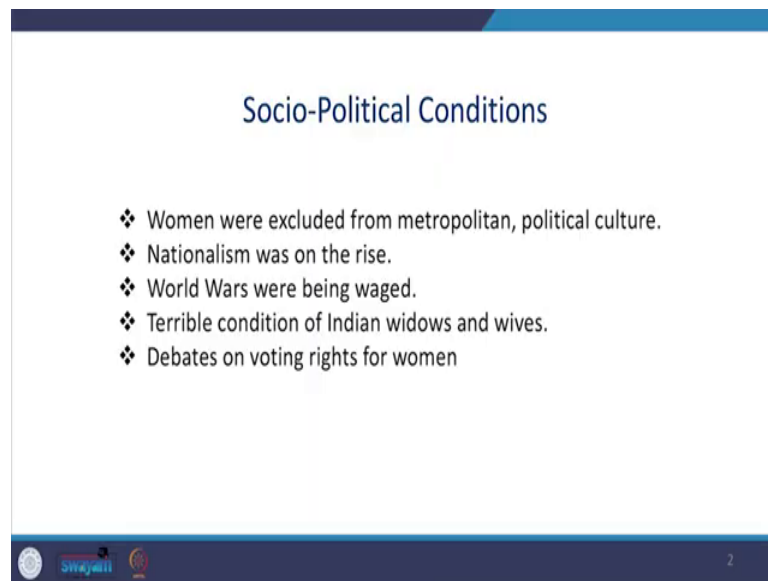


Indian Poetry in English
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Lecture - 07
Sarojini Naidu

Namaskar! and welcome to NPTEL online certification course on Indian Poetry in English. You are listening to this lectures by Binod Mishra. And today we are going to talk about Sarojini Naidu, one of the famous poets of the first phase of Indian poetry writing in English. But before we go on, to understand the poetic technique, the poems, it is always better to have a look at who Sarojini Naidu was, and what were the condition in her time when she was writing poetry.

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Now, let us have a look at the socio-political conditions. My dear friends, you have already been listening in several lectures, that when Indian poetry writing in English began, there were some women poets specially--- the British poets who started writing, but soon afterwards there were also some Indian women who started writing poetry ,and Sarojini Naidu was one such.

Now, during that time, the political condition and the social condition of India was passing through a very critical stage. Women were most of the time excluded from political culture; even though nationalism was on the rise, and the world was also


witnessing several events, several wars were being fought. There was a time when the voting rights for women, they were also a question.




And specially in India, Indian women were passing through a very critical condition, when for the first time, Raja Ram Mohan Roy started talking about women's rights and all. There were child marriages; there was the condition of widows. So, during that time writing poetry was of course, a very challenging task, and it was at that time, that Sarojini Naidu appeared on the scene. Now who was Sarojini Naidu? Sarojini Naidu as we will come to know later was born in Hyderabad fine?

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Condition of Women Poets

- ❖ Women wrote about domestic and personal affairs.
- ❖ However, there was a growing poetic tradition.
- ❖ Toru Dutt, Cornelia Sorabji, and Sarojini Naidu were some important poets.
- ❖ Naidu was a 'representative of the Orient' and for the Women.
- ❖ **Hyderabad's Ladies War Relief in 1915** addressing 'the sacrifice of Indian mothers on behalf of an ungrateful empire' recited her poem 'The Gift of India'.



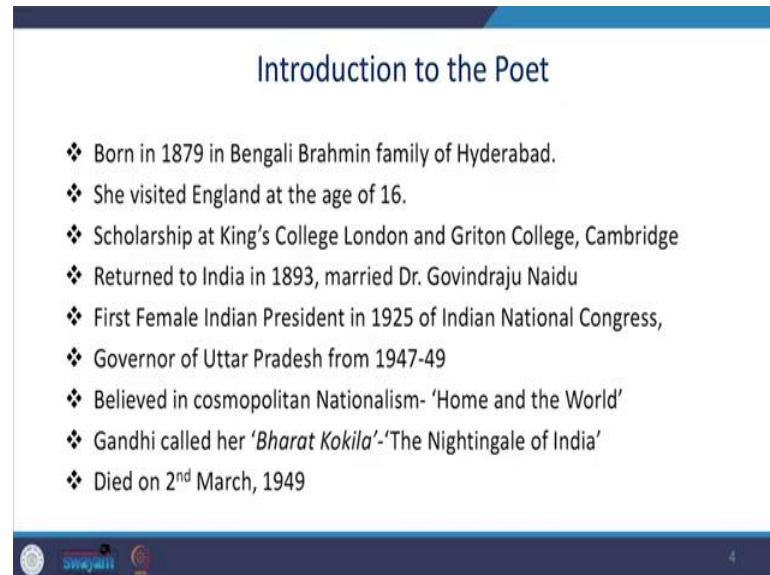
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But then, during that time we could also find that those women who were writing poetry, they were confined only to domestic and personal affairs. So, that used to be the theme, but then some poets namely along with Sarojini Naidu. Though we have already come to know that Toru Dutt had started writing poetry quite earlier, and then came Cornelia Sorabji and then Sarojini Naidu and some also other important poets.

Sarojini Naidu was a '**representative of the orient**', when we come to see the expanse and the canvas of her poems, will find that how she was a representative of the orient. And not only was she a poet. But she was also a very famous orator, and on many situations when she spoke, the audience members were spellbound and that is how she also got a chance to enter into the political arena of that time in Indian settings. So,

Hyderabad's Ladies War Relief in 1915 addressing the sacrifice of Indian mothers on behalf of an ungrateful empire recited Sarojini's poem 'The Gift of India'.

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My dear friends, as I have been telling you that she was born in 1879. I mean as I told you in the previous lecture as well, that after Sepoy Mutiny was over, the political conditions in India have become more severe, and it became more aggressive rather. So, Sarojini was born in a Bengali Brahmin family, but she was born in Hyderabad. And she was so talented, that it is said that only at the age of 12 she had matriculated.

And at the age of 16 she visited England on a fellowship from the Nizam of Hyderabad and this fellowship actually took her to London where she studied and she came into contact with many famous poets, critics, writers of those days. But then, Sarojini had one impediment, and the impediment was that she was actually in love with a person who was from a different caste and she wanted to marry that person who was a doctor, Doctor Govindraju Naidu.

Even though Sarojini's father Aghorenath Chattopadhyay who was himself a doctor, but then he perhaps and not only the father, but the family members along with the mother as well, they objected to Sarojini's advances towards Govindraju. But Sarojini wanted to marry Govindraju.

So, she returned to India in 1893, married Govindraju Naidu, and then her literary sparks had been quite visible right at the age of 13, when she had written a poem which was more than 1000 lines. Now, to her career there were several achievements. She actually became, at a very small age, she had become the president of **Indian National Congress** in 1925.

So, this was really a sort of jealousy to many other people, who could not have attained that status at such an age. And in her political strides, because she was highly influenced by the political views of Gandhi, Gokhale and many others, and she also took part in several political strives and struggles and she had been very close to Gandhiji. And then, it is only the result of that Sarojini could become the president of Indian National Congress in 1925.

Gandhi was so, infatuated with the poetic charms, the oratorical skills of Sarojini Naidu that he always used to call her the 'Bharat Kokila' or 'the Songbird' 'The Indian Cuckoo, 'The Nightingale of India'. Sarojini breathed her last, on 2nd March, 1949 when she was actually the governor of UP.


Now, Sarojini's poetic owers, because when she went to England she got into contact with so many famous poets, writers and critics. She was highly influenced by the romantic poets especially, Keat, Shelley, Tennyson, and Browning. And she was not confined only to the romantics, but she was also influenced by Victorian poets... And then Rossetti and Swinburne too had influenced her, and especially as regards her achievements, she had actually got several you know laurels to her credit.

And it is said, that when she wrote her first book of poems, and in contact with Edmund Gosse, who was a famous English writer and critic. And especially the rhymers club, and then Edmund Gosse and Arthur Symons all these people had appreciated her poetic sparks. So, when she showed her first poem to Edmund Gosse; Edmund Gosse had advised her why should not she write about India, Indian mountains, Indian rivers, Indian cultures and all... and that really had a great effect on Sarojini's poetic ower so, in order to influence... and in order to see the spark that was there.

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- ❖ **Influences**
 - Keats, Shelley, Tennyson, Browning, Rossetti and Swinburne
 - Gandhi, Tilak and Gokhale
- ❖ **Achievements**
 - Ambiguous position of the accomplished poetess.
 - 'Private singer of Indian poetry and public face of nationalism.'
 - In Europe, it was the era of the Decadents and Aesthetics, which influenced her.
 - The Rhymer's Club, **Edmund Gosse**, Arthur Symons.



The slide contains a list of influences and achievements of Sarojini Naidu. To the right of the text is a black and white portrait of Sarojini Naidu, showing her from the chest up, looking slightly to the side with her hand near her face. The slide has a blue header and footer with some logos.

What Edmund Gosse had said: “to set her poems firmly among the mountains the gardens the temples to introduce to us; the vivid population of her own voluptuous and unfamiliar provinces, in other words to be a genuine Indian poet of the Deccan, not a clever machine like imitator of English classics.”

Here you may be reminded of that many other poets who had started writing poetry in pre-independent days they were actually imitating. But Sarojini, even though Sarojini also in the beginning imitated, but Sarojini had her own voice, and Sarojini had her own technique and that has made Sarojini Naidu very popular. She started with the smaller poems, but what is quite significant about Sarojini Naidu is, that she is not confined to one theme.

One can find the ordinary life visible through her poems and the title of her poems. If you have a look at, you will find that she was not writing for one class, but she had sympathies to the people of all classes. For example, she also wrote poems for Bangle Sellers, then she wrote poems for Indian weavers. She was also very much influenced by nature, and that is why her poetic world is replete with *Champak trees*, then *Serisas* and then many others.

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Depiction of Ordinary Life

"If the poems of Sarojini Naidu can be carefully and delicately studied they will be found as luminous in lighting up the dark places of East as any contribution of a savant or historian."

- Edmund Gosse

- "The Bangle Sellers,"
- "Street Cries,"
- "Indian weavers,"
- "Champak Blooms,"
- "Song of Radha,"
- "Vasant Panchmi,"
- "Kali," "The Mother,"
- "Lakshmi," "The Lotus Born"
- "To A Buddha Seated on A lotus"

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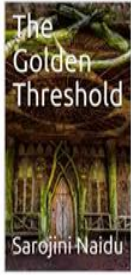
She has also talked about some of the Indian seasons like *Vasant Panchmi*, she also exposed herself to her knowledge of Indian, myths and Indian Gods and Goddesses like *Kali*, *Lakshmi* and many of the Indian saints also influenced her. So, one of her poems *To A Buddha Seated on A lotus* has also become very famous.

Edmund Gosse went on to say about Sarojini Naidu that if the poems of Sarojini can be carefully and delicately studied. They will be found as luminous in lighting, as luminous in lighting up the dark places of East, as any contribution of a savant historian, as any contribution of a savant historian.

Now, what was so, significant in the poetic world of Sarojini Naidu. We will have when once we read some of the poems. We can find out, though many of the poems many of you might have read in your school and college days, and you could have found the beauty that was there. It is always said: that of all the poets writing in pre-independent India Sarojini had the gentlest ear, meaning thereby there was a lot of rhyme in Sarojini's poetry, and that was actually the originality.

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Poems



✓ Collection of Poems-

- ☐ *The Golden Threshold*(1905)
- ☐ *The Bird of Time* (1912)
- ☐ *The Broken Wing*(1917)
- ☐ *The Feather of the Dawn*(1961)

(Revolutionary, Paean to womanhood, Indian in tenor and tone.)



"Be masters of whatever language you like, so long as it is the language of the human heart and spirit. Literature is the only way truth can be kept alive."
- Naidu

Sarojini wrote poems, but some of her collections are very important. Here you can find the names of those collections the very first book *The Golden Threshold* which came out in 1905, it had actually got 40 poems. And you know the title of this poem was taken by the name of the house in Hyderabad where she was living.

And then came *The Bird of Time* which is also influenced by Fajarul Umar Kayam and then the *Broken Wing* it is often said that when Sarojini wrote a *Broken Wing* in 1907, many people started looking at Sarojini with certain doubts and certain disillusionments and of course, the title also says the same thing.

Now, many people often say that because of her participation, I mean active participation in politics and because of her say disillusionment with the sort of life that she was living, because most of the time she used to be ill, and perhaps she had developed a sort of a sadistic attitude and that is why the *Broken Wing*. So, when the *Broken Wing* came, Gokhale once asked Sarojini that how come a song bird like you write a poem, or a collection like the *Broken Wing* and you know Sarojini was very witty.

So, she answered," you see even with the *Broken Wing* I can scale the stars". So, she was very witty and then the last one which you can find. Here this is actually the collection of her poems which could not be published during her lifetime and it was published later in 1961 under the title '*The Feather of the Dawn*, The Feather of the Dawn.

Now, Sarojini even though she was a Bengali she was writing in English. And when it came to discuss about discuss on the aspect of language what Sarojini says is a very eye opener and it is very remarkable. As she says,” be masters of whatever language you like as long as it is the language of the human heart and spirit, human heart and spirit my dear friend.”

What do I mean by a human heart and spirit? By human heart and spirit what we mean is something that comes out of your soul something that comes out of your heart meaning thereby the pleasant song and that is what Sarojini is famous for. Now, what actually are the themes? As I told you in the beginning, that Sarojini is not confined to one theme only she has in her and the entire poetic corpus of Sarojini can be divided into certain you know categories.

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Characteristics of Naidu's Poems

- ❖ British romanticism, Persian, Urdu poetic mode.
- ❖ Nationalistic and secular lyric
- ❖ Folk-songs, love-lyric, etc.
- ❖ Revolutionary but lyrical.
- ❖ Themes: Love, Nature, Life and Death.
- ❖ Romantically evoking imagery from Indian scene.
- ❖ Symbolic, Sentimental yet vague at time.

SAROJINI NAIDU
THE GOLDEN THRESHOLD
"YOUR NAME WITHIN A NATION'S PRAYER
YOUR MUSIC ON A NATION'S TONGUE"

Indian mythology, legends and history

She actually wrote about love, she wrote about nature, she wrote love-lyrics, she wrote some folk songs and she also wrote about life and death, these are actually the common themes. But in all the common things what is at the centre point is or what is in the background is love; because, right from the beginning, she tried to explore love, not only among human beings, but among natural objects, among animals, among people of all categories devoid of their profession.

Sarojini's poems are symbolic sentimental at times it may appear to be very vague. It is often said, that Sarojini even though she a her mother tongue was Bengali. And you

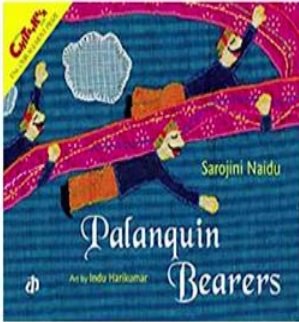
know, at a later stage she felt that she was not doing much even for her own mother tongue. She should have written either in Bengali or in Urdu because she was in Hyderabad.

But she was writing in English so, but then there was actually a flash of British romanticism in her poems. And many people have also gone to the extent of saying, that it is only because of that realisation that Sarojini wrote the collection a *Broken Wing*; because that talks about a somehow or the other the pessimism of the poet; the pessimism of Sarojini Naidu.

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"Palanquin Bearers"

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 a string.



Now, one of the poems which you might have come across during your school days which is actually which is very famous for it is rhyme which is very famous for it is musicality. But then while Sarojini wrote this poem entitled Palanquin Bearers you can find how she can convert a simple theme into a very magnanimous, and how she can provide music.

If you read the poem, because Sarojini was very fond of meters and you will find the way she write

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 a string.”


If you have a look only at this stanza, you can find it is not only full of literary devices like simile, but then at the same time you can see the comparison that she has made of a bride. My dear friends, nowadays can anyone think of the palanquin or the *Palaki* in Hindi fine?

Even the western people who happen to see who happen to read this poem could not imagine, that in Indian scenario a bride can be carried on a palanquin. And then the people who are carrying it, who are carrying it they are also singing and at the same time the poet's voice can be heard ‘lightly oh lightly we bear her along she sways like a flower in the wind of our song. So, the bride is going to her marital place’.

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Softly, O softly we bear her along,
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 from the eyes of a bride.
Lightly, O lightly we glide and we sing,
We bear her along like a pearl on a string.



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And then not only lightly every now and then you can find a lilting rhythm.

Softly, O softly we bear her along,

she hangs like a star in the dew of our song;

you can read the poem at leisure and at your own pleasure and you can derive pleasure out of it. This poem has been very common in majority of the schools and colleges and sometimes in university also. But what the poem actually tells us is how India can provide others, a sort of exotic view of India. I mean many people could not have thought of India having a sort of palanquin, a tradition of palanquin and the bride going in it.

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Characteristic of the Poem

- Exoticization of India
- Reflects on Indian culture, women, the bearers.
- **Did the 'palanquin bearers' feel privileged?**
- Dactyl and Anapaestic meter
- Melodious due to use of assonances and rhymes
- Lilted cadence, evoking beautiful embellished imageries

The slide features a decorative graphic on the right side depicting a traditional Indian palanquin (palki) being carried by several bearers. The slide is part of a presentation, as indicated by the 'swayam' logo and the number '11' in the bottom right corner.

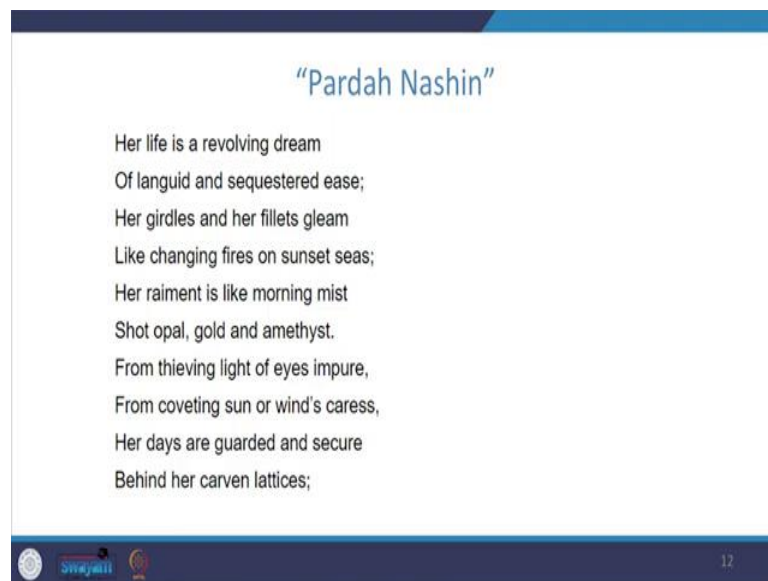
So, it actually talks about Indian culture, it talks about the Indian bride, and also talks about the practice of the bearers. Now the question here is, the entire poem, if we analyze it linguistically, and if we analyze it in a lyrical mode we can find, that there is a profound use of Dactyl and Anapaestic meter.

You might be thinking what this Dactyl and Anapaestic meter is? I mean dactyl is actually when there is one stressed and then two unstressed syllables. So, that is actually dactyl and the anapaestic meter is just the reverse of it one unstressed and two stressed. And the entire poem goes like this, and that actually makes the poem quite melodious my dear friend.

There is a sort of cadence as I told, you and it actually evokes a beautiful and embellished imagery. But then, as I told you that while on the one hand she talks about, because you know Sarojini had in her the technique that she will not talk only about one class, one person, one caste or whatsoever.

She also talks about another lady who is actually veiled, and her veiled beauty is deliberated upon in the poem *Pardah Nashin*. And in that not only does she sing about the *Pardah Nashin* or the veiled beauty, but then she also talks about the confinement that was there. Even though it is of a tradition, but she actually talks about how there used to be a sort of confinement, and if you can read some of the lines you can find her life is a revolving dream.

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Now, see under the curtain under the veil she can simply dream

Of languid and sequestered ease;

Her girdles and her fillets gleam

Like changing fires on sunset seas;

Her raiment is like morning mist

Shot opal, gold and amethyst.

See the rhyme

from thieving light of eyes impure,

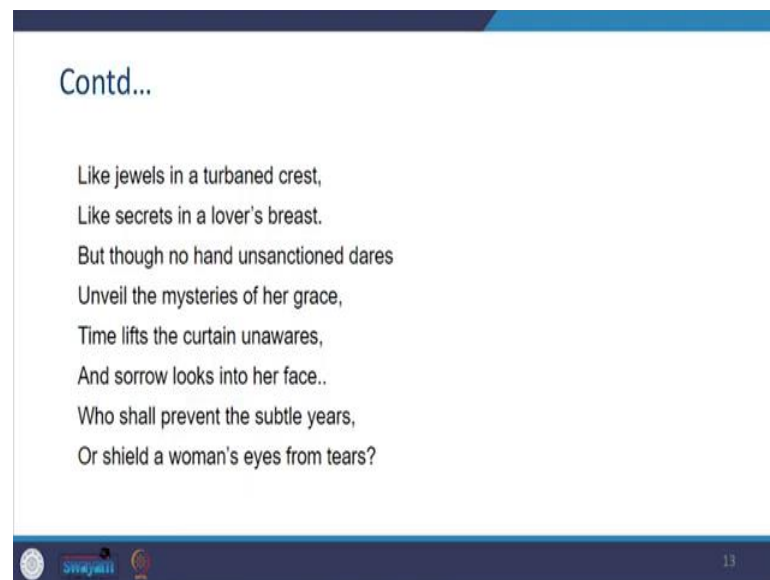
From coveting sun of wind's caress,

Her days are guarded and secure

Behind her carven lattices;

and the poem goes on and goes on my dear friend and you can enjoy.

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And there again is abundance of the use of literary devices, you will find every word that actually begins with like jewels in

like jewels in a turbaned crest,

like secrets in a lover's breast.

But though no hand unsanctioned dares

unveil the mysteries of her grace.

How beautiful she is, but then she is veiled

who shall prevent the subtle years,

or shield a woman's eyes from tears.

So, she not only talks about the dream, but she also talks about how she might be having a sort of feeling, that she is confined here under you know, under a cover and this cover

actually talks about all her frustrations and all her dreams. Now, when we have an analytical look, and a critical look at the poem we can find, that it not only talks about beauty, but it also talks about a time. When you know, being veiled was a custom and it was a sort of traditional you know it was a sort of traditional mode during those days, women happen to be prisoners.

So, in a way Sarojini is also trying to give the message to the outside world, that why this veiled where is the identity of the human, who is actually veiled the ending is quite rhetorical and you can also enjoy the rhyme scheme which goes like a b, a b, c c.

So, if you read the entire poem you will find. So, through this poem also, on the one hand we talk about Palanquin Bearers and on the other we talk about Pardah Nashin. We will also take up some other poems, where you can find the technique and the art of Sarojini as a poetess.


As I told you, that a poet like Sarojini cannot be confined to only one theme or to one genre. You remember my dear friends, that Sarojini's, Sarojini actually got noticed by these political leaders, namely Gandhiji and Gokhale who actually were very much attracted not only by her oratory skills, but by her poetic skills as well. And this is here a poem, which actually is titled *the Lotus* and you know this poem is actually dedicated to Gandhi.

Sarojini was so witty that there were times when she even called Gandhi the Mickey Mouse fine? But then nobody took it otherwise because Sarojini was as natural as the wind, she was as natural as the river, and if we have a look at this poem Lotus, where she talks about where not only she talks about the plain living, where not only does she talk about the non-violence, where not only she talks about the merits of Gandhi.

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"The Lotus"

O mystic Lotus, sacred and sublime,
In myriad-petalled grace inviolate,
Supreme o'er transient storms of tragic Fate,
Deep-rooted in the waters of all Time,
What legions loosed from many a far-off clime
Of wild-bee hordes with lips insatiate,
And hungry winds with wings of hope or hate,
Have thronged and pressed round thy miraculous prime
To devastate thy loveliness, to drain
The midmost rapture of thy glorious heart
But who could win thy secret, who attain
Thine ageless beauty born of Brahma's breath,
Or pluck thine immortality, who art
Coeval with the Lords of Life and Death?



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But through this Lotus flower, actually she tries to give a message and let us have a look at some of the lines. And you know the poem begins with an apostrophe

O mystic Lotus, sacred and sublime,

see the use of words sacred and sublime. So, here on the one hand she talks about how lotus is considered sacred and lotus as you all know is a national flower of India. So, since she had entered politics she had started writing or she had started scribbling some political poems which perhaps were going to bring a sort of decline to her career as a poet. My dear friends, poetry and politics have very rarely been successful together, and that also happened with Sarojini Naidu, a poem of such a great significance and such a great height.

O mystic Lotus, sacred and sublime

In myriad-petalled grace inviolate,

Supreme over transient forms of tragic Fate,

Deep-rooted in the waters of all Time,

What legions loosed from many a far-off clime

Of wild-bee hordes with lips insatiate,

And hungry winds with wings of hope or hate

and as the poem goes. And finally,

but who could win thy secret, who attain

Thine ageless beauty born of Brahmas breath.

Now, here she says you are born of Brahmas breath,

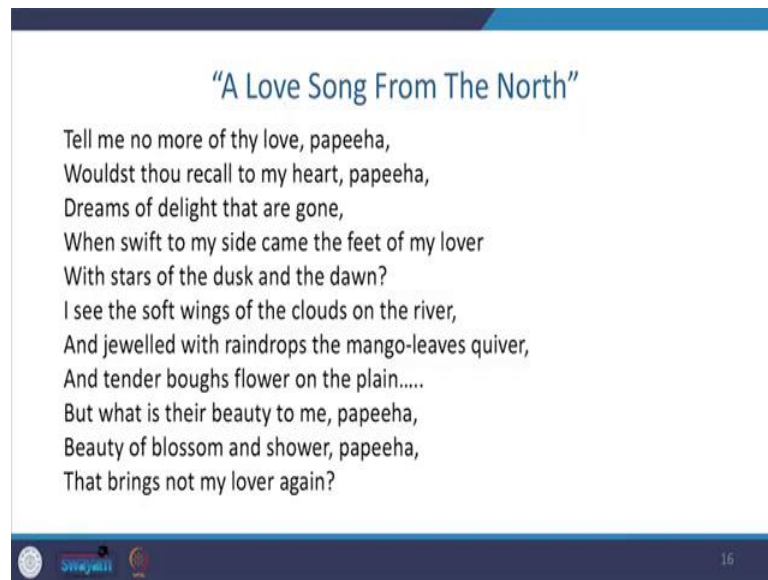
Or pluck the immortality who art

Coeval with the lords of Life and Death?

So, now, Sarojini actually tried to give it a different angle, a different push, and it is said that the poem was actually dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi. As I have been telling you that Sarojini was a poet who could not be confined in one category now, she has her eyes not only on Indian weavers, or Bangle Sellers or the Bazzars, but she also could talk of and majority of the poems which are soaked in love. Here she talks about in one of the poems "*A Love Song From The North*". Likewise there is a poem named a Rajput's love it is based on Rajput's love.

So, this poem a love song from the north it is also one of the very significant poem. If here you will find the Indian images are replete, Indian images are full of here she will not talk about skylark, here she will not talk about some other bird. But she will talk about Indian birds, and how she tries actually to bring in, or to render Indian colour to her poetic power. Let us have some lines.

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Tell me no more of thy love, papeeha,

Wouldst thou recall to my heart, papeeha,

Dreams of delight that are gone,

When swift to my side came the feet of my lover

With the stars of the dusk and the dawn?

I see the soft wings of the clouds on the river,

And jewelled with raindrops the mango-leaves quiver,

And tender boughs flower on the plain....

And as the poem proceeds,

But what is their beauty to me papeeha?

Even when she is talking of love, but then she knows that this love is going to be very temporary, she is here also going to talk about separation how come I be separated from my lover. So, even though you even though papeeha you are singing, but how am I affected,

what is their beauty to me, papeeha,

beauty of blossom and shower, papeeha,

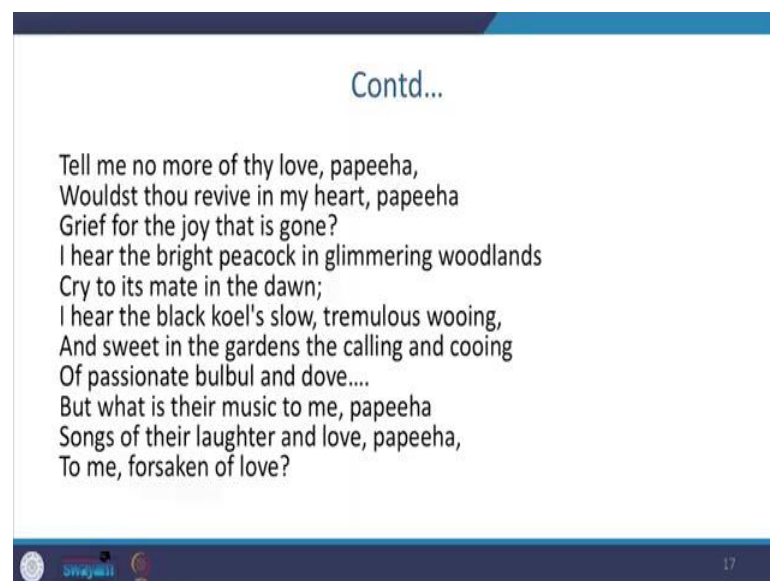
that brings not my lover again?

If I am not able to meet my lover again, how does your you know song affect me?

So, here this poem not only talks about longing, it also talks about how separation can affect two lovers and here she is singing. So, she was actually, basically she was a singer, and that is why she has been called a song bird; *a song bird*; a song bird, but then how can a person remain a song bird every now and then. Sometimes, we are reminded of how our sweetest songs are those, that consist of our saddest thought and that also happened with Sarojini. So, as she proceeded, because at a very early stage she had become very famous, but once she entered politics.

Once she entered the political struggle and all, her poetry actually came to have a sort of decline. It is also said that Sarojini never was quite healthy; she always had been suffering from one ailment or the other. But this did not have a mark, or this did not have a effect on her poetry. Because even out of her suffering, the sort of poetry that she was writing, the sort of the sort of strain, that she was creating that actually was full of love.

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Tell me no more of thy love, papeeha,

Wouldst thou revive in my heart, papeeha

would you be able to revive in my heart, papeeha grief for the joy that is gone? The past days the past pleasant days, the past days of love, the past experiences the past moments which are gone will you be able to. So, she anyway talks about how you know, time also passes, but with time everything is also gone.

I hear the bright peacock and glimmering woodlands.

So, I hear the bright peacocks glimmering woodlands

cry to its mate in the dawn; Now, here she provides a symbol of the peacock and says that how peacocks in glimmering woodlands cry to its mate in the dawn;

I hear the black koel's slow, tremulous wooing.

So, all the voices of temptation, all the voices of wooing

sweet in the gardens the calling and the

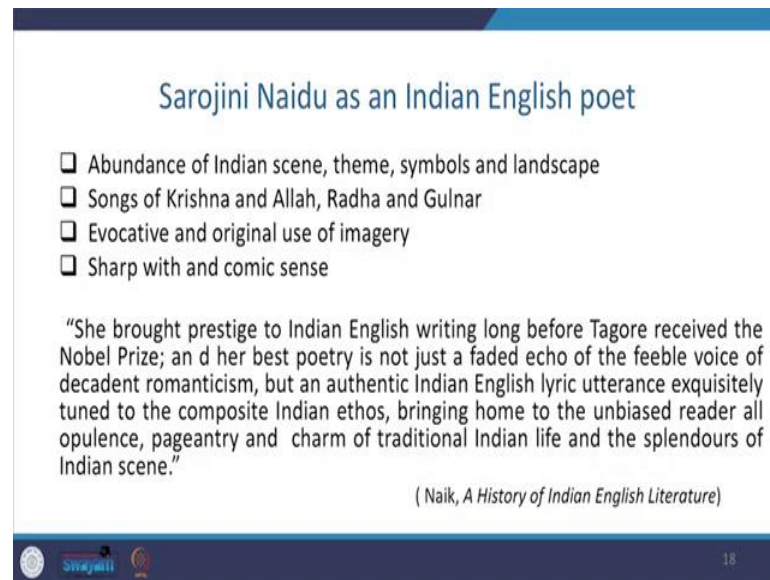
cooing of passionate bulbul and dove,

but what is their music to me papeeha,

songs of their laughter and love papeeha to me forsaken of love?

It is often said that there were certain things in her own life that actually could not make her so happy and that some way or the other could come to be a part of her a poetry, part of her muse.

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Sarojini Naidu as an Indian English poet

- ❑ Abundance of Indian scene, theme, symbols and landscape
- ❑ Songs of Krishna and Allah, Radha and Gulnar
- ❑ Evocative and original use of imagery
- ❑ Sharp with and comic sense

“She brought prestige to Indian English writing long before Tagore received the Nobel Prize; and her best poetry is not just a faded echo of the feeble voice of decadent romanticism, but an authentic Indian English lyric utterance exquisitely tuned to the composite Indian ethos, bringing home to the unbiased reader all opulence, pageantry and charm of traditional Indian life and the splendours of Indian scene.”

(Naik, A History of Indian English Literature)

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My dear friends, Sarojini Naidu as an Indian English poet, when one goes to estimate Sarojini Naidu as an Indian English poet. Though many people had said many things, even one of the famous you know scholars both of Maithili and English literature Doctor Amarnath jha who had been in constant friendship and in constant correspondence with Sarojini Naid had said, Sarojini was half a sister, half a mother to me, and how could I assess Sarojini Naidu.

So, my dear friends, when Saroji when we are going to estimate Sarojini Sarojini's ower is too wide, songs of love, songs of love and death, folk songs as she also writes folk songs and she also talks about love, and also of separation, of death my dear friends.

So, when we finally, estimate Sarojini Naidu and ask ourselves why Sarojini Naidu should be considered an Indian English poet? There are certain things that we can keep in mind. The first is there is abundance of Indian scene, you can come across *Champak* you can come across *Serisa*, you can come across Indian birds, you know koel, bulbul and many other things as well.

And then you can also find Indian Gods and Goddesses and she was not confined only to one God or one Goddess. She actually exposed herself, and showed her familiarity with other she talks about the milkmaid Radha you know she talks about the milkmaid Radha. And when she talks about Radha, when she talks about Radha she depicts her as how she was taking her curd to Mathura, and when on the boats she was trying to cross the river,

and people were trying to make a fun of her suddenly out of her throat came Govinda, Govinda.

Now, the question is, a poet with so much steeped in Indian culture can only be none other than Sarojini Naidu. So, not only the themes are Indian, but symbols and landscapes are also Indian, my dear friend. You can come across the songs of a Krishna and Allah, Radha and Gulnar and in all these, you know these are suffused with evocative and original use of imagery.

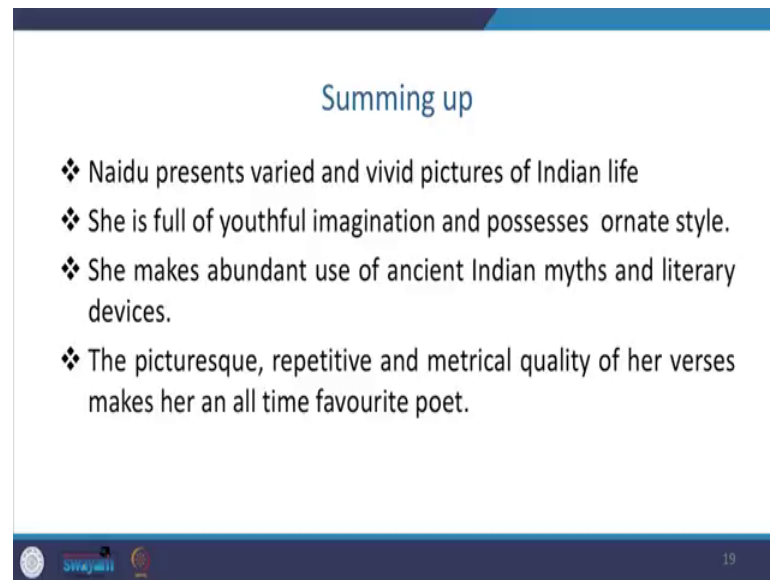
She is actually very much proficient at creating fedges, creating fedges and those fedges will have something of it is Indian you know origin and something of it is Indian tinge. And one can also find a sharp and comical sense a witty sense in Sarojini's world in Sarojini's poetic world.

There is one comment that actually needs to be taken care of, when we talk about Sarojini Naidu's entire poetic corpus where she says "She brought prestige to Indian English writing long before Tagore received the Nobel Prize; this is what M K Naik a famous Indian critique and writer of the book *a history of Indian English literature* says.

So," She actually brought prestige to India much before Tagore received the Nobel Prize; and her best poetry is not just a faded echo of the feeble voice of decadent romanticism, but an authentic Indian English lyric utterance exquisitely tuned to the composite Indian ethos Indian ethos, my dear friend, bringing home to the unbiased reader all opulence, pageantry and charm of traditional Indian life and the splendours of Indian scene."

So, you will find whichever poem you take from any of her collections, you will find it is not only steeped in Indian ethos, Indian strain, Indian landscape, Indian imagery. But at the same time, it talks about Gods and Goddesses, it talks about deities, it talks about the celebrated people of Indian culture, and that is what makes Sarojini Naidu a famous Indian poet. Now, to sum up, we can take some of the points in order to consider Sarojini Naidu as one poet without whom Indian poetry writing in English in pre independent days could not be a possibility.

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Summing up

- ❖ Naidu presents varied and vivid pictures of Indian life
- ❖ She is full of youthful imagination and possesses ornate style.
- ❖ She makes abundant use of ancient Indian myths and literary devices.
- ❖ The picturesque, repetitive and metrical quality of her verses makes her an all time favourite poet.

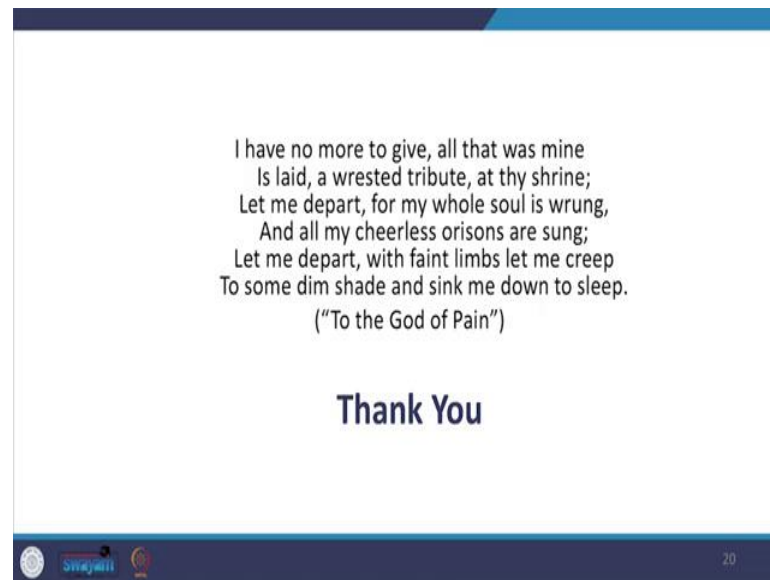
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Naidu has presented varied and vivid pictures of Indian life as I have been saying. And you know, the earlier poems if you have a look at they are full of the youthful imagination, and then her language is very flowery, when I say flowery very ornate every one can understand. It is not that she picks up difficult words whatsoever, the language is very simple, but it actually provides us a lilting musicality or a lilting rhythm.

She makes abundant use of ancient Indian myths and literary devices. There is an element of picturesque quality, at times you can find that there are certain things which are repetitive lightly o lightly, softly o softly. And then again in many poems you can find like that sometimes you can find that triplicatives have been used quite frequently. The metrical quality of her verse makes her an all time favourite Indian poetess of a great calibre.

So, my dear friends, without Sarojini Naidu the pre independent or the first phase of Indian English poetry cannot be complete. So, Sarojini was a poet of love, she was a poet of nature, she was a poet of Indian ethos, she was a poet of Indian tradition and she was also, we can also find some influences of the West. But then as she had been reminded by Edmund Gosse, and that actually became an eye opener for her, and that is what we can say. And before I end let me end ,this lecture by taking some lines from one of the poems of Naidu herself.

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The poem is titled “To the God of Pain” where she says

I have no more to give, all that was mine

is laid, a wrested tribute, at thy shrine;

let me depart, for my whole soul is wrung.

And all my cheerless orisons are sung;

let me depart, with faint limbs; let me creep

to some dim shade and sink me down to sleep.

This appears to be a sort of surrender to the almighty, who all of us are in awe of, and Sarojini too was also in awe of God. and she breathed her last when she was the governor of Lucknow. So, this with this, we come to the end of this lecture on Sarojini Naidu.

Thank you very much for a patient listening.