

A Study of Technical Aspects in Sarojini Naidu's Poetry

Dr.S.SHANMUGAM. M.A., M.PHIL., PH.D

*Assistant Prof. of English cum Principal Sri Vidya Mandir College of Arts
And Science, Neikkarapatty, Salem-10.*

ABSTRACT: *In our day-to-day life, writing poem has become fashion for all, particularly youngsters. In every poem, there are some technical aspects. They have become a kind of style of a particular poet. Sarojini Naidu has been acclaimed as one of the richest poets in the field of deliberating technicality in her poetry. She is a poetess with keen sensibility and rich imagination. Her poetry offers a delightful feast of similes and metaphors. Her images are usually impressive and impressionistic. They are also varied and sublime. She draws her lovely images mostly from the world of nature and the fairy kingdoms.*

*In short, almost all her poems deal with the rich expression of technical things. Sarojini Naidu has given a clear picture of a fisherman and his routine through her poem, **Coromandal Fishers**. Every early morning song is inculcated in the hearts and minds of the simple fishing community in the Eastern Coast of India.*

*In **Palanquin-Bearers**, Sarojini Naidu describes a young bride being carried in a palanquin to her husband's house. The poet evokes a period from Indian history when palanquins were a common sight on the streets.*

Her poetry has the power and loveliness of a water fall; her poetry is a brook flowing and producing ripple of sounds and spray of foam. She was a poetess of not today but of yesterday and tomorrow. In short, she is a poet of joy and optimism, not of sorrow of pessimism. To her fullness of living involves the experience of suffering and in the ultimate analysis, life and death are not opposites but two aspects of a single reality. Her poetry leads us out of murky atmosphere of doubt and gloom into the clear fresh air of life's elemental experience and perennial youthfulness.

I. INTRODUCTION

In our day-to-day life, writing poem has become fashion for all, particularly youngsters. In every poem, there are some technical aspects. They have become a kind of style of a particular poet. Sarojini Naidu has been acclaimed as one of the richest poets in the field of deliberating technicality in her poetry. She is a poetess with keen sensibility and rich imagination. Her poetry offers a delightful feast of similes and metaphors. Her images are usually impressive and impressionistic. They are also varied and sublime. She draws her lovely images mostly from the world of nature and the fairy kingdoms. But her later images are drawn from the native sources, from the myth, legend and folk life. The images are delicate, sensuous and romantic like the dance of the dew on the winds of moon beams. Sarojini Naidu has been greatly influenced by Shelley, Keats, Masfield, Early Yeats and Tagore.

Sarojini is also influenced by Omar Khayyam and other Persian poets. She had this kind of opportunity because of her early formative years which were spent in a stimulating Muslim city like Hyderabad. So, she shows her keen interest in taking some lively images from Muslim life, culture and the Islamic world. Most of her poems have been composed in her youthful periods with her vigorous imagination and youthful fancy. Her poetry is naturally marked by a freshness of imagination which transforms common objects of nature and human life into something miraculously fresh and uncommon. She expresses her feelings through sensuous imagery which is usually full of highly imaginative and suggestive. In this regard, she is aptly compared to Keats who has been very rich in presenting literature with a sense of sensuous touch. As far as, Sarojini's work is concerned, not only her sense perceptions are quick and alert, she also has a rare gift of communicating these perceptions by vivid, picturesque in sensuous imagery. Her imagery is full of Indian characters. However, the strongest feature of Sarojini's poetry is her vivid imagery. Her most memorable lines are those in which she has presented beautiful and graphic picture by fusing together several visual impressions. It should be stressed once again that these images could be appreciated only by those who have retained their sensitivity to the subtle stimuli which come from the Indian environment, and who still have feeling for aspects of Indian life.

In short, almost all her poems deal with the rich expression of technical things. Sarojini Naidu has given a clear picture of a fisherman and his routine through her poem, **Coromandal Fishers**. Every early morning song is inculcated in the hearts and minds of the simple fishing community in the Eastern Coast of India. The song calls all at every early dawn to tell the men- folk to rise. They are called as brothers to rise and

to waken skies. The prayer is there to the morning light for the great catch throughout the day. The wind is lying asleep in the arms of the dawn like a child. On hearing, the fishermen should leave immediately and let them gather their nets from the shore. They should set their catamarans. No doubt, these simple fishing folks are the kings of the sea. The sea is their mother. The cloud is their brother. The waves are their comrades. In other words, one can say that *Coromandal Fishers* is a realized lyric. It depicts the happy and busy life of the fishermen. The feeling of love and brotherhood and the fishermen's attachment with the sea is supported and reinforced by the imagery of protected childhood. Symbolism of morning light lends authenticity to the sense. Here one finds a simile, a metaphor and an image-all in one. 'The wind Howling all night is the child crying all night and the child lying quiet a sleep in the arms of his mother is the wind silent at dawn. The sensuous, romantic imagery in the following line is quite appealing:

Sweet is the shade of the coconut glade, and
the scent of the mango grove,
And sweet are the sands at the full O' the
Moon with the sound of the voices we love.
But sweeter, O brothers the kiss of the Spray, and
The dance of the wild foam's glee;
Row, brothers row to, the blue of the verge,
Were the low sky mates with the sea? (Pp.6-7)

The impact of Wordsworth can be felt distinctly on the imagery. The image of the dance of the wild foam's glee is reminiscent of Wordsworth's golden daffodils; "The waves beside them danced, but they outdid the sparkling waves in glee" (Brander, p.58).

There is another startling image in 'blue of the verge, where the low sky mates with the sea'. She is a dream to the fisherman, a dream they must pursue afresh every day.

In **Palanquin-Bearers**, Sarojini Naidu describes a young bride being carried in a palanquin to her husband's house. The poet evokes a period from Indian history when palanquins were a common sight on the streets. A mode of transportation which was used primarily by men of means or women of the upper classes, palanquins have long gone out of use in most parts of the country today. However, in some parts of Himachal Pradesh the tradition of carrying a bride and in some cases even a bridegroom in a palanquin still exists. Written in the tradition of a folk song, the poem uses vivid imagery to capture the carrying of a bride by palanquin bearers. The bearers turn the dreary task of carrying a person in the palanquin into a rich and joyful experience as they sing songs in harmony with their movement.

Though the poem does not have a thematic core, yet its charm is only too apparent. The poem employs a number of images which follow each other in quick succession and reinforce the rhythmic motion of the palanquin bearers. It uses as many as seven similes to describe the manner in which the young woman is being borne. These similes range from the concrete, as in 'falls like a tear from the eyes of a bride', to the abstract, as in 'floats like a laugh from the lips of a dream'. The two images together hint at the twin emotions associated with the moment of departure of a young bride from her parental house to that of her husband's. If the first image is suggestive of her sorrow at leaving her parents, the second image speaks of her joy at the prospect of a new phrase of life. Besides, the poet has compared the noble lady inside the palanquin to a number of objects:

Lightly, O Lightly, We bear her along,
She sways like a flower in the wind of our song;
She skims like a bird on the foam 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 string (p.3)
The lady "sways like a flower," "skims like a bird," "floats like a laugh" and the Palanquin Bearers bear her along "like a pearl on a string." Again, the bride
"She hangs like a star in the dew of our song;
She springs like a beam on the brow of the tide,
She falls like a tear in the eyes of a bride" (p.3).

Concrete and abstract images have been used. There are vivid and concrete images executed with gnomic terseness like skimming on the foam of a stream, a beam springing on the brow of the tide and tear falling from the eyes of a bride. There are also some vague images in the manner of the Pre-Raphaelites, 'like a laugh from the lips of a dream', 'swinging like a flower in the wind of a song and hanging like a star in the dew of a song. "Swinging", "hanging", "springing" and falling" are good kinetic images in themselves. The image "She falls like a tear from the eyes of a bride" is highly imaginative and suggestive. Cousins do not find any thought in the poem but is impressed by its imaginary and romantic setting. He comments that the poem "is

without the slightest suspicion of literature, yet its charm is instantaneous and complete”(Cousins, pp.259-60). The images indicate a lightness of touch, buoyancy, and create a dream like atmosphere.

The theme which she has made her known is the folk theme. Indeed, there has been a long tradition of folk poetry but Sarojini Naidu acquired a new significance and a new orientation. *Village Song* is a typical example of a folk song. Similarly *The Festival of Serpent, The Festival of Sea, The Bangle Sellers, The Palanquin Bearers* not only deals with folk characters but also with their vocations. She invests the folk theme with richness of allegory and symbolism. As a sincere artist, she conveys her meaning sweetly and beautifully. Her images are pictorial or visual, vivid and graphic. Sometimes her illustrations and images look artificial and the critics say that there is saccharine sweetness; however, most of the illustrations are natural and effective. She shows command over English prosody and her critics also admire her metrical dexterity. She is a poetess in romantic-Georgian tradition and as such she should be compared with Shelly and Keats, Walter de-la Mare, Robert Bridges, John Nesfield and early W.B.Yeats, not with Eliot and Auden and Ezekiel and Kamala Das. Her poetry has the power and loveliness of a water fall; her poetry is a brook flowing and producing ripple of sounds and spray of foam. She was a poetess of not today but of yesterday and tomorrow. In short, she is a poet of joy and optimism, not of sorrow of pessimism. To her fullness of living involves the experience of suffering and in the ultimate analysis, life and death are not opposites but two aspects of a single reality. Her poetry leads us out of murky atmosphere of doubt and gloom into the clear fresh air of life's elemental experience and perennial youthfulness. Life for her is not an obsession but possession, not an experiment but an adventure. Life for her is both a mystery to be adored and a glory to be celebrated. Death to her is not an extinction of life but a gateway to new life.

REFERENCE

- [1]. Brander, L. (ed.). *A Poet's Lips*. Oxford University Press, 1954.
- [2]. Cousins, James H. *The Poetical of Sarojini Naidu: A Critical Approach*, The Modern Review,
- [3]. Oct, 1917.
- [4]. Naidu, Sarojini, *The Golden Threshold*, William Heinmann, London, 1905.