



INDO-ANGLIAN LITERATURE: LITERATURE PRODUCED IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE BY INDIAN AUTHORS

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ABSTRACT

The present paper is a critical approach to Indo-Anglian literature. We define Indo-Anglian Literature as literature produced in the English language by Indian authors. “The term ‘Indo-Anglian’ was first used in 1813. We have two distinct literatures motivated by Indian culture : (i) The Indo-Anglian, by which present monograph is a bird's eye-view, and (ii) the Anglo-Indian, by which is meant literature dealing with Indian subjects or inspired by Indian culture produced by Englishmen. Among the Anglo-Indian writers special mention may be made here of Meadows Taylor and Sir Edwin Arnold.

Indian writing in English, beginning with the uncertain experiments of the 'renaissance', has now acquired the status of 'Indo-Anglian Literature'. Indo-Anglian writers have aroused considerable interest both at home and abroad. The works of writers like Aurobindo, Sarojini Naidu and Tagore in the past and Mulkh Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao in our own time have not only attracted a large number of readers, but have also received immense critical acclaim from Indian and foreign critics.

Poetry prose, drama fiction, criticism- in all these branches of creative writing Indian writers have done considerable work worthy to be regarded as literature. Their achievement in the different fields of literature is as striking as that writers in any other modern Indian language.

INDO-ANGLIAN LITERATURE: LITERATURE PRODUCED IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE BY INDIAN AUTHORS

We define Indo-Anglian Literature as literature produced in English language by Indian authors. "The term 'Indo-Anglian' was first used in 1813, when a book published in Calcutta bore the title '*Indo-Anglian Literature*' which contained 'specimen compositions from native students'"¹ Later on, Dr. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar adopted it as the title of his first book on this subject, 'Indo-Anglian Literature' published in 1943. As a matter of fact the term Indo-Anglian was coined to distinguish Indian writing in English from another kind of Indian writing called 'Anglo-Indian' which refers to the literary works dealing with Indian theme, setting and purpose written by Englishmen- Edward Oaten in his prize-winning essay "A Sketch of Anglo-Indian Literature (1908)" which was later on summarized for the Cambridge History of English literature (1916) referred to the works of English authors in Indian on Indian themes, because he considered Anglo-Indian writing as a part of English literature "strongly marked by Indian local colour."² Thus we have two distinct literatures motivated by Indian culture : (i) The Indo-Anglian, by which present monograph is a bird's eye-view, and (ii) the Anglo-Indian, by which is meant literature dealing with Indian subjects or inspired by Indian culture produced by Englishmen. Among the Anglo-Indian writers special mention may be made here of Meadows Taylor and Sir Edwin Arnold.

Then there is a third term - 'Indo-English' which is also very often used to connote the Indian writing in English or 'Indo-Anglian' Literature. John B. Alphonso Karkala prefers to use the name Indo-English to 'Indo-Anglian'. He writes :

"Indo-Anglian' which would suggest relation between two countries (India and England) rather than a country and a language. I prefer the term 'Indo-English' to Indo-Anglian."³

But Dr. Iyengar maintains "the advantage with Indo Anglian is that it can be used both as adjective and substantive, but Indo-Englishman would be unthinkable"⁴ According to Professor V.K. Gokak Indo-English literature in its simplest definition, refers to the translation into English from literatures in Indian languages. Dr. Gokak in his pioneering study "English in India" devotes a separate chapter to 'Indian Literature in Translation'. He places works like R.C. Dutt's '*Ramayan*' and '*Mahabharat*' under this category. He states:

Tagore's '*Gitanjali*' – the only Asian book which has been awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature - is a contribution, not to Indo-Anglian, but to Indo-English literature.⁵

The factors that contributed to the introduction of English education in India in the early nineteenth century and subsequently the establishment of Universities at the Metropolitan towns of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras in 1857 have also accelerated the emergence and growth of Indo-Anglian Literature, or 'Indian English Literature' as it has recently begin to be called.

In 1792 Charles Grant, a civil servant of the East India Company proposed a scheme of starting English schools to educate the illiterate masses of India. But his scheme could not draw the attention of the company. Nevertheless, a large number of schools and colleges were opened by the Christian missionaries [i.e. Oriental College Rampur (1774) Calcutta Madrass , Calcutta (1781); Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta (1784) ; Sanskrit College, Benaras (1792); Oriental Research Institute, Mysore (1801). In 1813 the British Parliament directed the company:

“a sum of not less than one lac should be set apart each year and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of sciences among the inhabitants.”⁷

In 1823 a 'Committee of Public instruction' was constituted by the company with a view to opening a College in Calcutta. But the committee were sharply divided between the 'Orientalists' and the 'Anglicists' - the former supporting the traditional System of Sanskrit education with English as a medium of instruction. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan wrote in his letters from Europe:

“All things spiritual and worldly which should be found in man have been bestowed by the Almighty on Europe, especially on England . . . ,.. without flattering the English. I can say that the natives of India high and low when contrasted with the English in education, manners and uprightness, are as like them as dirty animal is to an able and handsome man.”⁸

Raja Ram Mohan Roy denounced Sanskrit as 'for ages a lamentable check to the diffusion of knowledge,' and Sanskrit system of education as 'best calculated to keep this country in darkness,' and thus protested against the decision of establishing Sanskrit College in Calcutta.⁹

Macaulay's famous Minute on Education was a significant landmark in the history of English Education in India. He wrote his 'Minute' on Feb. 2, 1835 to help the Viceroy Lord William Bentinck come to a decision on the Sanskrit English controversy. Upholding the cause of English he said:

“Whether we took at the intrinsic value of our literature or at the particular situation of this country , we shall see, the strongest reason to think that, of all foreign tongues, the English tongue is the most useful to our native subjects.¹⁰

Lord William Bentinck, accepting Macaulay's recommendations, resolved on March 7, 1835 that

"The greatest object of the British government ought to be the promotion of European literature and sciences among the natives of India, and that all funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone.”¹¹

Following William Bentinck's decision English became not only the official language of India but also the medium of instruction in schools and colleges. But it was not until after Sir Charles Wood's Despatch of 1854 that a well-regulated modern system of education really emerged. He emphasized the co-ordination of education at different stages. He also pleaded for the mass education, female education, and supported the cause of vernaculars. The most notable recommendation of Wood Despatch was the provision for the establishment of European modelled universities and creation of a separate department of education. Consequently, three universities sprang up in the Presidency towns of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta with English as the medium of instruction.

Contact with the English education brought about a tremendous change in the attributed of Indians. The young men with University education could speak and write English with competence. Such was the craze for learning the English language that many

Indians acquired mastery over the tongue. Westernization left a great impact on the social, political, religious life of India.

The nineteenth century intellectuals like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Keshab Chandra Sen endeavoured to effect a cultural assimilation of the East and the West. The thought-currents of the Romantic Movement infused a new life and increased the bounds of knowledge. For the First time Indians began to question the orthodox prejudices, dogmas and superstitions that had gripped them for centuries. Under the impact of the nineteenth century progressive ideals the Indian society was undergoing a transformation.

"The revival of Indian classical learning and the introduction and study of European arts and sciences gave rise to an unprecedented awakening in India, similar to the renaissance that occurred in the fourteenth century Italy... For the first time in India a middle class intelligentsia began to emerge from the feudal society, giving rise to intense nationalism, during which time the Indians struggled to articulate their passionate thoughts and feelings through whatever means were available to them. Some caught up in the regional patriotism, revived the local vernaculars, others believing that the English rule had come to stay, studied and used the language of the rulers, thus giving rise to a new genre of Indo Anglian Literature. "¹²

But in India, the Renaissance did not appear in the sense of Revival along. The consciousness of the great Sanskrit heritage, the revival of classical learning-largely the work of foreign scholars-was only one aspect of the new changes that appeared on the Indian scene in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The main aspect of the Indian renaissance was the effort to recreate the cultural life that existed in the west. Indo Anglian literature was born out of this instinct of imitation"¹³. However it did not remain merely imitative for long.

Indian writing in English, beginning with the uncertain experiments of the 'renaissance', has now acquired the status of 'Indo-Anglian Literature'. Indo-Anglian writers have aroused considerable interest both at home and abroad. The works of writers like Aurobindo, Sarojini Naidu and Tagore in the past and Mulkh Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao in our own time have not only attracted a large number of readers but have also received immense critical acclaim from Indian and foreign critics. Mulkh Raj Anand and

R.K. Narayan have received favourable critical response from E.M. Forster and Graham Greene. Lawrence Durrell believes in the mysticism of Raja Rao. Dom Moraes and Nissim Ezekiel have added new dimensions to Indo-Anglian poetry. Nirrad c. Chaudhuri's three books *'The Autobiography of an unknown Indian'*, *'A Passage to England'* and *'The Continent of Circe'*, bear a solid testimony to the great achievement of the Indo-Anglian Literature.

Growing over past hundred and fifty years Indo-Anglian Literature has outstanding achievements to its credit in the creative as well as critical fields.

“ . . . Let us not encourage Indian writing in English to be regarded as a dog walking on its hind legs.” Since Professor David Mc Cutchion wrote this sentence in 1962, much has happened in the Indo-Anglian writing to make it universally acceptable as a form of Indian Literature. "Indian writing in English is a definite contribution to the composite culture of India. It is primarily a part of the literature of India like other literatures written in various regional languages. It can present the life of a village like Bulashah or Kanthapure, a small town like Malgudi or Kedaram or sweep through continents and eternity itself, and so long as the operative sensibility of the writer is essentially Indian, it will be Indian Literature."¹⁴

Indo-Anglian literature is a full-fledged literature. Considerable work has been done over the past hundred and fifty years in poetry drama, fiction and criticism. In all these branches of creative writing Indian writers have produced solid and significant work. The Cambridge History of English literature has also taken cognizance of Indian writers of English. The Times literary supplement (18.04.1958) had the wisdom to foresee that a brand new English literature will develop and flourish in Johannesburg or Sidney or Vancouver or Madras. Besides, Indian English like the West Indian English, the American English and any other English has to pull English (not only the language but literature too) out of its 'cabin'd, cribb'd and confined' insularity and make it a medium and repository of world thought, experience and vision, English Literature and African writing in English.

“It is through their writings that different nations can understand one another, for creative art cuts right across the artificial barriers constructed between peoples by their respective governments and an irresponsible press”.¹⁵

More than a dozen universities of India have provided for the study of Indo-Anglian Literature at the graduate and post graduate levels, Indian writers of English are attracting the attention of research scholars and many have obtained Ph. D and D. Litt. Degrees in different branches of Indo-Anglian Literature. Even the University of Leeds has prescribed a specialized course of Indo-Anglian Studies at the Master's degree level. It is evident, therefore, that Indo-Anglian Literature has acquired a status and a place of prestige. Dr. R.P.Gupta has summed up the Justification for the study of Indo-Anglian Literature in the editorial of *the Banasthali Patrika*:

“The more than a century of standing of this literature, the momentum it has developed, its recognition in England (The Times Literary Supplement of August 10, 1962 proclaims that already it is proper to talk of Indian Literature in English, Indo-Anglian poets have gone into ‘Encounter’, the Leeds University has a Commonwealth including Indo-Anglian Literature department and some other universities have provision for research in it). In America Indian poets frequently appear in 'Poetry', 'Chikago', 'The New Paltz Literature'. ‘East and West’ brings out 'English Research in India' by Dr. M.S Kushwaha, published by Swastika Publications, Lucknow provides a complete factual account of research in English (including American Literature, Indo-Anglian Literature etc.), carried out or being conducted in different Indian universities. A special number on Indo-Anglian writing; journals of academic repute discuss Indo-Anglian Fiction; its recognition at home by the Sahitya Academy which has honoured Indo-Anglian writers with its awards; its recognition at about a dozen Indian universities as a paper for the post-degree examination, and the existence of standard literary periodicals - 'The Indian Literature', 'Journal of English Studies', 'The P.E.N. (India)', 'The Indian Journal of English Studies', 'The Literary Criterion' 'The Literary Half-Yearly', 'Indian Writing Today', 'Creative Indian Writing in

English', 'The Miscellany' (of the Writers' Workshop, Calcutta), 'The Vishwabharti Quarterly', 'Triveni', 'Quest' and 'Mother India' .¹⁶

Also go to re-assure that Indo-Anglian Literature has come of age, and is no longer something to be ignored or taken lightly.

Indian writing in English caught public attention towards the end of the nineteenth century. But it was not until Indian independence that it came to its own. After the achievement of Independence, Indian English literature flourished with leaps and bounds. Independence actually brought a new self confidence to Indo Anglian writers. Today English is a vehicle of creative expression for many Indian writers and is to that extent as much a language of India as any other Indian language.

“We can not list Ram Mohan Roy and Ranade, Vivekananda and Aurobindo, Tilak and Gokhale Tagore and Gandhi in the calendar of our prophets and yet cultivate a blind antipathy towards the language they used as the forceful means of communicating their meaning and message to India and the world. These stalwarts were among the makers of modern India, and what they said and wrote must, therefore, be cherished as our national literature. English then, is one of our National literatures.¹⁷

Poetry prose, drama fiction, criticism- in all these branches of creative writing Indian writers have done considerable work worthy to be regarded as literature. Their achievement in the different fields of literature is as striking as that writers in any other modern Indian language.

Poetry comes first; then comes prose. Henry Louis Vivian Derozio 1801-1831 who 'aspired to be India's national bard' was the earliest. Indo-Anglian poet. His sonnets and lyrics with Indian imagery mythology and themes, show a remarkable command of language and beauty of expression. The influence of Romantic Poets and Derozio is perceptible in the choice of his themes like Melancholy, death, patriotism, futility, love and escapism. He has been called a minor but a genuine poet of the Romantic Movement.'

Derozio was the moving spirit in Indian English poetry of the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The English Romantic poets Scott, Byron, Chatterton and More exercised great influence on his poetry, Oaten compared him to Keats. . . . “For in both men

there was a passionate temperament combined with unbounded sympathy with natures Both died while their powers were not yet fully developed"¹⁸

Patriotism and love of nature distinguish Derozio's poetry. He loved India ardently and gave expression to this sentiments in no uncertain words in his sonnets, '*The Harp Of India*' and '*To India – My native Land*'.

Derozio lived a short life of twenty three years. He was followed by Kashi Prasad Ghose (1809-1873) who had such a passionate love for English metrical composition that he acquired a thorough knowledge of English prosody and versification. His poetry like that of Derozio is largely conventional and derivative. His '*Shair*' (1830) seems to have been modelled after Walter Scott's minstrel of the '*The Lady of the Last Minstrel*' (1805) Reviewing his poems as English journal '*New Monthly Magazine*' wrote in 1931 .

The '*Shair*' (the Persian name for minstrel) is a poem of a considerable length and varied merit. A great deal of poetic feeling may be discerned in part of the poem. Richness of imagery and elegance of language, the whole requiring polish and cultivation but evincing considerable natural powers, and exciting throughout a strong feeling of interest for the Indian writer." He describes the Moon as,

Orb of gentle light!
For still, resplendent Moon ! Whene'er we see
Thy placid face, and fondly gaze on thee
Its gentleness upon the wounded soul
Exerts a healing power and calm control.

(Kash Prasad Ghose's The Moon in September)

Michael Madhu sudan Dutt (1827-1873) was a far more gifted poet than Derozio and Kashi prasad Ghose. His poetic output consists of two long poems, '*The captive Lady*' and '*Visions Of Past*' and few stray lyrics and sonnets. In '*captive lady*' Dutt narrates the heroic exploits of Prithviraj closely imitating the style of Byron and Scott referring to its process of imitating. In Indo-Anglian poetry Dr. M.K. Naik writes,

"This process is indeed so completer in some Indo Anglian verse that it can be seen in choice of subject and attitude to it, mood and tone, imagery, diction and form. M' Dutt's sonnet '*Satan*' provides a copy book example. Dutt's conception of '*Satan*' is identical with that of Milton's '*Satan*' is a form of 'awe', and yet a 'sepulcher of beauty', or like a 'giant tree' blasted by

storm. The verse technique of the poem is entirely Miltonic... .Dutt's sonnet is an extremely competent imitation of Milton, an almost exact echo of Milton's voice."¹⁹

Manmohan Ghose (1867-1924) was the elder brother of Sri Aurobindo . His '*Love Songs and Elegies*' (1898) which appeared in his own life time, reflect his pathetic story of disappointment and loneliness. On his return to India after eighteen long years of absence, he felt like stranger in his own country. 'For years not a friendly step has crossed my threshold. With English people in Indian there can only be a nodding acquaintance or official connection, and with Indians my purely English breedings puts me out of harmony- denationalized- that is the word for me' This dilemma of the poet finds expression in his poem.

Lost in that country and all but forgotten
'Mid these chill breezes, yet still, oh, believe me
All her meridian Suns and ardent Summers
Burn in my bosom.

(Manmohan's Myvanwy)

Man Mohan wrote poems on various themes, such as nature, seasons, love, death and the home- sickness of the soul. Whatever his theme may be, his poetry has two distinctive characteristics:

"an undeniable technical perfection in writing verse and a note of sadness. His short, clear cut lines, his happy phrases and finely ser images appear effortless. His stanzas glide smoothly conveying their melancholy directly to the reader's heart."²⁰

George Sampson writes that "Manmohan was the most remarkable of Indian poets who wrote in English. A reader of his poems would readily take them as a work of an English poet trained in the classical tradition."²¹ In his later, mature poetry. Man Mohan renders the whole are of love, life and death and we have here the true pathos and an outline of poetry."²²

The age of Renaissance of Indo- Anglian poetry is dominated by “Dutt sisters”. This age may be called "The Age of Dutt's because Aru ,Toru, Ramesh Chunder Dutt contributed a lot to this age. Aru died at the age of twenty. She had a great command over English. Toru Dutt, her younger sister showed a remarkable talent and originality.

Toru Dutt (1856-1877) is the real innovator in the field of Indo Anglian poetry. Because of her historical position. She has become an inalienable part of Indo Anglian poetry. Her “Ballads” give evidence of her poetic worth. With them, she introduced an authentic Indian note in Indo - Anglian poetry.

All in all Indo-Anglian literature is a full-fledged literature. Considerable work has been done over the past hundred and fifty years in poetry drama, fiction and criticism. In all these branches of creative writing Indian writers have produced solid and significant work. Indian writing in English caught public attention towards the end of the nineteenth century. After the achievement of Independence, Indian English literature flourished with leaps and bounds. Today English is a vehicle of creative expression for many Indian writers and is to that extent as much a language of India as any other Indian language.

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