



## A STUDY OF IMAGERY IN THE POEMS OF TORU DUTT AND SAROJINI NAIDU

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### ABSTRACT

*Indian English Poetry is field with fine images and symbols from its origin in India. The Poets Coming from Anglo – Indian background left an undeliable mark by using symbols and imagery to make their Poetry grand success. Among these Poets, we have Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu who made Indian English Poetry rich with their grand style and symbols and imagery. Both the Poets are artistic, a fine user of rich and varied quality as a result their a poetry made grand success at world level. Both the Poets are the fine child of nature and they have drawn the imagery from nature, and myth and Legend.*

**Keywords :-** Nature Description , anthologies , figures of speech , grandness , ordinary words

### INTRODUCTION

Toru Dutt who is generally known as the first major voice in Indian English poetry. She has successfully used fine images and symbols in her poetry. Her poem “Our Casuarina Tree” found in many anthologies is often signaled out as the first major Indian English poem.” (Prasad, 27). In this poem the tree of Casuarina is described by using the apt and fine images taken around it. The poem has similarity to Keat’s “Ode to Autumn”. The only difference we find is the difference of rhyming scheme and pattern.

Toru Dutt’s childhood passed here in India but later on she went to England and while living in England she composed the poem “Our Casuarina Tree”. The poem depicts Toru’s deep love for India her own country. The tree which mentioned in the poem has the hearty connection with the childhood days of Toru Dutt in India. She has frequently travelled Italy and France but she never forgot to remember the Indian tree. The poem consists five stanzas with fine images, rhythm and cadence. All the stanzas of the poem are based on logic of an image which run from beginning to end. In the first stanza of the poem the poetess has used

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simile figure of speech when she says a 'huge python' links to a creeper. This comparison between these two different objects is based on the expression 'winding round and round'. She has not only used simile but inside of it she has used other figure of speeches to make clear the 'hugeness' of the tree. Hence we have in the poem creeper winds round the rugged trunk indented with deep scars. The poetess says that it is so high that it can touch even to the stars in the sky. It is her poetical fancy that gives the reader an idea of the height of the tree. The reference 'no other tree could live' gives an idea of the vitality of the tree. The poetess has given here the grace of the tree together with its charm. We have in the poem which came up in the forth coming six lines of the stanza make the idea more clear regarding the images. There is metaphor figure of speech which compares the tree to a 'gallant giant' and the creeper to a 'scarf' which depict the ornamental value of the tree. The depiction of 'crimson flowers' of the creeper together with the 'bird and bee full of charm which enhance the beauty of the figures. By using figures to exaggerate the objects of the tree in order to transcends the boundary of the ordinary world and the poetess reaches out the world which is full of magical powers. Further she depicts the fine image of a song night which seems in the garden, night after night which seems to have never end; as if sung from the tree in the dark (Sung darkling) makes a sound beauty around the tree. The poetess lays image upon image to carry out a superb charm which can be felt only the readers who are sensitive. The poetess knows it very well that neither a tree can touch the sky nor a tree can sing even after it is her fine images created by her to make us believe and accept them without if or but. At last we become fully convinced with the fine beauty and grandness of the tree.

In the second stanza of the poem she has employed the figure in condensed expression. The quintessence of condensed expression used by her in the poem is nothing but just an implied comparison which makes a link between the main subject to that of the incidental ones. We also have very beautiful balanced images which brings us to a natural landscape. Thus we come across to the fine image of winter season around it. She portrays a fine image of 'a grey baboon' sits statue-like alone/ watching the sunrise, while on its lower branch its 'Puny' off-springs' leap about and play. The poetess has used here simile in the phrase statue-like. By describing the picture of baboon she goes on to mention the 'winter' season in which the things go in the silent manner. By describing the shadow of the tree falls across the tank which enhance the beauty of water-lilies more to their actual beauty and looks like snow enmassed; Grand and charming as the tree is, the tree is very dear to the poetess chiefly for the memories that cluster round it. Her memories belong from the time when happy children played under the deep shade of the tree.

Naidu's skilfull handling of figures of speech expresses colorful and alive images in her poems. The images she has used in her poem are sublime, impressive and impressionistic and mostly drawn from Indian sources. Padmini sen Gupta states, "Through English was



Sarojini's medium of expression, her imagery was entirely India. She determined to write no more of English imagery or striving to imitate Shelley and Keats. Here was her own rich country with its vast and ancient culture and tradition, its varied life and its secret doors to be unlocked and the treasures scrutinised. What other paradise of traditional lore and oriental customs could Sarojini want? And therefore she started writing with her imagery completely Indian. She travelled in her Indian scene and her ancestry. Her subjects are all Indian and her similes and metaphors, though she borrowed now and then from the Persian and Islamic sources. Her themes were domestic and rural and she based many of her rhythms on her folk songs which she heard from beatmen and reapers and weavers (Sen Gupta, P.25-26)

Naidu's poem "The coming of Spring" is a fine example of her perfect command and mastery over English versification. She has skilfully applied simile to imagine the coming of spring and to welcome it. The following lines show her Indian tunes:

*O Spring! I cannot run to greet  
Your coming as I did of old  
Clad in a shining veil of gold  
With champa-buds and blowing wheat  
And silver anklets on my feet. (The coming of Spring, P.90)*

The poem "Spring" tells a colorful picture of the season. She (Naidu) narrates at young leaves grow on the banyan stem. The leaves on the peepul tree are red. The honey-birds pipe to the budding figs and honey-blooms call the bee. The poppies aquander their fragile gold in the lake. The kingfishers ruffle the feathery sedge. "The air is thrilled with butterfly wings in the wild-rose hedge. The earth is filled with the luminous blue of the hills spring kindles life in the trees, flowers and birds and butterflies. It draws human beings into the eddies of its vital flood. Spring in the moment, the season, and the cycle of love, whilst,

*Kamala tinkles a lingering foot  
And Krishna plays on his bamboo flute (P. 90)  
We have another picture of spring in the poem, "A Song of Spring" as:  
Drunk with the rich, red honey – of spring  
Fireflies weaving aerial dances  
Wild birds that sway in the citron branches.  
In fragile rhythms of flickering gold (P.96)*

The poem "In A Time of Flowers" we find very close to the poem "A Song of Spring" we find fusion of nature and myth. The spring is here visualized as a young girl and the earth as a tree which bursts into blossom at the touch of the girl's foot. Naidu is reminding the ancient



legend which was full of figures in Indian sculpture as well as poetry. The legend is about a tree which is divine or forest leans against a tree and touches the stem with her foot, the tree will put forth fresh flowers.

In the poem “Nightfall in the city of Hyderabad” Naidu has applied imagery impressively. We find a rich mixture of visual and kinetic images:

*She how the speckled sky burns like a pigeon's throat,  
Jwelled with embers of opal and peridot.  
See the white river that and scintillates,  
Curved like a tusk from the city gates (P.55)*

We find the similarity of images of night descending over the city bridge:

*Over the city bridge Night comes  
Born like a queen to festival? (P.56)*

The words “curved” and “borne” we have fine example of kinetic images. Similarly we find use of visual and kinetic images in the poem “Palanquin-Bearers” to describe the bride being borne in a palanquin:

*Softly, o softly her along we bear,  
She hangs like a star in the dwe of our song;  
She springs on the brow of tide like a beam,  
She falls like a tear from the eyes of a bride (P.3)*

Naidu in the poem “Palanquin Bearers” wants to convey with admirable brevity, the ideas of holiness, luminosity and solemnity. She uses a string of images, one image following the other in quick succession very much in the manner of Shelley:

*She sways like a flower in the wind of our song  
Lightly, O lightly, we bear her along,  
We bear her along like a pearl on a string. (P.3)*

The words “hangs”, “spring”, and “falls” have kinetic images.

The poem “Past and Future” of Naidu in which she depicts The soul which is linked up to a bridegroom and his future like a “fated bride” what hides behind the veil:

And now the soul stands in a vague intense,



Expectancy and anguish of suspense,  
His future shrinking there alone,  
Beneath her marriage-veil of mysteries.

The similar comparison is found in the poem "Alabastor" which is composed the poet's heart with "Alabastor box":

*Like this box whose art  
Flower, is my heart is frail as cassia –,  
With many a subtle and exquisite thought.  
The spice and scent therein I treasure  
Of rich and passionate memories blent  
Like odours of CINNAMON, sandal and clove,  
Of Song and sorrow and life and love. (P.24)*

Thus with the above discussion on imagery in the poems of Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu, we can say safely that both of the poets have filled their poems with fine imagery. Toru's imagery is not traditional but new and different kind in nature and structure whereas Naidu has infused in her poems similes and metaphors to highlight high class of imagery.

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