

Critical Appraisal of Toru Dutt's 'Our Casuarina Tree' 'Lotu' and 'Sita'

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Abstract : This paper focuses on Toru Dutt's poem Our Casuarina Tree. It highlights the love of nature. It shows the feeling of conservation of trees and protection of environment. The poem celebrates birds like baboon and kokila. The poetess describes how they played under the tree during childhood. Human life is impossible without trees. Toru Dutt was brought up in literary atmosphere. That's why she took interest in academics.

Keywords: memories, tree, nature, brother, sister.

Introduction - Toru Dutt's full name was Tarulatta Datta. She was born in Bengal. She was born on 4 th of March 1856. She wrote poems in English and French. Her parents were Govind Chandra Dutt and kshetra moni Dutt. She had a literary taste since early childhood. She also learned stories of ancient India from her mother.

She is among four founding figures of Indo- Anglican literature viz. Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, Manmohan Ghosh and Sarojini Naidu. Toru Dutt migrated to Europe. First they lived in France and then in England. She studied at Cambridge University for two years. She died at the age of 21 of tuberculosis on 30 August 1877.

Her famous poems are Sita, The Young Captive, Lakshman, The Young Captive and Christmas.

Our Casuarina Tree was published in 1881 in Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan. Toru Dutt remembers the casuarina Tree and memorises her happy days spent under it with her brother Abjie and sister Aru.

This poem was composed by her after she returned to India in 1873 along with her sister Aru. She wrote this poem to celebrate childhood memory. Her brother and sister played undershirt Casuarina Tree. Her sister died in 1874. The theme of this poem is death and eternity.

The poem is composed in five stanzas. The Casuarina Tree is very old. It is like python. Python is large fat snake. Casuarina tree is an Australian Tree. Branches of it are connected to each other. It appears to be like horse tail. The creeper is like Python. The flowers are red.

This poem is about nature. This is a nostalgic poem. It is full of autobiographical elements. A baboon is sitting on the Tree singing a beautiful song. The tiny bird of baboon insisting in lower branches watching sunrise is looking like a statue. The Tree is loaded by crimson flowers.

When she opens the window, she feels happy. Kokila

are also singing. Cows are sleepy. Water lilies are there. The poet hears sweet songs of bees and birds coming from trees. The lilies blooming in water under the shade of tree seems like a gathering of snow. They played under the tree.

In the third stanza Toru Dutt is unhappy over the loss of her dear ones. In the fourth stanza the poet establishes a deeper bond with the Tree using the imagery of waves.

In the fifth stanzas the poetess honours the casuarina Tree. The Tree was loved by her brother and sister. She desires for the Tree to live a long life similar to yew tree of Borrowdale which occurred in Wordsworth's poems. She tells about the differences between Casuarina Tree and trees of England.

The poem 'Lotus' was published in 1882 in 'Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan'. This is a petrarchan sonnet. It is a combination of east and west. God of love Cupid came to the god of flowers Flora who will be the queen of flowers. The lily or rose who will be queen of flowers. They are the rivals. Poets of flower had their claim. The rose can never be straight like lily. Rose is bowing. Lily is strait like Jupiter's wife Juno. Is lily lovelier? Flowers are divided into two groups one supported lily and one supported rose.

Give me a flower delicious as rose and lily's pride. Love chose red rose. Then told white as lily. Flora gave lotus. We find personification of love, Flora and lily.

The octave gives a question who is the queen of flowers. The sestet gives answer that lily is the flower of queen. Lotus is of pink colour combination of red rose and white lily. The poem end in conclusion that lily is beautiful flower. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar observes:

"On the other hand, the sinnet "The Lotus" is 'fancy free' and exemplifies her delicate talent for building up a poem"

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The rhyme scheme of this poem is ABBAABBACDCDDC.

Sita by Toru Dutt is about three children listening to story narrated by their mother about Sita. Sita a prominent figure in Indian mythology. Children start crying to listen to the story. Three children are sitting in a dark room. What are they looking. Three children are poet herself Abju and Aru. The forest is dense. There is no ray of sun. Clear spot is visible in the centre. Flowers are hanging on creepers. The lake is clear and crystal. Swans are swimming in it. Their wings are shaken by wind. The peacock is dancing and the deer are racing rapidly. The yellow colour grain is waving and shining. The environment is peaceful and there lives Maharshi Valmiki. Who is this fair lady. Three children cries. They bow their heads. The fair lady is Sita. The story was ended in a hurry. The mother hugged three children. The story ended.

This is a 22 line poem. Third person narrative is used in

this poem. The last lines consist of rhetorical question. It is an autobiographical poem. We find alliteration in dense dense forest, center a cleared spot, tall trees, there lucid lake, sad Sita etc. Rhetorical questions in the beginning has been given. Personification is used in the poem. Anaphora is used in this poem. It is repetition of words in the beginning of the sentences viz. there there. Poet anchorite is metaphor. Rhetorical question in the beginning has been given.

Sita is an allusion to mythical character. The poem is about loneliness, sadness in life, nostalgia. Love of nature is clearly visible in this poem. All the three poems describe the beauty of landscape, nature, flowers, tree, forest, autobiographical elements.

References:-

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