Ecocritical Reading of Tagore, Das, Wordsworth and Frost: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract: In the face of serious environmental crisis all over the world ecological aspects in literary texts began to gain importance, and in the mid nineteen nineties ecocriticism emerged as a critical approach to study literature. Simply defined ecocriticism is the study of relationship between the physical environment and literature. The present paper briefly highlights the environment aspects reflected in the writings of four canonical literary figures two of whom are from Bangla and two from English. They include Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), Jibanananda Das (1899–1954), William Wordsworth (1770 –1850) and Robert Frost (1874 –1963). The paper also focuses on the comparative aspects of their eco-thoughts that are reflected in their works. The poetry of Jibanananda Das and William Wordsworth deeply shows us how to live with nature. Robert Frost and Rabindranath Tagore are more critical and reactive to the dangers caused by environmental hazard, destruction of wilderness and materialism.

Introduction: Nature and natural environment has always been portrayed in literary texts, but the present day’s environmental crisis has brought this issue to the fore. Ecocriticism, as it is evolved today, is not only an approach to study literature, it is an activism as well, the purpose of which is to save the environment. Since its inception a huge number of scholars across the world have been active in studying literary texts ecocritically. In the USA ecocriticism takes its bearings from three major nineteen-century American authors - Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), Margaret Fuller (1810-1850) and Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) - whose works celebrate nature, the life force and the wilderness. The UK version of ecocriticism is green studies which takes its bearings from English Romnatic poets of whom William Wordsworth is the most leading figure. Obviously, in many languages and cultures the ecocritics are analyzing the nature related texts to focus on environmental issues. But a little has been done with the authors in Bangla so far. The paper, therefore, intends to ecocritically discuss the two Bangla poets Jabananda Das and Rabindranath Tagore, along with the two English poets Robert Frost and William Wordsworth and provide a comparative focus on their ecocritical awareness.

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Ecocriticism—Theoretical Background

Ecocriticism as a theoretical approach began to evolve in the backdrop of other critical approaches in the humanities. There are the approaches like biographical, cultural, postcolonial, feminist, queer theory, Marxist, formalistic, deconstructionist etc. Biographical criticism mainly focuses on the author's biography and historical perspectives in order to find meaning from the text; cultural criticism especially focuses on how popular culture like advertising, music movies, fan fiction etc influence the literary texts; postcolonial criticism focuses on the colonial domination and misrepresentation of the native culture etc; feminist criticism focuses on literary representation of women and how women are portrayed in literature; queer theory criticism focuses on gender identity, gay/lesbian issues etc; Marxist criticism focuses on the economic forces, women’s representation, class distinction etc; formalist criticism focuses solely on the texts without considering the biographical or historical issues; deconstructionist criticism emphasizes on the indeterminacy of literary text etc. In the backdrop of all these critical approaches a new approach began to evolve in the last decade of the twentieth century. The most important proponent of this theoretical approach is Cheryll Glotfelty, who became instrumental throwing ecocriticism, says:

If your knowledge of the outside world were limited to what you could infer from the major publications of the literary profession, you would quickly discern that race, class, and gender were the hot topics of the late twentieth century, but you would never suspect that the earth's life support systems were under stress. Indeed you might never know that there was an earth at all. In contrast, if you were to scan the newspaper headlines of the same period, you would learn of oil spills, lead and asbestos, poisoning, toxic waste contamination, extinction of species at an unprecedented rate, battles over public land use, protest over nuclear waste dumps, a growing hole in the ozone layer, predictions of global warming, acid rain, loss of topsoil, destruction of the tropical rain forest.... Browsing through periodicals you would discover that 1989 Time Magazine's person of the year award went to "The Endangered Earth."

Of course, it was not Glotfelty who first used the term ecocriticism. The term, perhaps, was first used by William Rueckert in 1978 in his essay titled Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism. In this essay Rueckert’s intent was to focus on “the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature”. However, there was no organized movement to study the ecological aspect of literature until the 1989 WLA (Western Literature Association) conference of the US based scholars. In this conference Cheryll Glotfelty revived the term
ecocriticism to refer to the diffuse critical field that had previously been known as ‘the study of nature writing’. She says:

What then is ecocriticism? Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as the feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies. Ecocritics and theorists ask questions like the following: How is nature represented in this sonnet? What role does the physical setting play in the plot of this novel? Are the values expressed in this play consistent with ecological wisdom? How do our metaphors of the land influence the way we treat it? How can we characterize nature writing as a genre?

Ecocriticism rejects the notion that everything is socially and/or linguistically constructed. For ecocritics nature “really exits, out there beyond ourselves, not needing to be ironised as a concept, but actually present as an entity which affects us, and which we can affect, perhaps fatally, if we mistreat it”. Nature, then, is not reducible to a concept which we conceive as part of our cultural practice. In her book *What is Nature* (1995) Kate Soper says, “It isn’t language which has a hole in its ozone layer”. Thus Ecocriticism rejects the foundational belief in ‘constructedness.’ It includes other theoretical and philosophical views such as deep ecology, eco feminism, Marxist environmentalism, environmental justice, land ethics etc. Deep ecology has been perhaps the single most influential philosophy for environmental activism. It is contemporary “ecological and environmental philosophy characterized by its advocacy of the inherent worth of living beings regardless of their instrumental utility to human needs, and advocacy for a radical restructuring of modern human societies in accordance with such ideas.”

In 1973 Arne Naess, a Norwegian philosopher, coined this term ‘deep ecology’ which, afterwards, turned into a movement in the USA and beyond. The following points of Deep ecology are summed up by Arne Naess and George Sessions:

- The well-being and flourishing of non-human life on earth have value in themselves, independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes.
- Richness and diversity of life-forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves.
- Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.
The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of non-human life requires such a decrease.

Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.

Policies must therefore be changed. These policies affect basic economic, technological and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs would be deeply different from the present.

The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living.

Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation either directly or indirectly to try to implement the necessary changes.8

Again, ecocriticism is related to ecofeminism or ecological feminism. The ‘Ecofeminism’ is coined in 1974 by Françoise d'Eaubonne. It is a philosophy and movement born from the union of feminist and ecological thinking and the belief that the social mentality that leads to the domination and oppression of women is directly connected to the social mentality that leads to the abuse of the natural environment. Ecofeminists argue that a strong parallel exists between the oppression and subordination of women in families and society and the degradation of nature through the construction of differences into conceptual binaries and ideological hierarchies that allow a systematic justification of domination ("power-over power") by subjects classed into higher-ranking categories over objects classed into lower-ranking categories, that is to say, man over woman, culture over nature, white over black.9

Marxist environmentalism which relates to ecocriticism formulates the idea that production must be geared to meeting the real needs of the people rather than wealth accumulation. Marxist ecologists argue that nature has become a commodity with capitalist production, and both nature and labour are over exploited leading to environmental hazards. Ecocriticism focuses on aspects of ‘environmental justice’ a movement which calls attention to the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. In ecocriticism Leopold’s ‘Land Ethic’ published in 1949 as the finale to A Sand County Almanac, is an important text that defined a new relationship between people and nature and set the stage for the modern conservation movement.10 It can be said that ecocriticism as a theoretical approach and activism started with a simple agenda and that is to save the environment.
Ecoconsciousness in Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) is the most prolific poetic genius ever born in the realm of Bangla literature. Not only poems and songs, Tagore wrote short stories, novels, plays, travelogues essays and letters. He also translated a significant number of his poems. It was his self-translated *Gitanjali: Song Offerings* that brought him the fame of a Nobel Laureate in 1913. However, as far as today’s ecocriticism is concerned Tagore’s bulk of writings can be studied with environmental awareness. His writings are like a mine from where environmental issues can be extracted almost inexhaustibly. In Tagore’s works man and natural world coexist harmoniously, man is portrayed as a humble ingredient of nature not as a king. This attitude regarding human and their relationship with nature inspires the reader to be sympathetic to all the elements of nature - big or small. Side by side with this awareness nonsensical activities of the humans towards natural world have been criticized severely. Tagore warns man of the dangers of a greedy world where all kinds of exploitations are rampant.

Tagore’s poem Sabhyatar Prati (To Civilization) is comparatively a short lyric consisting of fourteen lines. The opening line “dao phire se aranya lao e nagar” translated as “Give back that wilderness, take away the city” is obviously an angry protest of modern urbanization which hardly considers the issues of environment. Note the first few lines of the poem:

To Civilization
Give back that wilderness, take away the city –
Embrace if you will your steel, brick, and stonewalls
Of newfangled civilization! Cruel all consuming one,
Return all sylvan, secluded, shaded and sacred spots
And traditions of innocence. Come back evenings
When herds return suffused in evening light

Obviously, the poem is a critique to modern civilization which gives man a culture that does not know how to show respect to nature and natural world. Tagore called this civilization ‘new fangled civilization’. Such civilization is based on greed and exploitation which does not bear a sustainable development for mankind. Tagore was fond of seeing the landscape of rural Bengal – its greenery, sights and sounds and the wilderness. He was terribly shocked when he saw the landscape being shrunk in the process of urbanization and industrialization. Tagore severely criticizes man’s senseless act of destroying the wilderness and making structures there. In his personal life he had exceptional love for the vegetative world – the trees and plants, the pastoral and crop fields. Once he renounced city life and built a children’s school at the idyllic
rural setting of Santiniketan. He also believed that teaching and learning
can work better in the lap of nature. “To Civilization” is obviously a
poem of impassioned plea to recover the landscape and openness of
nature. He is a bitter critic of so called capitalism the consequences of
which is unequal distribution of wealth and environmental hazards.
Leaving his homecity Kolkata Tagore sought to renew his self by
returning to nature in the idyllic setting of Santiniketan. In this respect
Tagore can be compared to the American authors Ralph Waldo Emerson
(1803–1882) and Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862) whose works and
personal lives celebrate nature, the life force and the wilderness.

In his poem “Briksha Bandana” (Tree worshipping) Tagore has paid
glowing tribute to the trees. In fact all the poems occurring in Banabani
(1926) eulogize trees and the vegetative world. Most poems are titled
with names of trees and plants such as Debdaru (Pine Tree), Amroban
(Mango Orchard), Nilmanilata (Nilmani Creeper), Kurchi (Kurchi Plant),
Sal (Sal Tree), Madhumanjari (Madhumanjari Plant), Narikel (Coconut),
Chamelibitan (Chamelibitan creeper) etc. The poems in this volume
commonly showcase the importance of trees and the emotional
attachment of trees with humans. Note the lines of ‘Briksha Bandana’
(Tree Worship):

Tree Worship
You heard the call of the sun from inside the dark rock
In the first wake of life, you tree, the first life;
High on top you uttered the first hymn of light
On the chest of rhythmless solid; You bring life
In the dreary desolate desert.

... 
Land or water was once speechless
The seasons without festive-songs
Your branch gave song’s primitive shelter

... 
Man who is decorated with your wreaths
O friend of man! I, a messenger, with these verses
In tune with Sham’s music, a poet enamoured
Offer you this endowment of mine.12

The poem highlights the fact that trees existed on earth long before
the existence of man and other animals. Taking light from the sun the
trees heralded their existence, gradually decorated the dreary desert land
with vegetation and paved the way for the lives to appear. Trees are the
best friends to men because they give oxyzen, the lifeblood, without
which man cannot exist even for a minute. The poet worships trees and
offers his verses as a gift. Obviously, this kind of poem inspires a great
love for the trees and the vegetative world.
Love for trees has beautifully been shown in Tagore’s short story “Balai”. The protagonist of the story is a small boy named Balai. Balai understands the language of the trees and plants, as it were. He goes in the wood, stands alone staring at the trees, and could see 'man' inside them. All plants and trees are his friends. He cannot bear damage to any of them. Note the lines in translation from the original text:

He (Balai) cannot like that anybody pluck flowers. And he also has understood that this feeling of his has no meaning to others. So he wants to hide this within himself. Throwing stones the boys of his age pluck amloki, but he cannot say anything to them, he simply turns away from the spot. Also to provoke him, boys of his age, while going along the garden path, beat the plants with sticks or suddenly pluck a tender bough of Bakul tree. He feels like crying but he cannot, lest other boys should call him mad.

Balai loves his uncle’s garden–all the plants in it. Once when a shimul plant is sprouted in the garden, Balay's attention is drawn there. He shows this to his uncle who, contrary to Balay’s expectation, wants to uproot this awkward plant from the middle path of his garden. Balay requests his uncle not to do that. Later, Balay takes the help of his aunt so that she prevents her husband from uprooting the plant. The Shimul plant was saved. It was growing and with it grew Balai’s love. In the meantime Balay had to leave his uncle’s house for his education purpose. But, he could never forget his tree friend. Many days later he wrote to his aunt for sending a photograph of the tree. By the time the tree was felled by Balai’s uncle. Balai’s aunt who was always more sympathetic to Balai and didn’t know what to do when the tree was gone. The story thus inspires a passionate feeling for the vegetative world which is very much needed in this time of environmental crisis.

Tagore’s verse play Raktakarabi (Red Oleander) exhibits his concern of unrestrained capitalism, excessive exploitation of nature and environmental hazards. The central character in the play is a ruthless Raja or king who ruled his town Yakshapuri. The king remains unseen for the most part of the play. This anonymous demon king remains inaccessible behind the hard metal walls of Yakshapuri for his lust for gold. He exercises complete control over his people, exploits them for more gold, and grossly outrages nature in the process. Nandhini, a beautiful woman appears at a time of the oppression of humanity by greed and power. Nandhini, the lone woman fights against the king of the dark chamber. In the play she is presented as the embodiment of the benevolent Nature. The play is an elaborate portrait of Nandhini, a woman. She represents the joy of life, the simple beauty and pristine purity of Nature”. Obviously, through such a symbolic representation of
Yakkhapuri Tagore criticizes the capitalistic economy which destroys the harmonious relationship between humans and humans and between humans and mother earth. On the whole the play *Raktakarbi (Red Oleander)* is a warning against man's excessive greed for wealth and over exploitation of nature and labour.

Tagore was against man’s mundane desire and commodification of everything. For a deeper understanding of life he believed that natural surroundings and nature’s touch is essential for children’s education and upbringing. He taught the children in the lap of nature and helped them to learn from nature which is more fundamental than the bookish knowledge. He was against the mad rush of people in the city which is devoid of any natural bondage among people. About Kolkata he wrote:

"Brick after brick, inside man-insect
No love exists"

Tagore believed in development and urbanization, but not destroying the natural environment and the ecosystem. Today, in the twenty first century, the bad effects of so-called development. In his essay ‘atmasakti’ Tagore says this:

> It is important we do not molest nature. But in our rituals and action we are doing this every day. Due to this our problems are getting worse day by day–we are badly being unsuccessful and frustrated. In fact, complexity is not the religion of our country. Simplicity of livelihood is the tradition of our country. Here lies our strength, our life, our commitment.

In the essay ‘Aranya Debata’ (God of Forest) Tagore expresses his concern about relationship between man and nature:

> Everywhere it is increasingly being difficult to protect the wilderness from all-encompassing greed of man. God has sent life, he gave that habitable environment everywhere. It is man who out of greed has contributed to his death. Violating the cosmic plan man’s society is so cursed now. By destroying the wilderness people have brought their ruin. People are destroying the trees upon whom given the responsibility of refreshing the air and whose leaves being fallen give fertility to the land.

Rabindranath Tagore was a visionary. He wanted man to enjoy the blessings of nature and be grateful. He wanted man to realize the nobler purpose of life without wasting time in petty matters, He wholeheartedly wanted man to realize the important elements of nature that sustain life. In many songs and poems he conveys this message of a cosmic plan into which he is not a lord. In a song he says:

> The sky is full of stars, full of life is the world.
> Amidst this have I got a place of mine,
> And so my mind dances with wonder. (Swarabitian, 30)  

13
Ecoconsciousness in Jibananda Das

Perhaps no other Bangla poet has been able to depict rural Bangla’s landscape with all its flora and fauna as beautifully as that Das. His Rupashi Bangla poems published posthumously are graphic representations of a calm and peaceful pastoral life among all the objects of nature- ponds and rivers, water plants, ducks, the jackfruit trees, morning sun and such other objects of nature. Das shows us how to live with nature. Anyone simply having a glance of the titles from Rupashi Bangla poems can understand Das’s love and fascination for the natural world– the world of birds and animals, trees and plants, the crop fields, blue sky etc. He was a nature lover, were spell bound with every minute object of nature. The sensuous description of his poems has only parallel with that of the English romantic poet John Keats. However, as a modern poet Das was not unaware of modern people’s materialistic attitude and greed that are largely responsible for environmental hazards. Unlike those money mongers the poet wants to remain satisfied living in his own home amidst nature. In the poem “Tomra jekhane sadh cale jao” the poet boldly rejects the idea of searching fortune elsewhere:

Go wherever you desire–I will remain alongside Bengal’s banks;  
And see jackfruit tree leaves shedding in the morning breeze.  
And view the brown-winged shalik growing cold in the evening,  
Yellow legs skipping beneath brown furry body in the grass.  

The poet’s bond with nature is so deep and emotional that even after death he wants to come back on the Dhanshiri river perhaps not as a human– may be as a bird:

I’ll come again to the banks of Dhanshiri — to this land  
Perhaps not as a human-- may be as a white-breasted shakhachil or a yellow-beaked shalik;  
Or as a morning crow I’ll return to this late autumnal rice-harvest laden land,  
Wafting on the frog’s bosom I’ll float one day into jack-fruit tree shade,  
Perhaps I’ll come as a girlchild’s duck– her bells on my red-webbed feet,  
My days will pass floating in the fragrance of the aquatic kalmi plant;  
I’ll come lovingly again to Bengal’s rivers, field, farmlands,  
To the green wistful shores of Bengal lapped by Jalangi’s waves.  

In fact, man and nature is an inseparable part in Das’ poems. He feels the touch of his beloved through nature’s touch. He compares the eyes of his beloved with a bird’s nest. He sees his beloved’s face in the silence of an evening which comes slowly like soft dew drops. Amidst all the vibrations in natural world the lover sees his beloved’s face:

At the end of the day, with the soft sound of dew,  
Night falls; the kite wipes the sun’s smells from its wings;  
The world’s colors fade; fireflies light up the world anew.

Time to wrap up work and get set for the telling of tales;
All birds home—rivers too—life’s mart close again;
What remains is darkness and facing me — Banalata Sen.\(^{16}\)

In the poem Kampe (In the camp) Das shows modern people's perversity to destroy wildlife. In this poem Das shows how the hunters are killing the male deer by using the female deer as baits. There is no denying the fact that man’s senseless act are responsible for today’s environmental crisis, and the world is led by people who are not very rational. In a poem Das says:

‘A strange darkness falls upon the earth
Today those who are blind, see most
Those whose heart is devoid of love, no room for pity
The world cannot move an inch without their advice.’ \(^{17}\)

Clearly, Das’s poems are intertwined with a passionate love for nature and a consciousness to deal with nature. For this Das is known as "Rupasi Banglar Kabi” or “the poet of beautiful Bangla.”

**Ecoconsciousness in William Wordsworth**

William Wordsworth is generally known as the greatest nature poet in English literature. Wordsworth realized the importance of nature in human life. In his poems nature and man interacts. He reacted against the artificial town life and the contemporary coffee-house based urban poetry, the artificial diction into which poetry was written and opted for freedom and spontaneity and the openness of nature that is found in rural environment. In *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth says that in rural setting ‘the essential passions of the heart find a better soil’ and in that condition of life ‘our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and,…the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature.’ \(^{18}\)

Nature in Wordsworth's poems has always been a principal source of inspiration and spiritual enlightenment; He treated nature as a mother, a nurse that sustains human life and all other forms of life on earth. It is nature that teaches man to be good. It is nature that heals men from pains and sufferings of their minds. About nature he expressed his philosophic view known as pantheism which means that a power or a benevolent force is active in every object of nature.

In his autobiographical poem “The Prelude” Wordsworth describes how nature influenced him to become a better human being. It is nature that prevents the boy Wordsworth from stealing a boat anchored on the bank of a river or stealing a bird from other boy’s trap. Describing such a benevolent influence of nature on his life Wordsworth wanted to show
that nature has a moralizing effect on human character. In his poetry the freshness of nature and the beautiful objects of nature fill the viewer's mind with joy, and the joy enjoyed at the moment becomes a permanent wealth because it gives a feel of joy later in recollection. Thus in the poem “I Wonder Lonely as a Cloud” the poet is relieved of the pressure of his mind as soon as he sees a host of beautiful daffodils. He was wandering aimlessly and lonely like a piece of cloud, and as soon as he saw the daffodil flowers the pressures of his mind were gone:

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud  
That floats on high o’er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze

Celebrated ecocritic Jonathan Bate says that Wordsworth’s poetry is an exemplar of nature writing from the perspective of the ecocriticism since his poetry teaches readers how to walk with nature through the depiction of the pleasure derived from natural scenes’.  

Nature is ever present in Wordsworth’s poems and it is always treated as a benevolent force. In ‘Tintern Abbey’, one of Wordsworth’s best known poems, Wordsworth expresses his philosophy of nature—his pantheistic views, the healing quality of nature, etc. Mentionable that Tintern Abbey is a landscape beside the Wye river that Wordsworth revisits five years later and expresses his feelings for its natural surroundings. During those five years— from 1793 to 1798—Wordsworth was in London ‘in lonely rooms’, amid ‘the din of towns and cities’. He was ‘in the hours of weariness’, and was depressed by the sad happenings around him. In the hours of such weariness in city life the recollection of memories of Tintern Abbey tranquilized his mind. In this poem the city life is characterized by uproar, agony and fretful situations and therefore, Wordworth preferred rural life. In this poem Wordsworth says that his love for nature is divided into three stages— the early stage, the manhood and the later which is a more philosophical stage. The early stage is the stage of childhood when his attachment with nature was a kind of animal pleasure. In the manhood he is so much captivated by the external beauty of Nature and the third stage is a rationalization of his feelings for the suffering humanity. All these three stages played a vital role for the overall development of Wordsworth as a man. According to Wordsworth any man can pass through these stages. For this, it is necessary to come in close contact with nature and love nature. But in today’s world in the opposite things happen. Instead of loving nature man is polluting and destroying the natural environment resulting in the
consequences of serious environmental hazards such as the scarcity of pure air, pure drinking water and most dreadfully the global warming. In his poem Tintern Abbey Wordsworth gives a more philosophical view about man’s life on earth and the nature that sustains it:

… a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
......

The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and the soul
Of all my moral being.

Wordsworth’s poems give a deep ecological and philosophical interrelationship. His love for nature reminds him of the sufferings of the downtrodden. Thus even ‘the meanest flower’ reminds him of the ‘sad music of humanity.’ The poet urges man to love nature who ‘never did betray/The heart that loved her.’ Therefore, an ecocritical reading of wordsworth poems makes us aware of the importance of a loving relationship between man and nature for a healthy atmosphere both for man and natural environment. But unfortunately, man is the. So, the mother earth is angry with her children. So it is necessary for the humans to restore a balanced relationship between the mother earth and the children.

**Ecological awareness in Robert Frost**

Frost’s poetry is characterized by its simple language, graceful conception and deep ecological concern. The settings of most of his poems are the rural landscape of New England where Frost lived with his family and did farming for several years. He was a lover of nature. In his poetry man and nature co-exist. Man amidst nature is the very feature in Frost’s corpus of poetry.

In his best known poem ‘Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening’ Frost shows the speaker’s love for nature and the natural world. The setting of the poem—the woods, the frozen lakes, snowfall and the silence of the evening provide an atmosphere when one can contemplate and gain wisdom. On his way the speaker (who is a traveller) of the poem stopped to watch the mysterious beauty of the wood in a snowfall evening. He is different from others of this industrialized society, and this can be guessed from the projection of his thought on the horse: “My little horse must think it queer/ To stop without a farmhouse near.” The
horse represents the nonsensical modern people who find no interest to the objects of nature. The speaker’s desire to watch the mysterious beauty of the wood ‘filled up with snow’ and a pull to be connected with the duties (promises) for his fellow beings make a beautiful bond between man and nature. John F Lynen comments that Frost sees the basis of man’s power and indeed of his spiritual being in close contact with nature. Ecocritically the poem is a message of turning to nature. Being detached from nature the modern people are spiritually barren. But the speaker of this poem is different. Amidst this mysterious natural setting he/she realizes the importance of ecological bondage between the human world and the nonhumans. This realization also reminds him of his duties towards his fellow beings which has been expressed in these beautiful lines:

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And mile

Another poem ‘Tree at My Window’ expresses a man’s love for a tree. The poet loves the tree at his window and feels its presence in his life even when the tree goes out of his sight as the poet lowers down the window sash.

The poet says ‘let there never be curtain drawn/Between you and me.’ Amidst nature man learns life’s lessons and the poet’s realization comes, “Your head so much concerned with outer,/Mine with inner” that both of them are destined to suffer. In an age when unplanned urbanization and deforestation are on rampant, man’s love for trees can save the environment. Obviously, ‘Tree at My Window’ gives an insight that modern people should have a greater understanding and appreciation of the importance of trees to maintain an ecological balance.

The poem “Out, Out” can be interpreted as Frost’s lament over the breakdown of ecological balance both in the human world and natural world. In this poem there is the presence of nature: “And from there those that lifted eyes could count / Five mountain ranges one behind the other / Under the sunset far into Vermont.” Amidst such natural surrounding occurs cruelty. In Marxist ecological viewpoint the poem is a critique of labour-exploitation and so called industrialization that largely contributes to environmental crisis. In this poem a small boy lost his life while working with the saw which “rattled” and “made dust and dropped stove-length sticks of wood.” The saw’s work symbolizes deforestation that makes ecological imbalance affecting the human world. Dehumanization and child labour began to loom large in the
Ecocritical Reading of Tagore, Das, Wordsworth and Frost

society once industrialization started and had its mad rush. Frost was against modern people’s materialistic attitude that neglects humanity. If humans continue damaging the natural environment and are indifferent to this crucial issue, the days are not far away when they themselves will be “out, out” from the earth. In the money monger’s saw-mill the boy does ‘a man’s work though child at heart’. The boy’s tragic death touched no one so much. So others ‘turned to their affair’ because ‘they were not the one dead.’ The poem is a warning against unscrupulous exploitation of nature and labour in a capitalist economy that leads the world to disaster.

The poem “Mending Wall” deals with the contrary attitudes of the two villagers, one of whom is the supposed speaker of the poem. The wall in the poem metaphorically refers to the walls in human society as well as a wall in natural world that make things fragmented. The speaker’s neighbour is in favour of mending the wall. He says: “Good fences make good neighbours.” The speaker, on the other hand, finds no reason of keeping a wall between their lands because they have different crops in their lands. ‘He is all pine and I am apple orchard.’ Also, ‘something there is that doesn’t love a wall’ which means that nature does not like a wall. The ‘fence’ or ‘wall’ are also to be interpreted as the blocks, barrages, dams etc that prevent a natural flow and damage biodiversity. Thus the spirit of the poem expresses the poet’s ecological consciousness.

In “West Running Brook” Frost, like a true environmentalist, presents stream as an emblem in which a young couple recognize the running water as completing the triumvirate of their marriage. It becomes the stream of life for them:

“It is from that in water we were from
Long, long before we were from any creature
It flows between us, over us, and with us.
And it is time, strength, tone light, life, and love.”

In today’s world fresh water is going to be scarce more and more. The poem expresses a concern for the preservation of water as he says, “We love the things we love for what, they are”. Here, he refers to the brooks. Frost urges his readers to take care of water, the fount and elixir of life on earth.

The poem “At Woodward’s Gardens” gives the message that humans have no privilege over other creatures. Again some poems such as “After Apple Picking” “Gum Gatherer” and “Mowing” uphold the idea that humans have their own limitations and should exploit nature moderately to earn their living. “A Tuft of Flower”, “Rose” manifest the
view of reciprocal relationship between man and nature. The poem “Riders” shows man’s failure in conquering nature. “Good-By and Keep Cold” suggests that the best way of living with nature is not to interfere it so much.

Frost criticizes the callousness of man in disposing of a brook’s “immortal force” by running roughshod over it with his houses, curbs and street, throwing the brook, “Deep in a sewer dungeon.” Frost talks about man’s irresponsible playing with bonfires which is equally destructive, as with man’s perversity in toying with gunfire. In his “Range Finding” Frost conveys the ominous upheaval of the entire ecology caused by shells as its poison spreads over hill and pasture.

A Comparative Analysis
The four poets/writers discussed above are all nature lovers, and their poetry/literary works inspire love for nature, Eco consciousness is the common feature of their poetry. However, some distinctive features make these four canonical figures different from each other. For example, William Wordsworth’s distinctiveness is his pantheistic treatment to nature. In his poems nature is God and God is nature, and human life cannot exist without nature, he is considered to the greatest nature poet. Frost is also best known as an American Nature poet. Nature and natural world is the essential setting in Frost’s corpus of writing. Man amidst nature is also essential feature of his poetry. But as a modern poet Frost is more symbolic than Wordsworth. In Frost, nature has a separate entity. In some poems it is evident how nature is being polluted and damaged by man. Frost criticizes the ills of industrialization and labour exploitation that are damaging the natural environment. In this respect Frost resembles more with Rabindranath Tagore who vividly reflected exploitation of nature elements as well as working class people. But Tagore’s range and variety is wider than others and he is the combination of all. In his poetry we find Frostian symbols. His poetry inspires a great love for nature like that of Jibanananda Das. In fact he supersedes each of them for his all encompassing treatment of nature, natural world and man’s position in the lap of nature. His message is that man is a part of nature not the king. If man behaves like a king, it will lead him to a disastrous consequence that is the thing that is the happening now. In his literature Tagore is more reactive to man’s senseless act of polluting and damaging the natural environment that result in bringing disasters for humans and other lives on earth.

Conclusion
The paper only limitedly explores the environmental concerns of the four great poets. The texts discussed in the paper have their distinctive
features but they show the common ground of environmental issues that lie beneath the shiny edifices of progress and modernity in today’s world. The one common message of all four poets is to pay attention to nature and natural world so as to achieve as sustainable development. Literature is a very powerful weapon that can bring about a revolutionary change in the society. So, we can be optimistic that environmental literature is likely to play a vital role on the way of tackling modern world’s environmental crisis. For this, in national and international level ecocritical associations and movements need to be strengthened. In the context of Bangladesh Rabindranath, Jibanananda and some other writers can be focused more ecocritically to make people aware of the environmental hazards. Their writings can also be focused internationally to teach people how to live and co-exist with nature.

References

3. ibid, p.240.
5. Peter Barry, ibid p.243.
12. English translation of the poem is by Md. Abu Zafor, the author of this paper.
15. ibid p.51.
16. ibid p. 61.
17. (Source peom: Adhbut Adhar Ek Eshesche E Prithibite Aj)
19. Quoted in Dong Hwa Journal of Humanities No. 7 (July 2005):187-222 College of Humanities and Social Sciences National Dong Hwa University.