

# The Ecological Self in Rewat Panpipat's Poetry

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## Abstract

This article aims to study the ecological self in Rewat Panpipat's poetry in terms of ecological self presentation in poetry. This study uses Naess' ecological self framework to analyze seven Rewat Panpipat poems, including *Ban Mae Nam* (1995), *Pan Fon Pleng Nam* (2001), *Mae Nam Ram Luek* (2004), *Nok Cheewit* (2007), *Maew Phu Mong Hen Kam Pang Pen Sa Pan* "the story of a cat seeing the wall as a bridge" (2012), *Mae Nam Deaw Kan* (2012), and *Mae Nam Tee Sap Soon* (2016). The result of the study insists that Rewat Panpipat's poems are influenced by nature and the environment. Ecological self is presented via a story through his experiences with nature and the environment from the past until present. The ecological self is presented as unique features, including nature, materials, soil, water, wild, time, season, and place. Life in rural areas is a unique characteristic that is presented by Rewat Panpipat. Rewat Panpipat's imagination of the

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relationship between humans and nature is portrayed in those poems. The poems portray that humans and nature are living together and it can be considered as the same thing. Nature is portrayed as the creator, caregiver, and value maker for the human race. The value of human life is Self-Realization which relates to enlighten nature or ecological self.

**Keywords:** Ecological-self, poems, Rewat Panpipat, Self-Realization

## 1. Introduction

Charles Tayler, the philosopher and the famous writer who wrote "Source of the Self", stated that for more than two centuries in the western world, the best language to express yourself is art. All poetry, visual arts, and music are modern western culture. The arts seem like a kind of one religion (The Dalai Lama, 2013). This speech portrays the importance of art, which presents the identity of the author. Modern technology and innovation have changed the agricultural era into an endless industrial era. The increasing global population and the development of technology have resulted in the exploitation of the environment and nature. Because of the exploitation of industrial development, "ecology" was created for studying and solving a crisis in the environment. Phanpoon (2015) states that "In the past, western ecology was the study of the relationship between plants and animals. There was nothing associated with humans. At that time, they hadn't realized that they were part of nature. Humans studied nature for gaining benefits from nature.

Phuphakdee (2004) divides the meaning and value of life into two categories: Anthropocentric and Ecocentric. Anthropocentric is the concept that only humans can create morality by using their power to set the right.

Humans create the meaning and value of everything because humans are considered as rational living things. According to this concept, humans are considered unspiritual. Humans have no relationship with nature, so humans are the owners of nature. The concept sees nature as a resource without any value in itself. The only value of nature is to give benefit to humans. This happens because humans disassociate from the world and a human-centered point of view. Ecocentrism considers all living organisms as valuable as human beings. When compared to humans, it is more significant and consequential, more inclusive, more complex, more integrated, more creative, more beautiful, more mysterious, and older than time (Naess, 1973).

The relationship between man and nature is shown in the preface of *Rewat Panpipat's Nok Chee Wit*. He expresses his consciousness toward nature and ecological self as, "You and I are growing a plant to find the meaning of life."

From the statement, Rewat Panpipat expresses the meaning of life as nature. It portrays the relationship between the poet and the ecological self. Moreover, it can be seen as the spirit and soul of the poet joined together with nature. According to volume 16th of *The Writer* magazine, Rewat Panpipat states, "In the middle of the next year, we would see the paddy field. We could prepare worship for the mother goddess of grain. We could prepare all things, a speech for the grains, a courtyard speech, and a speech for taking rice to the barn. I did it because I believe in this. I believe in soil, water, wind, and fire. Somebody might say paying respect to the soil and water is nonsense, but I really love to do that. People living in the jungle might respect the water, river ghost, mountain ghost. I believe those people have an elaborate mentality. On the other hand, people who call themselves a civilized group, think they are the owner of nature (Piamsuwansiri, 2013).

Rewat Panpipat was born on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 1966 in Wang Luek, Sam Chuk, Suphan Buri. He finished high school at Samchuk Ratana Pokaram School. When he was young, his short story "Post officer who forgot his home number" won the Chokarakad prize, editor at that time was Suchat Sawatsri. In 1994, his short story "Story, river, and death" won the prize from the language and book association of Thailand. In 2004, his collection of poems "Mae Nam Ram Luek" won the S.E.A. Write. In the same year, the collection of his short stories, "Chee Wit Sam Ma Ha An Dai" won the seven-book award.

Rewat Panpipat always defines himself as "a man of feelings" who enjoys seeing the world and traveling "inside" the world. His works have common characteristics which reveal a strong relationship between his work and his birthplace, as well as nostalgia (Sangkapanthanon, 2015). All of his works use nature and the environment as the narrator throughout the story. This point emphasizes his concept of the relationship between humans and nature. In this study, the author aims to examine the concept of ecological self in his works. Moreover, the author aims to examine how nature influences Rewat's poetry and how Rewat portrays the ecological self in his works.

## 2. Ecological self in poetry

Nature and ecological poetry, which reflect the ecological self of writers, are considered as "Nature Writing" or "Green Writing." This article interests in Rewat Panpipat's poetry, which uses nature and the environment to portray his ecological self. The author uses the ecological self concept, which believes all living things are born from nature, the same as the universe. Another theory is the ecocriticism theory, which is the study of the relationship

between humans and nature in poetry. All poems are criticized by the environmentalism concept.

The ecological self concept is considered as one of ecology. From the viewpoint of deep ecology, it can be considered that the ecological self concept was established by Arne Naess, especially on the issue of "self", "relationship", "value", and "the purpose of life." Naess gave the concept "self is united with everything", which later developed into the ecological self. The concept is derived from the meaning of implicit identities, such as cosmic self, atman, spiritual self, or the meaning of the self that embraces all living beings. Naess focuses on the "internal relationship" by presenting that all things have interaction with each other or "all is one". Furthermore, the concept relates to "everything has its own value," so the purpose of life is "to enlighten yourself." That is the ecological self in nature. Phuphakdee (2004). The ecological self concepts arise from insight into the true self, which is usually viewed through three stages. There are Ego, Social Self and Metaphysical Self. Naess found that the initial concept lacks the relationship between humans and nature, so he proposed an ecological self, which means we are born from the womb of nature as well as all things in the universe. The new concept has 3 levels, including 1) ego-realization which means the level of self-awareness of one's ego. 2) self-realization means the level of self-perception concerning others. 3) Self-realization means the level of true self-awareness. The three levels are discussed in the next paragraph and shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Ecological self concept (Burinprakhon, 2016)

Intongpan (2010) mentions that the principle of self-realization according to Arne Naess's view has three levels of development, called Ecosophy. The principle of self-realization includes three levels. 1) Ego-realization is a state of general perception of human beings who think that themselves exist separately from other things. This is often referred to as the ego. 2) self-realization with a small "s". This state is developed from the concept of "putting yourself in someone else's shoes" or it is the view that other things are the same as us. It is called identification. 3) Self-realization with a capital "S" is to expand self-realization from the middle level to the highest level. It is different from self or ego in the previous levels. Manifestation of self in family, social, national, etc. is in the middle level, but the highest levels include mankind, plants, the environment, the whole world, and the universe. This manifestation is also known as the "ecological self".

In the past, people emphasized a human-centered idea called "anthropocentric." After that, they accepted "ecocentric," which believes that humans are not separated from nature. The ecocentric concept believes in a strong relationship between humans and nature, which consists of respect, submissiveness to nature, and ecological self in poetry. As we can see from Sangkapanthanon (2015) article title "Sense of Place and Nostalgia of Motherland in the Poetry of Rewat Panpipat." The article states that the sense of birthplace and nostalgia were the specific methods for identifying Rewat's poetry. The ecological self defines nature as the mother of everything. Nature gives birth and supports everything. Living a simple way of life with nature and living in rural areas is elegant, peaceful, safe, and sufficient. Rewat states that this concept is the way of nature and the Thai way of life. This way would lead to the freedom of human life (Sangkapanthanon, 2015)

As we can see from the prior section, Rewat Panpipat's poetry is self-expression. His works reflect his thoughts on both idealism and realism. The article focuses on the combination of imagination and realism in his poems. Self-realization is portrayed by using a modern paradigm about humans' attitudes towards the relationship between humans and nature. This article interests two ways of criticism of ecological philosophy, including anthropocentric and ecocentric in Rewat's writing works.

From this conceptual framework, nature and ecological self in Rewat's poetry is a relationship between himself and nature. Nature and the environment affect the poet's composition process, and it also reflects the poet's ecological self. The ecological self is portrayed in two ways, including soil, water, and the wild. Another way is through seasons and places. Likewise, the poetry portrays the poet's concept of a strong relationship between humans and nature.

### 3. Findings

#### Rewat Panpipat's poetry

Seven of Rewat Panpipat's poetry books are used in this study. All of them are gathered poetry, including, Ban Mae Nam, Pleng Nam, Mae Nam Ram Luek, Nok Cheewit, Maew Phu Mong Hen Kam Phaeng Pen Sa Pan "the story of a cat seeing the wall as a bridge." Mae Nam Deaw Kan, and Mae Nam Tee Sap Soon. The seven books portray the characteristics of giving value to nature. The concept is that nature initiates an ecological self in the poet and writing works. There is a relationship between self and appearance. An analysis of seven of Rewat's poems portrays his ecological self as follows.

The first book is Rewat Panpipat's Ban Mae Nam (1995). The content is about Rewat's autobiography, which readers can see from the preface of the book. The preface of the book mentions that "Rewat Panpipat writes both short stories and poems. At that time, he didn't expect the greatness of his work, he just wanted to tell his story to other people. However, he expected that someone might have feelings and senses like him." Ban Mae Nam is his self-introduction through poems. The contents of the book are divided into three parts, including identity, searching, and love. There are ten poems in the first part describing his birthplace from the time when he was young until he left home for another place. The second part includes twenty-eight poems that describe a story about his traveling to the big city. He portrays the curiosity about urban society and rural society. The disparity in the big city is another point, as we can see from the "Wi Tee Peek" section. He questions teens who are searching for abstract truths which readers can see from the "Endless Conversation" part. The final part includes eight poems about love. The story of this part portrays his love for his birthplace, including love for nature, love for the environment, love for the season, and love for the place in his old memories.

Rewat Panpipat's *Pan Fon Pleng Nam* (2001) is the second poetry book. There are thirty-seven poems which are divided into seven parts, including, 1) sweet memory, 2) back to your place of origins, 3) learning to realize the ongoing and what is coming, 4) it is a lifestyle, isn't it?, 5) I'm here, this is my lifestyle, 6) extract from the stone heart – who is slow is slow, 7) no one owns the golden sunlight, but sunlight is in everybody's heart. All of the contents in this book are about the relationship between the writer and the rural areas in nostalgia. Furthermore, this work criticizes rural society and urban society. "*Pan Fon Pleng Nam*" uses the timeframe when the writer was a child.

Rewat Panpipat's *Mae Nam Ram Luek* (2003) is the third poetry book that won the S.E.A Write in 2003. The forty-three poems in this book are divided into two parts, including the introduction chapter: *Going Back to Childhood*, and the final chapter: *Going Back to Childhood*. The content is about the nostalgia of the place and the happiness of his childhood. Sangkapanthanon (2015) thinks it is the most unity poetry because the poems portray the relationship between place attachment and consciousness of the motherland. All of the feelings are portrayed by using "nostalgia".

Rewat Panpipat's *Nok Chee Wit* (2007) is the fourth poetry book that changes the writing style by removing prosody from the poetry. The Duangjai publisher defines this book as a "winged essay." There are forty-five poems about a fictional garden. The story is about a gardener who is watching the environment around him, watching society, watching the change of seasons. There is a philosophy in the poems supposing readers to know about rural society, as we can see from the statement "You and I are growing a plant to find the meaning of life." "*Nok Chee Wit*" is the first book of Rewat's poetry without prosody, but the content is the same as the prior books.

Rewat Panpipat's *Maew Phu Mong Hen Kam Pang Pen Sa Pan*, the story of a cat seeing the wall as a bridge (2012), is the fifth poetry book. This book uses short stories to tell the story to the readers as fiction. The Duangjai publisher defines it as "a poem in prose." This book is divided into forty-nine parts which narrate a traveling story of a brown male cat named "Look Yang" who dreams of being a poet. "The cat had been fed by the gardener, whom the cat memorizes and learns poems from. Then, the cat traveled to fulfill his dream. During the journey, the cat encountered both good and bad situations. Finally, Look Yang traveled back to his small cottage, but he found nobody inside the beautiful cottage. The gardener who grew him was not there. A cat seeing the wall as a bridge is considered Rewat's philosophical poem.

Rewat Panpipat's *Mae Nam Deaw Kan* (2012), the sixth poetry book, includes eighty poems. The writer divides it into three parts, including the first part: *Another World*, the second part: *The Real Place*, and the third part: *The Same River*. Most of the content in this book is about nostalgia and the relationship between him and place, seasons. Moreover, the content is about criticism of urban society, the invasion of globalization, and talking about three places in Southeast Asia. "*Mae Nam Deaw Kan*" illustrates that all three places are united, so they are similar to the same river.

Rewat Panpipat's *Mae Nam Tee Sap Soon* (2016), is the seventh and latest poetry book. This book includes sixty poems which are divided into nine parts, including; 1) come from the soil, 2) life is created from poetry, 3) living with soil, 4) in the fictional garden, 5) on the route, 6) the rhythm of the river, 7) I write it because of wonder, 8) what do I write and what do I think of, 9) come from the soil. *Mae Nam Tee Sap Soon* is a series of poems that have very clear content. The stories tell readers about Rewat's lifestyle, love, beliefs, faith, religion, politics, the border, and changes in globalization.

### 3.1 Nature and Ecological self

This study uses seven of Rewat's books, including Ban Mae Nam (1995), Pleng Nam(2001), Mae Nam Ram Luek(2003), Nok Chee wit (2007), Maew Phu Mong Hen Kam Pang Pen Sa Pan (2012) the story of a cat seeing the wall as a bridge. Mae Nam Deaw Kan, and Mae Nam Tee Sap Soon (2016). The writer's ecological self is influenced by nature in several aspects, including seasons, places, careers, soil, water, and wild, agricultural lifestyle. From the shreds of evidence in those books, Rewat's ecological self is based on "ecology." This study aims to show that nature influences Rewat Panpipat's ecological self in two ways. There are 1) soil, water, wild 2) seasons, places.

The ecological self in Rewat's poetry reflects his young age. Sangkapanthanon (2015) mentions that a relationship with a place usually begins in childhood. This strong relationship begins when humans are young, such as good feelings and impressions of the place in the past. Rewat's poems are presented in accordance with this concept. "River" is commonly used as the main place. The river is surrounded by places and other hints related to childhood experiences. In other poems, his memories can be found with a hint of soil, water, wild places, and the environment. The evidence of ecological identity-building experiences which can be found in all seven poems may be basically classified as follows:

**Table 1.** Evidence: Experiences of ecological self which influence the writer in poems

Category	Evidence: Experiences of ecological self which influence the writer in poems
soil, water, wild	paddy, vegetation, cereal, field, black soil, stream, flower, sandy beach, garden, earth, water, wind, sky, firewood, fire, sea, sun, star, rainbow, field, sunlight, wind, fog clouds, rain, leaf, rice plant, seed, etc.
Seasons, Places	thatch, warm sunny day, bulrush hut, old village, river, elder, old temple, church, mosque, Christ church, road, Kuan Im Shrine, Brahma Shrine, kitchen, garden, neighborhood, footpath, all directions, industrial estate, way, stars, day, night, summer, rainy season, winter, morning, late, afternoon, dusk, etc.

### 3.2 Soil, water, and wild

This study finds that nature, soil, water, and wild are factors in Rewat's ecological self. In all seven Rewat's books, the writer frequently writes about soil, water, and wild. The writer wants to tell something to readers, but it is the identity of Rewat's poem. Rewat always talks about the relationship between humans and nature in his poems. Inploy (2008) states about Rewat's belief, "Rewat believes and has faith in the environment and nature because he believes that humans know themselves from the realization of nature first". The poem "Wi tee Thai" portrays Rewat's ecological self, which is influenced by the nature around him. ;

*“There is a **Thai style** for you to choose.  
 There is **paddy** for you to sow.  
 There is **thatch** in the courtyard.  
 There is **vegetation** for you to eat.  
 There is another life you have never chosen.  
 There is the **lea**. you always insult.  
 There is the **soil**. You always insult.  
 All your insults are strident hands and hard feet.”*

(Panpipat, 2001 :27)

In the poem below, Rewat emphasizes "I wrote to the rhythm of the river" to show the implication of the poem. The implication is the relationship with the river. The river is like the mother. The river is nature, which is the most beautiful thing in the world. The emphasis in this sentence portrays Rewat's ecological self, which implies that the "river" is "mother." From his point of view, everything is partly related to each other. ;

*“I wrote to the rhythm of **the river**.  
 Repeat it again and again.  
 Inside, the garden is weakened and wilt.  
 My tears drop on the **flower**.  
 I wrote to the rhythm of **the river**.  
 In the depths of my feelings  
 Like a calling sound in my mind  
 Contemplation is stretched like a **sandy beach**.”*

(Panpipat, 2016: 89)

The part "Uncle garden, untie field" is one of the poems where the poet's ideas about the relationship between soil, water, and wild are presented. The writer's idea looks through nature and centralizes on nature. According to the part, "auntie stays in the field, uncle loves the garden" is the main point that portrays the relationship between rural style and rural lifestyle. The writer thinks there is unity. Both uncle and aunt are farmers. They have a strong relationship with the agricultural ways of living in that area. It could be implied that their souls are living with nature. Kumar's (1997) stated that this was "spirit ecology", as we can see from "If you are tired, just take a nap, if you are diminished, just fulfill it. We had to beg for mother, mother of earth, water, wind, and fire." Using the concept of the spirit of ecology to analyze it, we would find "Uncle garden, auntie field" explains the relationship between humans, society, and nature. We would find the words earth, social, and soul are united together. Moreover, this point relates to the ecological self theory, which explains that everything in the universe is unity. Humans could not live without nature, so humans should respect nature by paying respect to nature and humans should love nature. (Jaifai, 2009). ;

*"In the "Uncle Garden, Auntie Field"*

*Auntie stays in the field. Uncle loves the **garden**.*

*They live there because of love.*

*At any time both happy or sad,  
they may fear karma, but it is normal.*

*If you are tired, just take a nap.*

*If you are diminished, just fulfill it.*

*We have to beg mother,*

***mother of earth, water, wind, and fire.***

*Auntie stays with the field, Uncle loves the garden  
.They get closer to the scent of the sea.  
For much long time ago, when we were young  
Those made me today."*

(Panpipat, 2012a :81-82)

Rewat Panpipat's ecological self is influenced by nature, including soil, water, and wild. According to the concept of soil, water, and wild, we can see the relationship between humans and nature. Rewat's poems portray humans life with nature, which is soil, water, and wild. His poems tell us how to live with nature, so it is an interesting respect for nature.

### 3.3 Seasons and places

According to the poems, Rewat's ecological self is also influenced by season and place. An analysis of seven Rewat's books finds that Rewat uses storytelling techniques to portray his experiences which relate to season and place. The place where he lived in the past is one of the unique characteristics in Rewat's poems. The relationship between humans and nature is portrayed in this part. Inploy (2008) states that nostalgia in Rewat Panpipat's poem shows that the writer and the characters in the story portray nostalgia. They think about geography and the rural lifestyle. This point expresses his relationship with seasons and places. In "Nok Chee Wit", the poet portrays the role of nature and how humans understand nature. The poet used his everyday life to explain his thoughts. He persuades the reader to imagine a picture of the environment around him. The poet uses context, which relates to the seasons and places where he lives. Then, he expresses it by using poetry. According to ecocriticism theory, the characteristics of this poem are similar to post-renaissance works, which is

the western style called "postural." The postural is a composition of plentiful places, full of nature, countryside places that are completely different from the big city (Sangkapanthanon, 2013).

Another poem that reflects the relationship of season and place is "Lullaby – cottage – river." The writer expresses his experiences with seasons, places, and the time when he was a kid in his poem. His cloudy memories were legible in this poem. Besides, this poem is in the "self" part of "Ban Mae Nam" which tells the story of the place and its gorgeous environment, so "Lullaby – cottage – river" was the poem that shows Rewat Panpipat's poetry skills. ;

*"Starting at the cottage near the **thatch**.*

***Sunny** is lighting up the straw rack.*

*Mother's hands are always soft and warm,  
pouring streams into our life.*

*The **bulrush hut** hears the song from the wind.*

*The milk song intercepts my mind.*

*The river song is a pleasant song.*

*Every song is a unity with our life."*

(Panpipat, 1995 :10)

"Mae Nam Deaw Kan" confirms that Rewat Panpipat's works are influenced by nature because he is affiliated with the river and his birthplace. The illustration of places is expressed by Rewat using his poem. He shows that the diversity of race and religion is not the cause of conflict. The ethnic diversity and religion could be united as water from several places gathered in the river. ;

*“The old village - the elder river,  
 Recitation sounds are at the old temple.  
 We were given something inside us?  
 The unique of our ancestor of us?  
 Thai church is in the north, a mosque in the south,  
 Christ church near the road.  
 Kuan Im shrine was there  
 Brahma shrine was there  
 Rounded by the homegrown plantation  
 Plantation in the area are all eatable  
 Spread to the north and the south  
 Those plants were rooting, sprouting, and growing.”*

(Panpipat, 2012a : 88)

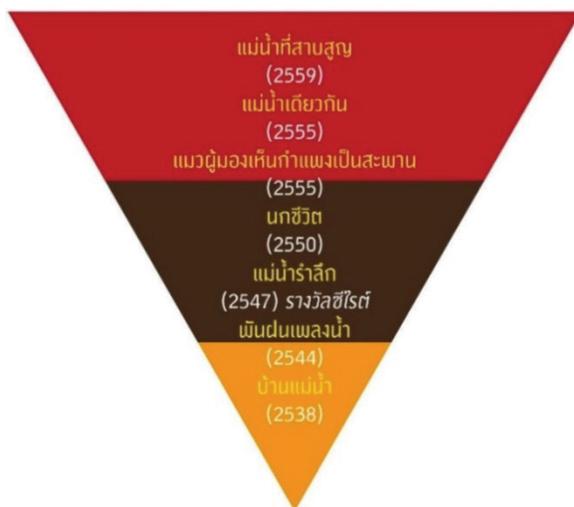
Poems about working as a laborer in a big city, an industrial estate, or in a factory are seen in several poems in this article. People who live in the big cities have to do those jobs for survival. "Factory" or "Rong Ngan" is a poem that reflects the laborers in a big city, especially daily employees, security guards, and workers. The cat "Look Yang" is used as a symbol to tell those stories. The poem illustrates the imagination of places in a big city, industrial estates, and the workers from different places who come to work in the city. "Faraway from their birthplace and rice fields" ;

*“Lots of merchandise is on the **footpath**.  
 Lots of diversity on the footpath.  
 Lots of people from **every direction**,  
 in the dreamed **industrial world**.  
 Look Yang is hiding beside **the path**.  
 Then he's looking at them and walking along the path.*

*His mind is sad at this difficult time.  
 His mind is thinking of utterances.  
 Hundreds of words could explain his feelings.  
 At that time, his mind realized something.  
 Like a star is shining in his mind,  
 amidst the hustle and bustle of the universe.”*

(Panpipat, 2012b : 128)

Analysis of Rewat Panpipat’s work using seasons and places concept found that Rewat’s poems show characteristics of childhood time. He uses seasons and places as a time machine to go back to his childhood, then writes about his experiences. Therefore, this poem shows his ecological self and shows his respect for nature. Rewat Panpipat becomes a poet due to the influence of those things.



**Figure 2.** Charts and captions about the concept of Ecological Self through Rewat Poetry in all seven books (Burinprakhon, 2018)

#### 4. Conclusion

From the study of nature and ecological self in seven of Rewat Panpipat's poems on the issue of ecological representation through the text, which is called nature writing or green poems, it can be found that his poems are used as representations of ecological self. The ecological self is portrayed by soil, water, wild, time, season, and place. It can be concluded that nature and the environment affect the creation of poetry. It is considered as a showcase for Rewat's to present his story through his experiences, way of life, well-being, and relationship with nature and the environment from childhood to the present. Soil, water, and wild are an important part of Rewat's ecological self presentation because soil, water, and wild are seen as one thing in his poems. Therefore, it is a review process of coexistence between humans and nature in a sense of interdependence.

Seasons and places in Rewat's poetry are considered as symbols of nostalgia or revisiting childhood times. Seasons and places are used as a vehicle to the past, while his experiences are used as the narrator of the story. Therefore, Rewat's poetry demonstrates the "unseparated himself from all living things", which is an ecological consciousness towards nature. Nature is considered as a place where the ecological self has been developed. It is also important that the poet see nature as a life-forming area, which is consistent with Arne Naess's idea, especially on the issue of 'Identity', 'Relationships', 'Values', and the 'Purpose of Life'. Naess focuses on "internal relations" which means the interaction of all things or "all is one". The purpose of life is "the manifestation of the true self", which can be traced back to the Self-realization (Phuphakdee, 2004).

In conclusion, Rewat's poetry has passed all three levels of ecological self concept, including, ego realization, self realization, and Self-realization. Presentation of the Ecological Self in Rewat's Poetry is under the concept of "Man and nature are similar to each other". Therefore, the purpose of human life is to manifest the true self (Self-Realization).

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