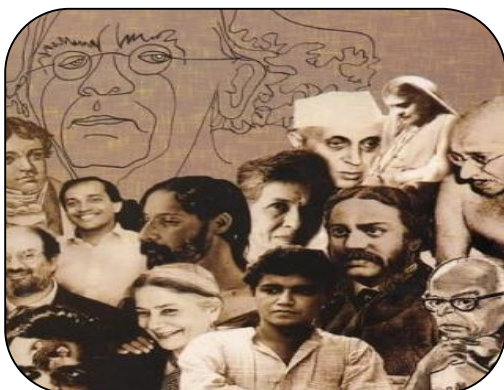




NATIVIZATION OF INDIAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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**ABSTRACT :**

Spoken Indian English is often the butt of jokes by “educated” British, American and Indian English-speakers alike. However, in spite of banter regarding colloquial English, India has a consistent and long record of pre and post-Independence thinkers and writers whose writings and speeches are attestations to many Indians’ absolute mastery of the language. Among others, Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, C. Rajagopalachari, Shri. Aurobindo Ghosh, Jawaharlal Nehru, the world famous novelist R K Narayan, and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan come to mind as prominent figures whose English, often though not always written, was of the highest quality in any country. Many more

contemporary Indians, such as Vikram Seth and Salman Rushdie, are acknowledged masters of English literary style. Indian English writers and English writers of Indian origin notably Booker Prize winners Salman Rushdie and Arundhati Roy- have in addition made creative use of more stereotypical Indian English through the mouths of characters in their works.

KEYWORDS : Spoken Indian English , Indian Literature.**INTRODUCTION :**

Indian Literature in English in the last century has got international recognition and acclaim. Its writers have achieved spectacular success. The interest in Indian Literature in English has grown nationally too with a number of regional authors being translated into English. The new millennium offers various opportunities and possibilities of expansion to it. The Indian writers have moulded the English language to suit their needs and given it a distinctly Indian flavor to it in more ways than one.

A much over-looked category of Indian writing in English is poetry. The question of its authenticity arises as English is not the first language in India. But English has the unique privilege of being nationally understood and appreciated. As Kamala Das says in the book *Summer in Calcutta*, (1965) in *Introduction*,

I am Indian, very born, born in
Malabar, I speak three languages, write in
Two, dream in one.

Kamala Das expresses the predicament of every writer or even user of the English language. The educated user of English is a user of minimum three languages: mother tongue, English and Hindi, as a mandatory in the School Curriculum owing to the three language policy of the government.

Tagore wrote in English and Bengali and was responsible for the translations of his own work into English. Other early notable poets in English include Derozio, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Joseph Furtado, Armando Menezes, Toru Dutt, Romesh Chandra Dutt, Aurobindo Ghosh, Sarojini Naidu and her brother Harenranath Chattopadhyaya.

In modern times, Indian poetry in English was typified by two very different poets.

Dom Moraes, who went on to occupy a pre-eminent position among Indian poets' writing in English. Nissim Ezekiel, who came from India's tiny Jewish community, created a voice and place for Indian poets writing in English and championed their work. Their cotemporaries in English poetry in India were Arvind Mehrotra, Jayanta Mahapatra, Gieve Patel, AK Ramanujan, Parthasarthy, Keki Daruwalla, Adil Jussawala, Arun Kolhatkar, Dilip Chitre, and Kamala Das among several others.

A generation of exiles also sprang from the Indian diaspora. Among these are names like Agha Shahid Ali, Sujata Bhatt and Vikram Seth.

The current generation of Indian poets, writing in English includes Ranjit Hoskote, Jeet Thayil, Tabish Khair, Vijay Nambisan, H. Masud Taj, Rukmini Bhaya Nair, Moniza Alvi, Vivek Narayanam, Anjum Hasan, Smita Agrawal, Anand Thakore, Meena Alexander, Gayatri Majumdar and Reetika Vazirani.

Indian English poets have formed a sufficiently large group with different tastes, aesthetics, styls standards. Davis McCutchions finds that Indian English poetry is becoming free from the pressures of 'alien' norms. As Dilip Chitre says,

The potential strength of Indian English poetry
Is going to be derived from native Indian
literatures and not without them. The ability to
transform non-Anglo-Saxon cultures will give
Indian poetry its sustenance in the
coming decades, provided Indian English poets
discover the nourishing activity of poetic
Translation as a major aspect of creativity in the
contemporary world. (Chitre, Times, Online)

Indian English poetry has come to acquire a strong body of work with its enlarged, detailed consciousness of localised realities in a distinguished Indian English. The Indian poets have freed their poetry from the colonial yoke so to say and have created poetry based on colloquial term and tenor. This is very well exemplified by Arun Kolhatkar in his collection of poems *Jejuri* (1976), these lines are taken from A Scratch:

What is god
And what is stone
The dividing line
Is very thin
At Jejuri
And every other stone
Is god or his cousin.

The cultural overtones that these lines convey, gives a truly rich Indian feel to the poem. The poet has written about the temples at Jejuri. He says that God is shaped out of stone and thus stone is God. In the last two lines he says that every other stone is God or his cousin. Hindus worship a large pantheon of Gods and they are symbolized in the form of stone statues. Amongst this pantheon the Gods are related to each other. This is a poem which is deeply rooted in the Hindu religious culture.

India has remarkable dramatic tradition of a thousand years. Ancient India abounds with works of classical drama and drama has flourished in the regional languages. However, Indian Drama in English has had a very poor growth compared to the tremendous success of other forms of literature. It has neither

developed in volume or vitality. A number of reasons are given for its poor growth. Early English theatre in India was dominated by plays of established playwrights like Shakespeare, Ibsen and Shaw. The later attempts at social plays did not receive much response. Another reason was that the theatres in metropolitan cities where English drama had a chance to flourish shied away. There was in the earlier stages a colonial hangover and authentic theatre true to its roots. The identity crisis seems to be over.

Classical Indian Drama has not had much of an influence on the Indian dramatists in English. Earlier playwrights like Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and Harindranath Chattopadhyaya were more influenced by the Elizabethan form.

Other notable playwrights were Bharati Sarabai who wrote poetic drama *The Well of the People*, Asif Currimbhoy emerged as a playwright with *Goa*, *Mansoon*, *The Hungry Ones*, *La Mama*, and *Inquilab*. Nissim Ezekiel, the doyen of Indian poetry has published three plays, *Nalini*, *A Marriage Poem* and *The Sleep Walkers*, and Gurcharan Das' well known play is *Larins Saheb*.

Of the modern playwrights who have vision and depth are Badal Sircar (*Stale News*), Vijay Tendulkar, and Girish Karnad. They have not only reshaped Indian drama but also given it topical meaning and dimension. Girish Karnad has made a singularly remarkable contribution. Inspired by the success of the Kannada version of the play, he translated *Tughlaq* in English. Karnad has also used folk theatre in his *Naga-Mandala*. He has exposed the caste-system in *Tale-Danda*. The young generation of playwrights like Mahesh Dattani with plays like *Where There is Will*, *Final Solutions* and *Tara*, and Manjulan Padmanabham with an award winning play *Harvest* have brought into focus the dehumanised, terrified and miserable world of the common people of India. This is well brought about by Girish Karnad in his play *Tughlaq*,

HINDU WOMAN: Please let me go, sir....My child...please have mercy, on itonly for a day, sir....

AZIZ: I told you I can't. No one can be allowed out of sight until we reach Daulatabad. I'm sorry, but I have my orders.

HINDU WOMAN: But I'll return tomorrow....I swear by my child I will....It's dying, your Excellency, I have to take it to doctor....

AZIZ: But what can I do? There is hakim's tent. Go to him. He will give you some medicine. (in a low voice.) I have told you what you can do. I could try and bribe my senior officials, but you'll have to pay for it.

HINDU WOMAN: But I haven't got a paisa on me, Your Excellency. And what will I give the doctor? My husband's also ill, sir please, I hold your feet- please let me go.

AZIZ: I can't waste any more time on you. There's a lot of work here. Stop screaming and get back to your tent. I said, get back to your tent! (1972:scene 8, p47)

This play is about *Tughlaq*, one of the most important kings of India. It has decree that the capital should be moved from Delhi to Daulatabad within a month. So the people are asked to leave Delhi and during the long journey, in one of the camps, a poor Hindu woman is begging the security guard to allow her to leave the camp to visit a doctor as her child is ill. But the guard is merciless and refuses her to permit to go unless she gives a bribe. The woman does not have any money and despite her falling at his feet, she is not allowed to visit the doctor. This shows the actual condition of the common people in the reign of the most foresighted kings of the times.

The Indian English Short Story has not been able to make much of an impact in the literary world. It is mostly a by-product of Indian English fiction. India has had a rich tradition in this genre. The short story is deeply rooted in tradition in both the oral and written forms in the forms of folklore and fables. Tagore, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Khushwant Singh, Raja Rao and many other like Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande have achieved considerable success in this form of writing. These authors give us a kaleidoscopic view of the multicultural India through wide ranging themes. The character portrayals have been sensitive and true to life.

The Katha series started by the Sahitya Academy has been immensely successful in giving a regional voice to the large number of short story writers. The short story too abounds in Indianisms. Shashi Deshpande in the short story *The Awakening* gives a vivid description of a chawl where Alka the Protagonist of the story lives in;

The scene ended as always, with my walking
out of the house. House? One room. I stood in
the gallery, my elbows on the faded, decaying
wooden railings, my face propped on my palm.
On either side of me people stood in identical
Poses. Watching...what? the same meaningless
Jumble of people milling around. With a gesture
Of impatience, I moved away. A boy walking
Pas saw me, stopped. He smiled at me. I smiles
Back. You can't antagonize anyone in a place
Like this. specially boys. (2006:116)

This is a description of a dilapidated chawl, the housing of lakhs of the lower middle class families in big cities in Mumbai. People are housed in one-room hovels. Here Alka, a young girl of seventeen has an argument with her father who is trying to convince her to take up a typist's job to supplement the family's income for which she has to give up her studies. She goes out to express her displeasure and one sees that going out means standing in a narrow veranda being jostled by passing people. She realizes that there are several people in similar poses. She is in a foul mood but responds to the smile of a young boy, as she wants to maintain good relations with all especially the boys. The gesture reveals the young teenager in her as well the social necessity to be good to a prospective suitor.

Anita Desai in her story, *A Devoted Son* (Games at Twilight) portrays the typical traditional Indian household in which the son makes it big and is devoted to the father who views the care taker of him in his old age as one of neglect.

In the evening, the summer, the servants would
Come into his cell, grip his bed, one at each end,
And carry it out to the veranda, there setting it
Down with a thump that jarred every tooth in his
Head. In answer to his agonised complaints they
Said the Doctor Sahib had told them he must
Take the evening air and the evening air they
Would make him take- thump. Then Veena,
That smiling pudding in the rustling sari, would
appear and pile up the pillows under his head till
he was popped up stiffly into a sitting position
that made his head swim and his back ache.
(1998:79)

The old man is at the end of his life. He is the father of a highly successful son who is a doctor and who looks after him. The old man is highly dissatisfied as he is put on a strict diet due to his various ailments. As he is bedridden he is carried into the terrace by the servants. The entire household makes it a point to serve him. This is a typical feature of the Indian Culture that old parents are taken care of as a duty and responsibility and not left to the mercy of care takers. Every need of the old father is meticulously taken care of to ensure that he doesn't suffer.

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