



Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu Blended

Dr. Deepa

Assistant Professor, Department of English, RSM (PG) College, Dhampur, Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract

Sarojini Naidu, 'The Nightingale of India' (Feb. 13, 1879 – March 2, 1949) and a great devotee of the Hinduism, Toru Dutt (March 4, 1856 – August 30, 1877) occupy prerogative place in Indo – Anglian poetry. Toru Dutt in her short span of life founded Indo – Anglian poetry on firm footing and established tradition which were persuaded by Sarojini Naidu. As interpreter of Indian life and as a landscapist Toru Dutt directed the path of Sarojini Naidu. Sarojini Naidu, an eminent personality is treasured in the memory of every Indian. As a politician, nationalist leader, poet activist for women's rights orator and celebrity, she was certainly one of the most memorable mighty Indian Woman. Both Sarojini Naidu and Toru Dutt are distinguished artists in their own sphere. Toru Dutt is superior to Sarojini Naidu in narrative and descriptive poetry, whereas the latter enjoys an inevitable place in Indo – Anglian lyrical poetry. Toru Dutt's poetry is characterized by simplicity, lucidity expression and an easy and graceful style. Her diction is opt. mark simplicity of style and aptness of diction. Sarojini Naidu's poetic style has lyrical spontaneity and rapidity of movement and is characterized by radiant and colourful diction. Both Sarojini Naidu and Toru Dutt are superb in their respective spheres.

Keywords: prerogative place, treasured, landscapist, lucidity

Introduction

Sarojini Naidu and Toru Dutt are the superb and foremost Indian Poetesses in English. Their names are usually coupled with each other. Perhaps Toru, came years before Sarojini but both the poetesses are concerned with each other. Together they placed their native land on the international map of letters. If Sarojini acclaimed as the greatest woman of her time in India as well as in World, was no mean Indo-English Poet. Front rank fighter for her country's freedom and one of the topmost national leaders, she was the first woman President of the Indian National Congress and member of its Working Committee for most of her life. She was the first woman president of Asian Relations Conference and Governor of Uttar Pradesh in the free India. She was also fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and President of the P.E.N. (India).

Similarly, in the brief span of twenty one year's life Toru presented herself not only as a poetess but also as a prose writer. Toru Dutt, the inheritor of unfulfilled renown, is one of the most talented poetesses in Indo – Anglian Literature. Both the poetesses interpreted Indian life before the Western World. But there is a fundamental difference in their approach. In 'Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan', Toru Dutt writes about the Legendry past of India. Besides seven miscellaneous poems, it consists of nine ballads or legends on "Savitri", "Lakshman", "Jogadhya Uma", "The Royal Ascetic and the Hind", "Dhruva", "Sindhu", "Sita" and "Prahlad".

In "Savitri", Toru Dutt extols the virtues of love, dutifulness and obedience to parents' Will. The crux of the Vedantic philosophy has been poetically explained in it. Savitri follows Yama when He is on His way to His own dark kingdom, carrying Satyavan's Soul with Him. The God of Death asks her go back to her home and to perform her husband's funeral rites according to the Shastras. At this she replies like a true Vedantic:

"I know that in this transient world
 All is delusion – nothing true;
 I know its shows are mists unfurled
 To please and vanish to renew."

Toru Dutt also expressed the Indian belief, the supremacy of fate in human life. The conception of Fate and the philosophy of Karma are poetically expounded in it. Man is a puppet in the hands of fate. He cannot resist fate. Narad Muni and Savitri's father, King Ashwapathi, disapprove her proposed marriage with Satyavan because according to Narad Muni's prediction, he would die "Upon this day as round the year." Savitri declares that her marriage with Satyavan was not approved she remains a virgin to her dying day. She says that fate is inescapable –

Once, and once only, have i given
 My heart and faith- tis-past recall;
 If I should now
 Deny the felling felt within,
 Unwedded to my dying day.

Sarojini Naidu also writes about India but not about her legendary past. On the other hand in her poems, she has vividly recreated the multitudinous panorama of Indian life with all its variegated pageants. Only in one of her poems "To Buddha seated on a Lotus" thinks James H. Cousins discloses the entire philosophy of Vedanta –

And all our mortal moments are
 A session of the Infinite
 How shall we reach the great, unknown
 Nirvana of the Lotus- Throne?

Though not very poetic, it will still be remembered for unmistakable Indian touch. It is very well acknowledged

that the Prince Siddhartha became Buddha after the achievement of Enlightenment, under a Banyan tree and attained "Nirvana". As a poetess Sarojini's outlook of life was secular. Major Indian religions, Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism, all segments of society and all aspects of life. In "The Flute Player of Brindaban" she represents the essential spirit of Hindus. Lord Krishna is a divine Flute- player. He plays the tune of the infinite luring the enchanting every Hindu heart. The sublimity and exaltation of Lord Krishna melody is underlined in this lyric:

Still must I like a homeless bird
Wander, forsaking all.
The Earthy loves and wordly lures
That held my life in thrall,
And fellow, follow, answering
Thy magical flute call.

In 'The Prayer of Islam' Sarojini Naidu clearly enunciates her attitude. The song composed on the occasion of Id-ul-Zuha expresses the poet's sincere feeling for Muslim culture and regard for Islam as a religion. Addressing God, she observes:

We praise Thee, O compassionate!
Master of life, and Time and Fate,
Lord the Labouring winds and seas,
Ya 'Hameed! Ya' Hajeez!

Toru Dutt is superb in narrative and descriptive art, whereas Sarojini is a lyrical poetess. Toru's distinct position in the field of narrative and descriptive poetry is undisputed. She knew the art of story, telling a story and of describing a scene or character vividly and convincingly. Her skill in narration and description has been highly praised by Dr. N. A. Jha who says:

"She has a rare gift of story-telling of arousing interest and curiosity of creating suspenses, and of drawig character. But in descriptive poetry, she is even superior."

'Jogadhya Uma' is a beautiful narrative having a tender charm for the unsophisticated and the unlettered. The last lines of this ballad are really remarkable for their argumentative quality couched in a language of simplicity.

"Absurd may be the tale I tell,
Ill-suited to the marching times,
I loved the lips from which it fell
So let it stand among my rhymes."

Sarojini Naidu wrote no epic, dramatic and narrative poetry, nor any blank-verse. She had no aptitude or talent for them. Her genius remains confined to short poems, lyrics (and songs) not even sonnets, although she wrote ten, three of which- 'The Lotus', 'In Salutation to My father's Spirit', and 'Imperial Delhi', are really good. As a lyricist what more characterized her work is delicate, fancy and haunting melody. Her art shows the influence of Keats, Shelley, Tennyson and Swinburne those were essentially lyrical. 'P. Seshadri' in one of her work "Anglo Indian Poetry" declares "...And Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the lyric sweetness of whose verse deserves the high commendation."

The following lines from the "Palanquir Bearers" recur in

memory for their sonorous music, highly suggestive similes and melodious flow of verse:

"Lightly, O Lightly, we bear her along,
She sways like a flower in the wind of our song.
She skims like a bird on the foam of a stream
She floats like a laugh from the lips of a dream."

Both Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu have written on the theme of love. Toru depicted both the spiritual and physical aspects of love. She also expressed various feelings of agony and separation, of rapture and ecstasy of love which the lovers feel. Sarojini's 'The Song of Radha, The Milkmaid' expressed the ecstasy of love which the beloved feels by realising her lover's presence where as she goes:

"I carried my gifts to the Mathura Shrine
How brightly the torches were glowing
I folded my hands at the alters to pray

In the poems of both Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu description of nature occupy a large space. In Toru Dutt's poetry, nature is portrayed as background for the enchantment of the human drama of the suffering of Savitri, Buttoo and Sindhu. 'H. A. L. Fisher', a generous man of letters, remembered Toru Dutt as-

"This child of the green valley of the Ganges."

Nature in her poetry is presented as a background for the expression of human feelings. In 'Savitri' in one place, Savitri is compared with a-

"A lotus when the moon
kisses its opening petals red."

'In our Casuarina Tree' nature is a befitting medium for the expression of personal feeling. Toru's sense responded keenly to the sights and sounds of nature. How beautifully she blends the sense of sights and sound!

"But gallantly
The giant wears the scarf and flowers are hung
In crimson clusters all the boughs among
Whereon all day are gathered bird and bee."

In Sarojini Naidu's world of nature, of wood, flowers etc. we have come across with occasional bulbul, koels, quail and sundry other birds but the poem, 'The Bird Sanctuary' brings into focus the world of birds and illustrates the poet's deep love of birds. The poet's love and admiration are remarkable:

"In your quiet garden waken magic tumult of winged choristers that keep the festival of Dawn."

Both Toru and Sarojini Naidu are distinguished artists in their own spheres. Toru Dutt's poetry is characterized by simplicity, lucidity expression, and an easy and graceful style. Her diction is apt. Mark simplicity of style and aptness of diction in the following lines from 'Sindhu':

"We do not curse Thee, God forbid!
But to my inner eye
The future is no longer hid
Thou too shalt like us die."

Sarojini Naidu's poetic style has lyrical spontaneity and

rapidity of movement and is characterized by radiant and colourful diction.

Eye ravished with rapture, celestially panting,
With passionate of bosoms of laming with fire.

Both Sarojini Naidu and Toru Dutt are superb in their respective spheres. Sarojini Naidu's poetical career too was very brief and her poetical output slender. She composed her best poetry between 1898 and 1914. In 1914 she met Mahatama Gandhi and ceased to be a poet and dedicated the rest of her life to her country's service. Sir Aurobindo once remarked that:

Sarojini's poetry has qualities which make her work
exquisite, unique and unchallengeable of its kind.

References

1. Toru Dutt Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan with an Introduction by Edmund Gosse (1882); Indian Edition with an Introduction by Amarnath Jha (Allahabad, Kitabistan 1941, Reprint 1969)
2. Toru Dutt Binaca. Or The Young Spanish Maiden (appeared in the Bengal Magazine, 1878.
3. Sarojini Naidu. The Golden Threshold, London; William Heinemann, 1905.
4. Sarojini Naidu. The Bird of Time, London; William Heinemann, 1912.
5. Sarojini Naidu. The Broken Wing, London; William Heinemann, 1917.
6. Bose A. Sarojini Naidu. The Literary Criterion, Winter, 1955.
7. Basu, Letika. Indian Writers of English Verse" Calcutta; The University, 1933.
8. Das, Harihar. The Life and Letters of Toru Dutt (London Oxford University Press 1921) with a Forward by H.A.I., Fisher
9. Gosse, Edmund. Introductory Memoir, Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan (London: Kegan Paul & Co, 1882.
10. Gowda HHA. Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu as Poets", The Literacy Half Yearly, IX, No. I, 1968.