

A SURVEY ON INDIAN ENGLISH LITERATURE

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Abstract

Indo-Anglian literature contributed to the common pool of world writing in English. It is a literature which is a combination of Indian literature and Indian literature written in English. Indian English Literature refers to the body of work by writers in India who write in the English and whose native or co-native language could be one of the numerous languages of India. It is also associated with the works of members of the Indian Diaspora. It is frequently referred to as IndoAnglian literature. As a category, this production comes under the broader realm of postcolonial literature- the production from previously colonized countries such as India. Indian English literature has a relatively recent history; it is only one and a half centuries old. The first book written by an Indian in English was by Sake Dean Mahomet, titled Travels of Dean Mahomet; Mahomet's travel narrative was published in 1793 in England. In its early stages it was influenced by the Western art form of the novel.

INTRODUCTION

whole. The fact that Indian literatures are a product of a multilingual, multicultural and sociohistorical *mélange* cannot be overlooked. Today Indian literature reached at the apex of creation with the contribution of regional and national writers. This researcher would like to focus on the root and brief literary history of Indian writing in English and the genre – novel in Indo-Anglian literature up to the time of Mulk Raj Anand for better understanding of his novel. Here, it is essential to mention the brief history of Indian writing in English and the contributors of it.

Along with the list of the contributors in Indian writing in English, the rise of the new form of literature- novel in India is also necessary to focus. For that researcher would like to divide the history of Indian writing in English into three parts, first to understand the beginning and exploration of Indian writing in English by major contributors, second for the rise and development of new literary genre (novel) in Indo-Anglian literature and third to understand Anand as a novelist. These three parts are foundation of

my research work. On the basis of the understanding of the Indo-Anglian literature and the rise and development of novel in IndoAnglian literature, the major novels of Mulk Raj Anand can be judged properly. Indo-Anglian literature contributed to the common pool of world writing in English. It is a literature which is a combination of Indian literature and Indian literature written in English. Indian English Literature refers to the body of work by writers in India who write in the English and whose native or co-native language could be one of the numerous languages of India. It is also associated with the works of members of the Indian Diaspora. It is frequently referred to as IndoAnglian literature. As a category, this production comes under the broader realm of postcolonial literature- the production from previously colonized countries such as India. Indian English literature has a relatively recent history; it is only one and a half centuries old. The first book written by an Indian in English was by Sake Dean Mahomet, titled Travels of Dean Mahomet; Mahomet's travel narrative was published in 1793 in England. In its early stages it was influenced by the Western art

form of the novel. Early Indian writers used English unadulterated by Indian words to convey an experience which was essentially Indian. Indian writings in English are a product of the historical encounter between the two cultures—Indian

Indian English Literature refers to the body of works by authors in India who write in English and whose native or co-native language could be one of the numerous languages of India. It is also associated with the works of members of the Indian diaspora. The very definition of the adjective “Indian” here is hazy. Many of these writers neither live in India, nor are Indian citizens. As a category, this production comes under the broader realm of postcolonial literature – the production from previously colonised countries such as India. Though one can trace such writers in India to a century back, Indian writing in English has come into force only in the last couple of decades or so, as far as literature goes. In this way he had contributed his writing and thoughts in the foundation of Indo-Anglian literature and prepared pathway for his successors and contemporaries like Henry Derozio, the Cavally Brothers, Kashiprosad Ghose, Hasan Ali, P. Rajagopual, Mohanlal, 12and Michel Madhusudan Dutt etc are considered first Indo-Anglian writers of verse and prose

The mid nineteenth century is the renaissance in India as that was the time of great literary and social revolutions. At that time legendary thinkers like Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, Kesub Chunder Sen, Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaj have contributed for social reform, educational reform and religious reform which has given scope for renaissance in India. The first Indian English poet, Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809-1831) had nurtured English verse in India. He became a teacher of English literature at the

Hindu College, Calcutta. A teacher as well as a poet, Derozio had expressed nature in his poetry like Keats. The flavor of Romanticism found in his poetry as he was highly influenced by Byron, Shelley, Keats, Scott and Moore. He died at the very early age due to cholera in 1831. This was the time when Hindu society in Bengal was undergoing considerable turmoil. In 1828, Raja Ram Mohan Roy established the Brahmo Samaj, which kept Hindu ideals but denied idolatry. This resulted in a backlash within orthodox Hindu society. It is in the perspective of these changes that Derozio was appointed at Hindu college, where he helped release the ideas for social change already in the air. His brilliant lectures presented closely-reasoned arguments based on his wide reading. He encouraged students to read Thomas Paine's Rights of Man and other free-thinking texts. Although Derozio himself was an atheist and had renounced Christianity, he encouraged questioning the orthodox Hindu customs and conventions on the basis of Judeo-Christian rationalism. He infused in his students the spirit of free expression, the yearning for knowledge and a passion to live up to their identity, while questioning irrational religious and cultural practices. Derozio's intense zeal for teaching and his interactions with students created a sensation at Hindu College. His students came to be known as Derozians. He organised debates where ideas and social norms were freely debated. In 1828, he motivated them to form a literary and debating club called the Academic Association. In 1830, this club brought out a magazine named Parthenon. Apart from articles criticizing Hindu practices, the students wrote on women's emancipation and criticized many aspects of British rule. He also encouraged students into journalism, to spread these ideas into a society eager for change. He took great pleasure in his

interactions with students, writing about them: 'Expanding like the petals of young flowers I watch the gentle opening of your minds...' Kashiprosad Ghose (1809-1837) is also counted as one of the founder pillars of indo-Anglian literature. His contribution in Indian English literature is as equal as Henry Derozio. His *The Shair and Other Poems* (1830), finds a place in literary history of India. Even he is considered as the first Indian to publish a regular volume of English verse. Ghose edited an English weekly *The Hindu Intelligence*. His poetry is counted as moralizing as good texture of originality and conventional descriptions. Michael Madhusudan Dutta (1824-1873), began writing while he was at Hindu College. He won several scholarships in college exams as well as a gold medal for an essay on women's education. While a student at Hindu College, his poems in Bengali and English were published in *Jnananvesan*, *Bengal Spectator*, *Literary Gleamer*, *Calcutta Library Gazette*, *Literary Blossom* and *Comet*. Lord Byron was Madhusudan's inspiration.

Michael's exceptionally colourful personality and his unconventional, dramatic and in many ways tragic life have added to the magnetism and glamour of his name. Generous in friendship, romantic and passionate by temperament, he was fond of the good life. By dint of his genius, he removed the stagnation in Bengali literature both in style and content. He was the first to use blank verse in 1860 in the play *Padmavati* based on a Greek myth. His later poems silenced the critics and detractors, and permanently established the vogue of blank verse literature. Madhusudan's epic poem: *Meghnad-Badh Kavya* is considered as his all-time masterpiece till today. Written in blank verse, this epic was based on the Ramayana

but inspired by Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Madhusudan transformed the villainous Ravana into a Hero. This grand heroic tragic epic was written in nine cantos which is quite unique in the history of Bengali Poetry. *Meghnad-Badh Kavya* was Bengali literature's first original epic and gave Madhusudan the status of an Epic Poet. Much of his time abroad, especially in Versailles, was spent in abject poverty, as the money from his late father's estate on which he was relying did not come regularly. His Indian friends who had inspired him to cross the ocean had by now managed to forget the beggar Madhusudan altogether. He fell hopelessly into debts and appealed for help to the great personality, the scholar, social reformer, and activist Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar (this kind soul was known to all as *Daya Sagar* – the ocean of kindness, for his immense generosity). His extravagant life-style, fickleness in money matters, and reckless drinking to drown problems conspired to wreck his health and happiness, and likewise the health and happiness of his second partner Henrietta, who had also succumbed to alcoholism during her days of poverty in Versailles. He was a man of real, though somewhat erratic, genius, and a courageous innovator of forms and types which altered the whole course of Bengali literature and added new dimensions to it. To his adventurous spirit, Bengali Literature owes its first blank verse and the sonnet, its first modern comedy and tragedy, and its first epic. Dutt was particularly inspired by both the life and work of the English Romantic poet Lord Byron. The life of Dutt closely parallels to the life of Lord Byron in many respects. Like Byron, Dutt was a spirited bohemian and like Byron, Dutt was a Romantic, albeit being born on the other side of the world, and as a recipient subject of the British imperialist enterprise. Madhusudan was a gifted linguist

and polyglot. Besides Indian languages like Bengali, Sanskrit and Tamil, he was well versed in classical languages like Greek and Latin. He also had a fluent understanding of modern European languages like Italian and French and could read and write the last two with perfect grace and ease.

Bengal was epicenter for renaissance as it has given literary scholars who gave fame to mother India at globe. Among them, Toru Dutt is the first poetess in Indo-Anglian literature. She had English education and had a rich and respectable ancestry. Her family was rich and highly educated. Her father Govind Chunder Dutt was a good linguist and a civilized man with literary eye. The Dutt family moved to Cambridge in 1871 where she had attended lectures. In 1875, she had translated French writing in to English with the title A Sheaf Gleamed in French Fields. She had learned Sanskrit and translated Ramayana, Mahabharata and Sakuntala into English verse. She had attained command over Sanskrit language and transformed her interest from French to Sanskrit and translated so many Indian mythological works into English. Another contributor of literature from Bengal, as is the land of arts, is Romesh Chunder Dutt (1848-1909). He was Toru Dutt's cousin and forwarded her writing at height. He had passed Indian civil service Examination in 1869 and served at various capacities in India. He had also devoted much time for literary creation in Bengali and English. Romesh Dutt had written novels in Bengali and translated two of these novels in to English named – The Lack of palms (1902) and The Slave Girl of Agra (1909). He had narrated historical surveys in a large range like – A History of Civilization in Ancient India, later Hindu Civilization, India in the Victorian Age, The Economic History of British India and

A brief History of Ancient and Modern Bengal. Apart from this, his greatest achievement was the Bengali translation of Rig Veda. His translation in to Englishverse from Ramayana, Mahabharata, Rig Veda, The Upanishads, Buddhist literatures, Kalidasa's Kumarasambhava and Bharavi's Kiratarjuniya – is most creditable contribution. Iyengar writes the turn from Toru Dutt to Romesh Chunder Dutt as; To turn from Aru and Taru Dutt to Romsh Chunder Dutt is like passing from the bud and the flower to the ripened fruit; from Erato and Melpomene to Clio and Calliope; from Ushas, rosy-fingered and short-lived, to the toiling Sun on the ascendant; from infinite promise to impressive achievement.

Another sparkling star of Indian literature is Manmohan Ghose (1869- 1924). He was an elder brother of Sri Aurobindo. He had English education at Manchester and Oxford. His first poem collection – Primavera (1890) was appreciated by literary scholars and classmate at Oxford. Like Derizio, Manmohan Ghose became professor of English at the Presidency College, Calcutta. In 1898, he published collection of poems – Love Songs and Elegies and also wrote five act play Perseus the Deliverer. His wonderful sense of the beauty of English words and 19rhythm made him notable literary craftsman in eyes of English scholars of England. His poetry was considered much intellectual thoughts and rhythm in his poetry is outstanding feature. Manmohan Ghose was born in 1869, the second son of an illustrious surgeon, Dr. K. D. Ghose. Together with his brothers, Binoy Bhushan and Aurobindo, he studied at Loreto Convent, Darjeeling. In 1879 Manmohan Ghose went to England where he remained until 1894, completing a professional qualification of Bar-at-law at Lincoln's Inn. On his return to India, he joined Patna College as

professor of English; later on, he was appointed professor at Presidency College, Kolkata and worked as Inspector of schools. Manmohan Ghose began writing poetry when he was in England and some of his poems were published in *Primavera*, an anthology which also contained poems by Laurence Binyon, Arthur Cripps and Stephen Phillips. Oscar Wilde, reviewing the volume, wrote of Manmohan Ghose: "The temper of Keats and the moods of Matthew Arnold have influenced Mr. Ghose, and what better influences could a beginner have?" Manmohan Ghose's poetry in many ways broke with the earlier school of Orientalist poetry. His poems often spoke of a longing to return to England, where he had spent twenty two years of his life. While his contemporaries in India, including his brother Aurobindo Ghose, were writing on nationalistic themes and were drawing upon ancient Indian culture, Manmohan Ghose turned to England for inspiration. Up to this time, Indian literature had flourished in its fullness but it was Rabindranath Tagore who lifted Indian literature at world level and gained for modern India a place on the world literary history that won Noble Prize for literature and gave recognition to India on global scale. Rabindranath Tagore (1861- 1941) the versatile personality of Indian literary scholar is considered as – the Rishi, the Gurudev and the Maharshi. He was a poet, dramatist, actor, producer, musician, painter, an educationist, reformer, philosopher, prophet, novelist, story writer, and a critic of life and literature. Rabindranath Tagore wrote primarily in Bengali and translated many of his poems and plays into English. Before he was eighteen, he had written more than 7000 lines of verse. For *Gitanjali* (1912) he won the noble prize for literature and became poet of the world. After that his other works and *Gitanjali* were translated by literary scholars into major

languages of world. To his credit, there is a long list of poems and plays, both in Bengali and English which had made his place among the world's greatest writers. In Iyengar's words.

As the years passed, he became more and more a legendary figure; in his flowing beard and immaculate white robes he was truly in the line of the great Rishi of Upanishadic times, and indeed he was truly in the line of the great bearing witness to the triune Reality, seeing the way showing it to others

The fertile soil of Bengal has given a shining star to the world in the form of Sri Aurobindo Ghose. He (1872-1950) is the one uncontested outstanding figure in Indo-Anglian literature. He had contributed very much to Indian literature and also uplifted his works at globe. Sri Aurobindo's long poetic career has given him the height of literary master of Indo-Anglian literature. He was interested in teaching, poetry and politics. His *Songs to Myrtilla* and longer poems of the early period- *Urvashi* were published in 1895 and 1896 respectively. He was scholar of classics and used Miltonic diction and epic similes in his works. This classical layer found in "Love and Death" – a poem of about 1100 lines of blank verse and its central theme is love which is based on an ancient Hindu legend with a remarkable resemblance to the Greek legend of Orpheus and Eurydice. Besides so many volumes of his poetry and plays, Sri Aurobindo has written – *The Life and Divine* – a work of prose art which is considered as the greatest philosophical religious book. The most outstanding work of Indo-Anglian literature is Aurobindo's *Savitri* which is in three parts, divided in to 12 books or 49 cantos which have total 23813 lines, on which the poet worked for fifty years of his life. M.K.Naik observes in *A History of Indian English Literature* that.

CONCLUSIONS

His 1991 essay "Three Hundred Ramayanas: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translations" courted controversy over its inclusion in B.A. in History syllabus of University of Delhi in 2006. In this essay, he wrote of the existence of many versions of Ramayana and a few versions portrayed Rama and Sita as siblings, which contradicts the popular versions of the Ramayana, such as those by Valmiki and Tulsidas