

Ecological Aspects in the Selected Poems of Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu and Kamala Das and Green Density Measure

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Role and Function of Ecology

The term “ecology” has been derived from the Greek word “oikos” which “means habitat or household, thus it is both natural as well as cultural” (qtd. in Nirmaldasan 20). Ecology forms a major aspect in almost every genre of literature. And a study of these ecological aspects as represented and exhibited in a literary genre is known as eco-criticism. It is an attempt to create awareness about ecological concerns. William Rueckert defines ecocriticism as the “application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature because ecology (as a science, as a discipline, as the basis for human vision) has the greatest relevance to the present and the future of the world” (Rueckert 107). Various lethal activities by men have caused a great harm to ecology. The incessant cutting of trees for human use and deforestation, use of weapons and missiles, of radioactive material in nuclear power plants, industrial pollution and many more such activities have led to serious ecological problems such as global warming, increased rate of pollution, frequent coastal inundation, tsunami and cyclones, earthquakes and floods. This damaging of the nature has not only caused a disastrous change in the climactic conditions all over the earth but has also proved destructive to the ozone layer, the protective shield of our earth. And now there is an urgent and pressing need to safeguard our environment and make our earth a better place to live.

Creative Writers and Ecology – A Formula to Evaluate Green Density in Creative Works

Various creative writers have responded to their environment in diverse ways. Some rejoice in the wondrous and divine beauty of Nature whereas some depict the harsher aspects of Nature in their works and there are some that become philosophic in their descriptions of nature. The creative eco-writers usually tend to exhibit in their works the symbolic manifestations of human emotions enveloped in the world of Nature. According to Nirmaldasan, “a green literary

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text or an eco-poem attempts to express the relationship among the sacred, the human and the nature in an oikos” (20). In his article “Green Density Measure of a Literary Text”, Nirmaldasan attempts to devise a formula for evaluating the green density of a literary text. He points out three dimensions of life i.e. natural, cultural and spiritual which have been coded as N, C and S respectively. A literary text either expresses one of these dimensions or may mingle all or any two of these dimensions. If a text combines all the three dimensions then it may be termed as an NCS-text but that can be reserved only for those texts in which these dimensions occupy main positions. However, in some texts, either of these dimensions may occupy subsidiary positions. In such case as this, N, C, and S must be reserved for principle dimensions and n, c, and s must be used to indicate subsidiary ones e.g. an NCS-text may have following subtypes: nCS, NcS, NCs, ncS, nCs, Ncs, and ncs. Nirmaldasan further says that there are three types of nouns/pronouns: 1. Green (GN-green noun, GP-green pronoun) 2. Human (HN-human noun, HP-human pronoun) and 3. Cultural (CN-cultural noun, CP-cultural pronoun) and then he gives the formula for Green Density Measure (or GDM): $GDM = [GNP / (TNP - HNP)] * 100$ (here, GNP is the number of green nouns and pronouns; TNP, the total number of nouns and pronouns; and HNP, the number of human nouns and pronouns).

Calculating the Green Density Measure of Toru Dutt’s poem “Baugmaree” (given in the Appendix)



Toru Dutt

Courtesy:

http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Author:Toru_Dutt&h=157&w=136&sz=1&tbnid=TTc8GbMCihhJ

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B0wCg](http://www.languageinindia.com/ISSN%201930-2940/13%20May%202013/Archana%20Dahiya%20M.%20A.%20NET%20Ecological%20Aspects%20in%20the%20Selected%20Poems%20of%20Toru%20Dutt%20Sarojini%20Naidu%20and%20Kamala%20Das%20and%20Green%20Density%20Measure%20B0wCg)

The poem contains a list of nouns and pronouns – sea (GN), foliage (GN), our (HP), garden (GN or CN as it's a household property), sea (GN), green (GN, as it's the colour of the object of nature), light-green (GN), tamarinds (GN), mango clumps (GN), green (GN), palms (GN), pillars (CN), grey (GN as this colour is used for palms), pools (GN), seemuls (GN), red (GN), trumpet (CN), bamboos (GN), moon (GN), white (GN), lotus (GN), silver (GN as this has been used for lotus), one (HN), Eden (GN as this has been used as a metaphor for garden). There are 20 GNs (counting the garden as a GN), 1 HP, 1 HN, and 2 CNs (TNP=24). This poem is an Nc-text, a densely green poem as by applying the formula, we get: $GDM = 20 / (24 - 2) * 100 = 90.91\%$. The poem indicates the positive attitude of the persona towards nature.

Gender Distinctions in Approach to Ecology

Nature has been constituted in a unique manner by God suffusing it with the essence of a sublime celestial presence that unites it in all its ecological diversity. Most women writers of verse seek to explore and express the feministic side of motherly Nature. Inspired by the beautiful sights and sounds, colour and odours of flora and fauna and the biodiversity of India, various women writers of verse have instilled the sap of Nature into the body of their verses. The present paper is an attempt to penetrate deeply into the sea of 'winged chariots' of ecological sense impressions in the poetry of Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu and Kamala Das. However, Kamala Das is the least exception in this case as nature forms but a small part of her poetry whereas the worlds of Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu are largely occupied by the world of Nature and by the romantic world of mythical and mystical figures. There are overtones of deeper ecology in their poems.

Romanticism and Ecology

There is an interrelationship between Romanticism and ecology that has been recognized not only by Romantic critical literature but also by ecological works and nature writings. Ecocriticism is a field of study which is beyond Romanticism and beyond ecology as it borders on the principles of these theories. Romantic literature is the germination ground for the growth

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of ecological awareness and practices. Ecocriticism reflects on the urgent and pressing concerns that we are facing today “about the relationship between human consciousness and nature, and about the structures of consciousness and feelings that predispose us to act in certain ways within our environment” (Harrison). The ecocritics’ main interest has been to view Romanticism as a site for the emergence of ecopoetics. Ecocriticism focuses on literary and artistic expression of human experience primarily in a naturally-, and consequently in a culturally-shaped world: the joys of abundance, sorrows of deprivation, hopes for harmonious existence, and fears of loss and disaster (Harrison).

Toru Dutt’s Poem – “The Lotus”

Toru Dutt’s poems “The Lotus”, “Our Casuarina Tree” and “Baugmaree” which form part of her nature poetry are of great majestic beauty and lasting significance. “The Lotus” is a lyric version of a legendary tale telling how this flower came into existence. Here, the two flowers – the lily and the rose are competing with each other to attain the supreme position of the “queenliest flower”. When Flora, the Goddess of flowers asked God Love what kind of flower does he need, he said- ““Give me a flower delicious as the rose/And stately as the lily in her pride”” and when asked of the colour – ““Rose red’, Love first chose, /Then prayed- ‘No Lily-white – or both provide’” (Singh 20). Then Flora gave him the Lotus mingling the qualities of the both – the deliciousness and redness of rose and the stateliness and whiteness of lily. Here, lotus becomes the symbol of the harmonious vision of life and nature. “The Lotus” unfolds “Toru’s keen sensitiveness to nature and the responsiveness of her soul to colour” (Singh 20).

“Our Casuarina Tree”

Dutt’s next poem “Our Casuarina Tree” is the best of all her nature poems. “It is more than the poetic evocation of a tree”, writes Dr. Iyenger, “it is recapturing the past, immortalizing the moments of time so recaptured. The tree is both tree and symbol and [in] it are implicated both time and eternity” (Kumar 132). This poem is full of varied ecological details in which Dutt reminiscences nostalgically about her childhood memories associated with the Casuarina tree in her family orchard. The tree has been personified here which is shown to be embraced by a creeper just like a ‘huge python’- “winding round and round/The rugged trunk, indented deep with scars/Up to its very summit near the stars” (Singh 21).

In the next few lines, the tree has been likened to a giant wearing the creeper as a “scarf” and on which flowers have been hung/In crimson clusters all the boughs among/Whereon all day are gathered birds and bee” and whole of the garden overflows with the song of the darkling. These lines, through such magnificent descriptions of Nature, present a feast to our eyes, ears and sense of smell and touch. The whole poem presents a vivid and vivacious picture of life and nature with all its sensuous and sensory details.

In the second stanza, there is an “image of a baboon watching the sunrise and its puny offsprings leaping and playing on lower boughs of the tree reinforces the theme of ecological life. “The baboon has been man’s ancestor” suggesting “the primal energy of man” (Rukhaiyar 5). “And far and near kokilas hail the day/And to their pastures wend our sleepy cows” and further ‘in the shadow’ of this beautiful and vast ‘hoar’ Casuarina tree – “The water-lilies spring, like snow enmassed” (Singh 21). These lines revoke a delightful and realistic picture of life enmeshed with the beauties of Nature, reminding at once of Wordsworth, the great poet and a ‘high priest’ of Nature. The poet-persona realizes the ‘dirge-like murmur’ of the tree to be the lamentation of the casuarina tree. The following lines of the poem present a dreamy atmosphere of the sea-shore:

Ah, I have heard that wail far, far away
In distant lands by many a sheltered bay,
When slumbered in his cave the water-wraith
And the waves gently kissed the classic shore
Of France or Italy, beneath the moon
When earth lay tranced in a dreamless swoon; (Singh 22)

Here, the poet hears the lament and the wail of the casuarina tree for the “sweet companions, loved with love intense” even far away in the foreign lands. These lines present vivid and vibrantly personified images related to the sea-shore. The whole poem manifests a panorama of variegated ecology. This poem captures the affinity of the poetess with the casuarina tree in her garden alongwith its ecological surroundings. Northrope Frye claims that the goal of art is to “recapture, in full consciousness, the lost sense of identity with our

surroundings, where there is nothing outside the mind of man, or something identical with the mind of man” (qtd. in Evernden 99).

“Baugmaree”

Toru Dutt’s poem “Baugmaree” is a sonnet which describes the poet’s garden surrounding her Calcutta house in a picturesque manner. With its vivid and picturesque description of Nature, it can be compared with Keats’s “Ode to Autumn”- with its “season of mists and mellow fruitfulness”. The poem opens with the description of the endless green that girdles around ‘our garden’. It showcases the sensuous beauty of the garden Baugmaree, which with its greenery and freshness, “with its several trees and thick foliage is a veritable garden of Eden where one might ‘gaze and gaze’ on its several beauties” (Nair 85). This poem reveals her to be a poet of senses par excellence. How picturesquely and lusciously the garden is described in these lines: “A sea of foliage girts our garden round” in which “the light-green graceful tamarinds abound/Amid the mango clumps of green profound” (Singh 23). The whole poem intensely excite all our senses – the sense of sight, smell, auditory and touch with their depiction of varied sights and sounds, colours and odours of Nature. The next lines create a dreamy and a fairyland-like atmosphere:

But nothing can be lovelier than the ranges
Of bamboos to the eastward, when the moon
Looks through their gaps, and the white lotus changes
Into a cup of silver. (Singh 23)

This marvelous and wonderstruck beauty of nature might lead one swoon “drunken with beauty” when he gazes on this “primeval Eden, in amaze” (23). This is such a wonderful poem that it brings to our mind Andrew Marvell’s poem “The Garden”, which presents a sensuous and lively display of Nature in vibrant hues and colours.

The image of the ‘garden’ as described in “Our Casuarina Tree” and “Baugmaree” is a kind of domesticated ecology which acts as a mediator between nature and culture. This ‘garden’ fulfils a large and unique role i.e. of “synthesis, the harmonious and fertile juxtaposition of past and foreign cultures” (Turner 50). In “Baugmaree”, the ‘garden’ symbolizes what George Steiner calls the “archive of Eden” (qtd. in Turner 51). It takes us back in the realm of mythical ‘Garden

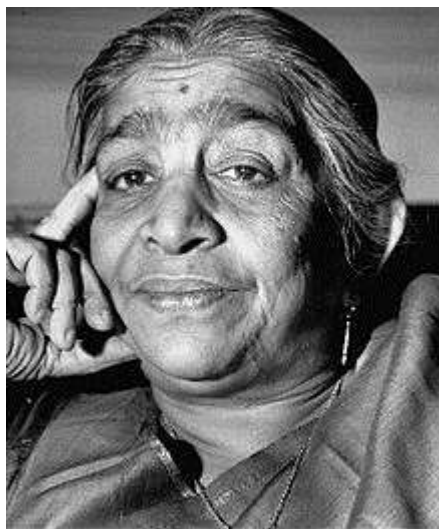
of Eden'. We can also recollect the episode when Adam and Eve enjoy the awesome beauty of the mythical 'garden' and also the moment when Adam plucks the 'apple'- the fruit of knowledge which is the beginning of destruction of nature by the same hands who had been assigned the responsibility of guarding the nature by the Ultimate Being.

Animated Vision of the Ecological Atmosphere

The poems of Toru Dutt represent the animated vision of the ecological atmosphere. An aura of animism can be traced in her poems. According to Mircea Eliade, among the characteristics of animism is "the belief that (I) all the phenomenal world is alive in the sense of being inspirited- including humans, cultural artifacts and natural entities both biological and 'inert' and (II) not only is the non-human world alive, but it is filled with articulate subjects, able to communicate with humans" (qtd. in Manes 18).

Toru Dutt is very much aware of the ecological diversity of India which her poems exhibit in full vigour. Her poems are true reflections of her immense love for each and every aspect of Nature that surrounds her. The objects of nature such as – birds, flowers, fruits and trees immensely appealed to her. In her nature poems – "The Lotus", "Baugmaree" and "Our Casuarina Tree" she emerges as the great poet of nature and in this respect can be compared with Sarojini Naidu.

Sarojini Naidu's Concept of Nature



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Sarojini Naidu

Courtesy: en.wikipedia.org

Just like Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu's concept of nature is also tinged with an innate bent of romanticism and renaissance ideals. She is the keen perceiver of the inherent aestheticism of Nature. The colourful Indian landscape with its 'crimson gulmohars', 'champa boughs', 'lotus buds', cassia woods and 'boughs of tamarind', with its wild forests and a variety of animals and birds, 'water-lily pools', rivers and hills thrill her with ecstatic delights. For her 'a thing of beauty is a joy forever'. Just like Wordsworth, she delights in Nature and seems to be inspired by the sights and sounds of beautiful surroundings around her. All this finds a full-fledged expression in her poems. In her poems, she not only renders but also recreates magnificently the beauty of life and nature, the aspects of love within these natural surroundings and the exquisite rhythm in movement and music of Nature. She is fascinated by the sights and sounds, colours and odours of the wonderful and vivacious Nature. "She has a keen sense of observation and her fine sensibility responds more emotionally than intellectually to the sense impressions from nature" (Nair 99).

Escape from the Mundane Realities of Life: "Village Song"

Nature offers her a kind of escape from the mundane realities of life. Her nature poems are romantic effusions of varied aspects of nature. One such poem is the "Village Song" where we find a glimpse of an idealized life of peaceful surroundings and sensuous manifestations of glorious Nature. The girl child in the poem seems to be "disgusted by the false shows and boastful claims, the fever and fret of life" around her and "finds peace and joys in the sanctuary of Nature" (Kumar 96). She seems enchanted by the mystical world of fairies and nature as she tells her mother:

O mother mine! to the wild forest I am going
Whereupon the champa boughs, the champa buds are blowing
To the koel-hunted river – isles where lotus lilies glisten
The voices of the fairy folk are calling me, O listen! (Singh 49)

For the girl-child, the lure of forest-call is more powerful than all the glittering externals of materialistic life. The world of fairies of the forest and the world of nature is full of ecstatic delights even than the real world. For her, the sounds of nature, of “the forest notes where forest streams are falling” are sweeter than that of the cradle or cradle-songs. This poem reminds us of W. B. Yeats, a poet of escapism and his poem “The Stolen Child” which describes the ‘faery’ world and where fairies are calling away a human child.

“Summer Woods”

Sarojini Naidu’s another poem “Summer Woods” also strikes the same note of escapism. In the poem, the persona has not only become “tired of painted roofs and soft and silken floors” and “sick of strife and song and festivals and fame” but she also longs “for wind-blown canopies of crimson gulmohars!” and “to fly where cassia-woods are breaking into flame”. She craves for freedom from the “toil and weariness, the praise and prayers of men” and desires to escape her sufferings as she says:

O let us fling all care away and lie alone and dream
‘Neath tangled boughs of tamarind and molsari and neem
And bind our brows with jasmine sprays to play on carren flutes
To wake the slumbering serpent-kings among the banyan roots. (Singh 53)

The whole poem gives us a vivid picture of various ecological aspects of nature such as trees (like cassia-woods, tamarind, molsari, neem and banyan), flowers (like crimson gulmohars, jasmine and water-lily), animals (like serpent-kings and golden panthers) and birds (like koels) and of pools and rivers as in the following lines: “And roam at fall of eventide along the river’s brink/And bathe in water-lily pools where golden panthers drink” (53). These lines present the scenic natural beauty of the evening time. This poem reveals the beauties of nature that arouse in our hearts feelings and emotions that are at once romantic and mystical. According to M.K. Naik “Like the Romantics, Naidu regarded Nature as a refuge from the cares of human life though she is no Nature-mystic, unlike Wordsworth nor does she subscribe to the Keatsian sensuous apprehension of Nature. But she does evoke the tropical magnificence of the opulent Indian landscape” (22).

Description through Similes and Metaphors: “The Queen’s Rival”

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Sarojini Naidu not only gives a detailed vivid description of nature in her poems but also describes it through similes and metaphors. The metaphors and similes are highly suggestive of the romantic spirit. In the long poem, “The Queen’s Rival”, which abounds in nature similes and metaphors, queen Gulnar – a peerless beauty is pining for her rival in beauty. Her sigh has been compared twice with “a murmuring rose”. She is so beautiful that her tissues “glowed with the hues of a lapwing’s crest” (Singh 50). Seven damsels brought as her rivals are like “seven new moon tides at the vesper call”, “seven soft gems on a silken thread” and “like seven bright petals of Beauty’s flower”. A young queen from among them “eyed like the morning star”. They are no suitable match for her. After finding her rival in her own “two spring times old” daughter in “blue robes bordered with tassels of gold” who “ran to her like a wildwood fay”, she sighed no more but “laughed like a tremulous rose”. How exquisite are these nature similes and metaphors. This poem also contains a small vivid and picturesque account of the spring season:

When spring winds wakened the mountain floods
And kindled the flame of the tulip buds,
When bees grew loud and the days grew long
And the peach groves thrilled to the oriole’s song. (Singh 51)

This small account of spring abounds in sensuous nature images and presents a personified vision of the opulent Nature. Even the whole body of the poem is inlaid with the gifts and beauties of nature. There are images of stones used for decoration – agate, porphyry, onyx and jade. Nature’s gifts are also described through following phrases – “ebony seat”, ivory bed”, “tassels of gold” and “fringes of pearls”.

“If You Call Me”

In the poem “If you call me” nature images have been described through similes and metaphors. Here, the poet persona’s swiftness has been compared with the swiftness of wild animals i.e. with that of a “trembling forest deer” running swiftly may be from the fear of the hunter or some animal of prey or “a panting dove” after its long and swift flight in the sky. She is even swifter than “a snake that flies” when the snake-charmer enthralls it. The following lines also contain nature similes: “Swifter than the lightning’s feet/Shod with plumes of fire/Life’s

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dark tides may roll between/Or Death's deep chasms divide" (Singh 54). In this poem, ecological atmosphere has been presented through metaphorical language.

Sarojini's Radha Poems

The romantic rapture of Sarojini Naidu is best expressed in her Radha poems such as "The Quest" which is a song by Radha. Here, Radha is in the quest or search of Lord Krishna also known as 'Kanhaya', 'Ghanshyam' or 'Flute Player'. Radha is enquiring each and every object of Nature about the whereabouts of her beloved Lord Krishna, seeking Him from dawn to dusk. She questioned the forest glade at noon rise and at dusk "pleaded with the dove-gray tides" (59). The poem presents a personified account of Nature as evident through the following lines where the poet says: "Dumb were the waters, dumb the woods, the winds/They knew not where my playfellow to find" (60). This poem combines the natural with the spiritual. Here, Radha comes to realization that Lord Krishna is nowhere to be found but abides in the mirror of her own heart. This poem is a kind of spiritual realization of God.

This poem shows that the God that pervades Nature resides nowhere but in the human heart itself. The ecological beings questioned by Radha have been depicted as dumb in the poem. Manes says that "nature is silent in our culture" i.e. "the uncounted voices of nature... are dumb" (15). So, there is an urgent need to make the voice of nature felt in the hearts of the humans. This poem brings out the empirical attitude of the persona towards nature as in the words of Manes: "Empiricism may have initiated an interrogation of nature unknown to medieval symbolic thought but in this questioning no one really expects nature to answer. Rather the enquiry only offers an occasion to find meanings and purposes that must by default reside in us" (22).

Tribute to Earth

The poems of Sarojini Naidu thus in a way pay a kind tribute to mother Earth instilling in us a deep reverence for the ecological treasure of India. Her nature poetry is a mosaic of melodious sounds, vibrant colours, natural odours and "vernal breezes" of fragrance that remind us of Keats, Wordsworth, W.B. Yeats and Pre-Raphaelites. Her nature poems such as "The Village Song", "Summer Woods", "The Quest", etc. have two predominant traits – a sensuous appreciation of the beauty of the opulent Nature and an unmistakable ability to express various

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aspects of nature in a most picturesque manner through the use of metaphors, similes and symbols. A silken fabric of sensuous nature-images runs through her poems and various natural elements have been so magnificently intertwined and interwoven in the fabric of her poems that “a network of exotic combinations of two or more sense impressions” (Nair 100) tend to emerge before our eyes.

Nature in the Writings of a Cultural Poet, Kamala Das



Kamala Das

Courtesy: <http://www.indianetzone.com>

Nature gets a different kind of treatment in the poetry of Kamala Das. She can't be termed wholly a nature poet as she is more of a cultural poet. However, we do find in some of her poems small-scale descriptions of the images of nature and natural objects. She is more of a cityscape writer as her poems reflect a “bizarre mixture of culture and nature” (qtd. in Pandey “Cityscape” 166). “The major appeal of her poetry lies in its unique strength and her intimacy with the sun and with the Indian landscape which it colours” (Pandey, “Kamala Das” 101) as in the poems – “A Hot Noon in Malabar”, “Dance of the Eunuchs” and “Summer in Calcutta”. The image of the sun never illumines the world of poetess but consumes it.

“A Hot Noon in Malabar”

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In “A Hot Noon in Malabar”, the sun symbolizes “wildness” and the passionate renderings of a feminine heart. This poem is reminiscent of Kamala Das’s childhood spent in her Malabar home and also of the landscape, the climate and the vendors of Malabar. Here, Das ponders over the life in the village which is in contrast to a city-bred life. In a city life, there is a cramping of elemental life-force that can be found only in Nature and in the love of nature. This poem gives a detailed account of village life where the people are born and bred in the open lap of Nature or even in the midst of jungle. She describes the hot noon during which there is a prominence of elemental life-force as in village life, people remain more active during noon hours. It is a “noon for men who come from hills/With parrots in a cage” and a “noon for strangers” whose “hot eyes” are “brimming with the sun, not seeing a thing in/Shadowy rooms” and this is also a noon for those strangers whose voices “run wild like jungle-voices” (Singh 77). Here, the noon time and the image of the sun act as life-force for the village people. There is a presence of life-force amidst such people as bangle-sellers, beggars, astrologers and other village-people who are content and happy with their lives. Their hope and contentment energized with the heat of the sun becomes their life-force. Kamala Das’s poem “Dance of the Eunuchs” depicts the oppressive power of the sun as implicit through the opening line of the poem: “It was hot, so hot, before the eunuchs came/To dance” (Singh 78). Das doesn’t give a detailed description of Nature in her poems but mingles the elements of nature with the cultural atmosphere. This poem gives an insight into the culture of the eunuchs.

Use of Four Natural Elements

Das also makes use of the four natural elements in her poems which form an integral part of her imagery- the fire, the earth, the water and the air. In the poem “Dance of the Eunuchs” which expresses the feministic tendencies and anguish of the eunuchs, she employs three of the four natural elements i.e. the images of ‘fire’ as implicit in “like half-burnt logs from/funeral pyres”, of ‘water’ as in the following lines which also give a vivid account of atmosphere during rainy season: “The sky crackled then, thunder came, and lightening/And rain, a meagre rain that smelt of dust” (Singh 78) and of ‘earth’ in the smell of “dust”. The poem also gives us a picture of other images of the objects of nature such as – of “fiery gulmohar”, of “jasmynes” in the hair of eunuchs, of “crows” who “were so silent on trees” and of lizards and mice.

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The poem presents the external extravagance and the inner vacuity of the eunuchs who are like “half-burnt logs” and like a “drought and “rottenness” which has been echoed even by Nature itself in the sudden and unusual thunder and lightning and even by rain which is ‘meagre’. The eunuchs represent a wasteland-like situation. The poem “An Introduction” also employs the four natural elements of fire, air, water and earth in its texture as evident in the following: “Not the deaf, blind speech/Of trees in storm, or of monsoon clouds or of rain or the/Incoherent mutterings of the blazing/Funeral pyre” (Singh 80). Here, men and women are described through the images of nature as Das says that in men runs the “hungry haste of rivers” and in women the “oceans’ tireless waiting”. This shows Das’s deft craftsmanship in mingling feministic aspects with the images of nature.

Outer Space, Inner Space, Restlessness

Kamala Das in her response to the external world maintains a sense of poise with which she depicts the outer landscape but that sense of poise “does not reflect the inner landscape of the poetess which is replete with restlessness” (Pandey, “Cityscape” 171). But in “Summer in Calcutta”, the external world reflects her inner feelings and joyous moods. The poem celebrates the temporary victory over the defeat of love (Singh 83). It “derives its poetic meaning from the poet’s intimacy with the pleasures of the Indian summer” (Pandey 171). The April sun acts as a warm intoxicating agent for the persona which helps her in relieving all her tensions. The opening lines of the poem give a sensuous description of the April sun that has been likened to an intoxicating drink:

The April sun, squeezed
Like an orange in
My glass? I sip the
Fire, I drink and drink. (Singh 83)

Here, the drink of the April sun that has been likened with the orange drink and further in the poem with the “noble venom” that flows through the persona’s veins acts as a source for providing ecstatic delights and transient relief from despairs for the poetess. This warm intoxicating agent soothes her and heals her sufferings too. This poem, thus, through the image

of the sun creates a soothing atmosphere for the poetess. It employs the positive side of Nature – showcasing the soothing and the healing power of nature. However, in most of her poems, Kamala Das also paints the negative aspect of Nature – its fierceness, its wildness as in “A Hot Noon in Malabar”, its stormy aspect as in “An Introduction” and a drought or a waste-land-like situation as in “Dance of the Eunuchs”.

To Conclude: Distinction between Nature and Culture

Therefore, this paper clearly shows how these women writers treat Nature in their poems. Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu become luscious and profuse in their descriptions of Nature whereas Kamala Das paints the cultural world of Nature as the images of nature attain cultural significance in the poems of Kamala Das. The poems of all these three poets present an important distinction between culture and nature. These two terms are not only distinct to each other but, at the same time, are inextricably linked to each other, as for Bates, culture is always already embedded in nature just as nature is always already embedded in culture (Harrison). This culture not merely affects nature but is, in turn, affected by it. We can trace the postcolonial paradigms in this distinction between nature and culture. Culture is the master that always dominates, exploits and marginalizes Nature whereas Nature is the slave that has been constantly annihilated, crushed, muted and tamed by the human culture. The culture achieves dynamic progress through its indulgence in wars, invasions and other forms of conquest on this earth that destroys our natural environment. Various minerals and stones are extracted from this earth such as gold, diamonds, agate, porphyry, onyx, jade, ruby, etc. for human use and decorative purposes through mining that proves destructive to nature. Human beings kill animals to obtain materials such as ivory, horns, leather and pearls. Hence it is clear that nature’s identity is at stake. So, there is a pressing need for imbibing the ecological ethics for survival in the human culture itself. The spiritual element is also inherent in the poems of these poets in the sense that there is a presence of a divine spirit in Nature that inspire in us “a dignity of all nature” that “powerfully expresses the romantic belief that divinity is diffused throughout nature” (Branch 289). The poems of these poets, thus, open up vistas of scenic beauties of the environment that stimulate an urge among the compassionate hearts to conserve this precious treasure.

APPENDIX

Toru Dutt's "Baugmaree"

A sea of foliage girts our garden round,
But not a sea of dull unvaried green,
Sharp contrasts of all colours here are seen;
The light-green graceful tamarinds abound
Amid the mango clumps of green profound,
And palms arise, like pillars grey, between;
And o'er the quiet pools the seemuls lean,
Red,- red, and startling like a trumpet's sound.
But nothing can be lovelier than the ranges
Of bamboos to the eastward, when the moon
Looks through their gaps, and the white lotus changes
Into a cup of silver. One might swoon
Drunken with beauty then, or gaze and gaze
On a primeval Eden, in amaze.

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