



THE THEME OF INDIANNESS IN SAROJINI NAIDU'S POEM *PALANQUIN-BEARERS*: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT:

One of the important aspects of Indian poetry in English is its Indianness. There were no any hard and fast rules for them to write about Indian terms. Yet it remains a fact that Indian poets write about India, Indian terminology, and other Indian things. The Indianness in Indian Poetry in English may take several forms and shapes. It is a quality that is unmistakably present in the finest work of all Indian writers, whether they write in the mother tongue or in English. Indianness is also seen in the ethos of the best Indian poetry in English. This ethos is unmistakably present in the Gitanjali of Tagore, Shri. Aurobindo's Savitri and in the lyrics of Sarojini Naidu.

Keywords: *Indianess, Images, Palanquin.*

INTRODUCTION:

The varied colors in Sarojini Naidu's poetry stamp it as truly of the soil. Naidu's 'Palanquin-Bearers' is a short poem developed in two stanzas of six lines each and has the rhyme scheme as aa, bb, cc. The poem expresses the joy and pride of palanquin bearers in carrying a bride to her husband's house while sensing a song in rhythmic harmony and footsteps. The bearer carries the bride with care and considers her as if she is like dew or a teardrop. 'Palanquin-Bearers' begins with a typical traditional picture of palanquin bearers which deals with a common sight of the whole of India during the 19th and early 20th century.

The poem has different shades and angles. The poem is in a romantic mood. The theme and imagery are fused artistically, which leads the poem to a universal appeal. The song sung by the palanquin bearers, narrates the basic human emotions and the mind of the bride is controlled by that song. This poem

reveals the Indian reality through folk characters. Palanquin Bearers are depicted as a part of the Feudal system of Indian life and they glorify their tradition. The poem rightly brings out one of the facets of the Indian life-the feudal system in India and the Palanquin Bearers as the most natural part of this system. The Palanquin Bearers was one of the sanctioned customs of contemporary Indian life.

Lyricaly it is one of the finest poems of the poetess. Naidu glorifies this custom intending to reassert the sense of Indianness and thereby, developing pride among Indians about the rich heritage of folk culture which was vanishing due to colonization. The folk characters in the poem glorify their tradition without the least reference to their oppression under this system; Sarojini Naidu composes a folk song out of their reality, in terms that would please the gentry. Naidu depicts this common scene in Hyderabad as representing the traditional Indian life. She has a highly idealized sense of this life and is least concerned about the toil, sweat and oppression of the Palanquin Bearers. Naidu glorifies this custom is view to reassert the sense of Indianness.

The whole setting of the poem is romantic. We observe the Palanquin Bearers to her husband's house. The Palanquin Bearers usually sang songs in rhythmic harmony with their footsteps. A piece of soft music leaps up in the air as the Palanquin Bearers bear the blooming beauty along. The idealized sense of duty and responsibility of the Palanquin Bearers is revealed here as:-

*Lightly, o lightly, we bear her along,
She sways likes a flower in wing of our song;
She skims like bird on the foam of streams,
She floats like 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.*

(Naidu, Line-1 to 6)

They are shown in idealized postures, in effect, celebrating and glorifying their oppression. Naidu is very much interested in this age-old custom which is part of Indian life and culture, where she locates Indianess with the collective identity of India. The rhythmic movement of the Palanquin Bearers footsteps corresponds with the heartbeats of the bride inside. Excited and instigated, she swings in the dreams of love “like a flower in the wind” in the song of the song of

the Palanquin Bearers. The bride is leaving her familiar parental house to join her love in a new home; she is in a strange emotional predicament. There is joy and excitement but, also melancholy and anxiety. The poem creates Indian women's delicate world which is marked with love and excitement as well as pain and curiosity. In this respect, B. R. Nanda in his biography of M. K. Gandhi says: "Women, some of the most intelligent and the noblest, were in his entourage and in the vanguard of his movements. He became the stoutest champion of the political and social emancipation of women; his voice was raised against the tyranny of the Purdah, the inequality of child marriage, the ban on widow remarriage, indeed against everything which cramped Indian womanhood. He roused India's women to the sense of their dignity and power" (Nanda, 89).

The Palanquin Bearers, the song, and the springy movement all are skilfully fused to create a dream-like atmosphere. In the second stanza, the poem moves from the dreamy surfaces of life to its stark realities. From the passive role of a daughter, the bride moves on to the active and responsible role of a wife. The poem beautifully expresses the mixed feelings of an Indian bride who experiences both the pangs of separation as well as hopes for a new life and happiness. The images are both abstract and concrete and at the same time appealing.

CONCLUSION:

Modern Indian poet is truly Indian when they draw and show their artistic sustenance from this heritage. Indian poets in English share the feelings of common citizens of the country. Naidu's poem The Palanquin Bearers is one of the finest examples through which the poet has beautifully expressed Indianness. The researcher has tried to show the theme of Indianness beautifully expressed by a great Indian poetess, Sarojini Naidu.

WORK CITED:

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- 2) <http://creativereligious.com>