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## Different Types Of Nature Images In Poetry Of Rabindranath Tagore

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Received- 09.10. 2021, Revised- 13.10. 2021, Accepted - 17.10.2021 E-mail: aaryvart2013@gmail.com

**Abstract:** *One of the most striking characteristics of Tagore as a Nature poet is that beauty and richness of the imagery that he employs in his lyrics. Like Keats, Tagore is a great lover of beauty and truth and always followed the same principle of beauty as Keats did - "Beauty is truth, Truth Beauty". His poems are teemed with different types of beautiful Nature images. His imagery is functional and is used for illustrative, decorative, and emotive purposes to give extra dimensions to his thought and experience. His images help him in attaining clarity and correctness. Many of his images are symbolic as they express in a memorable form his main themes and are recurrent and control. The images of lute, of the boat and the vessel have symbolic significance. In 'Gitanjali' songs his images are mostly elemental or drawn from Nature. In other poems the imagery is drawn from flower, thorns, honey, bees, music, birds, animals, love-life, daily household chores of maidens, human activities, Nature and its beauties, rivers, oceans, mountains. Tagore's Nature images can be divided into three groups - water imagery, sky imagery and miscellaneous imagery. Tagore's sky imagery is a collection of the birds, wings, the sky, the clouds, the lightning and the storm. In his sky imagery Tagore first of all sketches the sky is many ways giving it different shapes.*

**Key Words:** Images, beauty, Truth, Nature, Gitanjali, attaining clarity, correctness, symbolic, memorable .

One of the most striking characteristics of Tagore as a Nature poet is that beauty and richness of the imagery that he employs in his lyrics. Like Keats, Tagore is a great lover of beauty and truth and always followed the same principle of beauty as Keats did - "Beauty is truth, Truth Beauty".

Following this principle his poems are teemed with different types of beautiful Nature images. His imagery is functional and is used for illustrative, decorative, and emotive purposes to give extra dimensions to his thought and experience. His images help him in attaining clarity and correctness. Many of his images are symbolic as they express in a memorable form his main themes and are recurrent and control. The images of lute, of the boat and the vessel have symbolic significance. In 'Gitanjali', in particular, and in his poetry in general, there are direct images by mean of picturesque and concrete fancies, visions and dreams; Figurative Images by means of metaphor and simile, symbol and personification; and Mythical or Legendary Images. Then there are Reciprocal Images in which tenors and vehicles reciprocate, for instance both the poet and God are singers; both are related to music imagery. In 'Gitanjali' there are many examples of direct images and a couple of among them given below :

"To day the summer has come at  
My window with its sighs and murmurs;  
And the bees are flying their minstrelsy  
At the court of the flowering grove".  
'Gitanjali Song No. V.'

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
"Clouds heap upon clouds and it  
Darkens. Ah, love, why dost thou let  
Me wait outside at the door all alone?"  
'Gitanjali Song No. XVIII'

Tagore's figurative images are also highly admirable. He has used it in his several songs of 'Gitanjali' and one



of them as follows :-

**"On the day when the lotus bloomed,  
Alas, my mind was straying, and  
I knew it not. My basket was empty  
and the flower remained unheeded.**

-----  
**That vague sweetness made my  
heart ache with longing and it seemed  
to me that it was the eager breath  
of the summer seeking for its completion.**

**I knew not then that it was so  
near, that it was mine, and that this  
perfect sweetness has blossomed in  
the depth of my own heart."**

**'Gitanjali Song No. XX'**

Mythical or legendary images of Tagore is no less greater than any other images and he has presented them in some of the major songs of 'Gitanjali' :-

**"He it is who weaves the web  
of this 'Maya' in evanescent hues  
of gold and silver, blue and green,  
and lets peep out through the folds  
his fact, at whose touch I forget  
myself."**

**'Gitanjali Song No. LXXII'**

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
**"But more beautiful to me is thy  
sword with its curve of lightning  
like the outspread wings of the  
divine bird of Vishnu, perfectly  
poised in the angry red light  
of the sunset."**

**'Gitanjali Song LIII'**

In this Reciprocal images Tagore prays to God for His benevolence :-

**"My poet's vanity dies in shame  
before thy sight. O master poet, I  
have sat down at thy feet. Only  
let me make my life simple and  
straight, life a flute of reed  
for thee to fill with music."**

**'Gitanjali Song No. VIII'**

Tagore's Nature poetry is such an integral ingredient, especially in 'Gitanjali' that it is impossible almost to discuss it in isolation. Really, in doing so we will 'murder' the very spirit of poetry if we dissect the lyrics to isolate the Nature-elements in them. So it should be sufficient to state that Nature in Tagore's poetry is essential as the break is



for life. When Nature is so pervasive. It is not surprising that it is one of the chief sources of imagery in Tagore's poems in 'Gitanjali'. In 'Gitanjali' songs his images are mostly elemental or drawn from Nature. In other poems the imagery is drawn from flower, thorns, honey, bees, music, birds, animals, love-life, daily household chores of maidens, human activities, Nature and its beauties, rivers, oceans, mountains. Tagore's Nature images can be divided into three groups - water imagery, sky imagery and miscellaneous imagery.

Tagore's water imagery is very broad. His water imagery there is a huge description of the rain, the streams, the rivers, the ocean, the shore, the bank, the boat etc. Rain is a very prominent part of water imagery because not only the human beings but also the animals and the natural things like leaves and grass also anxiously waited for it as it gives refreshment to all the creatures and natural objects. In the songs of 'Gitanjali' Tagore has very beautifully painted the rain of the month of July :-

**"In the rainy gloom of July night  
on the thundering chariot of clouds  
he comes, comes, ever comes.**

**In sorrow after sorrow it is his  
steps that press upon my heart, and  
it is the golden touch of his feet that  
makes my joy to shine."**

**'Gitanjali Song No. XLV'**

x x x x x x x x x x

**"In the deep shadows of the  
rainy July, with secret steps, thou  
walkest, silent as night, eluding all  
watchers.**

**To-day the morning has closed  
its eyes, heedless of the insistent  
calls of the loud east wind, and  
a thick veil has been drawn over  
the ever-wakeful blue sky."**

**'Gitanjali Song No. XXII'**

Tagore has composed complete poem on rain - 'The Rainy Day' in his collection of poems 'The Crescent Moon' :-

**"Sullen clouds are gathering fast  
over the black fringe of the forest.**

- - - - -

**Men have crossed into the flooded  
field to catch the fishes as they  
escape from the over flowing ponds;  
the rain-water is running in rills  
through the narrow lanes like a laughing  
boy who has run away from his mother  
to tease her.**

- - - - -

**The sky seems to ride fast upon**



**the madly rushing rain; the water in  
the river is loud and impatient...."**

**'The Rainy Day'**

In the songs of 'Gitanjali' Tagore also takes the mention of rivers and streams that are also a part of water imagery :-

**"The question and the cry, "Oh,  
where?" melt into tears of a thousand  
streams and deluge the world with  
the flood of the assurance,  
"I am!"**

**'Gitanjali song No. - XII'**

**XXXXXXXXXXXX**

**"By what dim shore of the ink  
black river, by what far edge of the  
frowning forest, through what mazy  
depth of gloom art thou threading  
thy course to come to me, my friend?"**

**'Gitanjali Song No. XXIII'**

In his water imagery Tagore very beautifully paints the images of sea, sea-shore and banks of the river :-

**"Let all my songs gather together  
their diverse strains into one single  
current and flow to a sea of silence  
in one solution of thee."**

**'Gitanjali Song No. CIII'**

For the sea-shore Tagore has composed a separate poem from 'On the Sea shore' in which he has sketched a complete scenery of the sea-shore or the sea-beach :-

**"On the sea shore of endless world  
children meet.**

**The infinite sky is motionless  
over head and the restless water  
in boisterous. On the sea shore  
of endless worlds the children meet  
with shouts and dances.**

**- - - - -**

**The sea surges up with laughter,  
and pale gleams of the smile of the  
sea-beach -----**

**On the sea shore of endless worlds  
children meet."**

**'On The Sea shore'**

In his another poem 'The Sailor' Tagore describes a very beautiful picture of a boat man whose boat is uselessly laden with jute as he displays in the following lines :

**"The boat of the boat man Madhu**



**is moored at the wharf of Rajgunj.  
It is uselessly laden with jute,  
and has been lying there for ever so  
long."**

**'The Sailor'**

Tagore's sky imagery is a collection of the birds, wings, the sky, the clouds, the lightning and the storm. In his sky imagery Tagore first of all sketches the sky in many ways giving it different shapes. Tagore very beautifully points the blue sky :-

**"To-day the morning has closed its  
eyes, heedless of the insistent calls  
of the loud east wind, and a thick veil  
has been drawn over the ever-wakeful  
blue sky."**

**'Gitanjali Song No. XXII'**

Further Tagore sketches the picture of the rising sun in which the sky looks very clear and charming :-

**"The sun rose to the mid sky  
and doves cooled in the shade.  
Withered leaves danced and whirled  
in the hot air of noon. The shepherd  
boy drowned and dreamed in the  
shadow of the banyan tree, and I  
laid myself down by the water and  
stretched my tired limbs on the grass."**

**'Gitanjali Song No. XLVIII'**

The scenery of the mid-day sky as Tagore sketches in one of the songs of Gitanjali is also very praise worthy :-

**".....the sky paints and trembles  
with the heat of the mid day sun -  
what if the burning sand spreads its  
mantle of thirst."**

**'Gitanjali Song No. LV'**

In his another collection of poem 'Stray Birds' Tagore very beautifully paints the scenery of the evening sky :-

**"The evening sky to me is  
like a window, and a lighted  
lamp, and a waiting behind it."**

**'Stray Birds Song No. CLXXXIII'**

In this sky imagery Tagore paints the sky with the beautiful shades of different types of shapes of the clouds :-

**"The sky is overcast with  
clouds and the rain is  
ceaseless. I know not what is that  
sters in me - ....."**

**'Gitanjali Song No. XXVII'**

Tagore also paints the cloud of July with the sketches of rain:-



".....a rain cloud of July  
hung low with its burden of unshed  
showers let all my mind bend down  
at thy door in one solution to  
thee."

**'Gitanjali Song NO. CIII'**

The huge clouds give the sky darkness. If all the sky is covered with clouds, all the sky looks full of darkness and it prevails darkness all around as Tagore shows in the following lines :-

"Clouds heap upon cloud and  
it darkens. Ah, love, why dost  
thou let me wait outside at the  
door all alone?"

**'Gitanjali Song No. XVIII'**

In his collection of song 'Stray Birds' Tagore paints the gentle and humble clouds in a corner of the sky :-

"The cloud stood humbly in  
a corner of the sky. The morning  
crowned it with splendour."

**'Stray Birds Song C'**

In the sky Tagore also displays different type of lighting that looks very splendour :-

"I sit on the grass and gaze  
upon the sky and dream of the  
sudden splendour of thy coming -  
all the lights ablaze, golden pennoses  
flying over thy car, and they at the  
road side standing agape,-----"

**'Gitanjali Song No. XLI'**

Further Tagore sketches the lightening of the sky with the angry storm that is somewhat different from the above mentioned examples :-

"Send thy angry storm, dark  
with death, if it is thy wish,  
and with lashes of lightening startle  
the sky from end to end."

**'Gitanjali Song No. XL'**

Tagore also paints the scene of the stormy night in which the sky groans like one in despair :-

".....on this stormy night  
on the journey of love, my friend?  
The sky groans like one in despair."

**'Gitanjali Song No. XXIII'**

The flying birds into the sky is one of the prominent parts of sky imagery and Tagore has very beautifully painted it in the songs of Gitanjali :-

"Then thy words will take wing in  
song from every one of my birds'  
nests, and thy melodies will



**break forth its flowers in all  
my forest groves."**

**'Gitanjali Song No. XIX'**

Tagore also sketches the twittering sound of a bird in the morning time in his sky imagery :-

**"The morning bird twitter and  
asks, "Woman what has thou  
got?" No, it is no flower, no  
spices, nor vase of perfumed  
water - it is thy dreadful sword."**

**'Gitanjali Song No. LII'**

Tagore's another Nature imagery is miscellaneous imagery in which he paints flowers, leaves, seasons and two shades of a day - light and dark.

Flowers are, in fact, a very prominent part of Nature. Without the description of flowers Nature imagery looks incomplete. So Tagore paints flowers in his miscellaneous imagery to beauty and sweeten it.

**"The flowers sweetness the air  
with its perfume; yet its last  
service is to offer itself to thee."**

**'Gitanjali Song No. LXXV'**

Tagore sketches the summer scenery through a window with the help of natural flowers that look like :-

**"To-day the summer has come  
at my window with its sigh and  
murmurs; and the bees are flying  
their minstrelsy at the court of the  
flowering grove."**

**'Gitanjali Song No. -V'**

Lotus, a national flower of India is also considered a religious. In it is infect a very famous flower among all flowers and without its description, the description of the flower does not look complete. So Tagore has also mentioned it :-

**"On the day when the lotus  
bloomed, alas, my mind was straying,  
and I knew it not. My basket was  
empty and the flower remained  
unheeded."**

**'Gitanjali Song No. XX'**

In his another collection of songs 'Stray Birds' Tagore has very beautifully mentioned jasmine flower :-

**"The raindrop whispered to the  
jasmien, "keep me in your heart  
for ever."  
The jasmine sighed, "Alas" and  
dropped to the ground."**

**'Stray Birds Song No. CCXXXVII'**

With flowers Tagore has also mentioned the leaves of the plants that are also a part of flowers :-

**".....this golden light that**



dances upon the leaves, these  
idle clouds sailing across the sky, this  
passing breeze leaving its coolness  
upon my forehead."

'Gitanjali Song No. LIX'

Tagore displays a great association of a leaf with flower and a flowers' with fruits that also imparts his moral lesson towards nature :-

"The leaf becomes flower when it loves.  
The flower becomes fruit when it worships."

'Stray Birds No. CXXXIII'

In his miscellaneous imagery Tagore very beautifully displays all the seasons of the year - Summer Season, Autumn season, Rainy season and winter season. Tagore has very beautifully pointed the light and dark in his nature imagery to give dark and light shape as he displays in some of the fine examples of the songs of the 'Gitanjali' :-

"This is my delight, thus to wait.  
And watch all the wayside where shadow  
chases light and the rain  
comes in the wake of the summer."

'Gitanjali Song No. XLIV'

"Light, Oh where is the light?  
- - - - -

"A moment's flash of lighting  
drags a deeper gloom on my sight,  
and my heart gropes for the path  
to where the music of the night calls  
me".

'Gitanjali Song No. XXVII'

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