

## A Comparative Study of the Selected Poems on Nature

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### Introduction

Nature and poetry have a close link. Nature plays a major role in the creation of poetry. Poetry is a tool through which the beauty of nature can be expressed. When poetry is based on emotion, the emotion is based on nature that is to say, emotion comes out of nature. Nature, therefore, is the source for the creation of poetry.

Thus, it is apt to say that Nature is divine, Nature is beauty; Nature is wisdom: Nature is Love. Nature is mother. Above all, nature is a teacher. Since nature's services are many in the form of river, mountain, the sun, the Moon, the Stars, clouds, trees, fruits and flowers, sea and sky, man's life mixed with nature.

All saints go to the forest to live in the natural environment to attain wisdom. For example, Siddharta, the Prince went to the forest in Bihar and meditated. He attained enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree.<sup>1</sup> In Ramayana, the divine Hero, Rama spent fourteen long years in the forest.<sup>2</sup> Purification is gained in the nature. Freedom can be enjoyed in Nature. Scientific invention can be possible with the help of Nature. Sir Issac Newton saw an apple falling down from the tree and he discovered the law of Gravitation.

Many English poets like William Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Blake, American Poets like Robert Frost, Walt Whitman,

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Indian poets-Sarojini Naidu, Rabindranath Tagore highlighted the greatness of Nature. Many other poets brought out the beauty of Nature. Wordsworth's "Netting" the "Solitary Reaper" express beauty of Nature. Shelley's poem 'Ode to the West wind' describes the power of nature and nature's great characteristics.

In Tamil Literature, the Five Great Epics have been set in the Natural Environment. The twin epics known as 'Silapadigaram' and 'Manimegalai' describe more about sea, forest, water and 'life in natural environment'.

**Nature poets:** Wordsworth says in his poem 'The Tables Turned' that Nature is a better teacher than the book.

*"Up up my friend.....*

*That I, so long*

*A worshipper of Nature, hither came"*<sup>3</sup> Shelley wonders the nature's miracles and proclaims,

*"Lamp of Earth where're thou moves*

*Its dim shapes are clad with brightness"*

Browning's Pipp's Song begins as

*The year 's at the spring ...*

The beauty of the nature is expressed by Browning in an excellent way in the fourth line as follows

*The hill-side's dew-pearl'd*

Gerard Manley Hopkins in his 'Pied Beauty' describes the beauty of nature with his description on colours of nature. He wonders that the natural powers such as sky, land, singing bird, animals are marked with spots of colour upon a background of lighter colour. The poet enjoys looking at the colours. He brings out the picture as

*"Glory to God for dappled things—*

*For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;*

*For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim"*

Emily Dickinson's *The Villain* shows us how joyful it is to see the clouds and stars

*"While joy gave clouds the light of stars,*

*That beamed where'er they looked...*

*Exited , while they sucked."*<sup>4</sup>

Robert frost finds joy on seeing the snow covered trees. He remains in the wood for a long time watching the beauty of nature. Frost in his poem 'Stopping by Woods in the Snowy Evening' wonders,

*"Woods fill up with snow .....*

*Between the woods and frozen lake.....*

*The woods are lovely, dark and deep"*<sup>5</sup>

These two poems express the beauty, power and joy that the Nature gives to man. I could find similarities as well as differences between these poems. Therefore, I have taken this interesting work of making comparative study.

**Differences and Similarities**—Tagore describes the qualities of the wind of the April month. He calls the wind as 'Vagrant'<sup>6</sup> which means, 'wandering'. The wind does not remain in one place. It is busy, active and not idle. The poet joyfully says that he could hear some rhythm when the wind passes. He enjoys the tune of the wind and there is a musical melodious sound. It evokes his inner feeling. He is occupied with the joyful spirit and wishes to dance for the wind's music.

In the same way, Sarojini Naidu in her Coromandel fishers describes the fishermen's work at dawn. *When the sky is lit up by light* - This is the time when the wind is so soft and calm and not busy. She says that fishermen start their work early in the morning.

The difference between the two poems is that-

1. the wind is busy
2. the wind is motionless.

Tagore's poem is about April wind, so it is breezy and busy whereas Naidu's poem describes the wind at the early morning time which is usually calm and quiet. Both are enjoyable. Tagore's Breezy wind sings music and gives pleasure to the poet whereas Naidu's morning wind wakes the people quietly.

In the second stanza in 'Breezy April', Tagore says that he was sleeping by the wayside, the wind woke him up. Nature wakes him up from his sweet sleep. The philosophy behind it that nature which is also full of wisdom, touches people. It drives out their ignorance and enlightens people with the truth of life and the knowledge on various things. The philosophy in Coramandel Fishers is that the wind is quiet and silent. Silence is spiritual. The material life in the day time makes noise and the night till dawn the spiritual life brings quietness, and calm environment.

In the two poems, the subject is the same wind. But it plays two different roles. In one poem the wind 'Makes sound' in another poem, it remains motionless. These two contradictory qualities of the wind identify the service offered by the wind to man. In other way, in one role the wind provides Joy to the spirit and in another role the wind provides 'rest' to the body. One needs both strong body and enthusiastic spirit. Body must be given rest so that people can work hard again and find pleasure. The poetess calls the fishermen "Sons of the Sea". It is because the fishermen consider the sea as their mother. They are in the sea water as the innocent son is with the affectionate mother.

In the second stanza in Breezy April, the poet describes the intimacy he has with the nature. It is like a friend it comes with life, wakes him, plays with him making fun.

Simultaneously, Sarojini Naidu says in her poem.”*O brothers, the kiss of the spray<sup>14</sup> and the dance of the wild foam’s glee: Row, brother’s now to the blue of the verge, where the low Sky mates with the sea*”.

The poetess compares the happiness of the fishermen with the family members and happiness to see the sky and sea. The fishermen might have come back home. The word the shady coconut glade, the fragrant mango grove, the sweet voices of their near and dear show that they came back home and they are happy. Although they are happy with them, the poetess brings out the truth that only nature provides them better pleasant time. They look happier to see the sky . The kissing spray, the embracing waves, the sky bending down and mating with the sea creates a charm to the poem. The fishermen had better yield to this charm. Their mind prefers watching this natural scenes than being with their family members.

The poet says that nature has power and it is more than human power. This is another philosophical idea behind it.

Both the poems have similarities in describing nature’s beauty and “wind”. Tagore says ‘breeze’ where as Sarojini Naidu describes at the beginning of the poem ‘the wind’ is calm but “He who holds the storm by the hair, will hide in his breast our lives”

“Storm” is the word used by Sarojini Naidu, when the wind is harsh the sea-god saves the fishermen. There is a difference between wind and storm.

Then both the poets use the word ‘kiss’ to show the intimacy of nature. ‘Rock’ is the word used by Tagore, , whereas ‘dance’ is the word used by Sarojini Naidu. Both the poets end their poems, with the nature’s good characteristics. Nature provides sweeter sight and abundant pleasure for the poets. Thus there are contrasts and similarities in the two poems.

Sarojini Naidu says that the fishermen think of their home, the village has coconut glades and mango grove. They think of the sands, full moon and the sweet voices of the members of their families.

The 'Kiss of the Spray' is the beautiful words that enriches the poetry, dance of the wild foam are sweeter than the company of their family members.

The leader of the fishermen asks the men to ply their boats towards the distant place where the sky mates with the sea.

Tagore in his poem calls the wind as 'Breezy April' and he wonders on seeing the movement that the wind makes with the flowers, leaves and the plants. In his imaginative poetic mind he finds that there is a language between the wind and the leaves. Tagore calls it 'leafy language of love' and he says that he understands the movements and language of the wind.

*"I know all your fitful fancies Leafy languages, flithing footsteps".*

In the same way, Sarojini Naidu says that the sea is a God. The fishermen regard the sea as their mother, the clouds as their brothers and the waves as their comrades. There is good friendship and relationship between man and nature.

Tagore says that all branches break into blossom as the wind pass them by, breathing life into them and whispering love into their ears. All the leaves of the tree find a pleasant time, shakings, moving, exciting and surrendering themselves at the wind's lovable touch. The poet feels that the wind is kissing the branches, leaves and flowers. "All my leaves break into of surrender at your kisses"<sup>8</sup> He has written the verse as a tree speaks.

It is a tree that speaks to the wind in the poem.

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Tagore founded 'Shantineketan' – a Home of peace.<sup>10</sup> As a poet, Tagore dreams imagery from Indian philosophy. Sarojini Naidu's poetry can be sung as it has the musical words. She was known as the Nightingale of India. Tagore's song - Jana Gana Mana has been selected as the Indian National Anthem.

Sarojini Devi married Dr. Muthiya Govindarajulu when intercaste marriages were not allowed but Tagore who studied abroad married an illiterate Indian woman. Sarojini Naidu's other major poetical works are the Golden Threshold, The Bird of Time, The Broken wing, The Feather of the Dawn. Her poetic excellence is widely researched by various scholars at different universities.

**Conclusion-** On the other hand Tagore was not only a poet, he was a dramatist, essayist, short-story writer, Translator and philosopher. Research works on Tagore has been continuously carried on nearly half a century. It will be continued in the coming centuries too. As Rabindranath Tagore was known as the overall literary figure, he has a remarkable place in Indian literature.

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