

Multiple Facts of Indian English Poetry

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Abstract

This paper gives a comprehensive overview of Indian English Poetry. The introduction deals with the significance of Indian English Poetry and then The three phases of Indian English Poetry is dealt with in this paper. Then the Great Pioneers like Henry Louis Vivian Denozio, Kashi Prasad Ghose, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Behramji Malabari, Ramesh Chandra Dutt and the saint Poets like Swami Vivekananda and Swami Ramtirtha are dealt with. Then Poets like Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Rabindranath Tagore, Nissim Ezekiel and New Poets like K.N.Daruwalla, Grieve Patel, Jayant Mahapatra and O.P.Bhatnagar are dealt with. Finally, Women Poets like Kamala Das, Monika Verma, Meena Alexander and Gauri Deshpande are cited with their works.

Introduction

Literature, is infact, the mirror of the society. It reflects the cultural, social, economical and historical life of human beings. Literature is no longer limited to particular national, geographical or cultural circumstances. English literature is no longer the sole province of the imperial England is proved in the 21st century. English literature has gone on to sow the seeds of creativity in English in other parts of the world. The shifting paradigms and global concerns of different art forms have transformed the nature and the understanding of literature. Today Indian English has got its own identity as many works of budding writers in different genres, especially in poetry are arising everyday. Indian English Poetry is remarkably great. It is the oldest form of Indian English literature which has attained excellence. As poetry is the aesthetic representation of human life and feelings in a verbal form, many writers have contributed to this genre.

The Three Phases of Indian English Poetry

Indian English Poetry was three phases of development like

- (i) The Imitative Phase
- (ii) The Assimilative Phase
- (iii) The Experimental Phase

The trend settlers like Henry Derozio, Michael MadusudanDutt, Toru Dutt, B.M. Malabari, S.C. Dutt and R.C. Dutt were the early pioneers whose efforts were initiative and derivative of English Poetry. They gave a new direction to Indian English Poetry and based their writings

on Indian history, myths and legends. This phase is called imitative phase. The poets belonging to 1850 to 1900 who followed the British Romantics and Victorians come under this phase.

The Second Phase is the assimilative phase which starts from 1947 and these poets projected landscapes, moods, fancies and dreams. Swami Vivekananda, Swami Rantirtha, Swami Yogananda, Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath Tagore who endeavoured to nativize English language inorder to make it a better instrument for the expression of Indian sensibility belong to this Period.

The third phase is experimental phase which began after the Independence. The modern English Poets who dealt with concrete terms and concrete experience and have a vital language to compose their poetry come under this category. These Poets imitate Whitman, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and W.B. Yeats. Poets like Nissim Ezekiel, A.K. Ramanujan, R. Parthasarathy, K.N. Daruwalla, O.P. Bhatnagar, Jayanta Mahapatna, Monika Verma, Gauri Deshpande and many other modern poets belong to this experimental phase.

The Great Pioneers: - (1820-1900)

Henry Louis Vivian Derozio

He was the son of a Portugese father and an Indian Mother. He was a pioneer both in poetry and journalism. He taught English Literature in Hindu College, Kolkatta and is known for his sonnets *The Harp of India and To India - My Native Land*. His finest work is *The Fakir of Jungheera*.

Kashi Prasad Ghose: - (1809-1873)

He edited an English weekly named *The Hindu Intelligence*. He was one of the first Indians to publish a regular volume of English verse. His memorable work is *The Shiar And Other Poems*.

Michael Madhusudan Dutt: - (1827-1873)

He embraced Christianity and married a European lady. His famous work is *The Captive Lady* which described the love story of Prithviraj and Sanyukta. His Work *Vision of the Past* is a justification of his faith in Christianity.

Romesh Chunder Dutt (1848-1909)

He is a man of versatile genius and achievements. He translated into English Selections from *The Rigveda, The Upanishada, Buddhist Literature, Kalidas as Kumarasambhava and Bharvis Kiratarjuniya*.

Behramji Malabari (1853-1912)

His collection of Poems is known as *The Indian Muse in English Garb*. His work *A Sketch* is autobiographical and *The State of Hindu Female Life* depicts the sorrow of an Indian Widow. His *Where India* is a patriotic poem and *The Welcome* is an occasional poem to welcome the Prince of Wales 1875.

Manmohan Ghose (1869-1924)

He was educated in London, Manchester and Oxford. Lawrence Binyon, Stephen Philis and Oscar wilde were his friends. *Love Songs and Elegies* is a collection of Ghose's lyrics on love, nature and death and is characterized by nostalgia, melancholy, pathos and elegiac note.

Saint Poets

Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) and Swami Ramtirtha (1873-1906) were the pioneer of saint poetry that has come down to us from the age of The Vedas. *The Ramayana* and the *The Mahabharata* were composed by rishis who embody the Spiritual heritage of India. Both these saint poets belong to Indian saint Poetry of the School of Kabir, Tulsi, Sur, Mira, Tukaram, Dadu, Nanat etc., Vivekanandaa's memorable Vendantic and mystical lyrics are *The Blessed Dream, The Living God, An Interesting Correspondence, To An Early Violet, Kali, The Mother, To the Awakened India, The Song of the Sanyasin,*

On the Sea's Bosom, A Song of Creation, A Son of Samadhi, The Dance of Shiva, A Song I sing to thee, A Hymn to the Divinity of Sri Ram Krishna.

Toru Dutt

Toru Dutt known as *the inheritor of unfulfilled renown and the frail exotic blossom of song* was brought up in an atmosphere of sweetness and light. She learnt about the cultural greatness of Indian from her mother. She read the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Sakuntala, the Vishnu Puran and the Bhagavad Gita. In her work, *A sheaf Gleaned in French Fields* She translated about hundred and fifty-seven poems of about seventy-five French Poets. Her masterpiece *The Ancient Legends and Ballads of Hindustan* may be classified into two parts. The first Part consists of *Savitri, The Legend of Dhruva, Lakshman, Johadhya Uma, The Royal Ascetic and The Hind, Buttoo, Sindhu and Prahalad*. These Poems deal with the themes of Indian Mythology. The Second Part contains seven miscellaneous Poems *Near Hastings, Baugmaree, The Lotus, Our Casuasina Tree, France - 1870, The Tree of Life and On the Fly Leaf ErckmannChatrains Novel - Madam Therese*. A famous critic said about Toru Dutt, "Her English Poetry displayed really creative and imaginative Power and almost flawless technical Skill". She was called as "a Classic Writer" by Padmini Sen Gupta.

Rabindranath Tagore

Tagore was the first Indian writer to gain for modern India a permanent place on the world literary map. His renderings are called transcreations as he wrote mainly in Bengali and translated many of his Bengali poems and plays into English. Tagore was influenced by the Vedas and the Upanishadas, the medieval mystics and the Vaishnava Poets from his early days. His Lectures were known as *Sadhna*. In November 1913, Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature for the English translation of the *Gitanjali*. In the same year, an honorary doctorate was conferred on him by the Calcutta University. Protesting against the Jallian Walla Bagh Massacre, he renounced his knighthood which was conferred on him on 1914. As Tagore is a poet of excellence, his poetry includes *The Crescent Moon, The Gardener, Fruist Gathering, Lover's Gift, Crossing, The Fugitive and other Poems and The Gitangali*. As Tagore is a "Pure Poet", he once said, "I am a

Poet and nothing else, my religion essentially is a Poet's religion".

Sarojini Naidu (1879-1948)

Sarojini Naidu was a dreamer born in a dreamless age and "an ardent, versatile and dynamic genius". She has been rightly regarded as "a magnificent and colourful album of Indian Life". She began composing poetry at the age of twelve. The golden period of her poetic composition spans the period 1898 to 1914. Her first volume of poems *The Golden Threshold* was dedicated to her mentor, Sir Edmund Gossee. Her other volumes of Poetry are *The Bird of Time* (1912), *The Broken Wing* (1917) and *The Feather of Dawn* (1961). She occupies a unique position in Indian English Poetry. Her love poems like *The Temple Trilogy* are highly romantic. Her Poem *the Old Woman* is a radiant symbol of Courage and endurance. Her Poem *A Challenge of Fate* reveals her firm determination to fight the tyranny of fate.

Sri Aurobindo (1872 - 1950)

Sri Aurobindo, son of Krishnand Ghose and Swarnalata Devi is a man of versatile genius, profounder of Yoga, the Prophet of Life Divine, the fiery revolutionary and nationalist. In 1892, he joined the "Lotus and the Dagger", a Secret Society formed in London to work for Indians' freedom. His early poems *Songs to Myrtilla, Phaethon, O Coil, The Lover's Complaint, Love is Sorrow, Madhusudan Dutt* etc., are remarkable for chaste diction, vivid image and spontaneity of expression. His famous sonnets are *To the cuckoo, Rose I have Loved, Transformation, Nirvan, The Kingdom Within, The Godhead, Cosmic Consciousness, The unseen Infinite*, etc., His famous epic is *Savitri*.

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, brother of Sarojini Naidu was an actor, poet, mystic, musician, Marxist and a revolutionary. He began composing poems at the age of eight. His first collection of Poems. *The Feast of Youth* gained him popularity. His other Poems are *The Magic Tree* (1922), *Poems and Plays* (1927), *Strange Journey* (1936), *Spring in Winter* (1956) is a collection of 209 lyrics which have freshness, clarity and authenticity of Personal experience. *A call to Poets* is a collection of inspiring Poems on human suffering and patriotism.

The New Poetry

The new poetry began after the attainment of independence in 1947. Post-independence poetry is no longer imitative. It has its own originality and a distinct reality. The following are the NEW POETS.

Dr. Krishna Srinivas

His poems consist of *Dance of Dust, Maya, Everst, Beyond, Void, Sonnets, Five Elements, Sankra, Ramayan, Madhav, Christ, Muhammad, Vallalar, Mahavir, Tamil Vedas* etc., His poetry is metaphysical, mystical and comic and exhibits his vast knowledge of Vedanta, Upanishadas, Gita, Muslim Philosophy and Christianity.

Mahananda Sharma

He is an internationally recognized Poet who has composed *Flowers and Buds, A Rudraksha Rosary and Other poems, Scattered Leaves, A Spiritual Warrior, Divine Glimpses, Gushing Streams, Flowering of a Lotus and Autumn Strains*. Sharma's Poetry is mystical and Spiritual and his latest collection of poems entitled *Autumn Strains* reveals his personal life and experiences.

Nissim Ezekiel

He is the Professor of English in Mumbai University. He was a Professor at Leeds University in 1964 and 1974. His poetry collections include *A Time to Change* (1952), *Sixty Poems*(1953), *The Third* (1959), *The Unfinished Man*(1960), *The Exact Name*(1965), *Hymns to Darkness and Latter Day Psalms*. Ezekiel's Poetry reveals the identification of his own self with the environment. Ezekiel represents modern life with all its complexities and his poems like *A Morning Walk in India* and *Background Casually* deal with the theme of Urbanity.

A.K. Ramanujan

A.K. Ramanujan is a bilingual poet-Kannada and English and was a full bright scholar at Indiana University in 1960-62. He translated many Poems from Tamil and Kannada into English. His translation include *Fifteen Tamil Poems* (1965), *The Interior Landscape* (1967), *Speaking of Suka* (1974), *Sanskara* (1976) and *South Indian Folk Tales*. He was awarded Padmasri in 1976 and Mac Arthur Prize in 1983. He also wrote, *The Literature of India: An Introduction* (1975), *Striders* (1966), *Relations* (1971) and

Second Sight (1986). His Poems dealing with familial relationship are *Death and Hood Citizen*, *Small Scale Reflections on A Great House*, *Love Poems for a Wife and Of Mothers Among Other things*.

R. Parthasarathy

He is remembered for his only volume of verse entitled *Rough Passage (1976)* which is divided into three parts - *Exile*, *Trial and Home Coming*. It has autobiographical interest.

P.Lal

He was awarded Hawthornden Prize for Poetry in 1958. His Poems include *The Parrots Death*, *Loves First*, *Change*, *They Said*, *Draupadi and Jayadratha*, *Yakshi from Didarganj*, *The Man of Dharma*, *The Rasa of Silence*, *Calcutta and Collected Poems*.

Eminent Poets of The Seventies and Eighties

Dom Moraes

His poems include *A Beginning*, *Poems (1960)*, *John Nobody (1965)*, *Absences (1983)*, *My son's Father* (his autobiography), *a biography of Indira Gandhi* and several travel Books. He has won the Hawthornden Prize at Oxford in 1965 for his first collection of Poem *A Beginning*.

G.S. Sharat Chandra

His Poetry is immensely personal and he published three collection of poems *April in Nanjugud*, *Once or Twice* and *The Ghost of Moaning*.

Grieve Patel

He is a medical practitioner in Bombay. He is a Poet of "Promise and Potentiality rather than achievement". He published two collection of Poems *Poems (1966)*, and *Do You withstand Body (1976)*. He is concerned about the deprived sections of Society in his poems.

Arun Kolatkar

He is a graphic artist in Mumbai and is a bilingual poet who writes in Marathi and English. His first long poem *The Boat Ride* is a series of perceptions about economy, clarity, precision, irony, correctness and suggestive images.

K.D. Kotrak

He is an advertising consultant in Mumbai, who has published three collections of verse - *A Journal of the Way (1969)*, *Diversions by the Wayside (1969)* and *Underworld (1979)*. His poems reveal his intense personal experiences.

A.K. Mehotra

He is noted for *Bharatmataa* long satirical poem on modern India.

Dilip Chitre

His poem *Travelling in a Cage (1980)* contains poems which are characterized black moods, stormy energy, nostalgia and search for roots.

Syed Ammeruddin

He is a philosophical and romantic poet who has published three collections of poems *What the Himalayas said and other poems (1972)*, *The Dreadful Doom to come and other Poems (1974)* and *A Lover and A Wanderer*.

Shiva K. Kumar

He was a visiting professor of literature at several American Universities. He is an academic Poet and his poetry bears the stamp of his learning and scholarship. He has published five volumes of Poetry. *Articulate Silences (1970)*, *Cobwebs in the Sun (1974)* and *Trapfallos in the Sky (1986)*.

K.N. Daruwalla

His experience as a Police officer has helped him in vividly depicting the contemporary Indian Socio-Political world with touches of irony and Sarcasm. He has published six collection of Poems. *Under Orion (1920)*, *Apparition in Orion (1971)*, *Crossing of Rivers (1976)*, *Winter Poems (1980)*, *The Keeper of the Dead (1982)* and *Landscapes (1987)*. He was awarded Sahitya Academy Award for *The Keeper of the Dead* in 1984.

Jayant Mahapatra

He was a Professor of Physics in Ravenshaw College, Cuttack and a prolific Poet. His Poems include *Close the Sky*, *Ten by Ten (1971)*, *Suayamvara and Other Poems (1971)*, *Countermeasures (1973)*, *A Father's House (1976)*, *A Rain of Rites (1974)*, *Waiting (1979)*, *The False*

Start (1988), Life Signs (1983), Disposed Nests (1986), Selected Poems (1987), Burden of Waves and Fruits (1988), Temple (1989) and The Whiteness of Bones (1992). He was awarded the Jacob Gleystain Memorial Prize (Chicago) in 1975 and Sahitya Academy Award in 1981.

O.P. Bhatnagar

He is a celebrated Poet who has published Six Volumes of Poetry *Thought Poems (1976), Feeling Fossils (1977), Angels of Retreat (1979), Oneric Vision (1980), Shadows in Foodlights (1984) and The Audible landscape (1986)*. He expresses the helplessness of man in the midst of socio-political problems with a gentle touch of irony.

Women Poets

Kamala Das

She is a bilingual poetess in English and Malayalam and distinguished herself as an English Poet. Her famous poetry collections are *Summer in Calcutta (1965), The Descendants (1967), and Collected Poems (1985)*. She won various awards like Sahitya Academy Award for *Collected Poems* in 1985, the Chimanlal Award for fearless journalism in 1971, World Prize for Literature in 1984 and the Sahitya Academy Award for fiction in 1969.

Monika Verma

Her Poetry represents social awareness vivid description of nature and sincere presentation of emotion of love. She is known for her six volumes of Poetry. *Dragonflies Draw Flame (1962), Gita Govinda and other Poems (1966), Green Leaves and Gold (1970), Quartered Questions and Queries (1971), Past Imperature (1970), Across the Vast Spaces (1975) and Alaknanda (1976)*.

Gauri Deshpande

She is a renowned poet known for her three collection of poems-*Between Berthe, Lost Love (1970) and Beyond the Slaughter House (1972)*.

Mamta Kalia

Her poems deal with love marriage, family life and Society. She is a bilingual poet writing in Hindi and English and has

written two volumes of poems. *Tribute to Papa and other Poems (1970) and Poems (1979)*.

Sunita Nanjoshi

Her Poems like *Poems (1967), Cyclone in Pakistan (1971), More Poems (1971), Jackass and the Lady (1989)* deal with society life and love in rhythmical, balanced and lyrical style.

Meena Alexander

Her poems like *The Bird's Bright Ring (1976), Without Place (1978), and I Root My Name (1977)* are beautiful poems on melancholy, death, devaluation of values in life.

Conclusion

As we all know that poetry is the expression of self and poets' thoughts about his environment. The ancient poets dealt more about personal emotions and lyrical poetry, linguistic experiments and pungent satire. Their thoughts were deeper and more mystical. Whereas in modern poetry, one could sense a note of revolt, love for nature and animal life, psychological impact, mysticism and religious impact. A modern poet's philosophy is not a philosophy of despair or the psalm of death but he sees life square and sees it whole. The demarcation between the ancient and the modern Indian Poetry is that it projects from inward self to the outer world.

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