

## **An Analysis of Literary Techniques from Keki N. Daruwalla's Poem *Scarecrow and the Seasons***

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### **Abstract**

Literary techniques serves as essential component of poetry, fostering cognitive engagement and encouraging independent thoughts. Engaging with the article will facilitate a conscious understanding and application of Literary techniques within the realm of poetry. The article focuses on the literary techniques present in the poem *Scarecrow and the Seasons*, by the prominent Indian poet Keki N. Daruwalla. His ability to express complex experiences using language that is vividly tangible, strikingly memorable, and capable of revealing unexpected layers of meaning is truly exceptional. This poem vividly illustrates the character of the scarecrow, a non-human being, along with its environment, sensitivity, and intensity. The analysis of the poem delves into various literary devices, such as symbolism, simile, personification, metaphor, allusion, imagery, paradox, dramatic technique, and characterization, all intricately woven in the poem *Scarecrow and the Seasons*. Each literary device is clearly defined, and carefully selected lines are used to elucidate these literary techniques. This literary approach enhances the reader's comprehension by enabling them to integrate a diverse array of literary techniques, poetic devices, and figurative language. It serves as a means to explore and interpret the underlying concepts hidden within the poem.

**Keywords:** Poetry, Keki N Daruwalla, Poetic Craft, Scarecrow and the Seasons, Literary Techniques.

## Introduction

Literature encompasses a variety of genres, including poetry, drama, plays, fiction, and short stories. Poetry serves as a reflection of the world, effectively communicating human experiences through language. It is an esteemed art form that can be likened to music, sculpture, and painting. The uniqueness of poetry is to coagulate sea of emotions to dynamic verses into a compressed structure. A poet deliberately uses devices to amplify or change literal meanings and create rhythm or tone (Kiparsky, 2019). What sets poetry apart from other literary genres is its distinctive use of language and choice of words. A poem is a bundle of emotions, that has the power to bring extinct to exist, breathe life to non-human world. Through a process of brainstorming, poets select words to express concepts, ideas, intentions, and objectives within their poems. There is no universally accepted definition of poetry, as critics and scholars have offered diverse interpretations. In *A Study of T.S. Eliot: The Wasteland and Other Poems*, published in 2003 by S.C. Mundra, T.S. Eliot asserts, "The greatness of a poem does not depend on the greatness or the intensity of the emotions but in the intensity of the artistic process..." (Mundra 24). Additionally, Meena Alexander, in the article by Karen Simecek and Kate Rumbold titled "The Uses of Poetry, Changing English," states, "Poetry's task is to reconcile us to the world — not to accept it at face value or to assent to things that are wrong, but to reconcile one in a larger sense, to return us in love, the province of the imagination, to the scope of our mortal lives" (Simecek 2016).

The article focuses on poetry, specifically analyzing the Literary techniques hidden in Keki N. Daruwalla's poem *The Scarecrow and the Seasons*. Keki N Daruwalla is a prominent contemporary Indian poet and a short story writer, widely regarded as one of India's most esteemed literary figures. His work eloquently explores themes of unity, power, and chaos within the global framework. Through his poetry, he illustrates the interconnections of the sacred, nature, humanity, culture, and society. Daruwalla effectively evokes a sense of place through his carefully chosen words that elicit the desired emotional reactions. He rarely appear superficial, trivial, or excessively abstract and ambiguous.

The poem *The Scarecrow and the Seasons* featured in the 2014 anthology *The Scarecrow and the Ghost*, centers on the unique figure of the scarecrow, who reflects on his surroundings while monitoring the activities of birds, monkeys, and porcupines. *The Scarecrow and the Seasons* vividly captures the essence of nature and the transitions of the seasons. They are perceived through the eyes of the scarecrow, bringing life in a simple concept yet nuanced and humorous language. The poem is divided into four sections: 'In Morning Dew,' 'Winter,' 'Spring,' and 'Autumn,' each showcasing the splendor of the non-human world. It highlights the duty assigned to the non-human character 'scarecrow' to protect the expansive green fields. The poem celebrates the enchanting beauty of nature and pictures the intricate relationship between the scarecrow and the human realm, conveying the inner thoughts of this man-made guardian of the fields. Each poem presents a distinct style and approach.

## An outlook of the poem *The Scarecrow and the Seasons*

Scarecrows hold a significant position within the depiction of rural landscapes. They are human-made figures designed to deter birds that seek to prey on crops. It is a 'non-human being acting as a human helping the 'human world'. While it is widely acknowledged that scarecrows are intended to frighten away birds, the poem effectively highlights their harmonious relationship with humanity, the scarecrow possesses the ability to captivate attention and intrigue people. It emanates love and joy within its surroundings. The scarecrow is characterized as a wise companion, diligent in its duties, and serves as a

symbol of triumph. The anthology *The Scarecrow and the Ghost* comprises of three poems: The “Scarecrow and the Seasons”, “The Scarecrow and the Owl”, and “The Ghost Story”. The paper focuses on the poem “The Scarecrow and the Seasons”, which illustrates the cyclical nature of Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter. The poet introduces the inanimate character of the scarecrow, crafted in the likeness of a human to ward off birds from the fields intended for crop production. Daruwalla addresses that the scarecrow observes the transition through the four seasons. The poem articulates the characteristics of each season with detailed descriptions, showcasing the changing climatic conditions of the Earth. The poem *The Scarecrow and the Seasons*, from the anthology *The Scarecrow and the Ghost*, is divided into four sections: 'In Morning Dew', 'Winter', 'Spring', and 'Autumn'. Throughout the poem, the scarecrow is personified as a human figure. In the initial section, 'In Morning Dew', the poet depicts the scarecrow grooming itself on a dewy morning. Positioned high, it has a vantage point over the lush farmland. The scarecrow vigilantly observes its surroundings, yet, amidst the changing seasons, it remains unaware of their passage, as it is preoccupied with its primary task of deterring the birds.

The section titled 'Winter' illustrates the essence of nature during the winter months. Vast expanses are adorned with yellow mustard flowers, which flourish abundantly. In the morning light, the dew on the mustard plants sparkles, while in the evening, they exhibit a variety of hues. The observer, Scarecrow perceives one half of the landscape as mustard and the other as rye, relishing the sharp fragrance of mustard alongside the sweet aroma of rye. The winter scene reveals desolate groves, with houses nestled among them appearing forsaken and dilapidated.

The scarecrow, standing vigil day and night, cautions insects and worms to tread carefully, as the dewdrops have transformed into sharp grass. After witnessing these changes, the scarecrow experiences a chill and begins to shiver. It observes that its straw hair has turned gray and appears unwell. Despite this, it strives to maintain a stoic demeanor and fulfill its responsibilities. However, it embodies a certain hypocrisy, presenting a facade of indifference while its shadow reveals the stark reality of winter's persistent coldness. The poet vividly depicts the autumn season, characterized by obstinate trees that refuse to shed their leaves. The once-bountiful mango tree, generous in summer, has become harsh in autumn. The trees, cloaked in green foliage, seem oblivious to the appropriate time for blooming. These signs indicate the departure of winter and the full arrival of Autumn. The autumn season exhausts the scarecrow, who feels as though he is laboring excessively to deter birds from settling on the fruits. The burgeoning young wheat attracts monkeys, which become a nuisance to the farmers in the fields, preventing them from remaining still as they shout in frustration.

The scarecrow observes the landscape of the river and its valley. The river diminishes, resembling the frailty of old age, following the retreat of the floodwaters. He rubs his eyes in disbelief, astonished by the sight of mud islands emerging within the river. He envisions the rising waters and gazes at the clear blue sky. The scarecrow recognizes that autumn is nearing its end. He is captivated by the sight of the Bagla heron soaring gracefully with its expansive wings. Spring symbolizes the 'reawakening of the green world.' It heralds a resurgence of nature's abundance, revitalizing the season with a wealth of resources for humanity. In the poem *Scarecrow and the Seasons* the springtime is illustrated through a Lotus pond adorned with pink buds. He hears the melodious calls of the Cuckoo and the dove. He observes the industrious bees buzzing around their designated areas. The poet vividly depicts the diligent work of the bees as they sip nectar from the blossoms. The Scarecrow smiles at the sight of the bees, buzzing and humming as if intoxicated by honey. This season invigorates everyone—farmers, birds, bees, animals, orchard owners, and the general populace alike. The orchard owner, surrounded by a variety of fruits, becomes agitated upon witnessing the bees busily collecting nectar

from the blooming buds and Jamun fruits. He realizes that the fruits will soon vanish, leaving the Jamuns resembling desiccated figs.

He feels the pain and utters

"Getting bee-stung is better

than getting bee-kissed (Daruwalla 11).

When both humans and non-humans appear preoccupied, the scarecrow takes pleasure in standing upright, observing the events unfolding around him throughout the seasons. The scarecrow attentively watches the subtle transitions of each season. He perceives the river and the valley, noting the receding floodwaters that cause the river to diminish like the effects of aging. He observes the mud islands that rest within the river's embrace. He appreciates the cyclical nature of the seasons as they revolve endlessly. The paper captivates readers by providing extensive insights into the four seasons and the magnificent transformations that occur within each.

### Use of Literary Techniques

The article emphasizes on the use of poetic poem in the poem *The Scarecrow and Seasons* by Keki N. Daruwala. Poetry serves as a traditional medium for illustrating the events, circumstances, experiences, and daily occurrences of life. Analyzing the literary techniques within poetry aids readers, critics, and scholars in their understanding the craft of the poetry even better. In the selected poem, the poet employs figurative language to enhance the beauty of the work. As noted by Deedari and Mansouri, poetic devices are not merely ornamental; they are not just an elaborate or fanciful way of expressing ideas that could be articulated more straightforwardly. The explorarticlees various literary techniques such as symbolism, metaphor, simile, diction, imagery, allusion, paradox, Poetic elements, dramatic technique, and characterization.

a) **Symbolism** involves the use of symbols within a literary composition. A symbol may manifest as a phrase, character, word, poetic line, or action. The use of symbols conveys meanings that extend beyond the text's literal interpretation. This practice is crucial as it links to the deeper significance of the narrative. Keki N. Daruwala's use of symbols is particularly evocative. In the line,

On a dead tree

Sat the black-shouldered kite (Daruwalla7),

The 'dead tree' represents a life devoid of value, shrouded in darkness. The 'black-shouldered kite' perched upon this lifeless tree symbolizes a forsaken, shattered, and dishonored individual, abandoned by society. This images draws a parallel between the 'kite' and humanity, while the 'dead tree' reflects a barren existence.

b) **Poetic diction** refers to the selection of words that characterizes the distinctive style of a poet. There are three primary types of diction: poetic diction, formal diction, and informal diction. This article emphasizes the poetic diction present in the poem *The Scarecrow and the Seasons*. Daruwala's word choices are artistic, meaningful, and vividly descriptive. The lines,

The bird "made love to the fruit

The bees were in their flame bee cups (Daruwalla 11)

capture the readers' attention. The imagery of a bird engaging with a fruit and bees resting in flame-like cups serves to illustrate the trees, while the artistic depiction of the dry river shrinking like old age is particularly expressive.

c) **Simile** is regarded as one of the most commonly used poetic devices within poetry. This figurative language serves to emphasize the similarities between two distinct entities that share common traits. It is typically signified by the terms 'like' or 'as.' Through the use of imaginative and vivid expressions, the poet elucidates various aspects such as situations, characters, individuality, emotions, and actions. Keki N. Daruwalla incorporates striking similes in his poetry.

While seasons circle round and round

like oxen on a threshing floor. (Daruwalla 6)

Here, the circle of seasons round and round is compared to oxen fiercely whirling in the threshing floor. The cyclical nature of the seasons is likened to oxen spinning on the threshing floor.

They (bees) buzzed and hummed

Like drunks so often do.” (Daruwalla 11)

The humming and buzzing song of the bees is compared to drunkards dancing to unheard songs.

d) **Personification** enhances the reader's ability to human entities and inanimate objects. Poets frequently use this literary device to evoke vivid imagery and symbols within the reader's imagination, thereby enriching the sensory experience of their writing. By comparing human attributes to an inanimate object, the poet can convey deeper meanings. In his poem, Daruwalla selects the non-living figure 'Scarecrow' having human qualities to illustrate ideas more vividly, infusing the character with significance. The subsequent lines of the poem reflect the actions, traits, feelings, and emotions associated with the scarecrow. Daruwalla explores a wide range of human emotions through this personification, consistently referring to the scarecrow with the pronoun 'he.' The poet's adept use of personification is remarkable, as it unfolds a narrative of human emotions from the poem's inception to its conclusion.

“... Scarecrow combs his hair”. ( Daruwalla 5)

The scarecrow combing his hair is a day-to-day activity of the human world.

“... he (scarecrow) sees the seasons come and go. (Daruwalla 5)

As the human world witnesses the moving of seasons, so is the scarecrow standing in the field witnessing the seasons come and go.

“He shivers in the cold and in the summer he will fry.” (Daruwalla 5)

This line exhibits the climate of the seasons sensed by the scarecrow (human). It shivers in the cold and is aware of extreme heat in summer.

The scarecrow in the open

grey-haired with frost, looks ill

He's bit of a hypocrite

acting slightly bold. (Daruwalla 5)

The description provided pertains to the appearance and demeanor of the scarecrow. It appears to be unwell, standing alone in the expansive fields. The biting cold of the night has caused its hair to freeze, giving it a greyish appearance. The poet imbues the scarecrow with human traits, suggesting that it embodies hypocrisy while simultaneously projecting an air of boldness.

... It also covers his eye

they don't know how he suffers, how he



tries to observe what's going on and sense  
the buzz of insects and the sting of flies. (Daruwalla 13).

Like a human, the scarecrow covers his eyes, suffers, and feels tired. As he dozes he is disturbed hearing the buzz of the insects and is cautious about the sting of flies..

At times the Scarecrow wishes he  
could plug his ears and have some peace.  
Sometimes he feels he needs time to rest. (Daruwalla 16)

This quotation illustrates the emotional depth and awareness of the scarecrow. Similar to a human being, the scarecrow yearns for tranquility. He desires to break free from the relentless pace of life and seek solace and serenity. He fervently wishes for an opportunity to rest.

. . . the scarecrow is working overtime  
Evening he's tired his head drops a little (Daruwalla 19).

Daruwalla emphasizes the increasingly technological landscape that compels individuals to exceed their limits. He experiences the strain of extended work hours, noting the heaviness in his eyelids. He longs for the opportunity to maintain his composure, to take a break, and to find a sense of tranquility.

Yet no one's heard the scarecrow sneeze now  
and no one's seen him cry (Daruwalla 8).

This line illustrates the carelessness inherent in humanity. It highlights the 'emotional cry' of the Scarecrow. The contemporary world reflects the emotional instability of humankind, with the phrase 'no one's seen him cry' underscoring the indifference people exhibit towards their own kind.

e) **Allusion** conveys an indirect reference to a person, object, place, or concept, often relating to past events. This reference may pertain to real, fictional, or imaginative elements. It can encompass various domains such as art, culture, education, legendary figures, politics, religion, and more. The intention of this figure of speech, is to expand the reader's comprehension through indirect means, thus providing a nuanced approach to expressing thoughts or emotions.

To keep his question out and answers in  
he bolts his upper storey's store (Daruwalla 10)

Then he wonders why on earth his head goes round in circle (Daruwalla 17).

These lines in the poem present a sense of mystery. To illustrate this, the character of the 'scarecrow' is portrayed as a smuggler, which serves as a reflection of the human experience. A smuggler faces numerous inquiries from the outside world, encompassing questions such as when, where, how, what, and why. Meanwhile, his inner world is filled with answers he cannot disclose, as revealing them would lead to his capture. The phrase 'bolted the top storey's store' symbolizes his 'locked answers.' Consequently, he finds himself in a state of confusion, unable to determine his next course of action. Aware of his surroundings, he ponders why his thoughts seem to spiral endlessly.

f) **Imagery** facilitates readers' comprehension of the situations being presented. By appealing to the readers' senses, it encourages them to visualize the described scenes in their minds. This technique provides a straightforward means for poets to convey their thoughts to the audience, enriching the narrative with vivid details.

The mustard in the flower streaking through the countryside,  
band on yellow band  
acre on acre of light ( Daruwalla 4)

In these lines, Daruwalla highlights the picturesque allure of mustard fields adorned with vibrant yellow flowers that stretch across the landscape. The flowers resemble a dark beaded ribbon against the bright yellow expanse. They are dispersed over vast acres, illuminated by the brilliance of nature. Daruwalla's linguistic artistry captivates both our intellect and our visual senses.

g) **Metaphor** is characterized as a comparison that diverges from the literal interpretation of the words used in the text. Unlike similes, metaphors do not employ the terms 'like' or 'as' to draw comparisons. This writing technique enables the poet to effectively realize the purpose of establishing metaphor as a form of comparison.

The mustard scent is sharp  
So is the smell of rye : ( Daruwalla 8).

The term 'Sharp' does not refer to the physical sharpness associated with knives, daggers, or swords; rather, it describes the potent aroma or taste of rye and mustard that engages the human senses.

g) **Paradox** is a statement that contradicts itself. It serves as a figure of speech that appears entirely self-contradictory.

. . . . the mango, once generous with fruit, becomes an absolute brute  
...and yet the fire is cold, my dear. (Daruwalla 5)

Daruwalla emphasis about the mango season during the summer months. The expression "Once generous with fruit, becomes an 'absolute brute'" presents a paradox. While it may appear nonsensical, it can be perceived as a reflection of reality.

The phrase 'fire is cold' may seem illogical, yet it embodies a truth that defies conventional reasoning. When employed as a poetic device, it stimulates creativity in the minds of readers.

h) **Dramatic technique** employs figurative language to enhance the portrayal of dialogues exchanged among various characters within the poetry. Dialogue serves as a fundamental element of this technique. It is regarded as a significant poetic device, closely associated with Anagnorisis, which refers to the moment of "recognition" or "realization" when the protagonist becomes aware of the truth of their situation, often leading to a moment of self-awareness (Barry 224). In the poem, the scarecrow acts as the protagonist, acknowledging the passage of seasons and the cyclical nature of the ecological environment. He comes to the understanding that he cannot prevent birds and insects from settling in the fields. There are exchange of dialogues among multiple characters, and the inclusion of dialogue enriches the poem, allowing for deeper exploration of its themes. Dialogue can be categorized into two types: inner dialogue and outer dialogue. Inner dialogue reflects the character's internal thoughts and feelings, manifesting as conversations within their mind. This form of dialogue reveals the character's emotions and thoughts to themselves while providing readers with insight into their mental state.

The scarecrow answered, ' Chasing bees  
is not my bloody job. (Daruwalla 12)

The subsequent lines illustrate the poet's employment of Inner Dialogue. This technique effectively conveys the thoughts of the scarecrow, who lacks the desire to frighten or pursue the bees that are sipping nectar. He aspires not to fulfill the role of a 'Scarecrow' that intimidates the non-human realm, but rather to embody a scarecrow that appreciates the abundance of nature's cycle. Outer dialogue, on the other hand, refers to the exchanges that occur between two individuals within the poem. These conversations can involve multiple characters, allowing for a rich exploration of their personalities, which can be further developed through the use of outer dialogue.

The Scarecrow asked the owl  
'Can you count  
the roses in your garden?'  
'Flowering is quick now',  
the owl replied;  
'there are sixty-three roses  
and twenty buds.' (Daruwalla 9)

The dialogue in this excerpt features an exchange between the scarecrow and the owl, both of whom are among the non-human characters in the poem, discussing the roses in the garden.

i) **Characterization** serves as a literary device that emphasizes a character throughout the poem. In article, "What is Characterization in Poetry?", Kate Prudchenko explains that "Characters in poetry may be revealed using their actions, words or thoughts or other character's words or thoughts. They may also be revealed using imagery or a poignant type of figurative language, such as a particular metaphor or analogy" (Prudchenko, 2021). The poem outlines two forms of character presentation: direct presentation and indirect presentation. Direct presentation refers to characters depicted explicitly by authors, poets, writers, and narrators, while indirect presentation involves revealing characters through their actions, dialogues, and speech. In the poem *Scarecrow and the Seasons* the scarecrow is portrayed as a direct character. The poet Daruwalla presents the scarecrow in an unconventional manner. Typically, a scarecrow is constructed by humans to deter non-human creatures from consuming crops. However, in this poem, the scarecrow does not repel the bees that are drawn to the buds and flowers for nectar.

And you stand there, my scarecrow friend  
and do not lift a finger  
to drive the bee from bud or flower,  
for that is where they linger.  
Not a flicker on your eyebrow  
While I am being robbed! (Daruwalla 11).

The poet presents the scarecrow as a friend directly and the 'nature's world' indirectly.

## Conclusion

The article underscores the significance of literary techniques, which serve as tools for analyzing and interpreting the underlying messages within the poem. It also presents a synthesis of various themes, concepts, character development, poetic elements techniques. Keki N. Daruwalla employs these devices as instruments that elevate his work to the status of a masterpiece. His use of literary techniques has established a robust foundation for his writing in *The Scarecrow and the Seasons*. He captivates readers



by skillfully selecting words that stimulate thoughts, emotions, passions, and feelings. Daruwalla's poems are characterized by their naturalism, simplicity, and accessibility. The paper puts forth Daruwalla's involvement not only as a creator of beauty and serenity but also as a mastery of poetic techniques and literary elements. Daruwalla shows a remarkable ability to weave words that are complex and suggestive. His poems are hemmed with literary techniques and poetic elements which adds richness to his poems.

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