

CHAPTER II

Major Themes in the Poems of Rabindranath Tagore and the Select Contemporary Northeastern Poets Writing in English

Besides ecological themes, there are several other issues which are available in the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore and poets of Northeast India. These themes are mostly related to the contemporary problems of the society, mysticism, several religious, economic, political and cultural issues. The writings related to the ecological movement, the writings that speak of the destruction of nature and its flora and fauna, of the biological and physical world, have been designated as writings of 'Radical Statement'. It was born in the United States of America in the late 1950s or the early 1960s. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), Mary Daly's *Gyn/Ecology* (1978), Susan Griffin's *Woman and Nature, The Roaring Inside Her* (1978) are some of the foundational texts that have been able to shape public consciousness about ecology. At once pastoral and bleak in mood, ecological literature is the most elegiac of radical writings. In the late 1950s, Gary Snyder, the American poet, called for a "gentle stewardship" of nature, for a more sensitive awareness of our place in the "ecosystem" (Singh B.N. 2).

As the poet acts as the antennae of the society, his poetry establishes relationships so as to sustain society. In this regard, Ecocriticism's concern is with the category of place and hence with the ideal of reinhabitation, that is, that who we are and who we continue to be, is radically tied to what our surroundings "are and continue to be" (Terblanche 1999: 121). From these considerations it may be the relatedness of everything to everything and this implies an osmotic sense of boundaries (ibidem 122).

Like the ancient Indian literatures, the studies of Greek philosophers- Hippocrates, Aristotle and others were ecological in nature, but they did not have a word for ecology. The earth's total skin of air, water, soil and the biosphere, the planetary system, agriculture, industry, biological processes and everything whatever exist on the earth organic or inorganic, constitute the ecology (Sen David N 2). Our present era witnesses a revolution in the ecological awareness because we have been acutely affected by the pollutions arising out of destruction of nature/ecology for promotion/progress of industry/technology. Now we are revolutionizing the economy of ecology.

Tribals of various regions of India know very well that there is only one path to survival and that path is the ecological one, of harmony between man and nature. They believe that all nature is sacrosanct, that the earth itself as a living organism is capable of experiencing pain and pleasure. This holistic view of the universe is also very beautifully described by Kalidasa in his writings (Choudhury 172-173). Our basic ethos has taught us to live in harmony with nature, in a relationship of mutual dependence. The ecology, i.e. the earth, with its rivers and rich flora and fauna, is an intricate web of life. Development in the western pattern causes annihilation of this living organism/ecology; it destroys our resources rapidly. As such our chief concern at present is to think of alternative means of development which should be eco-friendly by "technology with a human face and that will link development with culture or, in other words, will boost the cultural ecology. As have been dilated in several of the world literatures, the nature/ecology/environment is feminine. The destruction of Nature is ravish/oppression of the Mother, that is, the rearer of the human kind. So for the upliftment of the mankind we have to maintain the environment properly. For this purpose "there are two ways for transforming and maintaining a harmonious relationship with our physical and social environment. One, to think or act with *ecofeminism*, that, the nature is at the centre of our experience and that the destruction of nature is linked with the oppression of women. Two, to expose the Western mode of development with totalizing tendencies and go also for an alternative model of development which will allow for the rhythm and movements of human life to be in accordance with nature". (ibidem 176-177). The cultural ecology believes in the sacredness of human life. *Prakriti* (Nature) is a sacred goddess and it reacts to bring

about ecological sanity. Though the ecology movement is not necessarily feminist, yet the North American (Indian) Women's poetry, which contributes to an understanding of the connections between the domination of persons and domination of non-human nature and between misogyny and hatred of nature, is an instance of ecological feminism or ecofeminism (Dasan 83). These poets have played leading roles in fighting against colonialism, patriarchy and in preserving their distinct cultural traditions and systems of knowledge (ibidem 78-79). Their struggle is more specific and powerful than the Indian woman poets who are writing in English. The Indian English woman poets have been dominated by the patriarchal ideology and they have a tough time coping with the consequences of a phallo-centric myth of creativity (Chibber 165). It is further said, "A random survey of Indian women writing poetry in English in the eighties reveals a fraternity of urban post-independence products boasting of degrees in subjects as varied as literature, law and molecular genetics. Cutting across socio-cultural barriers they attempt to give a lie to Jean Jaques Rousseau's misogyny that "women.....can acquire scientific knowledge, erudition and talent.....but the celestial fire which heats and engulfs the soul..... will always be lacking from women's writings" (ibidem 167). Thus an eco-mystic/ eco-mysterious trend of writing is present in the Indian English poetry. About the Indian English women poets' ecological concerns, Chibber says, "Nature is too often only a part of expensive vacation excursions. It is not the harsh reality of survival as it is for millions of our country-women. The turbulent rivers, jagged rocks, or burning desert sands that they describe do not really touch their lives and so lose their colours in their poetry. Poverty is fashionable material for poetry and the grief it evokes is synthetic and is mostly an intellectual posture" (ibidem 173).

Tagore's poetry is mostly nature-centric and evolutionary. There seems to be conspicuous development of thought and diversity in his whole poetic career. The development of Tagore's poetry can be traced at the various stages of life. In Pre-*Gitanjali* period, poems like *The Awakening of the Waterfall* and *Evening Songs* are quite significant. Both the poems shun gloom and despondency and a strong sense of joy prevails. At his twenty-one, he composed the poem, *Evening Songs*. The poems of next stage of his career deal with the theme of the newly awakened consciousness of reality. Some poems of Tagore deal with the social problems of the day. 'Basundhare' in *Sonar Pari* is one of his nature poems of this period. It is not it mere remembrance of

communion with nature, but also fills longing to dwell amidst nature. Though Tagore appreciated the calmness and tranquility of nature, some poems also depict the destructive aspects of nature. Tagore has depicted nature in all aspects. The first stage of his poetic career abounds in natural phenomena with all its ingredients.

The initial period is followed by the most eventful period of Tagore's life. Whatever he wrote during this time was overshadowed by the magnum opus *Gitanjali*. His poetic talent and exposure reached new heights as he was acclaimed all over the world. *Gitanjali* is a collection of lyrics on God, Man and Nature undefined by his romantic longing for a communion with the divine. The word *Gitanjali* means an offering of songs. Its central theme is the realization of the divine through self-purgation and service to humanity.

The *Gitanjali* songs are mainly poems of Bhakti in the great Indian tradition. Tagore's poems own their inspiration to the Upanishadic doctrine, which envisages the world and entire creation as having been born out of joy, residing in joy and returning to joy at last. The whole book is endowed with rich poetry of great significance. It leaves readers in a fit of contemplation. Even the opening lines seem to create a palpable influence on people:

Thou hast made me endless, such is thy
pleasure.
This frail vessel thou emptiest again and
again, and fillest it ever with fresh life.(1)

Gitanjali is a collection of hundred and three poems. It is ornamented with simplicity and sublimity. Lofty ideas and noble sentiments are mingled with striking images to provide solidity to the work. *Gitanjali* was originally composed in Bengali, but Tagore transcreated his original poems into English. So the English *Gitanjali* is not a literal and comprehensive translation of Bengali *Gitanjali*. The English poems are true

translations, expressing the main ideas of the Bengali poems which may be regarded as fresh compositions.

When *Gitanjali* was published in 1912, the whole world including the Westerners was struck with wonder. This collection of innovative poems rendered them speechless in admiration. That is why aptly in 1913 Tagore received the Nobel Prize for this laudable and peerless work. It compelled all the greatest men of letters to marvel and contemplate of his new set of ideas and sentiments. *Gitanjali* opens four distinctive worlds before the humanity, i.e., (i) God and human soul, (ii) God and nature, (iii) Nature and soul, and (iv) the soul and humanity (Satish Kumar 88). God as the giver of the infinite gifts is at the root of every thing. The nature upholds all the glories of the Almighty God. Every line of *Gitanjali* exposes the mystical glory and mystery of nature and God. Expressing his main objective “I am here sing thee songs”(9), the persona in *Gitanjali* devotes himself to exposing the greatest glory of the Almighty. As such *Gitanjali* as a divine song exposes the Deep ecology principle of eco-criticism. The persona is intoxicated with the love of God at the immortal touch of whose hands his “little heart loses its limits in joy and gives birth to utterance ineffable”. Though “ages pass, still thou (God) pourest, and still there is room to fill” (1-2) –speaks of the mystery of God’s creation. The Almighty being “ Life of my life, I shall ever try to keep my body pure, knowing that thy living touch is upon all my limbs”(3) is the essence of persona’s prime conscience. The persona celebrates the nature’s glories and rejoices in them. The trees, flowers, sky, waters, rains, birds and all creatures rejoice at His command. Hence the persona sings: “ I have had my invitation to this world’s festival and thus my life has been blessed. My eyes have seen and my ears have heard” (10).

Realizing Almighty’s presence everywhere the persona sings: “thou art the sky and thou art the nest as well. O thou beautiful, there is in the nest it is thy love that encloses the soul with colours and sounds and odours” (45). The persona is overwhelmed by the maya (illusion) of the Almighty Creator and surrenders his self to Him. The persona’s self-surrender is his extreme devotion to the Lord and hence he sings: “Like a flock of homesick cranes flying night and day back to their mountain

nects let all my life take its voyage to its eternal home in one salutation to thee". The superb ecomystical strain in *Gitanjali* is quite spiritual and spiritually ecological. Words fail to describe such divine experiences. The poets of Northeast India show some glimpses of spirituality and divinity according to their regional cultures in religious or animistic strains. But Rabindranath Tagore's ecomysticism and spiritually ecological strains is universally excellent.

The Gardener stands next only to *Gitanjali*. It is one of the most wonderful collections everproduced in English. Almost all the poems deal with sheer love, which is worldly as well as divine, though it is hard to distinguish in Tagore's poetry. All the emotions of love like agony, despair, delight, and fulfilment are woven together into a garland of memorable songs. Quite a few of the poems and songs in *The Gardener* are seen to be as good as the best in *Gitanjali*. Yet the collection as a whole is devoid of intensity and organic unity which is reminiscent of the great work.

Indian English poetry from North-eastern part of India is rich with various aspects of the ecology of the region. It has been a fashion with the poets of the region to celebrate the ecological glory of the region and their ecological awareness. The ruthless act of deforestation and oppression upon the Mother Nature in various ways by destroying the serenity of the nature, obliterating the natural environment, killing rare birds and animals and distorting the landscape and biodiversity, have been sharply reacted upon by these poets.

Ms. Mamang Dai (1957–) and Mr. Yumlam Tana (1976–) of Arunachal Pradesh have sympathetically responded to the ecological glory and ecological concerns of the land in their poetry. Ms. Mamang Dai is reminded of the past of Arunachal in her quest for identity. In her poetry, life in Arunachal Pradesh, peoples' faiths and her own, agriculture, mountains, streams, rivers and stones, myths, and nature's magic, reveal myriad world of Arunachal's ecology and mysterious and glorious heritage. She reflects the significance of Arunachalee culture and traditions and recent or modern transitions in the mosaic of their living conditions. A keen explorer of heritage, she seems to be a

sentinel of traditional tribal values. The myriad environment with profound serenity in nature, rich biodiversity, an innocent voice about the things in the surroundings and many other environmental concerns has been her important concerns. She voices her emotions and feelings through the images and metaphors chosen mostly from nature. Her search for identity has exposed her to be a nature-loving-humanist [Das 2004(a): 96]. She reveals her beliefs in the tribal pantheon of Gods and mystery of enviroing ecology.

The poet ponders over the contemporary systems of living in Arunachal and contrasts them with the ancient ways of life and agriculture. She has been an observer of the changes in the tribal society over the time:

I know/
 from faces that I meet/
 in these lives/
 that have crumbled/
 that the past lives/
 in these eyes/
 that the jungle shows/
 sometimes....., the mountain knows/
 how we pressed our hearts/
 against its earth/ we placed the shadows/
 where they are/
 in the leisure of dreams/
 the sky wind knows,/
 how we grew flowers/
 in fields of stone. (ibidem).

She has been a close observer of the wide socio-cultural and eco-cultural changes in her land, Arunachal Pradesh, which is known as one of the thirty odd

biodiversity hot-spots in the world. The men, mountains, rivers, trees and harvests have been her important subjects. In her poem entitled “Sky Song”, she says–

We left the tall trees standing
 We left the children playing
 We left the women talking,
 and the men are predicting Good harvests, or bad
 that winged summer
 We left, racing with
 the leopards of morning. (ibidem 5).

Vilas Sarang considers Indian English poets as river poets as most poets write on the Indian rivers (13). Ms. Dai is also a river poet. Living near the rivers amidst the natural surroundings, and varied feelings, experiences, and emotions, make the poet remember the transactions of life and plights of the components of nature. The past of her ancient land, the red robed men, the tribal rituals, tribes living in caves and the favourite, mysterious ecology lurk in her mind. Such rememberances make her a myth-maker, a designer of living realities and the contemporary myths, or the ancient and present life in Arunachal Pradesh:

I remember then/
 the great river/
 that turned, turning/
 with the fire/
 of the first sun/
 away from the old land/
 redrobed men,
 and the poisonous ritual,”/
Remember the flying dust/
 and the wind,
 like a long echo/

snapping the flight/
of the river beetle,
venomous in the caves/
where men and women/
dwelt, facing the night,
guarding the hooded poison. [2000(b): 64/ 2003: 20]

The lines quoted above from a poem entitled “The Missing Link” is about the river Siang of Arunachal Pradesh. The stretch of the river remained unexplored by geographers when the Survey of India was trying to establish the Tsangpo-Brahmaputra river connection. Nostalgic of her childhood days, the poet traces the ecology of the river with a deep sense of mystery and mysticism:

I will remember then the fading voices of deaf
women framing the root of light
in the first stories to the children of the tribe.
Remember the river’s voice
where else could we be born where
else could we belong
if not of memory divining life and form out of silence water
and mist, the twin gods, water and mist,
and the cloud woman always calling
from the sanctuary of the gorge. (2003: 20)

The rivers, eastern mountains, the flash of summer, intricate nature, divinity in trees, starry skies, the great river, Brahmaputra, landscape full of memories, which the poetess calls “myth and mystery”, (2001: 154), crowd her lines in poetry. Hers is the poetry of landscape:

Without speech
 We practised a craft
 leaving imprints
 on sky walls,
 Linking the seasons,
 coding the trailing.....
 mist in silent messages
 across the vast landscape. [2000(b): 66]

Ecological erosion is of deep concern for the poet and through her awareness of these erosions, she is visionary of a new world of shallow ecology with planted green seedlings. She is hopeful that realizing the decadence and environmental pollution, the world must come back with revived ecology:

And all across the land
 they are singing
 the big trees have fallen
 breaking our dreams,
 and all across the land
 they are still singing
 blind eyes,
 blind space still expanding
 full of hope.
 Do not ask
 how remedies are made.
 The carriers of dreams
 bring small sustenance
 A radiance
 in the wind,
 On a soft summer's day
 intent on the voices
 Of children

We stand
 On the turning road again
 planting green seedlings. [2000(b): 63-64]

Like Dai, Yumlam Tana (1976–) is a river poet. He writes about Tsangpo, Dibang Valley, jhum fields in his surroundings and the life in the bosom of nature. He belongs to the Nyishi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. The Nyishi myth of brotherhood of the man and the tiger and the cultural ecology of Nyishis are his prime concerns. He writes about his identity by humanising his status universally:

I write in English
 which is not my language
 You see, I am a Nyishi
 A tribal claiming to be a man.
 I am all humanity,
 With no geographical boundary,
 No social restrictions, no biological limitations.
Nothing to divide me from my fellowmen.
 (Nongkynrih & Ngangom 13)

He speaks of his brotherhood with the tiger and the ecology of his surroundings, where nature is the foster mother:

My brother, my mother nestled so fondly
 on her bosom
 Singing lullabies in the night and
 when away to the jhum fields in the mountains
 We played various games around the house He
 was my playmate. He was my nurse....
 The Tsangpo flowing through the Dibang

Valley And the plains of India
 And Bangladesh....
 So the tiger must stalk in the forest
 To kill and spill blood for blind appetite
 And the man, a social animal,
 Search an Ideology to suit his Intellect. (ibidem 14-15)

Mamang Dai and Yumlam Tana exposed their deep concerns for the ecology of Arunachal and have tried to glorify their biodiversity. In their future poetry their exploration will reveal the other dimensions of eco-system dynamics and homeostasis.

Though love for nature is intense in the poets of Assam who are writing in English as most of them are romantics, but profuse descriptive passages about ecological awareness are rare in their poetry. Maheswar Neog who tried his hand with English verse *Under One Sky (1970)* writes about the people and landscape of the East European countries which he visited under the Indo-Foreign Cultural Exchange Programme. The Indian landscape finds casual references in his poems. In 'Pranams to the Danube', he writes:

Here is no Gangā, no Yamunā, no Sarasvati, No Godavari, no Kaveri, or no
 Brahmaputra. Yet here am I touching the water of the Danube in my pilgrimage.
 Here are no Mughal Gardens;
 Yet here do I look at every strange face, every
 beautiful face, And it blossoms forth into kindness
 and grace. (1)

A famous teacher of English, Amaresh Datta (1920–), who is a fine romantic poet in his momentary impressions, has given abundant references to nature, though a serious attempt to expose ecological disaster in India and an awareness concerning

ecology is untraceable in his stanzas. In his poem ‘My God’, his romantic use of some ecological terms can be seen:

You have given me
 The freedom
 To traverse my *sky*
 To gain my *nest’s paradise*
 Or lose it. (34)

In another poem “In the beginning”, such uses continue to appear:

In the beginning was the dream
 He said: let there be *light*
 And pressed the *button*
 And the *light* was there
 In his walled *globe*.
 And *water* too
 For his lackey brought it cool from the bar. (ibidem 35).

Lakshahira Das, (1933–), who is called the skylark of North-eastern India [Das 1998(a): 29/ 2004(c): 15], “at the core of whose poetry lies a deep love for mother earth and who accepts and welcomes life with its scent, colour, sap and all pains and affliction (Sarma 1996: 99), is a bilingual poet. Her poems translated into English, were enshrined in Hem Barua’s *Modern Assamese Poetry (1960)* when she could have written originally in English. Her lone collection of poetry both in English translation and originally written in English, entitled *Between Births (1990)* presents her myriad views on nature and human values. Lakshahira has chosen majority of her poetic images from nature. In her ten poems originally written in English, she mingles the grace of the elements of ecology with the transactions in human life and her lyric sensibilities. In her poem entitled “The lingering light”, the glorious light which lingers on the temple

tower, spreads its fragrance over the cloud, trees and familiar roads and the breeze which embraces the sea, throws the golden waves of light around the poetess. The forest grows like love in splendour; straining her arms, she reaches out to the forest and smearing her hands with her tears, she touches the infinite darkness of cerebral anguish of doubt, misunderstanding and being oppressed. At this moment, the songs from the magic flute from some hidden source, fills the air, leaving “the petals of *poesy* amidst crushed Rajanigandhas” (ibidem 28). To give expression to her superb lyric sensibility, the poetess chooses images from the nature, which proves her sincere inclination towards her environment. In another poem “Visit to Neli”, the poetess exposes the cruelty and atrocity of the communal rioters by making the elements of nature sympathise innocent children killed in the massacre of Neli, 1983. In this lullaby, the poetess sings,

Sleep my child
 Sleep in the lap of mother earth....
 Only sunshine brightens your innocent face....
 Sleep my child
 Sleep alone on grass,
 the dew, the dust
 in the lap of mother earth
 The moonlit night of
 Chaturdashi will cover
 Your tender body
 The soft wet cries of the forest will
 hum a lullaby (ibidem 30)

Bhupati Das, a mystic and romantic, who is the finest among the poets of Assam writing in English [Das 2004(c): 19] in his mystic and romantic thoughts, he has consistently leant against the ecology, so to say, the cultural and physical ecology, though his is not a protest against the ecological imbalance or environmental pollution. To introduce his poems in the collection entitled *May I (1998)*, he writes a verse introduction revealing his mystic and romantic vision:

the sky was an honest blue
 the stars were bright
 and the sea was a dancing dream
 with the waves echoing
 the joys of an expectant night
 a poignant moment
 in a cascading embrace
 with the love waves (op. cit. np)

His significant images like river, rainbow, rain, clouds, sky, stone, sun, moon, star, rays, trees, leaves, angels, gods are chosen from nature, signifying some senses related to ecology. Most poems are but soliloquies where the frustrated lover has chosen 'nature' or the matrix of ecology as his final resort.

Dayananda Pathak very significantly in his rambling propensity, has been inconsistent in using in detail the concept of nature. To unravel the existentialist ideologies of Man in this world he has selected some terms related to nature to use them as image or symbol in poems as in the following instance:

Diamond

We are born *flowers*
 pure and holy,
 Life makes us *stones*
 sagged and rude, Here
 innate *fragrance*
 never comes.

Souls killed in the *bud*
 Well before midday *Sun*.
 Would they lead to
 a costly *diamond*
 after history's
 cruel sedimentation? (1998: 27)

Umakanta Sarma's *Thawing Out* (1998) containing only ten poems, vividly depicts natural glory, scenery and significance reflecting the symbolic justifications for human situations. Man's reckless atrocity/oppression upon the ecology situating his destiny in a perilous stage is absent in his poems. His choice of image for nature reveals his lenience to nature. In a love poem he exposes love with the help of a nature background:

An aroma of ploughed earth
 crawled through ferrous
 fresh, grassy, moist.
 A burnt leaf
 sticking on a wet bud,
 An aroma of
 Rohini's half-dried dress. (op. cit. 26)

Pradip Kumar Patra who is domiciled in Assam is another notable poet. He won the Michal Madhusudan Award for his poetry from Michael Madhusudan Academy. Presently he teaches in the Department of English in Bodoland University and is concerned with both theory and practice of poetry. A young enthusiastic poet of inborn merit, Pradip Kumar Patra belongs to the coastal district of Balasore in Orissa. Patra has seven books of poems to his credit, namely, *Panoromic Shillong*, *Summer Implications*, *The Winding Path*, *Midnight Divinity*, *Denouement*, *Dewy Morning* and *The Rain Speaks*.

Though Patra belongs to coastal Orissa, he has been living in Assam for the last two decades and as such he may be regarded as one of the North East Indian English poets due to his deep sense of rootedness to the Northeast. Mapping the link between Assam and Orissa is one of the recurrent themes of Patra's poetry. Poetry for Patra is a strong obsession and passion. He believes poetry to be a significant tool which can transform the humanity.

The calm and quite and pristine beauty and serenity of nature has potent influence in Patra's poetic experience influencing his poetic mind with different themes and content. Patra's early days were spent with the innocent simple people and scenery of a sweet and pastoral dignity in a remote village in the coastal district of Balasore in Orissa. His childhood intimacies with the beauty and bounties of nature with cowherds, open fields, its green hillocks and blue sky, hamlets and rivulets, shaped his mind noble and pure and gradually he apprenticed habits of observation in mind. The serene silence of nature taught him the art of being himself which at later stage gives him depth and sincerity to talk on the spiritual exploration of his self. Patra's poetic vision resembles with William Wordsworth for evidence shows that the poet achieves the spiritual or extra-ordinary knowledge through a deep emotional contact with nature by means of his senses of seeing, sensing, talking and hearing. Patra finds a living presence in nature which forms the 'soul' of his moral being. As a domiciled poet of Assam P.K. Patra has a deep appreciation for the scenic beauty of the Eastern region of India. The ecology, landscape and the memory of it is depicted in the poems like "Assam Greenery in Labyrinth", "A Night in Assam" "Immortal Gradma at Kamakhya", "Panoramic Shillong" etc. Patra talks of the "Natural tapestry" of Assam in many of his poems. As a poet, Patra is mostly associated with countryside for he feels that it is the countryside that is mostly associated with the nature and the mysteries of the universe. For him his village is a source of imagination. In the poem, "Evening in a village" Patra says:

The village evening flares the
dying creativity in me. (Patra 27)

For Patra country side bears an image of his own personal feeling. He deftly writes in his poem “suffering” included in *Denouement*:

When the evening is sleeping
 in the shamble of hope and despair
 I grope for the image of suffering. (Patra 55)

Patra also links his intense relationship, fond memory and the warmth of his village life with nature and the universal forces for a greater meaning and significance in the poem “Perception of the Earth”, included in *Midnight Divinity*:

Startled I am by the ghostly appearance of
 the Earth; ghost and darkness,
 and ghost, I find no clear meaning.
 The only feeling that follows is fear,
 but fear does not scar me; it is the only force
 that deepens my feeling, emotion and
 impressions and make me most human
 for a complete perception of the earth. (Patra 37)

The glory of nature is appreciated in Patra like Tagore. Nature in multiple manifestations of landscape is clearly visible in the poems like “Morning Delight”, “Unfamiliarity” etc. The poet writes:

One early winter morning
 I was walking on the sand;
 The river by my side
 Was a transparent portrait
 Of a dedicated artist. (Patra 38)

The vital force of nature has influenced a kind of ambition and despair in the poems like “Transcending Despair and Stagnation” “The Beach Festival” and “Languishing the wind” included in the volume of poems *Summer Implications*. In the poems included in *Dewy Morning*, landscape evokes a kind of dream, history and living myth.

Patra turns inward to the world of memories and dreams in certain introspective vision in *Panaromic Shillong*. He expresses the feeling in the poems like “Ganesh of my Dream and vision” etc. Like Tagore in Patra the stern reality of poetic self comes in contact with the glorified implications of nature.

Nature images, motifs, symbols like water imagery, pastoral imagery, mystical images abounds in Patra’s poetry. Water imagery in the forms of rain, river, dew, mist is vital imagery in Patra’s poetry. Like Tagore, in Patra also there is an exploration of the ‘self’. Patra believes in an ‘Existence’ beyond realities. They wish to explore its realities, its mysteries. Like Tagore the images of Nature are used by Patra to explore the subjective ‘I’ within him. In the poem ‘Feeling the Rain within’ of *Summer Implications* Patra says:

The voice pierces my being
and its cooling effect passes
So gently through the “I” in me. (Patra 10)

The ‘rain’ image, like Tagore’s poem has been used in many of Patra’s poem. Patra uses ‘rain’ image as a life force, a metaphor for spiritual zeal. In the poem “Reinterpreting Rain” Patra says:

Rain is
 An old subject
 an old symbol
 For Poetry (Patra 1-4)

Rain is a source of great relief for Patra. In the poem “Rain” the poet says:

What is relief!
 The rain endows me with riches Which
 a human being hankers after
 For the state of exaltation is the
 Pre-condition of such a achievement. (Patra 9-13)

Water images abound in Patra’s poems. Just as Wordsworth recollects his association with river Wye, Patra remembers his childhood acquaintances with the river Subarnarekha, in the poem “All about Subarnrekha” (from *Summer Implications*):

A river near my village
 Speaks a lot to me at dawn.---
 I run to its bank at the
 time of my frustration. (Patra 61)

Both Tagore and Patra believe in an order of things beyond their objective realities. They wish to explore its mysteries and to understand more clearly what life means. As Tagor hears “In the rainy gloom of July nights on the thundering chariot of clouds/ he comes, comes, ever comes”, Patra captures the rare moment of imagination that moulds his inner self” in the poems like “The Image of my own self” (from *Denouement*):

Sometimes I go to the river to splash in the
 Knee-deep water; I sit on a rock and hear the
 Sound of the oar from the boat visible in silhouette.
 My artistic sensibility lying dormant in me rushes
 forward to capture the scene in my imagination. (Patra 59)

Through the aforesaid lines it is clear that like the great romantic poets Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, in the poems of both the poets Tagore and Patra, the organic sensibility, the capacity to receive imposes through sense is beyond any doubt. In both the poets the sense of sight hearing and touch can be asserted. Like Tagore, Patra expresses his acute sense of wonder on the mysteries of nature in the lines of the poem “An Intimate Search” (*Summer Implications*):

looking at the night-wedded sky
 I only wonder, mystery engulfs me with
 any heart silent and still. (Patra 65)

There is vivid portrayal of landscape, country side memory of it in Patra’s poetry also. Landscape and rural beauty act as vital catalytic force in Patra’s creative regeneration. Patra believes countryside is more close to nature. Which finds expression in the poems like “Experiencing a Bliss” included in *Summer Implications*.

I have observed, my village smiles
 in the tumultuous night of
 heavy downpour and smile the
 Peasants ploughing the land
 against the backdrop of the morning.
 Sea whose rapport with the rain
 Conspires to contribute their mite
 to the fertility of the sterile earth. (Patra 48)

Patra while churning the memory of his grand mother identifies himself with the sun, sky and the clouds in his poem, “My Grandmother” include in *The Rain Speaks*;

The paddy fields at the end of my village
 Just like the village women gessip
 Masculinity of the sun above,
 The sky looks on; the clouds with nepterious shapes
 Join each other before raining on the dizzy paddy fiend (Patra 53)

Here Patra gives a divine touch to his worldly experience. The serene and calm quite morning is depicted in his poem “Dewy Morning”;

I was looking at the
 Cloudy designs of the sky
 Through the coconut leaves
 And trying to know if there was any
 resemblance between the design
 and the event of my dreams. (Patra 21)

Tagore’s love for his homeland is well-enshrined through his poetry. The ecology, landscape, myth, legends, rites and rituals, culture of his homeland are best exposed in his poetry.

The essence of nativity plays a vital role in Patra’s poetry also. Like Tagore and other provinent poets of Orissa like Jayanta Mahapatra, Bibhu Padhi Patra’s poems also glorifies the past and the present, Natural glory, myth, legends, tradition, cultural set up of a soil where they are form. Patra feels proud of his native state Orissa. So much that in exalted mode if he writes in the poem “Orissa”,

To live in Orissa is to live amidst past
and present both and march toward an epic
the kind of which Homer would have failed to create (Patra 37)

Memory plays a vital role in the poems of Patra. His innocent childhood memory of the “dreached horizon”, “the warmth of his village life”, “his childhood acquaintance with the river “Subarnarekha” is recorded in many of his poems. The poets attachment to his native land, finds expression the following lines of the poem “The Native Land” :

What native land is
What characteristic
makes a difference nobody knows. (Patra 36)

Patra highlights countryside not only for its natural beauty and innocent people, but also for its joy and mirth relating to various festivals.

No precision
No artificiality
and no conscious improvisation,
and only an expansion of nuddle
in memory of some legend or myth. (Patra 43)

Patra has been in Assam for the last fourteen years. The scenic beauty of this North Eastern part of India enlightens him greatly which is seen in the poems like “Memory of Kaldia at Jalah”, where he writes:

The Kaldia comes out
 Of the Himalayas.
 The age-old mountain
 Sitting reminiscent
 of his past mythical glory in
 the Northern horizon
 overlooks the river. (Patra 41)

Poetry recaptures feelings of wonder. Here both Tagore and Patra resembles with Wordsworth. They viewed the simple and common place things of life with artlessness and wonder. Wordsworth finds ecstatic joy witnessing the dark echoing clouds silhouetted against the silver grey sky. Tagore, in the same way felt ecstatic witnessing the dark echoing clouds silhouetted against the silver grey sky. Like wise Patra feels solicited beholding the calm of the sky. In the poem “A Rare Insight” included in *Summer Implications* Patra says:

My mind assumes the clam of
 the sky and remains a child
 Whose docility leaves me
 In peace and percipience. (Patra 18)

The poets of Assam have used the aesthetics of ecology to make a verbal exploration of their vision. They are not attentive to the ecological imbalance/environmental pollution on their motherland and not serious about the necessary ecological awareness. An ecofeminist implication is obvious in a few poems of Lakshahira Das. Other poets who are bilingual, and chiefly write in their mother tongue are not conscious about the ecology movement sweeping across the globe. The landscape of Assam, which has been glorified in the vernacular poetry, has remained unreflected in poetry written in English.

R.K. Madhubir, whose poetry in English is a consistently tenacious quest for roots, reflects the ecological disaster in Manipur, in his personal world and the world at large. He is forerunner of all contemporary Indian English poets of North East India in reacting against man's atrocity against Mother Nature and his ruthless insensibility in destroying the Nature carelessly. In a number of poems he has exposed his reactions, suggested redressal of ecology and revival of the glory of nature. He is recurrently satiric of contemporary man's recklessness of the rich biodiversity which has been sustaining human life and culture from time immemorial. He is so much obsessed with the ecological inequilibrium that in his dreams even he has been disturbed about it:

In my last night dream
 All peaks of Himalayas fallen
 Fallen to dust and flown through rivers
 Pacific, Mediterranean and Indian oceans
 Frozen into hard and concrete rocks
 No one worries no one cries No
 plant exists no wind blows
 Standstill the sun above the sky
 And the earth rotates no more. (1987: 4)

Though making and re-making go on in the Nature continuously, the poet proclaims that "nature never destroys herself" (ibidem 12) and in his frustration against the careless destruction of the biodiversity in the modern times, he vehemently claims that nobody will save him from "the deluge" (ibidem 14):

In my blood there is water
 in my breath there is air
 and in my diet there is protein
 but everything now useless will
 no one save me now either
 Krishna or Jesus or Allah or

Shidaba, any one of you
 be kind and save me from the deluge
 save me kindly from the deluge. (ibidem 14)

In a long poem entitled “Hunter Hunter Pitiless Hunter” the poet reveals the merciless activities of the modern man against mother Nature. He calls the ‘man’ as ‘pitiless hunter’. The modern man has been so much disillusioned by the pride of his false adventures that he has been killing the innocent creatures mistaking them as ferocious ones. As such the poet calls the modern man by the name of mythical ‘Ravana’. As a staunch guardian of ecological awareness and the cultural ecology of the land of his birth, he celebrates the glory of the landscape of Manipur and refers the rivers of the land, named Imphal and Nambul which flow surrounding the city of Imphal. Now the green and rich forests of the land are vanishing day by day and are going beyond the touch of humans. So sings Madhubir:

A far away place from city
 the forest lies beyond human
 touch the resting place of Mother Nature
 the Sheltering Centre of innocent animals
 the calm and quiet forest now becomes
 Hiroshima of second great war
 how pitiless you are;
 how prodigious you are;
 step for a few moments
 do not shoot your poisonous arrows hunter,
 hunter, pitiless hunter. (ibidem 17)

He calls the destroyers of the Nature as ‘germs’. With the decay of the environment and distortion of ecology, the culture, art and religions of nations worldwide are demolishing in spite of the evolutions of the new concepts. Extensive activities to protect the biomass from erosion or obliteration must be undertaken or else

there is every risk of the collapse of our life system. The poet sympathizes Mother Nature and exposes his asphyxiation and exasperation over environmental decadence which is the principle of shallow ecology:

Mother universe
 mother of my father mother of mother
 Oh, unlucky withered mother
 are you too vanishing a day
 slowly and slowly by the germs
 which increasing minute after minute
 and decreasing plants and animals
 where human beings their sepulchre
 culture, art, religion on different nations
 once your multicolouring garden
 now neglecting and vanishing day by day. (ibidem 20-21)

Madhubir's latest collection of verse, *The Shadow of Darkness (1998)* reflects his eco-conscience more emotionally. He revolts against the exploitation of Mother Nature and lamenting for the inhumanity of the contemporary denizens, he resolves to leave the motherland in frustration:

Let us leave mother, our motherland today.
 The cows, the goats, the sheep are eating
 red meat and fish, instead of greens
 eating their mouthful, the bloody gristle.
 The ponds, the lakes, the rivers, once so quiet and calm
 are full with red-hot blood.
 The harmonious soft notes of birds
 where are they gone now, I do not know.
 Instead, the shrill sound of vultures
 always I hear, shattering my ear.

Let us leave mother, our motherland today. (1998: 1)

He calls 'man' a glutton, because man's excessive greed for wealth/ prosperity/ valueless materialism, propels him for destruction of ecology. He feels that the place where the human being is absent is a place of pleasure and solace and so he says:

There will be no war, there will be no killing
cause there's now not a human being here. (ibidem 11).

For better sustenance of ecology, purification of the polluted air, he suggests to dispose the waste of the nature by cutting down the fruitless, rotten, and stinky trees and burning them down and planting new saplings (ibidem 12). There are several other poems like "A Dying Full Moon" (16), "Profile of the Earth" (20), "My Destiny" (22), "My Wish" (23), "Flower and Fire" (27), "Inaudibility" (29), "Green-field" (35), "Future Generations" (36), "Passing out Parade" (37), "Mother Earth" (39) and "Ode to Myself" (75-77) which reveal the poet's awareness of environment in principle of both deep and shallow ecology. Want of rain due to ecological disaster, the earth turning into barren land and unnatural transition in the cycle of seasons concern the poet critically. He reacts in his verse bitterly, like:

Days and months had passed away
Without a single drop of rain on earth
only the orphans are living now
on these barren lands....
but the change of season is natural
where is the spring?
Where are the days of rainy season? (ibidem 20-21)

Robin S. Ngangom, a sojourner in Shillong, is a home bound pilgrim who is essentially an eco-poet and eco-critic with his constant deliberations on various issues of nature and environmental degradation of the current age. Though various places of North East India and other nations find place in his poetry. Manipur, his homeland is his special attraction. He sounds his trumpet of awareness and consciousness to countrymen to revive the cultural and physical ecology of Manipur and to uphold the cultural destiny and place and race consciousness to face the challenges of time. A Meitei (Manipuri) by birth, he is the most representative contemporary Indian English poet of the North-eastern India [Das 1998(b): 94], and has contributed profusely to poetry by exploiting the folk-culture and folkloric tradition of Meghalaya [Das 2003(b): 21]. The landscape of other North-eastern states like Arunachal, Assam, Mizoram, Sikkim and Tibet has been depicted in his poetry [Ngangom 2003(a) 29/1995: 126-128/2002: 93-95]. Revealing his ecological concern, the poet says about his own creed:

I am a poet of earth and space,
possibly water, but not fire. I know
my limitations, and there are many things
between earth and sky I cannot name.
I have an ancient desire for understanding,
meaninglessness frightens me.
That is why I love simple things
such as sunlight on our shoulders,
or woman with firm breasts
and hills quiet in the rain. [2000(a): 39].

Robin is more bothered about the changes in Manipur due to the contemporary politics and social revolutions that result in insurgency. At several places in his poetry, he has exposed his concern about the ecology. He is worried about deforestation in Meghalaya and its bad effect on the hills:

Although we kill more than a hundred trees
 every month in our region of hills outstretched
 as our guileless hands once,
 still the rainsong like our disturbed
 dreams.... We of the hills, who have
 so little,
 will be patient with voice of our women
 with the munificence of our trees, without widowed
 soil, and uprooted animals (1988: 19)

The obliteration of the bio-diversity pains the poet. He is upset with the carelessness of the present generation regarding their exploitation of nature. To complain of the ecological degeneration along with the eco-cultural perversion, the poet declaims in a poem entitled "Racial Progression";

We are the remnants of a
 dying people We scorn the
 memory of the dead....
 Come to our forests and visit our lodges
 Come and share with us our glorious culture. (ibidem: 20-21).

The poet names the rich ecology of his land as "ancestral granaries" and warns his countrymen against the oppression upon nature which will result in unbearable consequences with his social and socialist ecological vision:

My people make a bonfire Of
 your ancestral granaries and
 cede your primordial hills to
 vultures from the plains....
 One day you'll find

no earth, no trees or rivers
 and would even sell
 a handful of blue sky
 to prolong your decadence. (ibidem 42-43)

A constantly tragic view of the denuded environment lurks in the mind of the poet and as such his poetry is replete with disappointment, decadence and pictures of degeneration:

Afternoon, when the
 cicada's cry is caught by
 the hill's ears
 and the rains withdraw
 for unknown land, legends
 are buried beneath layers of
 nudging earth;
 I walk alone across hostile maps,
 desolate and afraid. (1994: 28)

Winter on the hills is very symbolic of the death, degradation, denudation and bleakness. It symbolises the impending disaster due to the harm caused to the biodiversity of ecology by the humankind:

Winter is here
 And there's nothing more to be said.
 Earth has bared her bosom
 and in the thick of life
 We are in the thick of death. (1994: 29)

Ecology of the homeland is the dearest phenomenon for the poet. Remembering one of the finest writers of Manipur, a Sahitya Akademi award winner, late Pacha Meetei (1943-1990), who died in extreme poverty being hounded as a drunkard and madman, the poet establishes his verdict on importance of motherland's ecology in Pacha's words:

You only said: "One's homeland is dear.
I have not seen all of this land, I have not
been able to tread the grass that grows there. (1995: 126)

The natural environment of Mizoram is even celebrated by Robin in his verse. The rites, rituals and eco-cultural glories have been voiced by the poet, in his poem entitled "To a Woman from Southeastern Hills" (1995: 126-128).

"Tonight, a fullmoon steals above northern pines, and boys from your nativelyland sit on terraces with their dolorous guitars, singing of loves lost in the ravine of the heart." (ibidem 127)

The seasons exert various effects on the natives of the hills and thus says Robin in his poems that in summer "there reposes within me/ a desire not to meet anyone/ in the long afternoons" (1999:54), in autumn "by the presage of this dark wind/ harrowing the breast of the hill, the leaves's kindling,/ autumn returns, (ibidem) and at other times, "wedged between the stones of origin and the profane/ your muted steps belong to desertion/ while we search in rains of memory,/ with a solitary flower/ scanning monoliths standing in mist." (ibidem 54-55). The graces of nature are eroding with the spread of perversion and degeneration everywhere. As such the poet says:

Leaves no longer respond,
 to the alchemy of seasons,
 and the heart lies fallow
 expecting winter rain Earth
 has closed again like a woman
 when you do not return, and dreams turn to
 rust, the flame and the dew cannot create
 life. Only lust breaks on the branches of
 night, and men wear hideous masks, the
 fragrance of the wildrose is lost, and only
 the flowers of the market are on sale. [2000(a): 38]

The poet's memory of his past association with his friend Samir is reflected in his sense of today's degenerated natural environment and hence he is prophetic about a newtime when there will be a restoration of the ancient modes of life:

I fade into that distance, harking back
 to open fields of rice, away from your exhausted
 cough of factories and engines, touching
 braided roads to reach the hills.
 One day we shall be together again
 without names, with the simple things
 of earth, with plantain leaves, in months
 free of Sundays, and days without thoughts
 of women, with earthen pots and bamboo
 spoons. One day we shall walk that road
 where carrion-hunters have not defiled
 memory." [2000(b): 25-26]

The natural scenes and surroundings of Sikkim and Tibet find fine depiction in Robin's verse:

Teesta, tell me the meaning of your name.
 Like secretive men impelled by a sinuous love
 we follow your scent when the flame of the forest borrows a
 monk's robes and something shimmers beneath the veil of the
 Himalayan sky
 until you lift us on your maternal lap
 of flowers and stone, Gangtok. (2002: 94)

The capital city of Arunachal Pradesh named Itanagar (City of Baked Clay) and other places like Bandardewa, Bomdila and the natural glory of the land find lyric narration in Robin's verses and his poem entitled "City of Baked Clay" which epitomizes his eco-mystic attitude as he has mystified the greatness of the great places:

Bandardewa, strange syllables which
 followed us on the road until a crack on
 the green wall unfolded a blue river
 below, cottonclouds picked by
 mountains, the road relentless
 and then yak hair and hornbill feather on
 hats in a frontier market.
 A land of song and dances, roads
 becoming wild rivers, naked children
 about bamboo huts, a mansion with
 curling roofs
 and moody rice beer.
 I heard of songs sung all night and
 dances from house to house. A full
 moon,
 a quiet night,
 a sky which has lost its way, the blazing
 rhododendron trail
 to Bomdila still far away." [2003(a): 29]

Even in his prose-poems, Robin reveals his place politics and its ecology involving it with the present day insurgent activities. In the terrorist-ridden land sometimes innocent neighbours are also picked up by the army men and are punished. As such Robin calls these places as ‘bad places’:

“Some times, through no fault of its own, a neighbourhood picks up a bad reputation. If you happen to visit it on a singularly uneventful day, you will find it roofed with a blue sky, and dark-green pines and bamboo stooping to kiss its dusty road.” [2003(b): 151].

In *Anthology of Contemporary Poetry from the Northeast* edited by Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih and Robin S. Ngangom, Robin’s poetry has been considered as poetry from Meghalaya and in my critical essay entitled “Nostalgic Matrices: Poetry in English from Meghalaya” [2003(b): 21-23] I have also discussed his poetry among other poets of Meghalaya as at present he is a Shillong-based poet. But here I consider him a poet from Manipur though he represents the whole of North-east because he introduces himself as a Meitei and even today he writes in his mother tongue Manipuri and is more garrulous about Manipur in his poetry. Both the poets of Manipur have humanised ecology of their land.

In Meghalaya, the Scotland of East, nearly a dozen poets write regularly in English. Those who write exclusively in English, among them Desmond Lee Kharmawphlang, Ananya Sankar Guha, Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih and Anjum Hasan, are famous and have published their poetry collections. Others who have exposed their ecological aesthetics and have exploited the myths and folklore of the land in poetry are Esther Syiem, Almond D. Syiem, Indari Syiem Warjri, Paul Lyngdoh, and Donboklang Ryntathieng. Robin Ngangom who has written extensively on Meghalaya has been discussed among the Manipuri poets.

Deforestation, destruction of nature's beauty and bounty and changing of nature's course to modern men's luxury are reflected in Kharmawphlang's poetry. In a poem entitled "Letter to a Dear Friend", he writes:

You ask me about our hills—well, they
 are still there—the stones
 and rivers too—they are being pimped
 for tourists and lately,
 in many places disembowelled
 mercilessly. Their clothes are carried away
 to the lowlands and
 their names are sometimes being changed. (Paranjape.ed. 1993: 30)

Due to the distortion of nature ecological disasters take place. In the same letter, he writes again:

Since you asked, I mention these things.
 When you write next,
 I may have some interesting things to
 report may be about the advent
 of acid rain or even the disappearance of
 some villages for mining of
 a rare mineral (ibidem 31)

About his race-and-place-consciousness in the context of modern times, he says:

The stories burn our memories like
 a distant meteor searing

the unnamed gloom; by their light I
 examine the great hurt I carry in my soul
 for having denied my own. (Nongkyrih et al 2003: 139)

He writes about lakes, falls, forest, seasons and villages and is never tired of telling stories about them and as such he says:

I never get tired of talking about my
 hometown.
 In summer the sky is pregnant, Swollen
 with unborn rain.
 Winter arrives, with a tepid sun
 touching the frozen hills, the dream-boats on lakes. (ibidem 134).

Decimated landscape, a haze hanging suspended farther in southern skies, morning bathed in unease and quietness, trees laying dead everywhere and sad pictures of villages asphyxiate his heart and in his frustration he says: “It is a race against time to save the sacred forest of *Thaiang*” (2000:5) and reveals further:

Sohpdok, Raitong, Sonidan.....
 the village names sound like an
 ancient chant as the road weaves
 around the hills,
 the jeep topping each rise to a heave.
 Wheels biting dust, spinning relentlessly (ibidem).

In his poem, *Thaiang Buried Roots*, the poet writes about the sacred forest of *Thaiang* and voices of the spirit of the forest. The poem contains a conversation

between the *ThaiangSpirit* and the poet about the environmental transitions in Meghalaya. [Das 2003(b): 25].

Constantly nostalgic of his hometown, Ananya S. Guha, voices his affinity with Shillong and the land of rains and clouds, Meghalaya. He calls Meghalaya, a 'fairyland' and counts down his days there:

This is my fairyland
 my monsoon-spilled hometown
 my frost-bitten home
 I have spent years lazing here
 to feel every morning
 a whiff of freshness
 a tang of the hilly air (1988: 33)

The flora and fauna of the land continuously haunt his mind and he feels pain to recount the act of deforestation and depletion of nature's glory:

The majestic pine trees
 call me
 with their verdant ornaments
 as I am whisked away
 in taxi or a car
 I burn their branches
 now and then
 Trees no longer
 look green.... (ibidem: 11)

By our careless and irresponsible activities of destroying nature's rich treasures, we have been a huge threat to the safety of our foster mother, Nature:

We find the hawk in the wind, the trees,
 the hills. This huge loneliness has
 ensnared its net upon us We are but its
 shadow
 The fields shiver the sky grimaces
 Unmoved by the emptiness of our threat; (1994: 29)

The poet finds ever-increasing gloom in his surroundings of perversion of ecology and as such grim-faced nature is now helpless to save the humanity. Addressing his pale-faced friend, the poet says:

Where were you then my light-eyed, pale-
 faced friend, what dreams
 do you weave in earthly hours?
 What stories do you narrate
 Of the hills, stores,
 the sepulchred wind, as angels drift, ghosts
 catcall. [2003(b): 7]

Man's future is uncertain today as his natural environment is destroyed. So says the poet:

Or the man in the streets with
 Uncertain tomorrow
 I remember as a child: sunspun Moments
 with grey spiralling mists

Rising hopes,
 The indomitable spirit of green trees
 And sulking crows. [2003(a): 105]

To take care of our future and to compensate the ecological disaster, we shall have to save the ecology/biodiversity from the destruction by redressing the loss. We shall have to take care of our environment:

Opening our arms, let us
 touch the hills
 touch the rain
 touch the skies
 silently. (1997: 16)

The famous Khasi poet, Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih is a great worshipper of Mother Nature. His homeland Meghalaya's rivers, lakes, forests, fairies, hills, stone and nature's bounty find recurrent depiction in his poetry. Though he published books of his poems late, his forerunners have not exposed man's insensibility towards the nature and environmental degeneration in sufficient quantum as he has done. Like W.B. Yeats' *Innisfree*, Cherrapunjee is Kynpham's *Innisfree*. The nuisance of cutting and burning of forests, and digging of mines have distorted the bosom of nature and devastated the glory of nature. So he has reacted vehemently against these activities in his poetry:

The barren hills
 that bear the pockmarks
 of minors and a foolish people that
 burn and cut at will,
 looks as unremarkable
 as half-naked little brats. [1992(a): 24]

He has sympathy with the nature and thus everywhere he gives a fond description of the graces of nature drawing the attention of everybody about how nature cares us:

The breeze, however,
 prowling between spells of furious wind, stole
 up from the brooks
 to meet me on the hills
 and whisper its sympathies on the golden grass. [1992(b): 18]

The hills of Meghalaya, his homeland are abundantly glorious. The cold climate of his place has been symbolic of the degeneration due to the negligence to the natural environment in all shapes. Thus to share the sufferings of the Mother Nature, he himself has decided to live like *fungus* and hence he says:

That is why I keep like fungus
 to this cold and dark interior
 and in everything that I do
 it is only the fungus that shows (1994: 57)

The poet's persona is upset about the frequency of strange ways and strange things which are alien to his land. He is obsessed with these:

For how long can we go on
 living like wind blown thistledowns?.....
 Like flowers, only strangers
 and strange ways have come
 to bloom in this land. (1998: 53)

With the myriad glory of the biodiversity of his land of birth, the poet establishes the identity of a Khasi in the following narration which is but cultural ecology of the Khasis. The cultural distinction of a Khasi is his identity. As such the persona finds a *Khasi* as a man, who once a year celebrates distinctively to:

sport a *muga*-mulberry turban,
 an eri shawl and is seen *en*
grande tenue at *weiking* or
pomblang
 who once a year, speaks of these great festivals
 and the teachings of his great ancestors.
 who once a year, says “to Know Man,
 to Know God, to Earn Righteousness” is
 our faith. But this, only once a year.
 (2004: 29)

He considers the sufferings of the hills men and depletion of hills’ tribes as a kind of ecological erosion. The hill folks’ struggle for survival is tough. As such he justifies the insurgency reared by the tribes as a protest against their movement towards extinction, which is a way of quest for survival and revival of their past glories:

Somewhere in a forgotten little corner of the world a hill
 tribe of one million,
 fearful of its extinction,
 waged an arms insurrection against a nation of billion [2003(a):30 / 2003(b):
 162]

Anjum Hasan is strong new voice in whose poetry a feminist voice is loud and reverberating, and she likens the sufferings and slavery of women to the suffering of mother-nature. She describes “laughter is just the language of pain” (1994: 22). She

exposes realities of life like a profound mystic pondering deep on the stark realities human existence:

Life is a woman
 Night, a stolen river
 drowning the sobbing chamber
 of unnamed girls.
 I see centuries of slavery
 in the shadows
 within one darkroom
 above a multitude of murky streets. (ibidem).

Slavery and suffering are key words in an ordinary citizen's life. As a lover of nature she rejoices in the bounty of nature and gives a very beautiful description of flora and fauna in her poems which pacifies the aggrieved souls:

The forest-green orb of the lime
 hanging from dull trees in empty gardens,
 the leaf of the pear, sifting sunlight and dividing rain.
 (2003: 128)

Anjum Hasan, who spent her childhood years in Shillong, is a non-tribal Muslim woman poet. She is a deeply introspective, frank and philosophical muse. "Well-read in English and other literatures, and a student of Philosophy, she has the right kind of "long foreground" for a serious engagement with poetry. Her poetry is evocative, emotive, and built around memories of people, and places. And yet she very seldom lapses into sentimental slop." (Satpathy1999:21).

Budding poets of Mizoram, H. Ramdinthari and Mona Zote are very nostalgic of the Mizo landscape. Ramdinthari in her poems paints her environment in the hue of her imagination and deep sense of reality. [Das 2004(b): 13]. The Mizo hills, valleys, and extremely enticing nature find lucid and deeply romantic depiction in her lines:

The sky is black and blue tonight until
 stars hang up their lights from the
 treetops
 lit by stray lights.....
 soon voices leave the black cobalt street,
 whispers of empty rivers
 and bird cries in crescendo;
 the hill slope is dark, galvanic and barren (Nongkynrih et al. 2003: 195)

Through her maturing imagination, she has been pondering over man's attitudes to nature. Her nostalgia revolves round the landscape of Mizoram. She finds the human habitations as well as the green surroundings very charming in her colourful imagination and depicts them realistically: "For us the fogged lights of green leaves/ and the thick lamp-post of crushed boulders/ are antipodes where we build our huts."(ibidem 197)

The other Mizo poet, Mona Zote exposes her love of nature in her serene, sincere and nostalgic expressions. She feels the feelings of the elements of nature as human feelings. As such she speaks that snakeberries "are shy and will often hide under a mass/of larger leaves. /They look/
 like drops of blood/from a deer's flank. And so sweet. (ibidem 199).

She is very sentimental and her lines reflect a religious environment among the hemming hills under the sky:

Thin-skinned October/
 With its cold religious air Eyes of coal/
 Veins of ice/
 And the dark-enfolded insects /
 Go to sleep insects/
 Go to sleep/
 O Allah she thinks of Jesu/
 When out of the honeycomb of right church drums busily advertise/
 The high percentage of faith. (ibidem 204).

A prominent poet of Nagaland, Temsula Ao, is lover of nature and is a nature-poet par excellence. The pristine cultural and physical ecology of Meghalaya, Nagaland and other parts of Northeast and the sufferings of women haunt her vision. As a strong champion of the women and poor, she hails them to be ‘the blessed beings’:

Woman/
 Nature fashioned her thus./
 To bear the burden/
 To hold the seed/
 And feed/
 Every other need/
 But hers. (ibidem 22)

In many of her poems, she laments the destruction of nature and erosion of nature’s riches. She laments for the forest which was once verdant, virgin, and vibrant with tall trees as those have now been depleted. She is obsessed with absence of sweet melody of birds’ songs. Man’s atrocity on nature has resulted in the fury of the storms which is ravaging man’s habitations and the rest of the nature. The poet reveals her grief over the sufferings of mother-earth:

With the evidence of
 her rape.
 As on her breasts the
 elephants trample the
 lorries rumble
 loaded with her treasures
 Bound for the mills
 At the foothills (ibidem 45).

The persona is also infuriated with the drastic changes in nature. The river flowing with sweet gurgling sound with little fishes growing big on her bosom has dried. The deer, while tired and thirsty, was taking rest and quenching thirst with crystal mouthfuls, is now upset with muddy and choked river and is distressed. There are unnatural ways of fishing:

Choking with the remains
 of her sister
 The forest.
 No life stirs in her belly now.
 The bomb
 And the bleaching powder
 Have left her with no tomorrow (ibidem 46).

Man's cruelty to the lushness, sap and beauty of the earth has destroyed the surrounding serenity and thus all pervading perversion and disappointment prevail here and we have no other alternative than to lament the fate of the Mother Earth:

Alas for this earth
 Thus ravaged
 Stripped of her lushness

And her sap
 Her countenance
 Furrowed and damaged
 like a fading beauty
 Touched by age
 Her substance Exposed
 and crumbling ...
 To silt into the ocean
 And sand into the desert,
 Leaving her
 Old and decrepit
 Before her time (ibidem 46-47)

The persona reveals the mystery of ecology by singing of Jatinga, a place in Assam, where migratory birds congregate and commit suicide en masse. The secrets of nature and the realities make the poet feel that those birds come here to be immortal by dying together:

What leads you there
 O you immortal Birds?
 The strength
 Of your tiny wings
 or the dying cries
 Of your singing throats? (ibidem 48)

The Ao Origin myths about the glory of *Lungterok* (literally six stones), a place in the village called *Chungliyimti* in the Ao area of Nagaland, where it is supposed that the forefathers of the Aosemerged out of the earth, who were the worshippers of the 'Ecology' and were called the "Stone people":

The worshippers Of
 unknown, unseen
 Spirits
 Of trees, forests
 Of stones, and rivers,
 Believers of soul
 And its varied forms.
 (ibidem 50).

Temsula as an ethnic poet from hills, is a significant hill poet as the culture of hills find ample exposition in her verse. The poems on hills expose the ecological inequilibrium caused by the human nuisances and industrialisation in the modern times, which has been havoc to our future:

The sounds and sights
 Have altered
 In my hills
 Once they hummed
 With bird song
 And happy gurgling brooks
 Like running silver
 With shoals of many fish....
 (ibidem 48-49).

The elements of nature, which have been exploited by men, now protest in the voices and verses of the poet. This shows the poet's sympathetic responses to the nature. The non-humans have made to expose human sentiments. A monolith, which now stands at a village gate claims of its dissatisfaction and ignominy. So in its prayer, it says to other elements of nature not to tell its beloved about its outcast state:

And my beloved queries
 Just tell her
 I have gone to my glory
 But please, please, never
 Tell her the story
 Of my ignominy (2003: 5)

A priest of nature, Temsula Ao has truly given a picture of her land's ecology in her poetry. A blithe singer of lyrical ballads, she is a dreamer of an ecofriendly environment in the progress of the nation. To adopt technology with a human face linking development with culture to boost cultural ecology, Temsula Ao presents her ecofeminist-humanist-sermons in her songs.

Another strong voice, Nini Vinguriau Lungalang swims through the course of poetry with her sensibilities of tribal way of life, neglected people, and the Naga heritage [Das 2000(a): 151]. The myriad changes in the environment over the years surprise and obsess her. She remembers her utopian golden morning years and feels that she would not be able to get back those days again:

To turn back time and live again,
 I would not change a day, a year
 No: not even that wayward tear or wince of pain,
 For every breath that I have drawn
 Lent its own moment to the sum of me (1994: 1).

She is nostalgic of those early years of life when the environment was evergreen at par with her greenness. Those days seemed perpetual at that time but at present they have been nowhere leaving her helpless in her loneliness:

I look back on the morning years
 That have tricked like water ,
 Through my uncaring young fingers,
 when I only delighted in the touch and taste
 Warmth and coolth of those sunlit, perpetual- seeming days: (ibidem).

According to the traditional faith, Mountains are ancestors of the Naga people. The poet in her deep reverence for the mountains advises her race to rever the mountain 'Puliebadze' which is ten kilometres away from Kohima, by removing their habitations from the sacred hill and by worshipping her:

Stern sentinel trees silently guard
 the secret pulse that throbs beneath the skirts
 Of ancient ancestress Puliebadze....
 Swiftly remove yourself from holy ground, for shame!...
 like holy incense, sanctify the air again
 on ancient ancestress Puliebadze.....(1990:9)

Ecological devastations and degenerations during our times are the important concerns of Monalisa Changkija (1960–) who has reacted against man's atrocity on nature and women. As a sentinel of time and the cultural and political climate of the land of her birth in one of her poems, Monalisa has protested and challenged the manipulators who have spoiled the peace and prosperity her mother-land. Her protest prompts the citizens to be bold and to come forward to discipline ourselves for the better future.

Yes, I've seen our rice fields
 turn into factories and hills
 reduced to barren brown our
 rivers have dried

and our once sparkling fish
 lie dead on sandy banks.....
 But I wonder why you remain silent
 When I say we are hungry (Nongkynrih et al 2003: 216)

Easterine Kire (Iralu), the first poet and fictionist from Nagaland who tried her hand poetry in English, mingles her vision of past with the current realities. She reflects the erosions of environment and explores the folklore of the land about the culture of abundance of her mother-land till the unexplainable tragedy that intruded her mother-land of plenty in the shape of the Evil:

Keviselie speaks of a time
 when her hills were untamed
 her soil young and virgin
 and her warriors worthy
 the earth had felt good
 and full and rich and kind to his touch.
 Her daughters were seven,
 with the mountain air in their breaths and
 hair the colour of soft summer nights
 every evening they would return
 Their baskets overflowing
 with the yield of the land
 then they would gather round
 and their songs filled all the earth (ibidem 219).

In Indian English writings from the Northeastern region, poets from Nagaland like Easterine Kire, Temsula Ao, Monalisa Changkija and Nini Lungalang have written some bio-regional narratives voicing their ecofeminist ideals.

Rajendra Bhandari, the lone poet from Sikkim who writes in English and translates from Nepali, pigments his landscape with myriad mysteries. The stars, streams, flowers, trees and creatures of the surroundings are the myths and means of explorations of his emotions and feelings. He mystifies the nature by assigning human attributes to the aspects of nature:

The naked sky is the witness.
 Sultry sun is the witness.
 These words,
 I haven't coughed out
 from nowhere.....
 I haven't materialised these lines
 by the sleight of my hand.
 Reclaiming them from sliding land
 I've lifted them from
 the forests, the lowlands,
 the grainfields, the cliffs (2000: 19/ 2003: 72).

He is sympathetic to the subalterns: the poor and downtrodden. He makes Mother Nature a subaltern. Depicting the poverty of a girl and her parents, he consoles himself with step taken up by the girl and rejoices in the triumph of the subaltern:

In the dark corner of the street,
 the girl has opened a shop
 going hungry for many days
 At last she has learnt a trade,
 Trembling from the death-bed
 her father spat at the sky once
 Shedding many a tear
 the mother hid her face
 in her two palms. (1992: 23)

Our unkindness to nature results in our sorrow. The poet reacts to loneliness during the rains and hailstorm, when the nature turns violent isolating the man in shivering and solitude, which is supposed to be nature's reaction to man's insensibility:

Hostile is this loneliness to me.
 The past and present have grabbed me.
 History has assaulted me brutally, my dear!
 Wounded all through the body, I'm here (2000: 21).

Bhaskar Roy Barman from Tripura depicts the environmental, eco-marxist and ecocentric and anthropocentric reactions on the modern human's strides and exploitation of nature. Recurrence of the themes of river, stream, mountain, tree, temple, priest, crow, stone and other forms of ecology is found in many of his poems. Through the images of river and several forms of nature, the poet sincerely exposes the hard life of the tribes and their happy singing life in the midst of all hardships:

The river knows not how
 it has come to be called a river,
 Know though it does where it was born,
 Since its birth on the mountain top
 It has been cascading down the mountain
 Through groups of stones
 Spread out down the path
 While treading its way it sings forth
 into existence (Roy Barman 1)

The multiple difficulties, sorrow-stricken rural life, and the life of the tribes who have been driven away from the plains of Tripura by the Bengali refugees of Bangladesh, the tribal rites and practices, the harvest activities and the surrounding

environment find recurrent exposition in his poetry and he is fond of presenting the life and activities of these simple-hearted tribes:

I resumed wending my way towards the village, On my
 ears impinged the sounds
 That emanate from beating of tomtoms...
 Danced round heaps of crop gathered on a courtyard.
 I remembered it was time farmers brought crops home. (ibidem 35).

The poets of Northeast India are sentinels of time, culture and clime of all affairs. Ecology being their prime concern in their quest for identity, they have explored their sentiments and revealed their views about the transitions in natural environment over the years for several reasons. All have sympathetically gone deep into the environmental concerns for a revival of the glorious past of the evergreen nature.

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