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Rethinking Nature: An Ecocritical Analysis of Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay's Popular Novels

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Abstract : In an age of environmental crisis, the need of the hour is to re-think nature to keep the earth in better order. Ecocriticism is a comparatively new way of analyzing literature or art and is considered to be a mind-expanding theory as it seeks to expand our understanding of the environment that allows reading literature from nature's perspective and prompt eco-critics to think in a bio-centric way. The present paper studies three novels of Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay, *Pather Panchali-Song of the Road*, *Aparajita-the Unvanquished* and *Aranyak-Of the Forest* from the perspectives of ecocriticism. The paper explores the three specific perspectives like ecosophy, deep ecology and ecocide which are brought into focus by the self-realization of the protagonists. Ecocriticism in Bandyopadhyay's, therefore, develops an ecological literacy among the readers. The present study is an attempt to reconnect man's lost relationship with nature in order to promote green peace.

Keywords: Bandyopadhyay, Nature, Ecosophy, Deep-ecology, Ecocide.

Introduction

Literature has shared a very close relationship with nature down the ages. This intimate relationship between literary works and nature has been textualized in many poems, prose narratives, songs, plays etc since ancient Greek and Indian civilization. With the advancement of science and



technology, the man started dominating nature, therefore marring her pristine beauty. The early romantic writers thus started a revolt against the age of reason. But nature writing gets its momentum with the introduction of a new genre of a literary theory called Ecocriticism which does not simply mean the representation of nature in literature. It deals with how ecological concepts or ecological principles may be applied to the study of literature as described by William Rueckert. In fact, Ecocriticism studies the wider significance of nature in literary view-finder. This new movement has swept the land over the last three decades as it makes us think in a bio-centric way when the earth is suffering from global ecological issues like climate change and global warming. Literature cannot turn its face away from these man-made troubles. Literature certainly can develop ecological wisdom among the readers will be encouraged to take better care of the environment. The two most important Biblical works on Ecocriticism are *The Ecocriticism Reader* by Cheryl Glotfelty & Herold Fromm and Lawrence Buell's *Environmental Imagination*. In her edited book *The Ecocriticism Reader* Glotfelty writes, "Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender consciousness perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies"(Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996, xviii). Lawrence Buell has added that this study should be "conducted in a spirit of environmentalist's praxis." Further ecocriticism does not simply mean nature study; it has distinguished itself from conventional nature writing first by its ethical stand and commitment to the natural world and then by making the "connection between the human and the non-human world".

Novels penned by Bibhutibhushan are nature themed. He admits, "I love not Man the less but nature more" (Roychoudhury 38). But nature here is not merely a backdrop of his long prose narratives. But this celebration is not merely a glorification of nature. Broadly speaking these novels celebrates the inevitable bond "between the human and the non-human". His autobiographical novel *Pather Panchali -Song of the Road* along with its sequel *Aparajito-the Unvanquished* is a journey from the ecosophy to the deep ecological understanding. Aranyak-Of the Forest though considered by many as mere travel writing is the best example of the term Ecocide.



These novels beautifully depict man-nature interrelationship in a very realistic manner and demand a universal appeal. The language in Bandyopadhyay has no hole, as said to be in the ozone layer.

Ecocriticism: A Brief Survey

Ecocriticism proved to be an academic discipline with the publication of two highly influential books, both came out in 1996. The first work which is also known as the 'Bible' of ecocriticism is *The Ecocriticism Reader* edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. The second work is: *The Environmental Imagination* by Lawrence Buell. Ecocriticism gets its inspiration from the three important American writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Henry David Thoreau. Emerson enjoyed the impact of nature in his first reflect essay "Nature". Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes*, during 1843 encounters the American landscape at large. Thoreau's *Walden* "is an account of his two years stay from 1845, in a hut he had built on the shore of Walden Pond, a couple of miles away from his hometown of Concord, Massachusetts. It is, perhaps, the classic account of dropping out of modern life and seeking to renew the self by a 'return to nature'-this is certainly a book which has always exerted a strong effect on the attitudes of its readers."(Barry, 2002, 162).Thoreau wrote, - "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life " (Thoreau 3).

While the U.S version of eco-literature is known as Ecocriticism, the UK version of nature study of the new genre is commonly known as Green Studies. The UK version of Ecocriticism is greatly influenced by the British Romantics of the 1790's.The most influencing works are Jonathon Bate's *Romantic Ecology*, and Raymond William's *Country and the City* and Lawrence Coupe's epoch-making work *Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*. The ecocritics make critical appreciation of nature in literary works. They make a scholarly study of nature within an ecocritical framework. They try to find out what role nature and the landscape play in a literary work. They search for 'image' or 'symbolic representation' of nature that an author constructs. They explore how nature and human emotions are co-related to each other in a text. They underline how nature affects our emotion; they study the relationship between humans and the environment in a text and how literary works can build up ecological wisdom among the readers; they explain how the environmental threat is being reflected in contemporary art or culture etc.



Ecocriticism is still a young theory spanning a period of about three decades. The scholars are still engaged in widening its scope. The green theory now proliferates into several subfields like ecosophy, ecocide, ecofeminism, eco-spiritualism, green cultural studies, deep-ecology movement etc. Although all ecocritical writings studied nature from manifold perspectives, Ecocriticism shares a common motive that our global environment has reached its margin; unless we are very careful the world will lead to destruction at a Titanic speed to the ice-berg.

India is a land rich in biodiversity and different landforms. So the physical environment of the country has a deep impact on the culture of man. Many writers have written on the theme of nature. Our ancient Veda has a beautiful treatment of nature and its advocacy for the preservation of the physical environment for the benevolence of mankind. The same tune is found in the works of Gurudeva Rabindranath Tagore, R.K. Narayan, Ruskin Bond, Mahasweta Devi, Arundhati Roy, Amitav Ghosh etc. Their writings plead for the environmental protection as well as the need for the human nature bond. The Indian ecocritics like Bandana Shiva, Nirmaldasan, Suresh Frederic, Nirmal Selvamony, Rayson Alex are doing the yeomen service for the expansion from the first stage to the second stage of this movement. Nowadays Conferences on eco-literature are being held in India, more and more scholars are engaged in research with Ecocriticism and many Indian writings are coming under the purview of this revisionist movement.

Objectives

- The main objective of this article is to explore the eco-critical praxis of Bibhuti novels that very much popular even today for their classic beauty and eternal appeal.
- To explain how nature plays a mysterious role leaving a deep impact on the human world and how all his characters are deeply interconnected with nature.
- To ensure that the present study accomplishes an eco-critical understanding of these three novels from the perspectives of Ecosophy, Deep-Ecology, and Ecocide.

Pather Panchali- Song Of The Road: An Ecosophy Of Life

One of the important subfields of Ecocriticism is Ecosophy or ecological philosophy. It is commonly known as 'the philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium'('Ecosophy-



Wikipedia", 2017). The word was termed by the Norwegian deep ecologist Arne Naess and French philosopher Felix Guattari. Naess emphasizes on ecological wisdom and defines of ecosophy in the following way: "By an ecosophy, I mean a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium. A philosophy as a kind of sofia (or) wisdom, is openly normative, it contains both norms, rules, postulates, value priority announcements, and hypotheses concerning the state of affairs in our universe. Wisdom is policy wisdom, prescription, not only scientific description and prediction. The details of an ecosophy will show many variations due to significant differences concerning not only the 'facts' of pollution, resources, population, etc. but also value priorities" ("Ecosophy - Wikipedia", 2017).

On the other hand, Guattari considers ecosophy as a pluralistic critical field of study. "Ecosophy in his sense is the study of complex phenomenon including human subjectivity, the environment, and social relations all of which are intimately interlinked" ("Ecosophy - Wikipedia", 2017). Guattari opines, "Without modifications to the social and material environment, there can be no change in mentalities. Here, we are in the presence of a circle that leads me to postulate the necessity of founding an "ecosophy" that would link environmental ecology to social ecology and to mental ecology"("Ecosophy - Wikipedia", 2017).

Pather Panchali-Song of the Road (1929), Bandyopadhyay's first novel beautifully depicts the natural landscape of rural Bengal, which becomes highly symbolic in the novel. The placid flow of rural life is not like a blustering river of mountain region like 'Tista' but it is like the gentle flow of 'Ichhamoti' river in the plain landscape of agrarian Bengal. The realism of poverty-stricken rural life in a Bengal village like 'Nischindipur' has been deftly depicted by the novelist in an eco-poetic style. Again life sometimes is as ruthless as summer noon for Harihar and Sarbajaya- Apu's parents who live in abject poverty. However, this does not make any impact upon nature loving children for whom nature proves to be the best refuge. They are as green and spontaneous as nature herself. In their crystal clear mind nature lays deep impact which never withers. Children make their own toys with the elements of nature and drink life to the lees amid fruits and flowers, birds and animals, skies and rain. Apu's love of nature begins with *Pather Panchali-Song of the Road*. He is, in fact, half man and half nature. He and his sister Durga use to enjoy the sweet rain which makes their



faces as lovely as jasmine flowers usually after a shower. The rural landscape was their joy land of heaven. The green meadows, the vast canopy of sky, the rain-drops, the clouds- every natural object- all tell us of the never ending saga of life blended with happiness and misery. The jungle near their house has its deep impact on them to bring peace and consolation to their hearts despite their grim struggle for existence in the midst of poverty and snobbery of wealthier neighbors. They collect mangoes, make fun and feast in the forest, gather vegetables and remain untouched by the horrors of poverty. The Harihar's family draws the sustenance from the natural environments. It is as though nature has her own resource to meet the needs of the dispossessed. Nature abounds in the gifts of fruits and flowers with which the children make their own joys. Durga herself is a part and parcel of Nature which gets tremendous vitality with her very movement into the wild. She leaves no stone unturned to make her brother happy with trifle things of nature which we carelessly pass by. Yet she is paid less importance than Apu. Being a girl child she is given little food. Even her elementary education is neglected, although she is more intelligent than her brother. She is even brutally bitten due to her childish mistakes. Yet it is she who is the first teacher of Apu who makes him learn to read 'the book of nature'. 'She knew the bushes where the *bashok* flowers lay hidden, the secret recesses of the forest where the *chatim* blossoms slept in the shade of their trees, the clusters of green reeds by a bend in the Ichamoti where the indigo and *kolmi* huddled together, and the thorn trees where the baby tailor-birds had just woken up in their little nests of straw' (Bandyopādhyāya & Clark, 2004, 179). The maltreatment of Durga is the other name of exploitation of nature which reacts violently by rocking the land with thunder and torrential rain disturbing the normal activity of life. Bibhutibhushan himself being a wayfarer roaming through the ways of the physical universe, his heart felt an irresistible pull to the simple and innocent joys of earthly life as exemplified in the characters like Apu and Durga. Although Durga dies the novel ends with a message of hope and positive vision as the journey of life continues in spite of the hurdles on the road. This journey goes on to find out a better environment at a different place. It continues to quench the wonder thirst of Apu, the protagonist. His mind here expands from rural to urban, from regional to a global understanding of the ecosphere. The novel got eternal appeal when it was translated into film by Oscar-winning film director Mr. Satyajit Roy who gave



Bibhutibhushan a universal recognition. In fact, UN has chosen Mr. Roy as one of the twenty world thinkers whose art has transformative power. He has been selected for preserving and immortalizing in an art that section of people whom we carelessly pass by. Some pictures of *Pather Panchali-Song of the Road* have been selected for exhibition as a part of Time for Action to fulfill sustainable UN Goals to combat climate change. In fact, *Pather Panchali* deals with an eco-sophic understanding of our physical environment which is an integral part of our very existence.

Aparajito -The Unvanquished: A Study In Deep Ecology

The ecocritical term deep ecology was also coined by Arne Naess who rejected the idea that anything can be ranked according to their relative value. The philosophy provides a foundation for the green movement fostering environmental ethics of wilderness preservation, a harmonious relationship among organisms, and simple living ("Deep ecology - Wikipedia", 2017). Bibhutibhushan's second novel *Aparajito -The Unvanquished* (1931), is a sequel to *Pather Panchali*. It carries forward Apu's ecological vision through his close intimacy with nature. His love of nature gets its maturity here in this novel. The novelist says- "The shadowy woods, the distant call of a bird on this lazy evening, the sky that was a shade of peacock blue, the soft scent of bakul, were all mixed with a touch of intoxication. The strange mixture of emotions that rose in his heart-pride, enthusiasm, a breathless anticipation for the unknown, made Apu feels quite lightheaded". (Bibhutibhushan & Majumdar,1999, 76). No one can deny the human nature interconnection in the above lines.

The novel mainly deals with two themes, Apu's struggle for existence and his yearning to go back to his roots. For the sake of Education, Apu has come to Calcutta, cannot complete the higher study due to poverty, searches for the job and finds life in the city suffocating. The tranquility and peace of Nischindipur village, his juvenile playground pulls him back. But every now and then environmental imagination of the village haunted him like a passion. He discovers the inherent worth of every rural object of his village life. Bandyopadhyay writes "Apu felt suffocated in Diwanpur. His only relief came from his imagination. In his notebook, Apu described the land his mind felt thirsty for. In it, there was a river, deep dark woods, singing birds, a golden sun at dawn and at dusk, and flowers innumerable, endless flowers. Even without stepping out of his little room



in the boarding house, he could take a walk by the river, or down a green meadow"(Bibhutibhushan & Majumdar, 1999:53). The village boy is the big metropolis of Calcutta to quench his insatiable thirst for knowledge leaving aside the traditional family profession of a priest. He works hard from dawn to night 'to earn a living to acclimatize himself with the ways of city life'(Bibhutibhushan & Majumdar, 1999:x). He never understands the artificial city life where he finds himself imprisoned like a bird in the claustrophobic atmosphere. 'While working as an account clerk in the house of a big landowner, he hankers for a small piece of blue sky, the verdure of the open fields, for the magic of the open emptiness of the horizon' (x). 'The only source of joy in his stale, claustrophobic life was Aparna'(Bibhutibhushan & Majumdar, 1999:238).She was the full moon and a goddess herself who took utmost care of him. Aparna herself is like nature with which Apu felt an inseparable bond to sustain him even in the odds of life. Having left Mr. Seel's office 'Apu felt as if he had been released from prison-the terrors of Mr. Seel's office had already faded away. His fun loving heart danced with joy. After all, he had ties of blood with the green expanse that now met his eyes, the scent that rose from the water'(Bibhutibhushan & Majumdar,1999:246). Though Apu suffers the grim realities of life (first having lost is parents one by one and then his wife Aparna who was a source of joy to him) he continues to live happily with his like-minded son Kajal, without any material pursuit. Like a phoenix, his spirit remains unvanquished despite grim poverty and loneliness. With the exploration of the unknown and the unseen of this beautiful earth, he finds enough pleasure in close intimacy with nature. In this novel the writer also warns us against the indiscriminate deforestation resulting in environmental hazards long before people became aware of environmental pollution;-

"Occasionally, when Apu thought of the steady destruction of the earth, particularly in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Africa, he felt that one day nature would take her revenge. Every act of man's arrogance-the building of empires, the naming of mountains and lakes after kings and queens, the killing of animals and birds to promote trade, the destruction of glorious pine forests to open factories-every ruinous attempt would be crushed, every score settled"(Bibhutibhushan & Majumdar,1999:352).Bibhutibhushan's concept of 'nature' is akin to the Vedic thought as believed in 'the enormous strength of the forest and the powers of nature'(352). To him, nature is 'apparently



lost in silent meditation like Shiva, all her fury curbed and controlled for the moment, but just waiting with infinite patience for the right time, the opportunity to strike'(Bibhutibhushan & Majumdar,1999:352). The impact of Nature on Apu is such that he even gave up hunting a deer which resembled the large , clear, expressive eyes of Kajal (his child) brimming with innocent wonder. Bibhutibhushan, the high priest of nature was also a pioneer of environmental conservation.

The novel shows how Nature's solitude can mould one's character. The nature mystic Apu of Pather Panchali has now undergone a study of deep ecology reading the book of nature here in this novel. After Aparna's death, Apu spent a few years of carefree life. He got the best refuge in the open lap of nature. In fact, one may renew one's self in nature. He went into the forest: the silent night and the damp air seemed to talk to him. He wished to see a deer which did not appear there. Yet he had a very strange experience "Disappointed though he was, Apu realized one thing. Being alone in these isolated places brought a change in his state of mind. In the city, one's mind might be wholly preoccupied with thoughts of self, desire or ambition. Here, under the colossal expanse of the star-studded sky, these things seemed both irrelevant and insignificant. The mind could expand here, learn to be more generous, tolerant and observant. One's whole angle of vision could change"(Bibhutibhushan & Majumdar, 1999:316).

Thus rural Apu learns a lot as urban Apu; the child of natural environment meets with the built environment. Yet he never forgets the inherent worth of the natural things. So he brings his son back to his childhood joy land. He does not want his motherless child sink into the materialistic society of the metro city. He never wants his son to become a victim of the artificialities of urban life. Exploring the flora and fauna he will learn how to satisfy one's creative self which Apu himself used to do during his formative period of life. The motherless child is put to his another mother, i.e., mother-nature for its proper nourishment. Apu's understanding of deep ecology led him to bring up his child without any alienation from the natural environment.

Aranyak-Of The Forest- An Ecocide

The term ecocide refers to extensive damage done to the ecosystem of a territory due to human atrocities or to such an extent that the normal living of the inhabitants is severely disturbed



("Ecosophy - Wikipedia", 2017). Human nature is essentially anthropocentric which assumes the primacy of man over other organisms in the environment. We are committing ecocide by deforestation of a land, burning fossil fuel, emitting greenhouse gasses from the industrial hubs, by exploiting the natural ecocritical understanding of *Aranyak-Of the Forest* (1976) in the light of ecocide. Ecocriticism is best exhibited in *Aranyak-Of the Forest* where the protagonist Satyacharan, a city dweller gets hypnotized by nature. Initially, urban lifestyle revolted against the loneliness of the forest. He has been sent to the forest as an estate manager to clear up a forest land of 30 thousand bighas. But as the novel progresses he fell madly in love with nature. The novel is told in the manner of a reverie whichever haunts his imagination. It is a good example of an ecocide. The narrator mentions "But these memories do not give me pleasure; they are filled with sorrow. By my hands was destroyed an unfettered playground of nature. I know too, that for this act the forest gods will never forgive me. I have heard that to confess a crime in one's own words lightens somewhat the burden of the crime. Therefore, the story" (Bandyopādhyāya & Bhattacharya, 2002: 3).

The novel deals with the protagonist Satyacharan's development of his attitude to Nature. The votary of urban life has transformed into a devoted lover of nature in her pristine beauty. The city man Satyacharan was to draw up new tenants. His role was that of a colonizer to set up more human habitation or industry in the forest. At first, he had hardly any care for the forest land and its so-called savage people. He writes "It all felt very strange to me, as though I had been exiled from our familiar earth and had been drawn into the mysterious life of an unknown planet somewhere in space"(19). The loneliness of the forestland set upon his breast like a stone. But as time passes by we see that nature has got him in such way that he can never be able to get separation from her for even a brief moment. Therefore, he says, "I began to feel that I would not be able to return to the hurly-burly of Calcutta forsaking the vast tracts of forest land, the fresh fragrance of the sun-scorched earth and the freedom and the liberation they represent" (Bandyopādhyāya & Bhattacharya, 2002:22). He enjoys horse ride in the forest on a moonlit night; He even sends Jugalprasad with enough money to the impenetrable forests of Jayanti Hills to bring saplings of 'dudhia' flower for beautification of Saraswati Kundi where variety of amazing birds like magpies,



pheasant crows, wild parrots, sparrows, chat shares, ghughus, harials, shyamas and hareets flocked to take refuge after a huge part of the forest becomes a victim of deforestation. He enjoys wondrous solitude in the unbroken quiet of Saraswati kundi which serves as a heaven to him with its honeybee creepers, wild sheuli, and its supernatural surroundings.

A clear change in his attitude to nature is evident in his recollection here in these lines. "This was a different sort of life, I mused, as I rode through the moonlit forest. This was a life for the eccentric wanderer- one who did not care to remain confined within the four walls of his house did not have housekeeping and domesticity in his blood. When I had left Calcutta and came to this terrible loneliness, to an utterly natural sort of lifestyle, how intolerable the uncivilized life here had seemed: but now, I feel this is the better life of the two. Nature- rude and barbaric here- had initiated me into the mysteries of freedom and liberation; would I ever be able to reconcile myself to a perch in the bird-cage city?" (Bandyopādhyāya & Bhattacharya, 2002:62). The protagonist here would never like to exchange this happiness for all the wealth in the world. He now understands "What nature gives to her devotees is invaluable. However, it is a gift not to be received until one has served her for long...if you lie immersed in her, the greatest gifts of nature- beauty and exquisite peace- will be showered on you so abundantly that they will drive you to ecstasy...drawing you closer to immortality"(Bandyopādhyāya & Bhattacharya, 2002:95).

But he has to destroy the forest land against his will for earning more revenue as his master has assigned him to do so. This creates in him a deep sense of guilt and remorse, a pang of conscience that leads him to beg mercy to the forest goddess "Forests, primeval and ancient, forgive me"(Aranyak, 254). Thus, like his creator Bibhutibhushan, Satyacharan has undergone a transformation in his thought process. Bandyopadhyay once said, "I have learned to look on Nature"(Chattopadhyay, 2010: 24).

The novel also shows the impact of nature on man. We see Satyacharan himself taking care of Saraswati Kundi where he asks Jugalprasad, a nature-loving soul to plant rare species of plants. He also expresses his anxiety over the fact that this part of natural beauty may not exist for a long time for- "Human beings are only too greedy" (Bandyopādhyāya & Bhattacharya, 2002:213). None can miss the ecological touch in Raju Parey's words: "The forest you see here is very beautiful. The flowers have been blooming for a long time and the birds sing. Each with their own call; the gods



themselves have merged with the wind and have left their mark on the earth. But whenever there is money or transactions of cash, loans, and receipts, the air becomes polluted. Then the gods choose not to stay any longer. So whenever I pick up the cutter and the axe, the gods come and snatch away my tools. They whisper such thoughts into my ears that all thoughts of land and property are driven away from my mind"(Bandyopādhyāya & Bhattacharya, 2002: 76).

The narrator also laments "The settlers did not care much for the majesty of trees, they did not have eyes to see the grandeur of the land; their only concern was to fill their stomachs and to survive. If it were any other country, they would have had laws to keep the forests intact and preserve them for nature lovers, as they have done with the Yosemite Park in California, the Krugger National Park in South Africa or the National Albert in the Belgian Congo. My distant employers do not care for the landscape: all they understand are taxes and revenue money- the salami, the irshal and the hustabood" (Bandyopādhyāya & Bhattacharya, 2002: 213). So the novel may be related to both the domination model as well as the caretaking model of ecocriticism. Bibhutibhushan here advocates the conservation of forests in India.

At the same, time Satyacharan is critical of the city people who cannot appreciate the beauty of nature. He is critical of Rai Bahadur Family from the city who came on a visit to the forest as "they lacked the vision to appreciate what they saw. In fact, they had come with the sole purpose of hunting, as though birds, rabbits, and deer were all awaiting them by the roadside, waiting patiently to be shot"(Bandyopādhyāya & Bhattacharya, 2002: 189). Although they were all educated they failed to understand the tranquil beauty and solitude of forest life. He then added "The women were motley collection, completely devoid of imagination. They ran about gathering twigs for their fire on the edges of the forest and chattered endlessly, but not one of them was around to see where they were, either at the spot where they were going to cook or at the natural beauty of the forest around them"(189). He has a fervent appeal to all to save the remaining Mahalikharooop hills and the forest land of Bhanmati's family on the Dhannjhari range "Perhaps a time would come when men would no more be able to see forests: all they would see would be fields of crops or the chimneys of jute and cotton mills. They would come then to this secluded forest land, as though on a pilgrimage. For those people, yet to come, let the forest stay pristine, undisturbed" (Bandyopādhyāya &



Bhattacharya, 2002: 248).

Hence, the novel brings about a radical change in the thought process of Satyacharan, the protagonist. The votary of urban life has turned to be a devoted lover of nature. It is not a mere travelogue or a diary of some individual. It is the eternal saga of the poverty stricken people of the earth who are deprived of the equal share of the natural resource due to the dominance of the so-called capitalistic society. These people are not afraid of facing the odds and adversities of forest life; rather they are the best example of the struggle for existence in their hostile environment. They lack the material comfort of city life, yet they are happy with what they find in the forest. When ecocide occurs these people prove to be the worst sufferers.

Conclusion

The novels of Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay allow one to rethink nature and to study them from nature's perspective. In an age of anxiety and anger ravaged by post world war disillusionment, Bibhuti novels prescribe solace for mankind into the world of 'Nature'. They advocate environmental protection which is a much-talked matter during today's ecological crisis. His characters in the novels may not be regarded as heroes in the traditional sense. But they teach us how to lead a life in the most optimistic manner. They are the common run of people who lead a simple life with an ecological vision. The novelists in Western countries deal with violence, sex, alienation and psychological problems, but Bibhutibhushan deals with the basics of human life. His characters are interconnected with nature, the rural environment, the rivers, the mountains etc. While *Pather Panchali* is the healthy boy's pure delight in the open air; *Aparajito* is the maturity of his eco-philosophy of life. On the other hand, *Aranyak* is the self-realization of a city man who has committed an ecocide during his six long years of stay in the forest land. The great nature prophet foreshadows the evils of 'the growth of the soil' and his novels make us think in a bio-centric way. Through his green narratives, the novelist has a strong message that human life devoid of nature is meaningless while living in the lap of nature is absolute freedom and happiness. They indicate how the text is associated with the writer's connection to the environment to build up an ecological literacy among the readers who are environmentally aware when the text is read and reread. The study insists on rethinking nature as part of our very existence. Hence, Bandyopadhyay's novels are



the best example of ecocritical context even though they were written much before the term Ecocriticism came into existence.

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