



# Respecting the Resilience uniqueness of Trees in selected Indian poems: A Study

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**Abstract:** Arboreal ecocriticism or dendrocriticism reflects the burgeoning interest in vegetal life with the environmental humanities. On the one hand dendrocriticism addresses the imperiled status of forest ecosystems globally on the other hand tree tuned mode of ecocritical thinking and practice. In nature plants and trees are life maintaining resources without them there are no life and it's means on earth. Everything and living things are affected by the rapid increase of the world's population. Plants and trees play an important role in influencing us from environment to our physical and mental health. As the world's tree population decreases day by day due to deforestation, delay and unawareness are on longer practical options concerning the forest and urban tree population. This article is a indirect call for rewilding the species Tree through selected poems of Indian English poets and would inspire to know the importance of tree population in forest and urban settings for the wildlife environment and human on earth. A tree stands as a profound metaphor for life symbolizing growth, resilience and interconnectedness with their ability to withstand high winds and extreme temperatures and even forest fires trees are the ultimate symbol of steadfastness and durability. This article aims to explain 'Tree' as a natural product that makes poet not only participate in its beauty but also ponder over its 'resilience effect' through a silent message.

**Keywords:** Ecocriticism, Arboreal Ecocriticism or Dendrocriticism, Nature, Environment, Species Conservation, Romanticism, Resilience Conscience.

## INTRODUCTION

Poetry has a long and varied history evolving differentially across the globe. It dates back at least to prehistoric times with hunting poetry in Africa and to panegyric and elegiac court poems of the empires of Nile Niger and Volta River. Nature has been symbol, artistic elements subjects of various forms of art. Since evolution of literary writing the world was working only with the beauty of nature and painted the environmental concerns but failed to pose the threat given by it due to man's deteriorating actions. Recently the threats posed by that beauty has attracted the attention of all the people especially writers and environmental activists. The aggressive power which it possesses alarmed everyone and created a sense of fear and anxiety which resulted in creation of a new branch of Literary theory called Ecocriticism in Literatures. Once upon a time nature was celebrated in Literatures as divine spirit, holy mother friend Of man, beauty of beauties, artistic painting, a backdrop scene, a precisely soul and peerless. Now it is becoming aggressive supernatural force, depleting and degrading day by day, becoming a devastating power. Various elements of nature such as the sky, landscape, cyclic season, it's flora and fauna often find symbolic value in work of art especially in poetry which enhances its texture and forms base for claiming reward.

Poets such as William Wordsworth a key icon of Ecocriticism studies and a forerunner of English Romanticism puts forth his critical views towards nature and interaction between human and nature. By the end of 18th century, as a result of industrial revolution Romanticism, a literary movement began. It was an anti-enlightenment movement. Wordsworth in his 'The Ruined Cottage' emphasis reunion of Man and Nature. In this poem one can vividly see the employment of socio-Political issues woven within the lines. It instructs the readers how to see into the life of thing's, to perceive the importance of the bond between the rural poor and their ancestral land things and learn how-to live-in harmony with nature.

In his sonnet lines, "The World Is Too Much With Us",

'The world we have given our hearts away, a sordid boon! For this, For everything we are out of tune; It moves us not .... (Wordsworth, 2006, p.1394,lines 8-9).emphasis that the modern man has neglected nature and says that punishment of him is the unification of the natural elements with man. Lord Byron in his Darkness has picturized an imagination of post apocalyptic world and life due to drastic climatic change shift. Hence, we all wonder how literature and criticism may bring about a drastic change of man's thought process and insists us to take healthy and immediate actions to preserve nature.

Trees are sacred and their appreciation and thought provoking writings become a great achievement which is effective in the poems such as Trees by Joyce Kilmer, The Sound of the Trees by Robert Frost, Loveliest Trees by A.E.Housman, The Friendly

Tree by Annette Wynne, Under the Green Wood Tree by William Shakespeare, The Two Trees by W.B. Yeats, To Autumn by John Keats, The Mahogany Tree by William Makepeace Thackeray, Polar Trees are Happiest by John Russell McCarthy, The oak by Alfred Lord Tennyson, The Shepherd's Tree by John Clare, Briches by Robert Frost, The Trees of Heaven by Bliss Carman, Cedars by Grace Hazard Conkling, Pear tree by Hilda Doolittle, Pine Trees and Tree and the Sky by Siegfried Sassoon, Go Plant A Tree by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, City Trees by Edna St. Vincent Millay, A Drop On The Apple Tree by Emily Dickinson, An Apple Gathering by Christina Rossetti, When Great Trees Fall by Maya Angelou, The Planting of Apple Tree by William Cullen Bryant, Trees in the Garden by D.H. Lawrence, The way through the woods by Rudyard Kipling, Aspen by Edward Thomas, The Trees by Philip Larkin, The Almond Tree by Derek Walcott, Winter Trees by William Carlos Williams, This Line Tree Bower my Prison by S.T. Coleridge, Plant a Tree by Lucy Larcom etc. These writings on some or on other way led us to recognize and comprehend the representations and reflections of people and poets in distant geographical area upon the nature's great regenerative force the Tree.

The techniques used in this study are creative, collaborative poetic inquiry and writing as research. The poems comprise a mixture of poems celebrating beauty of trees and poems indirectly calling for environmental activism rewilding against deforestation and incessant cutting of trees.

The collection of poems includes three number of poems. They are 'Summer Wood' by Sarojini Naidu, Keki.N.Daruwala's 'The Tree', Rabindranath's 'Palm Tree'.

### **THE RESILIENCE OF TREES**

Resilience may be defined as the ability to recover from or adapt to hardships or change toughness. Humans go through phases of growth and development much like trees. Trees are mighty and strong beings that tower over us, but they begin as little seeds buried deep in the ground. Like us they are born dependent on others to survive but over time they grow into self-sufficient beings shaping their own destinies. A tree stands as a profound metaphor for life symbolizing growth, resilience and interconnectedness with their ability to withstand high winds and extreme temperatures and even forest fires trees are the ultimate symbol of steadfastness and durability.

### **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES OF SELECTED POETS**

#### **Sarojini Naidu**

Sarojini Naidu was an Indian Political activist and poet who served as the first Governor of United provinces after India's independence. Her book of poem was published in London in 1905 titled as 'The Golden Threshold', her second and strongly nationalist book of poems was The Bird of Time published in 1912, the last book of new poems published in her life time was 'The Broken Wing' (1917) and after her death her unpublished poems were collected by her daughter Padmaja Naidu and published as 'The Feather of the Dawn' (1961).

#### **Keki Nasserwanji Daruwalla**

Keki Nasserwanji Daruwalla joined the Indian police service in 1958. He was Special Assistant to the Prime Minister in 1979. He was a Colombo plan scholar at Oxford in 1980 to 81, where he worked on politics in South Asia. He was Also a member of the commonwealth observers Group for Zimbabwe Elections in 1980. He has been noted for vigorous and immediacy of language and his indignant cynicism about predicament of human society. He was awarded Padma Shri for his writings in 2014.

#### **Rabindranath Tagore**

Rabindranath Tagore was a Bengali polymath who was active as a poet writer playwright composer philosopher, social reformer, educationist, linguist, grammarian and painter. Author of Gitanjali, became in 1913 the first non-European and the first lyricist to win the Nobel prize in Literature. His compositions of songs were chosen by two nations as national anthem: India's 'Jana Gana Mana' and Bangladesh's 'Amar Shonar Bangla'. His song 'Banglar Mati Banglar Jol' has been adopted as the state anthem of west Bengal.

### **REPRESENTATIVE AND REFLECTIVE TONE ON CELEBRATING BEAUTY AND RESILIENCE OF TREE BY INDIAN POETS**

This presents Sarojini Naidu's 'Summer wood', Keki. Daruwalla's 'The Tree' and, Rabindranath's Palm Tree.

#### **Summer Woods by Sarojini Naidu**

O I AM tired of painted roofs and soft and silken floors,  
 And long for wind-blown canopies of crimson gulmohurs!  
 O I am tired of strife and song and festivals and fame,  
 And long to fly where cassia-woods are breaking into flame.  
 Love, come with me where koels call from flowering glade and glen,  
 Far from the toil and weariness, the praise and prayers of men.  
 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 and play on carven flutes,  
 To wake the slumbering serpent-kings among the banyan roots,  
 And roam at fall of eventide along the river's brink,  
 And bathe in water-lily pools where golden panthers drink!  
 You and I together, Love, in the deep blossoming woods  
 Engirt with low-voiced silences and gleaming solitudes,  
 Companions of the lustrous dawn, gay comrades of the night,

Like Krishna and like Radhika, encompassed with delight.

The poet has been made to find refuge in nature. Artificiality of the modernisation as portrayed in the poem line as 'painted roof, soft and silken floors' made the poet very tired and sick. She represents that the so-called sophisticated life made her to long for admiration of beauty of nature that she depicts as long for wind blown canopies of crimson Gulmohurs.

On the other side of this materialistic life, she could see houses with overhanging canopies with Gulmohar flowers appear to be simple, healthier to both psychic and physic, becomes beautiful and charming by a blow of breeze and wind. Indirectly the writer insists the reader to celebrate the beauty and utility of that Gulmohur Trees and its flowers. Crimson Gulmohur Trees are with vibrant red colour flowers that is indigenous to India but is on the verge of extinction. The main cause for this endangered tree's endangered status is because of cutting them to make furniture. People across India use Gulmohur leaves during Diwali and Holi festival as a sign of celebration which signifies good luck and prosperity. By using this tree, the poet emphasizes the rich binding linkage of up our culture with nature. The poet also reflects that the sophisticated life and its artificiality brought many Natural things to the status of endanger.

The poet expresses that the present age life though civilized, modernized brings angry frustration, lot of controversies, bitter disagreement over fundamental issues, confinement conflict within the human community, made the poet tired of facing all these though it seems to have ecstasies like song festivals and fame. This made the poet to long to fly where Cassia Woods were. Cassia tree also known as golden shower, purging cassia, Indian Laburnum, Mani Konna and Konna poo, used to treat skin disorders syphilis leprosy, tuberculosis and throat disorders. The poet used this cassia tree since it is a native to India Malaysia and South East Asia and it is well known for producing a show -stopping bloom of yellow flower, an ornamental plant, its view seems to be a feast to eye and mind. Fed up with the life of ailments she wants and longs for medicine which happens to be reunion with natural a realistic way of life. The Representation of trees in literary works more specially in poems often tap us into the notion of importance of trees in human life and would express the notion of biophilia and will propel the readers to transcend the written words.

From the lines of poem 'Nature' by Thoreau Walden

For I'd rather be thy child  
And pupil in the forest wild  
Than be the king of men elsewhere  
And most sovereign slave of care  
To have one moment of they dawn  
Than share the city's year for lorn.

In these lines Thoreau Walden defers to nature as the ultimate teacher and a place of refuge as Sarojini Naidu seemed in her Summer Woods and celebrates her love towards trees as a place of refuge not only for other living things but for us too. Resilience is the ability to return to the original nature that is what in summer wood the poet in need of resilience get refuge in natures object tree to attain the capacity to withstand or to recover quickly from all difficulties of this materialistic world and its toughness.

### **Palm Tree by Rabindranath Tagore**

Palm-tree: single-legged giant,  
topping other trees,  
peering at the firmament -  
It longs to pierce the black cloud-ceiling  
and fly away, away,  
if only it had wings.

The tree seems to express its wish  
in the tossing of its head:  
its fronds heave and swish -  
It thinks, Maybe my leaves are feathers,  
and nothing stops me now  
from rising on their flutter.

All day the fronds the windblown tree  
soar and flap and shudder  
as though it thinks it can fly,  
As though it wanders in the skies,  
travelling who knows where,  
wheeling past the stars -

And then as soon as the wind dies down,  
the fronds subside, subside:  
the mind of the tree returns.

To earth, recalls that earth is its mother:  
 and then it likes once more  
 its earthly corner.

Palm Tree by Rabindranath's Tagore is a representation and reflections of aspirations by celebrating the appearance of Palm Tree. In a reflecting tone the poem suggests that one's aspirations depend upon the earthly limitations. In representative note the poet depicts a Tree's majestic greatness and powerful flight and stand of fancy beyond black clouds and stars. Palm trees are a straight, have unbranched stem evergreen and have either fan leaves or feather leaves arranged in a spiral at the top of the trunk and live for more than a century means that it might outlive us. Moreover, Palm Tree history can be traced back over 5000 years to Mesopotamian times. It is used as a food source, for constructing tools and dwellings and shade from the hot desert Sun. It's even thought that the date Palm is responsible for the growth of the human population. Romans used Palm branches as a symbol of victory, while it represents peace and plenty in Judaism and Christianity. The poem reflects the strength and tall it has given the feeling of superiority, he behind the screen speaks of a similar parallel thread prevailing in human society. The poem celebrates not only the appearance of the Palm Tree but also celebrates human nature in disguise through the poet's imagination of depicting the tree's desire. It is a representation of the illusion created by the appearance and beauty of the Palm Tree. In the first stanza the poet personifies the Palm Tree to a single legged giant, taller has a longing to fly beyond the ceiling of black clouds feels sad of having no wings. In second stanza, illusioned by its movement in wind, it wishes to fly by thinking it's fronds to be wings. And in the third stanza it endeavors to fly and transcend its terrestrial confines. In the fourth stanza when the wind stops the Tree subsides to self realization that it is rooted in the mother earth and feels quiet. Thus, the poet celebrates the strength, calmness and resilient nature of the tree.

### The Tree by Keki N Daruwalla

I planted here, to-day, a strong young tree.  
 Rich soil it has, and sun, and space to grow;  
 And who, I wonder, in the years to be  
 Will seek its boughs' soft shade; for well I know  
 Long ere this slender plant grows full and round  
 He who now tends it shall be sleeping sound.

What manner of a man will sit to view  
 This now familiar scene when those shades spread?  
 Will he be thankful that he never knew  
 These days of strange, uncomprehended dread?  
 Or will he, gazing back, find cause to sigh  
 For olden peace, for happier days gone by?

I planted here, to-day, a strong young hope  
 That, when this tree's green banners be unfurled,  
 There shall come singing down this verdant slope  
 Some wiser mortal of a wiser world.  
 And if he bless the man who set the tree,  
 And be content, so, mayhap, shall I be.

In this poem Keki.N.Daruwala presents the sense of joy experience by the poet while planting a Tree and taking care of it till it gives fruit. The poet reveals that looking and taking care of a Tree as a similar to that of growing a baby. In this poem the Tree planted was Gulmohar, which after deliberate hard work with patience turned into a red rooted tree. Wondered by the poet as 'A thing of beauty rare'. This the poet celebrates the Tree and uses imagery of tree to explore the themes of growth changes and passage of time. The resilience effect of tree induces the poet's psyche to be and feel happy and successful by planting and growing a tree after something difficult.

### CONCLUSION

Trees perhaps a common image used by the poets of the world. Tree as a natural product makes poet not only participate in its beauty but also ponder over its silent message. Resilience is the ability to return to the original nature that is what in summer wood the poet in need of resilience get refuge in nature's object tree to attain the capacity to withstand or to recover quickly from all difficulties of this materialistic world and its toughness. The patient waiting witness trees as natural corollaries to the various kinds of birds in their diversity their resilient struggle for life in difficult circumstances and in their profound contribution to the ecosystem. The resilience effect of tree induces the poet's psyche to be and feel happy and successful by planting and growing a tree after something difficult. In sum dendrocritical practice strives to understand the complexities of arboreality beyond its arrogation as a screen- as a symbol, metaphor or trope for the projection of human desire. Dendrocritical analysis thus seeks to articulate how trees talk back to and intervene in cultural record. In this way dendrocriticism countervails critical methods that construct tree as the voiceless de-corporealized and sentimentalized backdrops of narratives.

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