A STUDY OF THE POETIC CRAFTSMANSHIP IN

SAROJNI Naidu’S POEMS

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ABSTRACT:

Sarojini Naidu was one of the most lyrical poets in Indian English poetry. She started writing poetry at the age of eleven years in 1890. At the age of thirteen, she wrote a long poem of 1300 lines called THE LADY OF THE LAKE in six days only. Her poetry is pictorial, has the romantic colouring and smooth rhythms of the Georgians and shows perfect mastery over her chosen medium. She achieves success in the handling of Indian imagery and the expression of Indian personality. Her Indian weavers, corn Grinders and such other poems are noted for their rhythmic flow and characteristic Indian imagery. The poems she wrote on her 14th birthday show that she is much more mature and serious than is usual for a girl of her age. The death of her father gave a profound shock to her and the lyric she composed on that occasion shows further maturity and shattering awareness of the transistorizes of human life. She is a singer of India’s glory, India’s present, India’s flora and fauna. The western critics would categories her with Shelly and Keats. It was Edmund Gosse who encouraged her to undertake to write on Indian themes and subjects. Her poetic output is slender, but even this slender volume consists of lyrics which would last as long as the English language lasts. She has attempted every species of the lyric, as hymns, ode, elegy, sonnet, and has achieved excellence in each. Her poems are characterized by simplicity beauty, spontaneity, music and melody. She exhales a lyric as flower exhales fragrance and poems come to her as spontaneously and naturally as do leaves to a tree. Her poetry is lyric cry of joy and sorrow, zeal and emotion marked with perfect fusion of thought and expression, through her range is not very wide, she is intensely lyrical.

Key Words: English Literature; English Poems; Sarojni Naidu’s Poems;

Sarojini Naidu has emerged as one of India’s leading English poets. She won recognition at home and abroad. Her poetry is read all over the English speaking world. Diverse currents of tradition and many roads of influence, and numerous talents meet in her. A woman in everywhere, she played a part in the nation’s affairs as few can play. She had no less felicitous a tongue than her pen. She was an orator of great persuasiveness and power, as she was lyricist of delicate fancy and haunting melody. She one of the most
distinguished pioneers in Indian English poetry, introduced the real India before the West and effaced the false picture presented about India by Rudyard Kipling and his followers. Her poems always remind us of India of palanquin-bearers, corn-grinders, wandering beggars, wandering singers, of love, meditation and solitude. She has adroitly poetized the sights and sounds familiar to us. This paper makes a refreshing reading of Sarojini Naidu’s poetry. She endeavored to natives English language in order to make it a befitting instrument for the expression of Indian ethos and sensibility.

Sarojini Naidu was one of the most lyrical poets in Indian English poetry. She started writing poetry at the age of eleven years in 1890. At the age of thirteen, She wrote a long poem of 1300 lines called *The Lady of the Lake* in six days only. Her poetry is pictorial, has the romantic clouring and smooth rhythms of the Georgians and shows perfect mastery over her chosen medium. She achieves success in the handling of Indian imagery and the expression of Indian personality. Her *Indian weavers, corn Grinders* and such other poems are noted for their rhythmic flow and characteristic Indian imagery. The poems she wrote on her 14th birthday show that she is much more mature and serious than is usual for a girl of her age. The death of her father gave a profound shock to her and the lyric she composed on that occasion shows further maturity and shattering awareness of the transistorizes of human life. She is a singer of India’s glory, India’s present, India’s flora and fauna. The western critics would categories her with Shelly and Keats. It was Edmund Gosse who encouraged her to undertake to write on Indian themes and subjects. Her poetic output is slender, but even this slender volume consists of lyrics which would last as long as the English language lasts. She has attempted every species of the lyric, as hymns, ode elegy, sonnet, and has achieved excellence in each. Her poems are characterized by simplicity beauty, spontaneity, music and melody. She exhales a lyric as flower exhales fragrance and poems come to her as spontaneously and naturally as do leaves to a tree. Her poetry is lyric cry of joy and sorrow, Zeal and emotion marked with perfect fusion of thought and expression,
through her range is not very wide, she is intensely lyrical. Her love lyrics have beauty and charm fervor and sensuousness. Having a immense love for nature, she wrote a number of poems on the theme nature. To her Nature served as a background for the portraiture of human emotions as it did to Tennyson. Emotional intensity is one of the major features of her poetry. The joys of spring, the rapture of love the suffering of lovers in separation the mystic peace enjoyed by Buddha and numerous other emotions thrill her and in the heat of emotions she begins to sing. Most of her poems have an abiding auto biographical interest. Her lyrics are swift and impetuous, grave solemn, galloping and joyous according to the nature of emotions expressed. Naidu addressed her benedictory verses to her children, Jaya Surya, Padmaja, Ranadeera and Lilamani. They are.

Golden son of victory, born In my life’s unclouded morn In my laments sky of love Sun of victory, may you be Son of song and liberty. Lotus maiden, you who claim All the sweetness of your name, Lakshmi forume’s queen defend you Loutus - Maiden may you be Fragrant of all ecstasy Lord of battle, hail In your newly tempered mail! Learn to conquer, learn to fight In the foremost flanks of right Like Valmiki’s heroes bold, Rubies gift in epic gold.... Limpid jewel of delight Severed from the tender night Of your sheltering mother mine Leap and sparkle dance and shine Blithely and securely set In Love’s magic coronet .( In her bright benedictory verses addressed to her children Jaya Surya Padmaja Ranadheera.

The quick succession of similes and images which are neither forced nor laborious but a spontaneous growth of poetic impulse, enhance the beauty of her poetry, for example The Palanquin Bearers. It is the opening poem of The Sceptred Flute a collection of Sarojini’s poem in this poem a noble lady, most probably a newly wedded bride is being borne to their husband’s house in a veiled palanquin which is being carried on the shoulders by the bearers colourfully and gaily attired and singing
a song in adoration of the young beauty they bear along.

Lightly, O lightly we bear he along, She Sways like a flower in the wind of our song; She skims like a bird on the foams of a stream, She floats like a laugh from the lips of a dream, Gaily, O gaily, We glide and we sing, We bear her along like a pearl on a string ...

She composed 84 Poems. They can be categorised on the basis of their themes. Nature poems love poems the folk themes, poems of love and death miscellaneous poems All those poems have and Indian ethos and flavour. The poetic element in her was neither deflected nor suppressed but it was reflected in all her moods and passions. Her scintillating vivacity her proverbial sense of humor, her easy sportsmanship are indeed eloquent tributes to the soul of the poet in her. By 1905 she had composed a number of poems which had appeared in various periodicals both in England and India and had been greatly applauded. At the persuasion of her friends, she gave to the poetic world, the first blossom of their genius under the title *The Golden Threshold* published in 1905. It was dedicated to sir Edmund Gosse who first showed her ‘The way’ to the ‘golden threshold’. Her second volume of poems *The Bird of Time* came out in 1912. *The Broken Wing* appeared in 1917 *The Father of Dawn* was posthumously published in 1961.

*Life* is a short poem of 14 lines included in the ‘poems’ section of *The Golden Threshold*. The poem embodies the poet’s philosophy of children. He thinks that life is as beautiful as vision’s seen in a dream. Life for children is nothing but a period of festivity and merry making a period of dancing and singing and carefree enjoyment of life. They have not experienced real life at all...The poem embodies Sarojini Naidu’s philosophy of life. Life is more real than dream, larger than existence and greater than personal experience. It is constant process of struggle against sorrow and suffering, against difficulties and failures which shatter our beautiful dream of life. Difficulties will generate growth and maturity in us. Such difficulties test our moral fiber and prove the soul’s hunger for greatness. They fulfill God’s will.
Life will become not a pessimistic one but an optimistic one. It is realistic. *The Queen’s Rival* is included in the ‘poems’ section of *The Golden Threshold*. The poem is romantic. It is called lyrical ballad. The poem is based on a Persian legend narrated to the poet by a friend. A Persian queen Gulnaar is an unrivalled one in beauty. She wants a rival in beauty. The seven queens culled from different kingdoms could not rival Gunnar in beauty. After two years, the queen succeeded in her attempt to find a real rival in her two-year-old daughter of matchless beauty. The poem reveals Sarojini Naidu’s insight into feminine psychology.

Sensuousness and picturesqueness, profusion of colourful imagery and radiant diction love of nature and humanity mysticism and vivid recreation of India’s hoary past enchantment and flight of imagination are some of the distinctive romantic characteristics of her poetry. She is gifted in the use of language finely sensitive and capable of responding delicately to certain physical and emotional phenomena. A folk song is a song written in the traditional style of country and community. It reflects the beliefs of ordinary people. It is related to art culture, traditional and typical of the ordinary people of a country or community. Folk songs occupy an important place in Naidu’s poetry and comprise some of her best poems. They deal with the life, occupations, festivals, joys and sorrows of the common folk of India. They give us a vivid picture of Indian scene and deal with the varied panorama of Indian life. *The Indian Weavers* is a poem which is included in the Folk songs. Section of *The Golden Threshold*. Weaving is one of the most important of the folk vocations in India, and the weavers are important folk characters. The poet traced human life through the three most important stages that it passes—birth, marriage, and death. The poet provided a symbolic representation of man’s journey from birth to death. Indian weavers weave multi-coloured clothes for all stages of human life:

Weavers weaving at break of day Why do you weave a garment so gay Blue as the wing of a Halcyon wild? We weave the ropes of a new born child
Weavers weaving at night fall,
Why do you weave a garment so bright?
Like the plumes of a peacock, purple and green
We weave the marriage veils of a queen
Weavers weaving solemn and still
What do you weave in the moonlight chill?
White as a feather and white a cloud
We weave a dead man’s funeral shroud. (The Indian weavers)

The poem reminds us of an allusive and symbolic journey of life from birth to death. The weavers also remind us of the trinity of Hinduism, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva the poet is profoundly aware of their own traditions, admirable poise economy and an ear and eye for striking rhythm image and symbol. Edmund advised Naidu to attempt to reveal the heart of India and to be a genuine Indian poetess of the Deccan and not a clever machine, made imitator of the English Classics. Sarojini Naidu took his advice seriously, for the bulk of her poetry in The Golden threshold, The Bird of Time and The Broken Wing are Indian in spirit thought and imagery. Her Indian Weavers, Corn Grinders and such other poems are noted for their rhythmic flow and characteristic Indian imagery. Cradlesong is one of the most beautiful lyrics composed by Sarojini Naidu. It is a soft and gentle song sung to make a child go to sleep. Cradle songs are lullabies from an important genre of the Indian folk songs. The evocation of the Indian landscape, of spice groves, rice fields, lotus stream, need and poppy boles witness to the Indianans of sarojiniNaidu. The mother’s concern for the child’s growth towards fullness and fulfillment is clearly expressed in the tender accent of folk sentiment. The poet has captured the sweet melody of the Indian lullaby.

A love song from the North is a poem that brings out the pathos of the love-lorn maiden who is separated from her lover. This poem was first published in The Bird of Time Sarojini Naidu’s second collection of poems, and is now included in The Songs of Love and Death, section of The Sceptred Flute. Sarojini’s love poems are highly romantic. Imagination casts a super natural charm over her love poems. Her conception of love is not platonic. All her love poems -- A Rajput love
*Song of Radha, The Milkmaid* express various facets of love in a romantic manner. In the poem *A love song from the North* the love-lorn maiden forsaken by her love. Any reminder of love is painful to the. To a happy lover, even a winter landscape would be beautiful and charming, but to a widow or to a maiden, forsaken of love even the songs of spring cause pain. The spring season cannot make her happy. The theme of love predominates in Naidu’s poetry. Every kind of love experience and every possible mood of love finds its place in her poetry she plays all possible notes on the orchestra of love *A Rajput love song* is a ballad in two parts .It evokes for us the romantic medieval world of Rajput chivalry and knight errantry .The images used by the love-lorn maiden are all appropriate to her as the are drawn for the shattered, latticed, feminine world a world of luxury and opulence. The longing of lovers for each other is expressed with truly oriental splendor in *A Rajput love song*.

Hast, o wild deer hours to the meadows of the sunset! Fly, wild stallion day, to the pastures of the west! Come, o tranquil night with your soft, consenting darkness, And bear me to the fragrance of my beloved’s breast! (A Rajput Love song)

The world of Rajput Chivalry and royal splendor has been very beautifully evoked in the poem. Sarojini Naidu’s poems reflect to the gentle and enchanting sides of India’s life and landscape. Her picture of India has been condemned as Kipling India, that is to say it does not correspond with the reality of Indian life that she was not aware of these realities. But such views are incorrect. Her political and social work shows a deep awareness of the darker aspects of Indian life and the sufferings of the Indian people. She witnessed the poverty, superstition, backwardness, the calmness and simple beauty of Indian life, its spiritual richness its amazing continuity and assimilative power. She remains an Indian poet in spite of her use of English language. The poet lived and created in those stirring times through the throes of her struggle for freedom. She plunged into the thick of the battle, and her letters and speeches are full of her deeply felt love for India. This love is also reflected at every step in her poetry. Her patriotic
fervor is also expressed in number of verses in which she paid glowing tributes to some of her great contemporaries who devoted to the service of their motherland. She has praised the heroic courage and the spirit of self-sacrifice of Gokhale and Gandhi, Lokmanya Tilak. In The gift of India, Mother India herself speaks of the gift she had offered to the world -- the gift of her children’s lives India’s capacity for self-sacrifice is here eulogized. Mother Indian offered her sacrificial natured children at the altar of the Goddess of War. The reference is related to India’s participation in the First World War.

Is there aught you need that my hands with hold Rich gifts of raiment or grain or gold? Lo, I have flung to the East and West, Priceless treasures from my stricken womb To the drum beats of the duty the sabers of doom. (The Gift of India)

Emotional intensity is one of the main features of her poetry. Naidu’s poetry was published before the birth of modern poetry with its harsh emphasis upon truth without philosophy and meaning, without lyricism. In spite of neo-modernist criticism, her place is secure in Indian English poetry.

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