

Indian Poetry in English
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Lecture - 03

Toru Dutt

Good morning, I do remember that we have been doing the lectures on Indian Poetry in English. And my dear friends, you are listening to these NPTEL online lectures on Indian poetry in English. The lectures are being delivered by Binod Mishra. Prior to this, we have had two lectures, where we discussed what Indian poetry in English means, and what actually it means in a broader way when we talk about Indian literature in English.

We had the other day discussed, the historical background and we had also seen that the first Indian English poet was Henry Derozio. My dear friends, I am reminded of one very important line by M K Naik in his book, where he says that the first period of Indian English literature or for that matter poetry came to an end by 1850. Now, that was the first period of Indian English poetry. Now in and between so many things passed off. India at, that time was witnessing the rise of nationalism and of course, the East India Company which was ruling India, had actually a greater say.

So, many of the poets as you remember who had started trying their hands whether Indian or British, some of them also happen to be British women poets. Now, in 1858, you are well reminded of the fact that 1857 mutiny that is Sepoy Mutiny which was called the first struggle for Indian Independence that actually came to an end in 1858. And, the rule of East India Company was now on its decline.


So, many changes were taking place. There were many Indian voices also on the rise especially in the field of poetry of course, many of them were quite adamant in writing their verses in the regional language that is especially in Bengal, we had Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. And, you well remember how Madhusudan Dutt who had started writing in English, writing in English later on switched over to writing in Bengali and his seminal work *Meghnad Badh* had become very popular.

But then, as the second phase of Indian English poetry starts, we have some very prominent voices and we can call these people as the path breakers of Indian poetry in English.


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Socio-Political Conditions

- Indian ethos underwent great changes politically and culturally.
- The rise of confident authentic poets: Toru Dutt, Shri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore.
- India rediscovering her identity.
- Revolution for right to education for British Women.
- While the Dutt men converted to Christianity, the women of the family remained Hindoo (Indian Mythology).



'a scar was drawn across IndoBritish relations deeper than any which had been inflicted since the Mutiny.'

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There were ToruDutt, Shri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore. My dear friends, it has always been seen that whenever there is an opposition it is not devoid of its own benefits and that India also witnessed. India was actually able to rediscover an own identity and it was not only in the minds of Indian male poets, but also in the minds of Indian female poets. And it was for the first time, the Dutts came into limelight with their composing of the Dutt family album.

And, we will talk in details about that, but here we have to be reminded of how some of the British women poets they were also trying their hands and writing poetry in English. Now, who were these women poets? Majority of these women poets were some way or the other the relatives or the kinsmen of the British officials in India.

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Condition of Women Poets

- ❖ British Women poets namely, Anna Maria, Adela Cory Nicolson, Mary Carshore, Mary Eliza Leslie, Emma Roberts etc.
- ❖ Gendered maintenance of poetic canon.
- ❖ Poetess: Daughters of Christian converts, members of *Bhrahmo Samaj*, daughters of progressive and reformist fathers.
- ❖ Education of Women
- ❖ Subscription publication allowed anonymous publication.

They were actually talking about are the themes of spatiality, I mean the space distancing and of course, at times they also talked about the gendered feeling. Some names that we can take here are Anna Maria. Of course, many of them were writing under their pseudonyms. They were not actually writing in their true names, some of them were stealthily publishing their poems and Adela, Cory Nicolson, Mary Carshore, Mary Eliza Leslie and then Emma Roberts. These are some of the names to be taken here and some of these poets who were writing while many of them had the British landscape on their mind, but there was one voice Mary Eliza Leslie who was actually born in India especially in a small town of Munger in Bihar.

And you know, what happened because her upbringing was here, she started practicing her verses and in her verses you can find a sort of linguistic mix both, of Indian language and also of British. Since these women poets were daughters of the British officials they had in their mind certain reservations as well.

Because many of them did not want to be called as poetess, and they thought that it was sought it was a sort of discriminative word for them because they felt themselves inferior to. And of course, the education of the women also helped in this regard a great deal, my dear friend. Now, you might be thinking that since these were the women poets what were they writing?

Of course, a woman poet is supposed to write poems which actually border upon domestic life. Many of them were also writing oriental tales, but then some of them were

also writing about the Christian devotional verses on the right and you can see here, it is actually a poem by Mary Eliza Leslie who about whom I said that she was born in Bihar, and because of her background what she does is she actually mixes some of the Indian words.

So, Indian poetry in English was also seeing its own vicissitudes through the voices of some British people. Now, let us have a look at this poem which is entitled Kadambini. And, if you read the poem in detail you will find how this British women poet who herself does not feel comfortable by calling herself to be a British woman, how she writes?

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What Women Poets Wrote?

- Domestic life
- Oriental tales
- Christian devotional verse
- Retelling of traditional stories

The Raja brings to her his child,
A lovely one, with face as mild
As Chandra, whom some castes address,

In Purnima the hand they kiss.
The lady spake: – the child came near,
"Here is an English Pustak, dear,
With pretty stories, pictures too, Brought
from America, for you." "Bahukhush, do
ham ko," lisp'd the child.
(Kadambini)

The Raja brings to her child,
A lovely one, with face as mild
As Chandra, whom some castes address,
In Purnima the hand they kiss.
The lady spake:- the child came near,
“ Here is an English Pustak, dear,
with pretty stories, pictures too, brought

from America, for you.” “ Bahutkhush, do

ham ko,” lisped the child.”

Now, you can find here a blend not only of the regional language that is I mean Indian language here and in that part where the words like *Chandra*, *Purnima*, and then *Pustak-* - these are Indian.

So, Indian poetry in English in it I mean in the works of in the poems of Mary Eliza found its own tinge the Indian tinge. But then it could have been perfected nonetheless unless and until an Indian poet who actually belong to the Indian soil, to the Indian psyche and also to the Indian land could come or to take her own stride and that is how Toru Dutt’s name here comes into picture.

But who was this Toru Dutt? And you know most of us remember The Dutt Family Album, and this Dutt Family Album was actually composed by Toru’s parents especially Toru’s father and two of his her uncle’s namely Govin Chunder, Girish Chunder; and other was one other relative Umesh Chandra. Now, these people what they were writing? They were actually writing about their own family we will see, but before that let us have a look at who is this Toru Dutt and where was she born?


Now, you may well remember that Indian poetry in English could not have its own time unless and until somebody, who could work as if we are reminded of the quote. So, a medium of intercourse or communication and that also resulted in many of the poets writing in English with the blessings of the Britisher’s British people, and at that time there was actually a courage that children should be sent if possible and if their financial conditions so actually allowed they could go to England and this is how it happened.

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Introduction to Toru Dutt

- Born on 4th March, 1856 in a rich family in Calcutta
- Siblings: Aru Dutt and Abju
- Elite Europhile Bengali family
- Dutt's left for Europe in 1869.
- Alienated in society as Christians.
- Died of consumption at the age of 21 in 1877.

“Puny and elf like, with dishevelled tresses
Self willed and shy...
Intent to pay her tenderest addresses
To bird or cat,---
But most intelligent.” (Govin Chander Dutt)



5

So, Toru was born on 4th march 1856 in a rich family in Calcutta. And the father Govin Chunder Dutt as I said, he himself was a poet and two of his brothers also were poets and Toru was born in a family having 3 siblings. Toru had 3, 2 siblings including her becoming the third.

So, Aru Dutt and Abju; Aru was a sister and Abju was the brother. But, my dear friends, at times it so happens that Toru had a very crooked fate fine? Even though she was born in Calcutta, the family because of some reason or the other they embraced Christianity and they left for Europe in 1869. It is said that they were the first Bengali family to visit Europe fine? And Toru also was the first woman Indian Bengali woman to visit Europe.

Dutt's left for Europe in 1869 and then in the society they felt themselves alienated. When they went to England, when they went to Europe, their first stay was in France where Toru had her schooling fine ,and then later on she also switched over along with her parents to Cambridge where she could make friendship with Mary Martin who happened to be the recipient of all her letters fine, all the letters of Toru.

But Toru and her siblings had a very sad, bad and a very crooked fate. All of them were suffering from some disease or the other. And, you will come to know later that Toru had a very small life, a life of only 21 years. First she lost her own brother and then she lost her sister and that also of consumption and later on she also succumbed to death in 1877.

A brief description about Toru given by GovinChunderDutt in a sonnet is---‘ puny and elf like with dishevelled tresses she willed and shy, self- willed and shy intent to pay her tenderest addresses to bird or cat but most intelligent.’” Toru Dutt actually was very intelligent right from the beginning and she had her passion, she had her passion and sympathies for everything that was around her it is said that she even wanted a mosquito for her canneries.


She had the same sort of love for the birds and also at times the nature which was around her. So, Toru was witty by nature fine; when she had been living in England, she had all sorts of experiences, but even when Toru’s father had embraced Christianity, her mother was a very traditional Indian woman and she was a traditional Hindu.

And, most often she filled Toru’s mind with the ancient tales of Indian scriptures and that actually seemed to formulate the early years of Toru when she had drawn herself to the Indian legions, Indian *kathas* and the Indian myths.

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Contd.

- Went to French school at Nice.
- Moved to Cambridge in 1871, befriended Mary Martin.
- True authentic poet
- Wrote in French and English. (One letter in Bengali)
- ‘Brown English woman?’ or ‘Bengali Ladies?’
- Influence of Victor Hugo
- Heir to English and French Romantics



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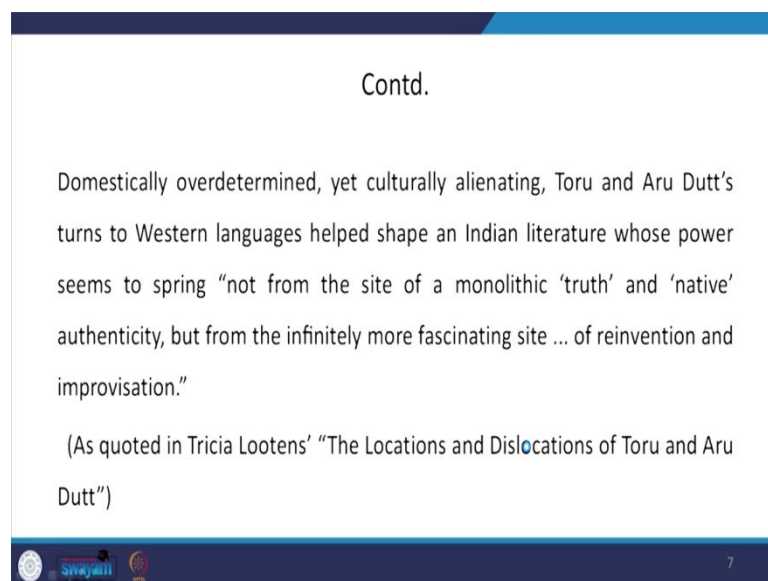
The family moved in 1871 to Cambridge where as I said earlier Toru befriended Mary Martin, who happened to be one of the most fortunate beings to receive all the letters of Toru throughout her life. Toru actually, it is said by many Indian writers and poets, that she was the one, she was the one who could be considered that she was the first true and authentic Indian voice.

And it is said ,I am reminded of what M K Naik says that from psittacism to an authentic utterance, I think this was actually the call of the second period of Indian English literature. So, from psittacism not mere speech, not mere writing, but there has to be some amount of authenticity. And, in the beginning many people consider that Toru was a sort of Brown English woman.

But no, my dear friend, of course, had because of her upbringing she had started writing only at a very early age though she was quite fluent in English, but she exposed herself to French as well, and also to Spanish.

And you will realize that the first work that she did was in French; and the way she has done it of course, it was a work of translation as you will see later. But, then there are different voices, all the important figures of France right from Victor Hugo to many others they were actually translated in her book and title A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields.

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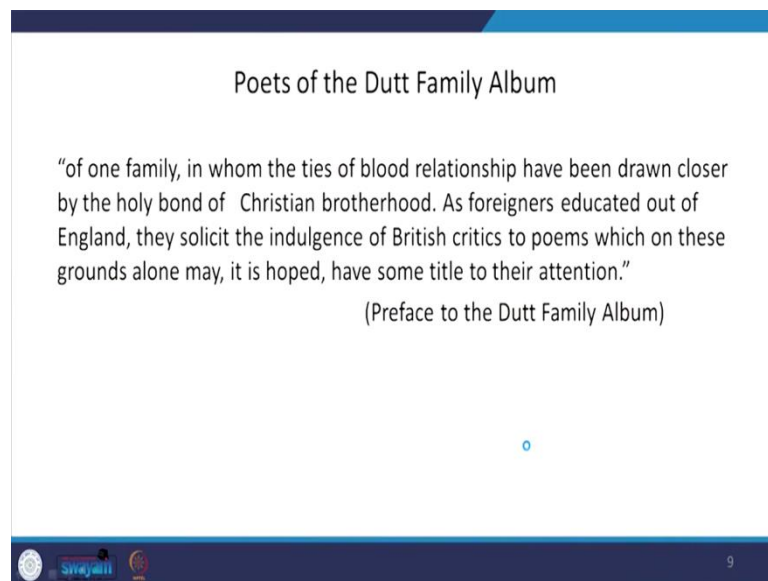
Now, about Toru Dutt, what Tricia Looten's says, is very significant and all of us should try to understand domestically over determined yet culturally alienating, because she was living in England and partly in France. Toru and Aru Dutts turns to western languages helped, shape an Indian literature. I will rather italicize the word *Indian literature* even though she was away.

But the themes that were going on in her mind were nonetheless Indian whose power seems to spring not from the site of a monolithic truth and native authenticity, but from the infinitely more fascinating site of reinvention and improvisation. You will find that when Toru came back to India, the family came back to India in 1873 my dear friend.

They came back to India in 1873, and unfortunately 4 years later I mean in 1877 Toru also died and the deaths of Abju and Aru, they had actually a very catastrophic effect on Toru's psyche. Of course, the Dutt family where these people, the poets who belonged only to one family and they have included their lyric, ballad, sonnet.

But it is said that these this book, *The Dutt Family Album* which was published in 1870 could not succeed. Why it could not succeed? Because even though, it had a technical competence and all there was imitation, but then it could not be successful because as in the preface, to the Dutt family Album GovinChunderDutt himself says,

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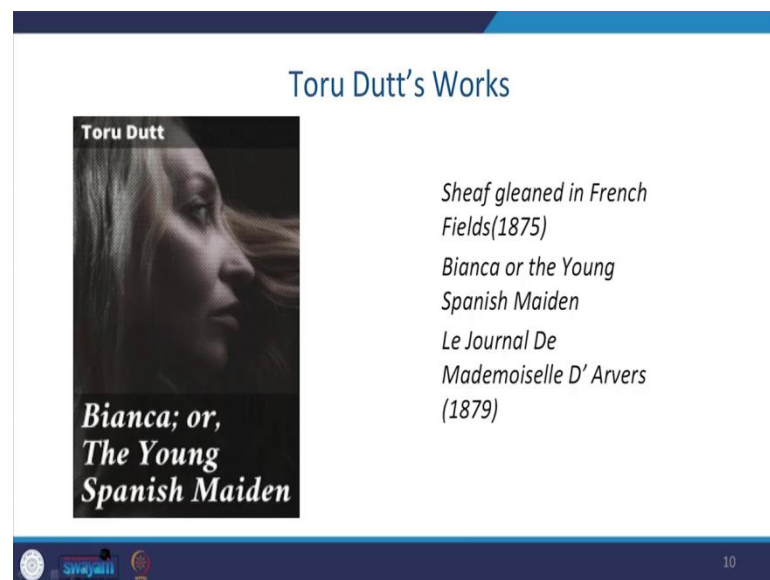


“it was actually the relationship “of one family in whom the blood ties of relationship have been drawn closer to the holy bond of Christian brotherhood. As foreigners educated out of England, they solicit the indulgence of British critics to poems which on these grounds alone may it is hoped, have some title to their attention, but Dutt Family Album could not do well.”

Now, having seen all this, Toru Dutt right from the beginning who actually was influenced by French and she was a very quick learner my dear friend, very quick learner. So, there are only two works that can be credited to her, and those two works which are written--- the first work *Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields*, these are all translations.

And, translations of all these seventy to hundred poets rather and in this volume there are 165 pieces out of which only 8 were written, 8 were done by Aru and the remaining one's were done by Toru Dutt.

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Later on Toru also wrote a novel “Bianca; Or The Young Spanish Maiden”. Now, she also tried her hand at novel and it is said that this was written in Spanish because it was about a Spanish maiden. And, Bianca is actually torn between the loves of her elder sister’s fiance and lord both of whom wanted to marry Bianca, but the novel could not develop further and the novel suddenly got off in the middle.

Later on Toru wrote “Le Journal D Mademoiselle D Arvers” that was actually in French that was in French; and here the heroine is Margarita. Margarita has to choose between the love of Louis and Count Dunios. Actually, Margarita loved Count Dunios, but Count Dunios out of jealousy, he had actually killed his own brother and the Count Dunios wanted, Count Dunios had his attraction or fascination towards his own maid.

And it later so happened that not only did he kill his own brother out of jealousy, but he also killed himself and ultimately Margarita had no choice, then to marry the able and the worthy Louis.

So, that is all about, but there was one more important thing on which Toru's fame rests and, but then the book came out posthumously, means after Toru's death. Because it was found that Toru had been writing and what she and the book that actually made her, so famous as an Indian poet was "Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan" which was published in 1882 I mean after her death.

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Poems by Toru Dutt

'Literature has no honours which need have been beyond the grasp of a girl who at the age of twenty-one and in languages separated from her own by so deep a chasm, had produced so much of lasting worth.' - Edmund Gosse

Poems Published in
Bengal Magazine
Early Translations

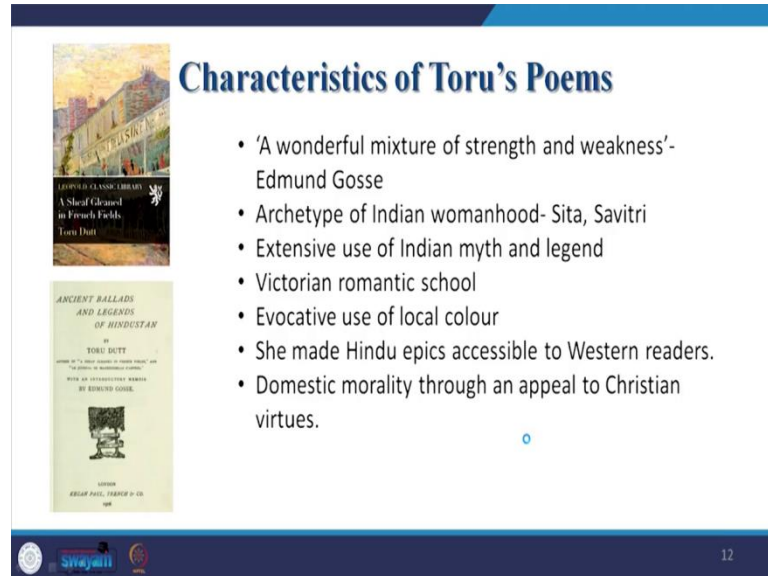
- *A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields* (1875)
- *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan* (1882)

Now, when Toru wrote the first book that is "A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields", it actually had a very good effect even upon many English writers. And, Edmund Gosse who being one of the great admirers of Toru's writings. He writes "literature has no honours which need have been beyond the grasp of a girl who at the age of twenty one and in languages separated from her own by so deep a chasm, had produced so much of lasting worth".

Actually he called Toru earlier as an exotic voice, exotic fragrant voice, but there were some French critics also who said that she is very much like a French women who can understand our own culture and that is how Toru had become very popular. Toru had also been writing and publishing some of her poems in Bengali magazine though they

were translations, but then majority of Toru's poems as I said earlier. Since in Toru's psyche there was a deep imprint of Indian myths and legions.

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Characteristics of Toru's Poems

- 'A wonderful mixture of strength and weakness'- Edmund Gosse
- Archetype of Indian womanhood- Sita, Savitri
- Extensive use of Indian myth and legend
- Victorian romantic school
- Evocative use of local colour
- She made Hindu epics accessible to Western readers.
- Domestic morality through an appeal to Christian virtues.

The slide includes two book covers on the left: 'A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields' by Toru Dutt and 'Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan' by Toru Dutt, with an introduction by Edmund Gosse. The slide also features logos for Swajal and a page number 12.

We could find that there was wonderful mixture of a strength and weakness both in Toru. Toru could not be called merely an Indian poet, but she was much the same a French writer and on which her fame rests.

We find that in the ancient legions which we had been talking about which made her ancient ballads and legends which made her very popular there she talks about Sita, there she talks about Savitri, she talks about Dhruv, she talks about Lakshman, she talks about the Indian king Bharat.

And the ways he has narrated everything because we find that there is a sort of narration, there is a sort of dram, a there is actually and you know besides all she had her own voice. Of course, many of her works are suffused with Indian myths and legions, but then she reminds at times all the readers of Victorian romantic school, but then not devoid of the use of local colour.

It was actually Toru's endeavor to bring Hindu epics accessible to western readers. There are in many of her works, domestic morality through an appeal to Christian virtues. Toru did not want herself to be called merely an Indian English poet, but the way she has

written it is often said that she also tried to blend the two cultures together and that we shall see when we will find some of Toru's poems.

For example, the poem which made Toru very popular and this poem "our Casuarina Tree" which is actually prescribed in many of the universities and colleges, it is associated with several layers of meaning. And the moment a reader reads it, one can find that while she is talking about the tree, but with the tree is associated Toru's childhood memories while structurally she talks about the tree, but she also talks about the pains, she also talks about the sweet memories.


And, in a way she is also talking about the loss, the despair, the frustration that she had on the demise of two of her siblings. We can read a few lines of the poem in order to understand how Toru was quite adept at making use of English phrases, but with the same felicity of bringing some of the Indian words in many of her poems.

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Our Casuarina Tree

LIKE a huge Python, winding round and round
The rugged trunk, indented deep with scars,
Up to its very summit near the stars,
A creeper climbs, in whose embraces bound
No other tree could live. 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;
And oft at nights the garden overflows
With one sweet song that seems to have no close,

Sung darkling from our tree, while men repose.



13

The poem begins with the very first stanza of the poem says,

like a huge Python, winding round and round

The rugged trunk indented deep with scars,

Up to its very summit near the stars,

A creeper climbs, in whose embraces bound

No other tree could live. 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;


And oft at nights the garden overflows

With one sweet song that seems to have no close.

Now, see the first stanza simply talks about the tree, the structural, the objective tree, but as we move to the second stanza, we can find how Toru moves and how she unfolds her own memory fine?

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Contd.



When first my casement is wide open thrown
At dawn, my eyes delighted on it rest;
Sometimes, and most in winter,—on its crest
A gray baboon sits statue-like alone
Watching the sunrise; while on lower boughs
His puny offspring leap about and play;
And far and near kokilas hail the day;
And to their pastures wend our sleepy cows;

And in the shadow, on the broad tank cast
By that hoar tree, so beautiful and vast,
The water-lilies spring, like snow enmassed.

14

When first my casement is wide open thrown

at dawn, my eyes delighted on it rest.

See at, some places Toru has written that she had quite a sheltered life, and when she came out of her own bungalow or building, there were people staring at her. So, she had only the opportunity of looking through her own windows and where she says, sometimes, and most in winter, - on its crest

A gray baboon sits statue like alone

watching the sunrise; while on the lower boughs.”

So, Toru’s view of the outside world ,when she is confined in her own room living a sheltered life.

His puny offspring leap about and play;

and far and near kokilas hail the day;

and to their pastures wend our sleepy cows.

So, it is it reminds us of the rural settings of Indian life and at the same time the child’s view of the outside world, but as the poem progresses we can find Toru is reminded of her own painful and at the same time sweet sour memories.

So, Toru has developed a sort of association with the tree and she says,

and in the shadow, on the broad tank cast


By that hoar tree, so beautiful and vast,

The water lilies spring, like snow enmassed

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Contd.

But not because of its magnificence
Dear is the Casuarina to my soul:
Beneath it we have played; though years may roll,
O sweet companions, loved with love intense,
For your sakes, shall the tree be ever dear.
Blent with your images, it shall arise
In memory, till the hot tears blind mine eyes!
What is that dirge-like murmur that I hear
Like the sea breaking on a shingle-beach?
It is the tree's lament, an eerie speech,
That haply to the unknown land may reach.



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But not because of its magnificence,

Dear is the Casuarina to my soul:

Why do I love this tree? And then she says

Beneath it we have played;

So, memory

beneath it we have played;

though years may roll,

o sweet companions, loved with love intense.

So, she gets very painful, she actually gets reminiscent of the days that she had spent with her own siblings loved with love intense for your sakes shall the tree be ever dear, shall the tree be ever dear. And, then suddenly she retreats;

Blent with your images, it shall arise

In memory till the hot tears blind mine eyes!

What is that dirge- like murmur that I hear

Like the sea breaking on a shingle beach?

it is the tree's lament, an eerie speech,

that haply to the unknown land may reach.

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Contd.

Unknown, yet well-known to the eye of faith!
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:
And every time the music rose,—before
Mine inner vision rose a form sublime,
Thy form, O Tree, as in my happy prime
I saw thee, in my own loved native clime.



Unknown, yet well- known to the eye of faith!

Ah, I have heard that wail far, far away

Again I have heard that wail 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,

So, trying to blend both the Indian landscape and then also the France and also Italy.

When earth lay tranced in a dreamless swoon:

And every time the music rose, -before

Mine inner vision rose a form sublime,

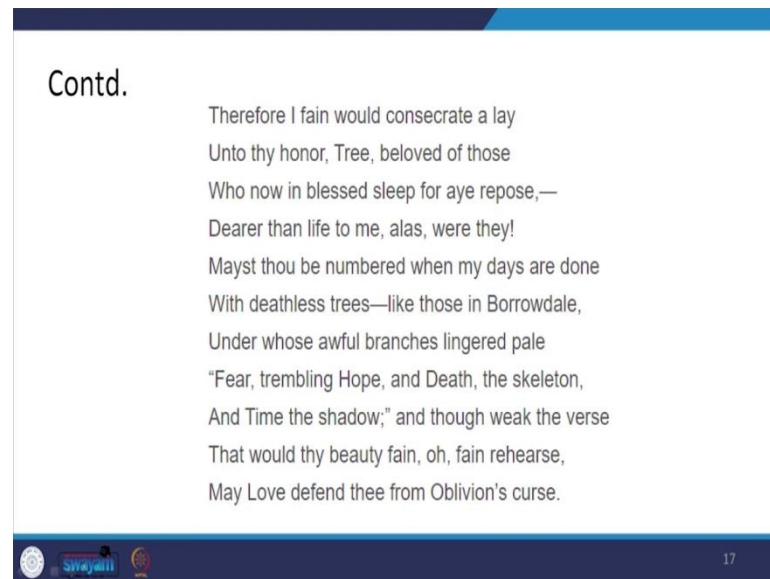
Thy form, O Tree, as in my happy prime

this prime refers to her childhood

I saw thee, in my own loved native clime.

in my own loved native clime.

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Contd.

Therefore I fain would consecrate a lay
Unto thy honor, Tree, beloved of those
Who now in blessed sleep for aye repose,—
Dearer than life to me, alas, were they!
Mayst thou be numbered when my days are done
With deathless trees—like those in Borrowdale,
Under whose awful branches lingered pale
"Fear, trembling Hope, and Death, the skeleton,
And Time the shadow;" and though weak the verse
That would thy beauty fain, oh, fain rehearse,
May Love defend thee from Oblivion's curse.

And then finally, the last stanza - where she says ,

Therefore I fain would consecrate a lay

Unto thy honor, I would consecrate a lay

unto thy honor, Tree, beloved of those

Who now in blessed sleep

referring to her brother and sister,

For aye repose,

Dearer than life to me ,alas, were they!

So, her deep associations,

mayst thou be numbered when my days are done,

Mayst thou be numbered when my days are done.

And she actually also maybe we can find that there is a sort of premonition of our own death


With deathless trees like those in Borrowdale,
Under whose awful branches lingered pale
“ Fear, trembling hope, and Death, the skeleton,
And time the shadow;” and though weak the verse
That would thy beauty fain, oh, fain rehearse,
May Love defend thee from oblivion’s curse.

Here she also reminds us of Keats, of some other poets who had seen death and despair. Many people often can say that she also reminds the readers of Emily Dickinson who was also shocked in death like John Keats of English literature. Now, what does this poem tell us, and how can this allow and enable us to understand Toru as an authentic Indian English voice?

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Characteristics of Poem

- Indian Setting and imageries
- Picturesque
- Keatsian romanticism
- Traumatic recollection
- Rhythmic and musical



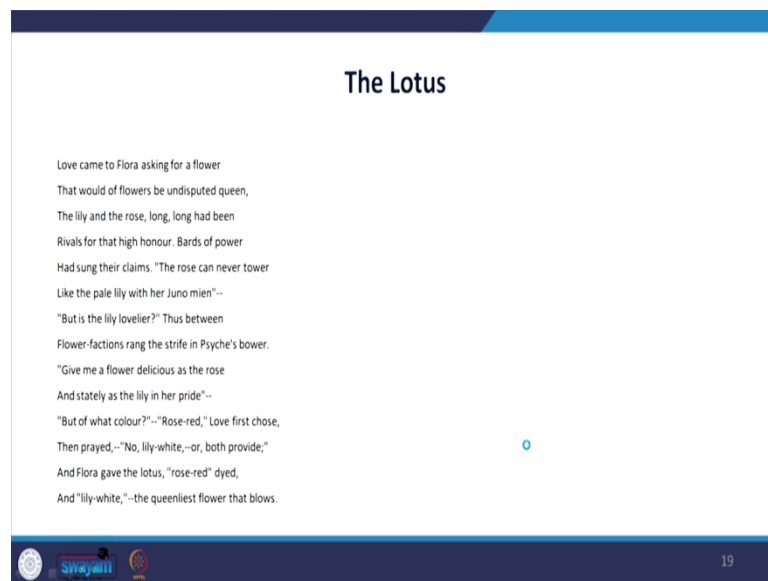
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Not only are there the Indian settings and imageries, as you have already seen. The *kokilas*, the baboons on the trees which are a common site, but then the beauty of the poem lies in its pictures quality fine and it reminds us of the Keatsian romanticism. So, not only is Toru aware of at such an age and you know Toru shared the fate of John Keats who also died so early my dear friend. It is a traumatic recollection, but then it is not devoid of the rhythmic quality and the musicality.

So, in a way 'Casuarina tree' which is one of the most famous poems of Toru Dutt not only blends us to the Indian settings, but also it allows us to enter the inner psyche of the poet who had preserved the tragedy, who had preserved the sufferings that she underwent after the demise of two of a dear and near siblings. Now, one can often say that Toru had the privilege of getting education in a foreign land, but at the same time was she also aware was a sort of consciousness that she was an Indian.

Of course, in one of the poems which we have taken from the last collection fine? the *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan* the poem entitled **Lotus**. And in this poem not only does the poet makes use of very beautiful literary devices called personification but at the same time she also refers to the conflict of religions and then she tries to prove how Indian religion or Indian ethics or Indian settings or Indian psyche had something that can make the world having a sort of wonder and awe. Let us have a look at the lines of the poem in order to understand not only the rhythmic quality, but the sort of philosophy that she tries to weave ah beneath these lines.

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The Lotus

Love came to Flora asking for a flower
That would of flowers be undisputed queen,
The lily and the rose, long, long had been
Rivals for that high honour. Bards of power
Had sung their claims. "The rose can never tower
Like the pale lily with her Juno mien"--
"But is the lily lovelier?" Thus between
Flower-factions rang the strife in Psyche's bower.
"Give me a flower delicious as the rose
And stately as the lily in her pride"--
"But of what colour?"--"Rose-red," Love first chose,
Then prayed,--"No, lily-white,--or, both provide;"
And Flora gave the lotus, "rose-red" dyed,
And "lily-white,"--the queenliest flower that blows.

Love came to flora asking for a flower, actually it talks about a flower and here Love has been personified, Love wanted to know which is the loveliest, we have been saying that when we talk about poetry, in poetry a flower is considered to be the queen of the garden, the lady of the garden fine, and something of delight.

And here we find how a Toru Dutt very in a very exquisite manner tries to say that how Indian flower lotus has its own importance. And she says,

Love came to Flora asking for a flower

That would of flowers be undisputed queen.

The lily and the rose, long, long had been

Rivals for that honour. Bards of power.

So, when she says lily and rose she is referring to something else not India like the pale lily birds of power had sung their claims,

the rose can never tower

like the pale lily with her Juno mien”,--

“ But is the lily lovelier?” Thus between

Flower-factions rang the strife in psyche’s bower.

“ Give me a flower delicious as the rose

And stately as the lily in her pride”--,

“But of what colour?”—“ Rose-red.”

So, the flower says what colour? Rose red.

Love first chose and

then prayed,--“ No, lily-white,-- or, both provide”,

And Flora gave the lotus, “rose- red” dyed,

And ‘lily-white,”-- the queenliest flower that blows.

So, through this poem the poetess Toru Dutt actually wants to say that the lotus has its own significant place. Even though it may not till now it has not been considered to be as

great as lily and rose, but then and Flora gave the lotus rose red dyed which has got both rose, but then red dyed and lily white it has got the combination of.

So, here we can find a sort of synthesis between not only between two sorts of opinion, but also between two sorts of culture between two sorts of religion between two and you know, she tries to clear this ambivalence. So, that is why this poem appears to me one of my favorite ones.

Now, before we come on to assess Toru Dutt as one very authentic Indian voice, you may well understand that once when an Indian syce was killed and the matters came to the court the judge find the killer only by awarding a punishment of two pounds.

And at that, Toru Dutt had responded you see how cheap is the life of an Indian size in the eyes of the British judge. And you know since Toru was very witty, at times she gave answers which could really not only surprise others, but then it was not devoid of reality. Once upon a time when an elderly gentleman chided Toru by asking why do not you get married and Toru had said ,”I was simply waiting for your permission”.

So, this was actually the beauty of the so little. So, little a girl of 21 years old, but then she had within her a heart, a psyche, a sort of poetry which if could have been preserved or if Toru could have lived longer, she could really have been proved to be an authentic Indian voice which she is, but she could have surpassed many. So, now in order to assess Toru’s poetic corpus and her poetic qualities we can say that Toru was not like her predecessors and she was not only imitating.

Of course, her education was in the west, but just for some time, but then she did not forget because she was very close to her mother and mother’s stories had really worked miracles my dear friend. So, Toru blends personal and cultural dimensions of her own experience,--- one poem after another you will find whether it is Sita or it is Lakshman or it is the famous poem are ‘*The royal Asiatic and the Hind*’.

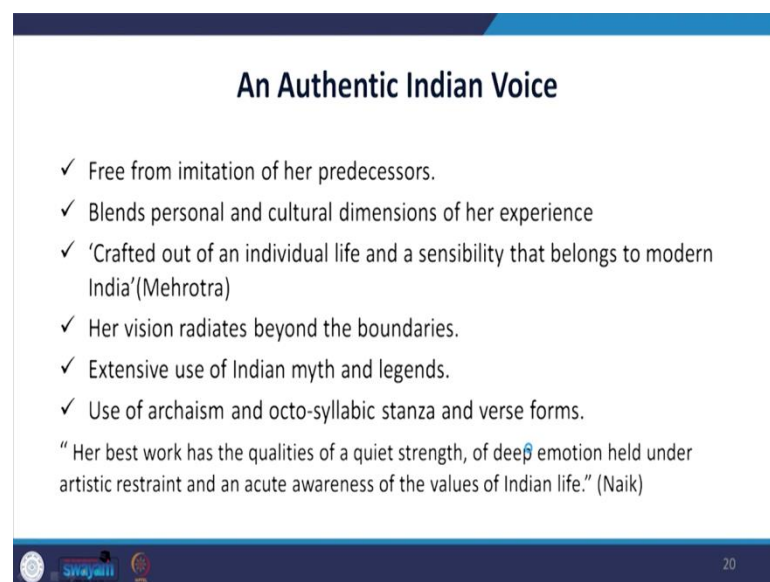
You will be surprised to know that Toru in her poem Lakshmana, she has delineated the picture of how when Sita had been asked to keep herself confined to the line which was drawn by Lakshman.

And, then when Marich, Marich was hurt and he called oh Sita, oh Lakshman and whatsoever we find that Lakshman does not she is not happy with Lakshman and she at times felt that Lakshman was not coming to save her only because Lakshman had an eye on her. But then Toru actually delineates in such a manner later on Sita the simple woman realizes. In the same line we have another episode, when king Bharat who himself was an ascetic and in the forest when a hind a pregnant hind was walking fine. Suddenly, a lion appeared and the lion attacked the hind, and out of fear the hind could not control herself and the child was born. Now, it was very difficult for the king what to do, whether he should listen to God's voice or he should become human.

So, king finally, came and decided that he should help the little child. So, by delineating this, she actually, I mean Toru actually wanted to take a dig on the sort of renunciation, on the sort of such a void, such a life which is secluded from the human welfare.

Now, the question is, as rightly has been said by Maharotra in his famous book," Toru's language and vision" was crafted out of an individual life and a sensibility that actually belongs to modern India.

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An Authentic Indian Voice

- ✓ Free from imitation of her predecessors.
- ✓ Blends personal and cultural dimensions of her experience
- ✓ 'Crafted out of an individual life and a sensibility that belongs to modern India'(Mehrotra)
- ✓ Her vision radiates beyond the boundaries.
- ✓ Extensive use of Indian myth and legends.
- ✓ Use of archaism and octo-syllabic stanza and verse forms.

"Her best work has the qualities of a quiet strength, of deep emotion held under artistic restraint and an acute awareness of the values of Indian life." (Naik)

swayam 20

So, people who are still apprehensive and who are still hesitating of calling Toru a real Indian voice may take a reply from this because Toru's vision radiates beyond the boundaries. Even though what was there in her psyche say could portray and delineate her through her poems and as we have seen that many of her poems of the last book that

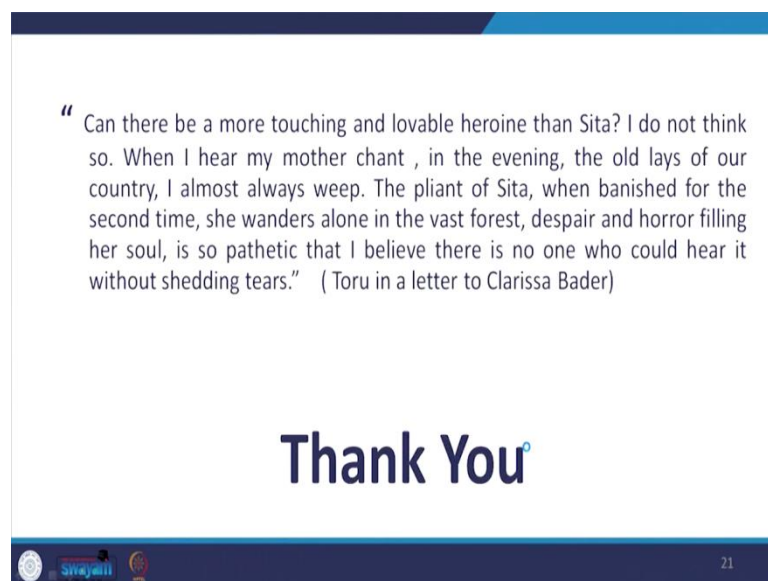
was published posthumously are having a background of Indian myths and legends of course, at times she makes use of archaism fine, and many of her poems are having octo-syllabic stanza and verse forms.

One beautiful quality of one of the poems that the lotus is--- that it is fashioned in a Petrarchan stanza form where we find the lines are pattern in such a way a b b a a b b a b b c c like that. And finally, you find if you go to the poem you can find how she tries to maintain the quality, how she tries to maintain the rhythmic quality. Naik has rightly said about what Naik says about her is, really reminiscent of Toru being a true and authentic Indian voice.

What M K Naik says is”--- Her best work has the qualities of a quiet strength of deep emotion held under artistic restraint and an acute awareness of the values of Indian life. So, my dear friends, when we assess Toru as an as a true authentic Indian poet. We should also remember how Toru had at the back of her mind the Indian themes working and rightly has she written in one of her letters to Clarissa Bader where she says, because she has seen her mother who was an ardent Hindu.

But then when the family had embraced Christianity she followed she told the line, but she could not leave off the Indian values and the in Indian scriptural stories and the myths.

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“ Can there be a more touching and lovable heroine than Sita? I do not think so. When I hear my mother chant , in the evening, the old lays of our country, I almost always weep. The plight of Sita, when banished for the second time, she wanders alone in the vast forest, despair and horror filling her soul, is so pathetic that I believe there is no one who could hear it without shedding tears.” (Toru in a letter to Clarissa Bader)

Thank You

swajani 21

So, Toru has rightly mentioned, “Can there be a more touching and lovable heroine than Sita.” Now see, Toru had her early life in France and England, but still she considers Sita to be one of the most lovable heroines,” I do not think. So, when I hear my mother chant in the evening the old lays of our country, I always almost weep .”And in one of the poems she says who is that lady weeping, fine?She is not only referring to Sita, she is also referring to her mother.” The plight of Sita, when banished for the second time she wanders alone in the vast forest despair and horror filling her soul it is so pathetic that I believe there is no one who could hear it without shedding tears.” And my dear friend’s Toru’s life also was one such that when we are reminded of her that she produced such gems at such a tender age, but then she could not survive the heat and the dust and she died in 1877 of consumption.

So, and that is why I have been saying that she shared her fortune with John Keats. With this, we come to the end of this lecture on Toru Dutt. Friends, I actually wanted to give an elaborate talk, but this is not possible in a lecture of only 30 minutes. So, my dear friend, I allow you and I think I request you to go more and more and the pieces of information which I have provided will take you to the beautiful corpus of Toru Dutt and her beautiful works.

Thank you very much I wish you all a good day.

Thank you.