. They form a vivid picture gallery of ecological and environmental destruction which is a potential threat for the humans and all living creatures of this world.

Not merely does Sunday Afolayan uses symbols, he also utilizes several other diverse poetic devices that seem to convey the concept of ecological trauma about which Lauren Woolbright mentions in her thesis, *Wounded Planet, Wounded People: The Possibility of Ecological Trauma*. She opines, "In recognizing that the human relationship to the nonhuman natural world has been characterized primarily by trauma, we might notice that humans abuse landscapes and deplete resources, harming

the very ecosystems that support us, moving on when they no longer can or using technology in order to remain. This might be seen as a double trauma in which the human traumatizes ecosystems, which are then traumatic to the human.” (Woolbright, 2011). Moreover, the visual, auditory, tactile and gustatory images make *Ripples of Our Deeds* an effective sensuous poem with a specific message. The onomatopoeic images like “crying, chirping and zithering” represent the traumatic condition of the inhabitants of the earth. Another implication of “crying, chirping and zithering”<sup>5</sup> in lines 3 and 5 seems to make the reader feel the pain of the baby birds. These images remind of the weeping and wailing of the individuals who fell a prey to famine and poverty as Erik S. Reinert relates the industrialization induced famines, “The basic answer to the Famine Paradox is that agricultural production answers to different economic laws than the industrial and advanced service sectors”<sup>10</sup> (Networkideas.org - the Paradox of Famine, n.d.). The analysts and historians have also been aware of the drastic effects of machines over the environment which, resultantly, traumatized humans and even killed many. The visual images “shivering” and “writhing” in lines 1 and 7 of the poem are multilayered. Apparently, they represent the miserable condition of the baby birds, but eco-critically, they connote the suffering humanity in the teeth of ecological troubles. Besides, the images of the hunter, snake and storm also reflect the cruelty of industrialization about which Patnaik says, “Since ages, industrial growth has started to affect environment with severe downside problems. It causes tremendous stress on the entire bionetwork and natural system components like water, air, soil, bio-diversity including surrounding eco-system.” (Patnaik, 2018). So, the “hunter” is the image of the selfish mindset of the industrialists who destroy the natural habitat and the “storm” suggests the smoke of the factories, mills and automobiles. Line number 18, “A snake climbed up the tree” and line number 23 “A storm then gathered” carry the pictorial images that also imply the growing danger of anti-ecological impact of mechanization. These two images are supported by two more visual images in lines 54 and 56 “far and wide” and “spread and sprawl”<sup>5</sup> respectively. Furthermore, the gustatory images in *Ripples of Our Deeds* like “thirsty and hungry”<sup>5</sup> in line number 6, anew reflect the terrible condition of the baby birds which signify the thirsty and hungry kids of Somalia whose eyes stare as if blind and whose bodies appear as if corpses. The tactile images “cold”<sup>5</sup> and “nipped in the bud”<sup>5</sup> in line 44 reflect the impact of present day climatic swings and their effect on the sufferers – the creatures on earth. These vibrant and evocative images grab the attention of the readers towards the current condition of the environment.

The significant traces of irony and foreshadowing pave the path of the eco-critical reading of “*Ripples of Our Deeds*”. The situational irony in this poem is that the cruel hunter is unaware of his own miserable fate. Moreover, the baby birds who should be taken care of by the benign forces of nature are killed by the snake and the storm. The situational irony is also that the snake and the storm join the hunter’s party and further the hunter’s ferocious act of killing the baby birds. So, the crime against fragile and delicate objects of nature multiplied by the snake, the downpour and the tempest. The thematic irony is that humans’ concept of development through industrialization and technologization is not progress in totality. They are harming the environment and thus destroying their own selves, which should not be the fate of life on earth. Additionally, the poetic technique of foreshadowing highlighted by the words, “shivering,” “lonely,” and “crying for help”<sup>5</sup> in lines 1-3. This forecast warns the readers about the critical destiny of the environment which is already at stake. Such warnings appear in the definitions of environmental degradation. “Many international organizations recognize environmental degradation as one of the major threats facing the planet, since humans have only been given one Earth to work with, and if the environment becomes irreparably compromised, it could mean the end of human existence.”<sup>11</sup> (GEMET, 2021)

Sunday Afolayan’s use of metaphors and personification brings forth the concept of ecological trauma.

The portrayal of the storm and tempest in lines 22-25 metaphorically embodies the destructive potency of ecological forces which may trigger ecological trauma. In the poem the traumatic baby birds are the microcosmic manifestation of all existence on earth which is being harmed by the anti-ecological doings of the humans. Afolayan names the hunter the architect of gruesome death. The metaphors of architect and death need excavation. What an architect does? He designs, plans and advises construction. But in *Ripples of Our Deeds*, the architect is the metaphor of trauma and destruction. So, the planners and designers of industrial and technological adventures are the trauma mongers for the human race along with other living creatures.

Furthermore, personification plays the vital role in the poem from its beginning till end. The poem has five sections and each section carries the poetic device of personification. Ecological trauma can be referred to both the ecological degradation of nature and the effect of this degradation on humans and his cohabitants. Personification in *Ripples of our deeds* serve the purpose of manifestation of ecological trauma. The quivering, hopeless and crying nestlings represent the traumatic human kids who die of pollution. For instance, The Guardian published an article on 16 December 2020 that reads, “Philip Barlow, the inner south London coroner, said Ella Kissi-Debrah’s death in February 2013 was caused by acute respiratory failure, severe asthma and air pollution exposure.” Ella’s family raised their voice and an inquest was held at coroner’s court. Moreover, upon coroner’s ruling “The mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said the coroner’s conclusion was a “landmark moment” and called pollution a “public health crisis”. 12 (Laville, 2020). In Sunday Afolayan’s “*Ripples of Our Deeds*”, there was no coroner’s court available for the evaluation of baby birds’ deaths, so the tempest took revenge and in Sir Francis Bacon’s words, “Revenge is a kind of wild justice” 13 (OF REVENGE, n.d.). Afolayan seems to bring forth the looming revenge of nature by titling his poem *Ripples of Our Deeds*.

In addition to this, the juxtaposition of the guileless “baby birds” and the “ruthless hunter”, the “nest” and the “snake”, the “five remaining chicks” and “the tempest”, “evil deed” and “aftermath”, “dreams of the fellow” and “nipped in the bud” etc. in *Ripples of Our Deeds* invites Anthropocene – a concept which “is widely accepted that our species, *Homo sapiens*, has had such a significant impact on Earth and its inhabitants that we will have a lasting - and potentially irreversible - influence on its systems, environment, processes and biodiversity.”<sup>14</sup> (Pavid, 2019). The act of the hunter against the beautiful and meek objects of nature: the baby birds highlights how humans have traumatized the natural world. The hunter killed their mother bird, snatched their shelter, and left them to face the unearned death. The current environmental ruin, global warming, climate change, are those traumas that are triggered by the humans in the guise of development but now not merely the humans but all life on earth as well is facing the consequences. The balance of ecosystems have has been shattered. The notion of Anthropocene takes an alarming connotation if comprehended with the lens of this poem which seems to suggest that impact of humans on nature is not ecofriendly. The tempest and the rain in the poem mirror the today’s unexpected storms and untimely rains and other natural disasters caused by the deforestation, urbanization and industrialization.

The concept of Anthropocene also includes the tributaries of biodiversity and eco-ethical responsibilities. The former refers to the interconnectedness and interdependence of the simplest and the most complex living organisms and the latter denotes that it is the ethical responsibility of every human to protect and sustain the environment. The sequentially horrific events like, killing of the mother bird, death of the baby birds, gathering of the storm, pouring of the rain and destruction of the entire scene seem to be the warning for the humans as they are unbridled in breaking the structure of biodiversity and interconnectedness of all living beings on this planet and oblivious of fulfilling their

eco-ethical responsibility.

The close reading of *Ripples of our deeds* also helps explore metonymy and synecdoche. According to Oxford Learners dictionaries, metonymy is “the act of referring to something by the name of something else that is closely connected with it”<sup>15</sup>, and synecdoche is “a word or phrase in which a part of something is used to represent a whole, or a whole is used to represent a part of something.”<sup>16</sup> Employing eco-criticism on the poem, the wailing of the chicks is the vocalization of the traumatic and dying nature. Metonymically, the hunter is the emblem of all anti-environmental deeds of humans. The synecdoche in this poem is the fire which seems to be a part of the real life wildfires spurred by the climate change whose manmade causes are “Burning coal, oil and gas produces carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide. Cutting down forests...Increasing livestock farming... fertilizers containing nitrogen... and Fluorinated gases”.<sup>17</sup> Thus, “A fire made at one point”<sup>5</sup> in line 53, is the synecdoche of the literal and real fires ignited by the humans directly or indirectly.

Hyperbole and Hendiadys, are a couple of other poetic devices that help focus on the eco-critical reading of the poem. According to Longman’s Dictionary hyperbole is “a way of describing something by saying it is much bigger, smaller, worse etc than it actually is.”<sup>18</sup> Apparently, hyperbole disrupts the sequential arrangement of events in the poem. The first 10 lines describe the plight of the motherless and unprotected baby birds, the next few lines introduce the ruthless hunter, then, from nowhere enters the snake; lines 23 to 28 bring forth the wrathful tempest and the merciless downpour that kill the nestlings; from line 29 to 57, the narrator’s voice mostly plays its role of soothsaying. These apparently disconnected pieces seem logical if the usage of hyperbole is evaluated. The hunter is a threat against nature which is complemented by the symbols of snake, storm and downpour. This exaggerated intensification of the trauma might be hyperbolically treated in the poem, but eco-critically, the realistic manifestation of this trauma is prevalent in the today’s injured environment. Melting ice worldwide, sea level rise, migration and extinction of different species, intensifying hurricanes and storms, and water crisis do not apparently seem to follow some any sequential structure. These are abrupt traumas faced by the life on earth. Moreover, hendiadys which is defined by Merriam Webster Dictionary, is “the expression of an idea by the use of usually two independent words.”<sup>19</sup> plays the significant role of emphasizing the gravity of ecological trauma. Line 54, “travel far and wide”<sup>5</sup> and line 56, “spread and sprawl”<sup>5</sup> are the phrases contain such pairs of words that give the same thought. Eco-critically, both the phrases provide the consequential intensity of the ecological denigration by the deeds of the humans.

The sound patterns in *Ripples of Our Deeds* are both cacophonous and euphonic; the former represent the harshness of the miseries inflicted upon the bird family: for instance “crying, chirping, thirsty, zithering, hungry” etc. The cacophonous sounds used for the hunter, the storm and other ferocious objects and events reflect oppression: for example, “ruthless, architect, rudest, downpour, harm, ripples, gruesome, nipped conundrum etc. The euphonic sounds like: lonely, hopeless, longing, waiting, nowhere, whirlwind etc. surprisingly, do not represent the delicate image of the beauties and melodies of nature. The pleasant sounds, paradoxically, strengthen the inflictions upon the humble, frail and meek objects of nature. Consequently, both the cacophonous and euphonic sounds shake hand to portray, eco-critically, the unpleasant noise of the factories and biting mechanical sounds produced by machines. The roar of the tempest is like the rumbustiousness of the industries. Along with this, the complete and partial alliterations (of /l/ line 2, “Lonely and hopeless”<sup>5</sup> for the emphasis on the wretched state of the nestlings; / ɲ/ in lines 5 and 7, “Longing for succor” and “Chirping, zithering”<sup>5</sup> for the unanswered cries for help; /r/ in lines 13 and 14, “By a ruthless hunter” and “In the rudest of game.”<sup>5</sup>

for the stubborn continuity of cruelty; / ð/ in line 17 “Right there in their nest”<sup>5</sup> for the vulnerability of the humble objects of nature, /f/ Line 19 “Feasted on five”<sup>5</sup> for the ferocious aftermath of the cruel deed of the hunter; /w/ in line 24 “With whirlwind and lightening,”<sup>5</sup> and /r/ in Line 34 “Will bring ripples aftermath”<sup>5</sup> for the fission chain reaction of that after math commence) mature and complete the entire miserable story about the eco-destructive activities of humans and the impacts of such deeds.

Ecopoetically, the entire poem revolves around the motifs of the relation between environment and the human behaviour towards natural world. Human-nature relationship is the oldest, strongest and the most delicate at the same time. Environment is the best shelter for humans if and only if the latter protects and respects it; otherwise, the consequences will be drastic that can be observed and experienced in the current industrial world. The narrative voice in this poem is, describes, portrays, and warns. The narrator is well aware of the vulnerability of nature which he represents through the only three main characters. First of all, the mother bird that never appears on the scene, but becomes the most significant means to debunk the cruelty of eco-destructive activities of humans. Then the chicks that further the concept of vulnerability and take the poem to a point where the narrator speaks directly with the readers and reminds them, through a forecast, of their forgotten responsibilities. The poem exposes how the killing of the mother bird and the death of her chicks refer to the disruption of the natural order. This disruption involves further deterioration of ecosystem and damages the entire environment which naturally follows a motif or sustenance, shelter, and protection of humans’ life and all life on earth as well.

The eco-ethical voice in *Ripples of Our deeds* by Sunday Afolayan becomes clear and direct in lines 29 to 34: “The lesson is this”, “It is cruel and evil”, “To harm or kill”, “For every evil deed”, “A man metes onto others” and “Will bring ripples aftermath”<sup>5</sup>. The enjambment technique in these lines make the poet speak like a teacher to the students in his class when he concludes a story with a moral lesson. Generally, symbolic and metaphoric poems don’t behave like that. This innovative directness fetches a type of narrative volta and voices implicit moral condemnation which apparently disrupts the prevalent symbolic discourse of the poem, but the analysis of this shift of tone with the eco-critical lens suggests that it equates the disturbance caused by human deeds. Moreover, this sudden shift of style seems necessary to wake up humans obviously indulged in destroying the environment. This direct address to the readers also seems significant in that it implies a duty on the inhabitants of the earth to realize their eco-ethical responsibilities. This tone of the poet furthers in lines 53 to 57 “A fire made at one point”, “Can travel far and wide”, “The ripples of our deeds”, “Can spread and sprawl”, and “Over diverse directions”<sup>5</sup> but the discourse resumes its previous symbolic manner. The eco-critical comparison of these two sections of the poem reveals the refrain of “ripples” brings forth the same concern of the poet which is also the main motif of the poem: the symbiosis of man and nature.

Literature has been trying to preserve nature since long. The species of neither daffodils nor nightingale would extinct from the earth, for Wordsworth and Keats have eternalized them with their poems. Literature also raises its voice against all those factors that traumatize environment and ecology. *Ripples of Our Deeds* by Sunday Afolayan can be regarded as one of those notable pieces of poetry that register their protest against irresponsible, rather cruel behaviour of humans towards environment and ecology. The poem symbolically and metaphorically portrays the current violation of environments’ rights. With vivid narration and description, it also portrays the ecological trauma of nature abuse instigated and intensified by humans. The close reading of this poem excavates the poetic devices like hendiadys, irony, imagery etc. and phonetic devices like alliteration, onomatopoeia, refrain etc. These figures of speech and sound devices viewed through the lens of eco-critical literary theory



reveal this poem exposes the unbridled continuity of anti-environmental and anti-ecological activities. The eco-ethical voice of the poem, especially in section 3 and 5, tries to communicate with human conscience by warning the industrialized modern world. Sunday Afolayan's poem also attest that literature is as conscious about environmental degradation as science. Scientific reports and conferences about ecological damage are worthy efforts to make the inhabitants of the earth aware of the impending danger, yet literature takes a step further by reminding humans of their eco-ethical responsibilities and by warning them if the situation persists. The motif and message of this poem is rooted even in the very title – Ripples of Our Deeds. The little damage to environment originates a chain of traumatic happenings with the potency to damage the entire existence of life on this earth.

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