CHAPTER – V

M. K. NAIK : LITERARY CRITICISM OF INDIAN POETRY IN ENGLISH

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CHAPTER – V

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I. The Pre-Independence Poetry In English

I

Introduction :

Of the four major forms of Indian English literature, viz., Poetry, Fiction, Prose and Drama, the situation is absolutely serious when it comes to poetry in English. Sometimes, we do not have the texts of Indian poetry in English; sometimes, the works of even our major poets are not easily available; poetry is published in small editions; poetry being one of the slowest selling items for the bookseller. What is more, the readership of Indian poetry is very small and a part of that readership must be of those readers who like to read either their own poetry or the poetry of their close friends.

Indians have been writing verse in English for over a century and a half. And it is only legitimate that attempts have been made from time to time to select the best out of the poems written during these years and publish them in the form of anthologies. An early attempt of this sort in this century was made by Gwendoline Goodwin in 1927 in *An Anthology of Modern Indian Poetry*. This was followed in 1935 by the publication of *An Anthology of Indo-Anglian Verse* edited by A. R. Chinda. And a few more years passed before the first comprehensive anthology appeared. This was *The Peacock Lute* edited and published by V. N. Bhushan in 1945. Bearing the subtitle "Anthology of Poems in English by Indians", the anthology contains selections from the work of thirty-five Indian versifiers.

The following persons have done the right thing by collecting and publishing the works of poets : V. K. Gokak's *The Golden Treasury of Indo-Anglian Poetry*; Makarand Paranjape's *Indian English Poetry*; R. Parthasarthy's *Ten Twentieth Century Indian Poets*; K. N. Daruwalla's *Two Decades of Indian Poetry : 1960-1980*; Gauri Deshpande's *An Anthology of Indo-English Poetry;* Vilas Sarang's *Indian Poetry in English Since 1950 : An Anthology*; Saleem Peeradina's *Contemporary Indian Poetry in English*; Pritish Nandy's *Indian Poetry in English Today; 19 Poets : An Anthology of Contemporary Indo-English Poetry* edited by Keshav Malik and Manohar Bandopadhyay. Prabhu S. Guptara's *The Lotus : An Anthology of Contemporary Indian Religious Poetry in English*; K.S. Ramamurti's *Twenty Five Indian Poets in*

English; Nandy's *Vikas Book of Modern Love Poetry*; P.C.K. Prem's *Contemporary Indian English Poetry from Himachal*; H. K. Kaul's *Poetry India : New Voices*; P. Lal and K. Raghavendra Rao's *Modern Indian Poetry in English : An Anthology and a Credo* and a host of others. The intention of the researcher is not to give a comprehensive list of anthologies, nor to define the task of the anthologist, nor to search for the drawbacks of the anthologist. The intention is to show how these anthologies have been playing the constructive role of helping the ordinary reader to appreciate the poems better.

In addition to these anthologies, we have a number of literature books, books containing the survey of Indian English poetry, books embodying critical interpretations of individual poem or poet. The list of the books is so long that it cannot be given for want of space. However, some of the important books are – William Walsh's *Indian Literature in English*; C. Paul Vergheese's *Problems of the Indian Creative Writer in English*; K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar's *Indian Writing in English*; H. M. Williams's *Indo-Anglian Literature : 1800-1970*; David MacCutchion's *Indian Writing in English*; K. N. Sinha's *Indian Writing in English*; Murli Das Melwani's *Themes in Indo-Anglian Literature*, and a few others. We have dozens of critical books, published on individual poet/ poets or poem/ poems. Such books are – John Oliver Perry's *Absent Authority : Issues in Contemporary Indian English Criticism;* Bruce King's *Modern Poetry in English*; N. Sharda Iyer's *Musings on Indian Writing in English, Vol. 2 Poetry*; B. K. Das's *Contemporary Indo-English Poetry*; Madhusudan Prasad's *Living Indian English Poets*; Shirish Chindhade's *Five Indian English Poets*; Gauri Shankar Jha's *Indian English Poetry; A. K. Mehrotra's A Concise History of Indian Literature in English*, and a number of others.

The anthologies, the literary history books, the critical books on poetry would inspire the readers of poetry. At the same time, several new periodicals began to appear, providing opportunities for publication to younger poets. Some of the leading journals are – *The Journal of Indian Writing in English; The Literary Criterion; Indian Literature, Asian Quarterly, Quest, The Journal of English Studies, The Half Yearly; Littcrit, Indian Literary Panorama*, to name a few. Among short-lived efforts were several others : Meenakshi Mukherjee's *Vagartha* (1973-79); Pranab Bandopadhyaya's *Indian Verse* (1973-78); K. D. Katrak and Gauri Deshpande's *Opinion Quarterly* (1974); *Kavi* edited by Santan Rodrigues et. al (1986-87); *Clearing House*, a poet's co-operative led by Adil Jussawalla; Pritish Nandy's *Dialogue* (1968) and *Dialogue-India* (1972-75); *Newground*, another poet's co-operative, led by Santan Rodrigues (1978) aimed at publishing new and younger poets. P. Lal's *Writers Workshop* continued to publish poetry on a large scale,

encouraging young poets to write and publish. In the process, the properties of chaff to the grain was not quite ideal, but it must not be forgotten that Lal has published first books of most of the poets who are now the establishment: Nissim Ezekiel, Kamala Das, Jayant Mahapatra and Vikram Seth.

II

A) Naik has achieved great fame through the inspiring and invaluable workmanship in the field of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and drama. Like the earlier two volumes, *Perspectives on Indian Drama in English* (1977) and *Perspectives on Indian Prose in English* (1982), *Perspectives on Indian Poetry in English* (1984) includes two types of essays – those evaluating the entire work of major poets and schools and those attempting intensive textual analyses of outstanding poems like *Savitri*, *Gitanjali*, and *Jejuri*. The final essay on "The Achievement of Indian Poetry in English" is an attempt at evaluation on the lines of similar essays on Drama and Prose in the earlier volumes. A select bibliography has also been included.

A History of Indian English Literature (1982) contains some chapters devoted to poetry – 'Early Poetry' (pp. 21-27), 'Poetry (pp.36-71), 'Poetry' (pp.143-146), and 'Poetry' (pp. 192-212). Next publication is *Indian English Poetry : from the beginnings upto 2000* (2006). The book devotes the following chapters for the development of poetry :

1. 'The Romantic Dawn'
2. 'The Modernist Noontide'
3. 'Younger Accents : Modernism-II'
4. 'The Fair Voice : Modern Women Poets'

Indian English Literature 1980-2000 : A Critical Survey is a sequel to M. K. Naik's *A History of Indian English Literature*. Naik and Shyamala A. Narayan published the book in 2001, and was reprinted in 2007. The book contains the following chapters, devoted to poetry :

1. 'Swan Songs : Poetry-I'
2. 'The Cygnets : Poetry-II'
3. 'In Their Own Voice : Women Poets'

These four books contain the survey of Indo-Anglian poetry, from the beginnings to the modern times.

B) Critical Articles :

1. *Jejuri* : A Thematic Study

   Or

   Arun Kolatkar's *Jejuri* and the Three Value Systems

   Or

   A Cock and Hen Story : Arun Kolatkar's *Jejuri*

2. A. K. Ramanujan and the Search for Roots
3. A Tale in the Sting : An analysis of Nissim Ezekiel's "Night of the Scorpion"
4. 'Drama Talk' : The Poetry of K. N. Daruwalla
5. Two Worlds : The Imagery of Jayanta Mahapatra
6. The Poetry of Sri Aurobindo : A Revaluation
7. Rabindranath Tagore and Saint Tukaram : A Study in Comparison
8. 'How Do I Love Thee?" Sarojini Naidu and Kamala Das as Poets of Love
9. Change, Continuity and Unity in the Poetry of Dom Moraes
10. Gateway to What? Vikram Seth's "The Golden Gate"
11. Alienation and the Contemporary Indian English Poet

C) Issues/ problems and Position :

1. "Echo and Voice in Indian Poetry in English"
2. "The Indianness of Indian Poetry in English"

D) Light Verse :

1. *Indian Clerihews*, Kolkatta : W. W. 1989.
2. *Indian Limericks*, Kolkatta ; W. W. 1990.
3. *More Indian Clerihews*, Kolkatta ; W. W. 1992.
4. *Indian Poet-Pourri*, Kolkatta ; W. W. 1993.
5. *Beowulf and All That : An Unorthodox History of English Literature*, Kolkatta : W.W. 1999.

6. *From Anne Bradstreet to Main Street and Beyond : An Unorthodox History of American Literature*, Kolkatta : W.W. 2001.

7. *Ancient World Clerihews*, Kolkatta : W. W. 2002.

K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar is the first Indian poet-critic who has succeeded in giving Indian literature in English a historical perspective– his *Indian Writing in English* (1962) being an eloquent testimony to this fact. He divides the study of Indian English literature into the following categories :

1820-1870	:	Beginnings – Age of Great Pioneers
1870-1900	:	Renaissance – Age of Religious and Literary Awakening
1900-1920	:	Political Awakening : Bandemataram and 'Home Rule'
1920-1947	:	Gandhian Revolution : Modern Heroic Age
1947-	:	Era of Independence

Indian English poetry has, more or less, kept pace with these categories. The earliest Indian who has been given the distinction of having written in English was Cavelly Venkata Ramaswami who translated *Arasanipala's Viswagunadarsana* into English in 1825. Ramaswami also translated portions of *Vasu Charitra*, A Telgu epic by sixteenth century poet Bhattu Murti in his *Biographical Sketches of Dekkan Poets*.

M. K. Naik, like Iyengar, has also succeeded in giving Indian literature in English a historical perspective. He divides the study of Indian English literature into the following categories :

1. The Literary Landscape : The Nature and Scope of Indian English Literature.

2. 'The Pagoda Tree' (till 1857)

3. 'The Winds of Change' (1857-1920)

4. 'The Gandhian Whirlwind' (1920-1947)

5. 'The Ashoka Pillar : Independence and After'

6. Retrospect and Prospect

The enormous 'matter' is further grouped under 'Prose', 'Poetry', 'Drama', 'Fiction', and 'The Short Story', and the links between the age

and the practitioners are suggestively indicated at the appropriate places of the 300 pages, the period between 1857 (Mutiny) to 1920 receives 85 pages, the Gandhian Age 75 pages and the post-Independence Age nearly 100 pages.

If one looks at M. K. Naik's categories for evolving a historical perspective to Indian literature in English, he has divided Indian poetry in English into the Early Poetry, the School of Aurobindo, the Romantic School, the New Poetry and the Women poets. Since Indian English literature is a vastly growing body of literature, categories shall continue to fall short of expectations and the literary critic shall be required to read and re-read the categories provided by the pioneer critics. O. P. Budholia is one pioneer critic who observes "Indian English poetry came to its present form through different stages. In its incessant and continuous growth the entire poetic writings of Indian English literature can be divided into the three phases; imitative, assimilative and experimentative" (2008 : V). Charu Sheel Singh divides Indian poetry in English into four Chapters/ Sections : 1) Seedlings and Sprouts (1820-1870), 2) Renaissance (1870-1900), 3) Gandhian Era (1920-1950), and 4) Modernism/ Post-modernism (1950 upto the present)" (1997: 199). There is no end to the categories. There are as many categories as there are critics. Naik's division of poetry is quite subtle and comprehensive. As Prema Nandakumar rightly observes, "... well-planned and properly executed historical survey of *Indian Writing in English*" (1983: 50).

With this broad perspective in mind, let us see the development of pre-Independence poetry in English, as given by Naik in his books.

III

Within the scope of a dissertation, one cannot make a comprehensive examination of every poet, major or minor. Only some of the major poets of pre-Independence poetry will be dealt with.

Indians have been writing poetry in English for the past several decades now. It emerged as "as an offshoot as well as recordation of the Indian renaissance" (1984: X). According to one view "The history of Indian poetry in English begins in 1830, with Kashiprasad Ghosh : Who called himself the first Hindoo who has ventured to publish a volume of English poems" (1970: 267). Even earlier in 1827, Vivian Henry Derozio published his poems which initiated the emergence of poems in English by Indians. In 1825 Cavelly Venkata Ramaswami rendered *Viswaganadarsana of Arasanipala Venkatadhvarin,* an early 17th century Sanskrit poem into English. Most of these efforts were made out of gratitude and emulation. Their themes were mostly Indian though their models were English poets and their poems soaked in Romantic

exuberance and Victorian sentimentalism. A Bibliography of Indian English, prepared by the C.I.E.F.L., Hyderabad, 1972, lists as many as 777 separate titles under poetry, 664 under fiction and a paltry 173 under drama.

Ever since the publication of the poems of the three poets in Indo-Anglian literature – Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, Kashiprasad Ghosh and Michael Madhusudan Dutta – the Indian English literature rapidly developed.

Henry Louis Viviam Derozio (1809-1831) was a Lecturer at Hindu College, Kolkatta and he is the first acknowledged Indian English poet. During his brief poetic career Derozio published two collections of poems : *Poems* (1827) and *The Fakeer of Jungheera : A Metrical Tale and Other Poems* (1828). His shorter poems are influenced both by the British Neo-Classical as well as the Romantic poetry in terms of diction, imagery, sentiment and emotion. In his satirical mode, Derozio is comparable to Lord Byron. The narrative poem *The Fakeer* is about a Hindu widow who is rescued from the funeral pyre by a robber chief. The robber and the widow begin to love each other but the widow's relatives kill the robber who is supposedly united with his beloved after death.

Derozio makes use of different metres to suit the temper and tone of the emotion conveyed. There is much nationalistic and patriotic sentiment in Derozio as shown by poems like "To India – My Native Land", "The Harp of India", and "To the Pupils of Hindu College". Indian myths and legends continue to find a frequent mention in his poems. Derozio's overall achievement as a poet does not entitle him for much thought. E. F. Oaten made a somewhat premature remark that Derozio is "the National bard of modern India". It is not easy to say what kind of poetry Derozio would have written had he not died so young. The extant verses are often derivative, but we glimpse through them a lively and sensitive mind.

Kashiprasad Ghose (1809-73) was the first Indian to publish a regular volume of English verse. His was a derivative and imitative poetry, made up mainly of conventional description and tedious moralizing but at places brightened by flashes of originality. *The Shair and Other Poems* (1830) imitates the stylized love lyrics of the Cavalier School, the Neo Classical School and the British Romantics. His *Shair* is Walter Scott's *Minstrel* in an Indian garb. His use of Indian material in his poems about the Hindu festivals and in lyrics like *The Boatman's Song to Ganga* indicates an honest attempt to strike a native-wood note, which fails owing to lack of sheer poetic talent. Kashiprasad's poetry caused a stir in the English speaking circle and made people aware of the existence of an Indo-Anglian School of Poetry.

Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-73) better known as a major writer in "Bengali, began as an Indian English poet. Apart from some sonnets and short pieces, he wrote two long poems in English : *The Captive Ladie* (1849) and *Visions of the Past* (1849).

The ghost of imitation continues to haunt early Indian poetry for years after M. M. Dutt. Three more Dutts combined to publish *The Dutt Family Album* (1870), the only instance of its kind in Indian English verse. Govind Chunder, Hur Chunder and 'Girish', together with their cousin Omesh Chunder, contributed the 187 poems to the anthology. Ram Sharma, a minor poet, published *Willow Drops* (1873-74) and *Shiva Ratri, Bhagaboti Gita* and *Miscellaneous Poems* (1903).

Almost all the early Indian English poets considered so far had taken the British Romantic Poets as their models; in spite of this they had failed to produce genuine romantic poetry, because in a sense they were not romantic enough i.e. they merely copied the external features of Romantic poetry, missing the core altogether.

The tragedy of Toru Dutt (1856-1877) is that, like Derozio, she died just when her talent was maturing, but some of her lyrics are sure to find a place in a representative anthology of romantic poetry in English. The nostalgia expressed so poignantly in her 'Our Casuarina Tree' and 'Sita' was surely not manufactured in England, for it was the cause of her soul. And while describing the Seemul tree's bright red flowers, she coins her most memorable image : 'Red, red, and startling like a trumpet's sound'. Not until Edith Sitwell in the twentieth century was the device of synesthesia to be used so effectively. While estimating Toru Dutt as an Indo-Anglian poet, Naik observes 'Indian English Poetry really graduated from imitation to authenticity" (2006:12). Naik further adds "what is most impressive about of Toru Dutt's verse is its virtually total freedom from imitation, in contrast to Kashiprasad Ghose and M. M. Dutt. She does quote from Pope and Wordsworth, but copies neither. This shows that hers was an individual talent, capable of developing according to the laws of its own nature. Edmund Gosse's well-known description of her as 'this fragile blossom of song' is entirely misleading. There is nothing 'Glass Menagerie' like about Toru Dutt's poetry. Her best work exhibits keen sensibility, firm artistic control, and an acute awareness of the abiding values of Indian life. Granted a few more years of life, she could have proved capable of far greater things, as her actual achievement, though slender, unmistakably indicates" (*Ibidem* : 13).

A cousin of Toru Dutt, Romesh Chunder Dutt (1848-1909) wrote both in Bengali and English, but he did his creative work in the first language, and used English only for his translations from Sanskrit. These include *Lays of Ancient India* (1894), workman like translations from

Sanskrit and the Prakrit classics – *the Rigveda, Upnishadas, Kalidas* and *Bharavi,* and the Prakrit *Dhammapada.* The translations of *the Mahabharata* (1895) and *Ramayana* (1899) are better known. Dutt reduces the 48,000 lines of the *Ramayana* and the 2,00,000 of the *Mahabharata* to 4,000 each and imposes the twelve book Western epic structure on each narrative. R. C. Dutt's translations of *The Mahabharata* and *The Ramayana* are technically competent; but fail disastrously to recapture the epic spirit.

A younger contemporary of R. C. Dutt is Manmohan Ghose (1869-1924), the elder brother of Sri Aurobindo. He had an impressive poetic equipment, first displayed in his lyrics in *Primavera* (1890). *Love Songs and Elegies* (1898) is in the same vein, though a celebration of Nature is a new theme now. His other publications are – *Graphic Mysteries : Songs of Pain, Passion and the Mystery of Death; Immortal Eve : songs of the Triumph and Mystery of Beauty.* He also wrote a play, *Persues, the Gorgon Slayer.*

Manmohan Ghose's poetry reveals a genuine, though limited poetic talent, which unfortunately never developed fully. Unable to strike firm roots in his own native tradition and culture, he could never progress from imitation to authenticity.

This was exactly what a younger brother of Manmohan Ghose, Aurobindo Ghose (Sri Aurobindo) (1872-1950) was able to achieve. He had a long poetic career. He wrote lyrical, narrative, philosophical and epic poetry. His publications are – *Short Poems* (1890-1900), *Short Poems* (1895-1908), *Savitri* (1954). A detail study of Sri Aurobindo is written separately in 'Critical Appreciations'.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), the contemporary of Sri Aurobindo, was one of the most versatile men of his age, who touched and enriched modern Indian life at several points. Poet, dramatist, novelist, short story writer, composer, painter, thinker, educationist, nationalist and internationalist – such were the different roles that Tagore played with uniform distinction in his long and illustrious career. Tagore presents a case of literary bilingualism which is rare in literary history. He wrote mainly in Bengali, with the exception of a solitary poem – "The Child" which he wrote originally in English. His publications are – *Gitanjali* (1912), *The Gardener* (1913), *The Crescent Moon* (1913), *Fruit Gathering* (1916), *Stray Birds* (1916), *Love's Gift and Crossing* (1918), *The Fugitive* (1921), *Fireflies* (1928), *Poems* (1942).

Tagore has been lavishly praised as well as severely criticized. Even Pound and Yeats changed their opinions after early pushing Tagore on into the English-speaking world. *Gitanjali,* Tagore's masterpiece,

approaches the infinite glory of God through many finite centres. Rejecting institutional forms of religion, Tagore discovers God in man and woman and in the living creation. Tagore's other collections also deal with love, devotion, glory of God, and so on. Basically, Tagore is a lyric poet and in him Indian Romanticism, climaxed by Kalidasa once upon a time, climaxes again. Tagore's lines are a form in themselves although a Marxist critic like George Lukacs accused him of having no sense of structure. *Straybirds* and *Fireflies* are Tagore's best free-verse epigrams. Tagore's style is a combination of the utter simplicity, the femininity of language, and archaisms, colourful idioms, feudal imagery, and pervading mysticism. To conclude, 'Tagore has done great service to Indian Writing in English. His greatest contribution is the importation of an incantatory rhythmic prose which he almost perfected as a medium for the rendering of his own poetry into English and by which, though not consciously and deliberately, he demonstrated that the English language could be a suitable vehicle of Indian sentiment, thought and imagery" (1971: 54).

Younger than both Sri Aurobindo and Tagore, Sarojini Naidu (1879:1949) was to win recognition in England much earlier. She studied at London and Cambridge where she was encouraged in poetry writing by Arthur Symons and Edmund Gosse who advised her to write about the Indian landscape. Her publications are – *The Golden Threshold* (1905), *The Bird of Time* (1912), *The Broken Wing* (1917), *Feather of the Dawn* (1927). A collected edition of her poems appeared in *The Sceptred Flute* (1946).

Sarojini Naidu is basically a lyric poet, and like other contemporary poets, her songs are written on seasons, love, death, sadness, and God, and show an influence of Hindu and Persian love poetry. At best, her poetry is sometimes vague though most of the time sentimental with demands of rhyme often dictating emotion and logic. Her work is important from the historical point of view. She could be said to bring to lyric an Indian perspective even before Tagore had shot into fame.

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, brother of Sarojini Naidu, wrote his first collection of lyrics – *The Feast of Youth, Virgins and Vineyards* (1967). His significant books of verse are – *The Magic Tree* (1922), *Poems and Plays* (1927) and *Spring in Winter* (1955). Chattopadhyaya was a confirmed romantic like Sarojini Naidu, but unlike her, his verse mostly remains derivative and imitative, sporting direct echoes from the great Romantic poets. His later work shows a genuine attempt to come out of the shadow of his masters, and a capacity for abstract thought, and a more controlled expression; however, he was not able to organize these later insights firmly enough to produce major poetry.

"Of minor talent, Naik observes, "Indian English Poetry has indeed never felt a dearth" (1982: 70). Among the minor poets of this period, mention must be made of Swami Vivekanand (1863—1902) whose *Collected Poems* appeared in 1947 and Joseph Furtado (1872-1947) who used pidgin English for comic purpose for the first time. His publications are – *Poems* (1901), *A Goan Fiddler* (1927), *Songs in Exile* (1938) and *Selected Poems* (1942). Naik has given a comprehensive list of the minor poets in *A History of Indian English Literature* (pp. 70-71 and 146).

IV

The Indian resurgence received a fresh impetus during the Gandhian age (1920-1947) which witnessed a tremendous upheaval in the political, social and economic spheres. The Gandhian Era saw no major new voice emerges in Indian English poetry. Aurobindo and Tagore were still writing, creating a tradition and a following. The disciples of Sri Aurobindo like K. D. Sethna (*The Secret Splendour,* 1941), N. K. Gupta (*To The Heights,* 1944), Punjalal (*Lotus Petals,* 1943), Nirodbaran (*Sun-blossoms,* 1947) Nishikanto (*Dream Cadence,* 1947) imitated Aurobindo and Tagore in style, diction, rhythm, and metre but with less poetic effect. There are a number of academicians like G. K. Chettur (*Sounds and Images*, 1921), *The Temple Tank* and *Other Poems*, 1932, and *The Shadow of God,* 1934), Armando Menzes (*The Fund,* 1923), *The Emigrant*, 1933, *Chords and Dischords*, 1936, *Chaos and Dancing Star*, 1946, *The Ancestral Face*, 1951), V. N. Bhushan (*Silhouettes*, 1928, *The Far Ascent*, 1948), B. N. Seal who wrote a derivative verse and it is mostly their work which has created the unjust impression that all Indian English poetry before Independence is imitative and inconsequential. Manjeri S. Isvaran (1910-68) published ten thin volumes of poetry, which, according to him, were 'sparks in the emotive blood". His first and the last collections were *Saffron and Gold and Other Poems* (1932) and *The Neem is a Lady* (1957). Isvaran is known for his short stories than for his poetry. The other poets of this era are – P. R. Kaikini (*Flower Offerings : Prose Poems on Truth, Beauty and Nature* 1943; *Poems of the Passionate East*, 1947; Humayun Kabir (*Poems*, 1932; *Mahatma and Other Poems*); K.S.R. Sastry (*The Epic of Indian Womanhood*, 1921; *The Light of Life*, 1939); N. M. Chatterjee (*Parvati*, 1922; *India and Other Sonnets*, 1923); A Christina Albers (*Ancient Tales of Hindustan*, 1922; *Himalayan Whispers*, 1926); S. L. Chordia (*Seeking and Other Poems* 1925, *Chitor and Other Poems*, 1928); M. Krishnamurti (*Songs of Rose Leaves*, 1927; *Love Sonnets and Other Poems*, 1937); Uma S. Maheshwar (*Among the Silence*, 1928; *Southern Idylls*, 1939); T.R.P. Mody (*Golden Harvest*, 1932; *Verses, Grave and Gay*, 1938).

V

Many studies of Indian English poetry have appeared in recent years, almost all of them have concentrated on post-Independence poetry only. The general fashion seems to be to ignore pre-Independence poetry altogether. R. Parthasarathy declares that Indian English poetry "did not seriously begin to exist until after the withdrawal of the British from India" (2006: 5). William Walsh, Bruce King, P. Lal, Buddhadeva Bose, O. P. Budholia, to name a few, echo the similar opinion.

Gordon Bottomley described Indian Poetry in English as "Matthew Arnold in a Saree". But as V. K. Gokak has pointed out, it is also "Shakuntala in skirts" 1968: 104). It appears from these critics that Indian poetry in English shows the two strains of imitation and authenticity at work. The Indian poet in English is either sedulous ape or Adam, and though it must be conceded that in a land where the monkey is traditionally considered to be sacred, the proportion of the 'apes' is rather uncomfortably large, only a prejudiced observer will maintain that this Adam is childless. In his concluding part of pre-Independence poetry in Indian English, Naik observes "The minor romantics that followed – viz; the disciples of Sri Aurobindo like K. D. Sethna, N. K. Gupta and others; the academicians like B. N. Seal, G. K. Chettur, Arnando Menezes, V. N. Bhushan etc. and the rest like Manjeri Isvaran and Harindranath Chattopadhyaya generally wrote a derivative verse and it is mostly their work which has created the unjust impression that all Indian English poetry before Independence is imitative and inconsequential" (1984: 216). Naik further adds "The political and social awakening made conditions highly conducive to the growth of the novel; and what poetry lost, fiction gained, for the major triumvirate of Indian English fiction – Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao – began to write during this period" (*Ibidem*: 216). Naik, with serious intention of defending pre-Independence poetry, wrote an article "Eco and Voice in Indian Poetry in English", published in 1969 (Journal of the Karnatak University, Dharwad, Vol. XIII). "Surely, Naik says, "a tradition could not have survived for a century and a quarter without having had at least some areas of some excellence, whatever its deficiencies" (1984: 208). Even after the gap of four decades, Naik's sword of defending Indian pre-Independence poetry in English was not rusted. He was as much agile as he was forty years back, and gave a stunning reply to the critics ; "This is an astounding pronouncement; surely, an entire century of literary effort cannot be wiped out like this by a rash stroke of an irresponsible pen. If the best that Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, and Sarojini Naidu wrote is not poetry, we must then have a new definition of poetry altogether" (2006: 5).

To conclude, it is true that much verse was written during this period which was only putatively 'romantic', in that it had only a surface Romanticism to offer. For over a century and more, there were far too many would be Wordsworths, Babu Byrons, and synthetic Shelleys around. But in this chaos of imitation and derivativeness, the work of three poets stands out by virtue of their individuality and authenticity. The three poets are Rabindranath Tagore with his devotional fervour, Sri Aurobindo with his symbolic richness and Sarojini Naidu with her ecstatic celebration of Love and Nature. And it is highly significant that all the three are firmly rooted in the Indian tradition, for without roots no poet can grow and flower.

II. The Post-Independence Poetry in English :

Introduction : (a) 1950s

It is in poetry that the post-independence period witnessed the most crucial developments. William Walsh rightly observes : "Genuine Indian poetry in English really began in the nineteen-fifties, and the reader of today who is strictly interested in poetry can ignore ... earlier versifying" (1990: 127). The post-independence poetry in India rejected the Romantic-Victorian tradition and was more influenced by Eliot, Pound, and others. The nature of images, symbols changed from the ethereal to the hard and concrete, and instead of a countryside tradition of poetry, we had, for the first time, a poetry of urban landscape depicting non urban sensibility and dealing with the problems of an emerging city. The romantic tradition, however, could be still said to exist as Aurobindo's *Savitri* was published in 1950-51; his *Last Poems* (1952); and *More Poems* (1953). The prominent Aurobindo followers are D. K. Roy (*Eyes of Light*, 1948), P. S. Nahar (*The Winds of Silence*, 1954), P. N. Mukherjee (*A Rose-Bud's Song,* 1959), V. Madhusudan Reddy (*Sapphires of Solitude*, 1960), K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar (*Tryst With the Divine*, 1974), *Mycrocosmographia Poetica* (1976), and V. K. Gokak (*Songs of Life and Other Poems,* 1947), *In Life's Temple* (1965) and *Kashmir and the Blind Man* (1977).

But it is true that poetic taste had changed. The Indian English poet is no longer prone to deriving his light from Shelley and Tennyson. His masters now are T. S. Eliot and W. H. Anden. The 'new poetry' made its appearance in the fifties. The harbingers of modernity in Indian English poetry had already come to constitute the establishment within a just a decade or two after independence. Some of the poets of sixties and seventies had done their best work before the eighties.

In 1958 P. Lal and his associates founded the Writers Workshop in Calcutta (Kolkatta) which soon became an effective forum for modernist

poetry. The workshop manifesto described the school as consisting of a group of writers who agree in principle that English has proved its ability, as a language to play a creative role in Indian literature, through original writings and transcreations. "The workshop 'miscellany' was to be 'devoted to creative writing' giving preference to experiment by the young and unpublished writers." In an Introduction to Modern Indo-Anglian Poetry (1958), 'greasy, weak spined and purple adjectived 'Spiritual Poetry' and 'the blurred and rubbery sentiments of Sri Aurobindo' and declared that "the phase of Indo-Anglian romanticism ended with Sarojini Naidu." They affirmed their faith in a "vital language which must not be a total travesty of the current pattern of speech 'commended' the "effort to experiment" advocated a poetry that dealt "in concrete terms with concrete experience and emphasized 'the need for the private voice'".

The first of the 'new' poets to publish a collection was Nissim Ezekiel (1924-2004). In a poetic career spanning more than three decades, he published *A Time to Change* (1952), *Sixty Poems* (1953), *The Third* (1959), *The Unfinished Man* (1960), *The Exact Name* (1965), *Hymns in Darkness* (1976), *Latter-day Psalms* (1982), and *Poems : 1983-88* (1988). *His Collected Poems : 1952-1988* appeared in 1989.

Ezekiel presents an urban scene in his poetry with occasional use of the elements of myth. Ezekiel learnt his craft from Eliot and Auden though he also felt inspired by Rilke. Alienation and the sense of being uprooted form the core of many of Ezekiel's poems. Failure in love and marriage and art are other themes of Ezekiel's poetry. Ezekiel has mastery over colloquial speech, rhyme and rhythm, though occasionally, he drifts into loose patterns, particularly in his minor verse. Besides, he has made significant contributions as playwright, prose writer, critic, translator and teacher.

To conclude, Naik observes : "Nissim Ezekiel will always be remembered as the chief pioneer of modernism in Indian English poetry, and as a father figure who inspired, encouraged and guided several younger poets. Besides, he is a poet with a hard, luminous clarity of perception and execution, which endows his style with trenchancy of expression as in the line, 'Home is where one gathers Grace'" (2006 : 54).

Dom Moraes (1938-2004) was another 'new' poet to emerge during the fifties. Much of his time he spent in England, winning the coveted Hawthornden prize in 1958. He became a British citizen in 1961. Some of the famous Indian journalist Frank Moraes, Dom was born in a Goan-Christian family and published his first collection *A Beginning* in 1957, *Poems* in 1960 and *John Nobody* in 1968. *Poems 1955-1965* appeared in 1966 and the *Collected Poems* in 1969. Dom's is a

confessional poetry, surrealistic, influenced by the poetry of Dylan Thomas. There are insecurities working up in Dom's poetry owning to traumatic experiences he had in his childhood because of the insanity of his mother. His autobiography, *My Son's Father* reveals it Eroticism and self-probing are frequent recourses in his poetry. Classical, medieval myths are shaped in terms of good and evil forces symbolized by the dragon and the dwarfs, Cain and the Unicorn, and so on. His other publications are – *Serendip, Typed With One Finger.* He was writing poetry till the day of his death.

To conclude, Dom Moraes was not only a major poet, but a journalist and critic. His almost total ignorance of any Indian language has probably given him the finest ear for the rhythms of modern English. As N. Sharada Iyer rightly points out : "The lyrical beauty and technical virtuosity that are the hallmark of his poetry have enthralled readers for decades. Drawing them into a mesmerizing world of passion, romance, fear, guilt and the renewal, characterized by an elegant and hypnotic imagery the surreal texture of his poems weave together a variety of themes of love and war, friendship and alienation, myth and religion. His candour much as his brilliance will ensure that he will be remembered for generations" (2008: 98-99).

(b) 1960s : The nineteen-sixties heralded the arrival of several new poets – P. Lal, Adil Jussawalla, A. K. Ramanujan, R. Parthasarathy, Gieve Patel, A. K. Mehrotra, Pritish Nandy.

P. Lal (1929-) was the earliest new poet. He published *The Parrot's Death and Other Poems* (1967), *Yakshi from Didarganj and Other Poems* (1969), *The Man of Dharma and the Rasa of Silence* (1974) and *Calcutta : A Long Poem* (1977). His Collected Poems also appeared in 1977. He has also published the translated versions of the *Bhagavadgita* (1965), *The Dhammapada* (1967) and *Ghalib's Love Poems* (1971). He has also made a verse translation of The Mahabharta, of which several slender volumes have appeared. Lal believes in the melodic pattern which is all important for him. His contribution in popularizing Indian English poetry is substantial.

To conclude, lauding his publication work through the *Writers Workshop,* Naik praises his work of publication. At the same time Lal never escapes from his comment. "Lal has also been a indefatigable publisher of books in English (especially verse) by Indian writers, with numerically impressive results, though it is possible to wish that he could have perhaps been a little more selective" (2006: 56).

Adil Jussawalla (1940) published *Land's End* in 1962 which contained poems written in England and Europe. *Missing Person*

appeared in 1974. Adil tries to recapture foreign experience, the sense of exile, and a quest for self-knowledge in his poetry. Jussawalla wrote no more poetry, and turned to journalism instead.

A. K. Ramanujan (1929-1993) was the most authentic signatures to emerge during the sixties. Ramanujan never returned to India and taught at the University of Chicago. He published *The Striders* (1966) which won him the Poetry Book Society Award. *Relations* was published in 1971. His translations from Kannada and Tamil poetry into English are included in *The Interior Landscape* (1967) and *Speaking of Siva* (1972). Ramanujan draws his themes from anthropology, linguistics, folklore, religion, myth, and uses myth, metre, logical structure to shape his experience. Irony, paradox, and satire are well used even in poems which talk of the Hindu ethos. Romantic cliché are foreign to his poetry.

To conclude, critics generally look at Ramanujan more as a translator than as a major Indian English poet. But Ramanujan is reported to have said toward the end of his life : "all you have to do is to make it clear that my interest in poetry is central to my being and all my work" (2005: 7).

A fellow Tamil and an artist equally urgently concerned with his native heritage is R. Parthasarathy. He is a poet acutely conscious of the complex relationship between the 'hourglass of the Tamil mind and the exact chronometer of Europe'. His most famous poetic collection is *Rough Passage* (1977). It is a poem in three parts dealing with the theme of identity exposed to two cultures.

Parthasarathy has recently chosen to migrate to the U.S.A., thus deserting his country, his roots and his muse too, for he seems to have stopped publishing poetry after *Rough Passage.* One hopes his passage to America was smooth.

Gieve Patel (1940) published his first book *Poems in 1966.* In 1976 he published his second collection *How Do You Withstand Body* (1976). Patel writes a poetry of situations. Beginning with a real life situation, Patel hardly uses any metaphor or symbol and relies heavily on irony and direct detail. His descriptions remain bare and naked. After an interval of fifteen years, he published his third collection of poems by name *Mirrored Mirroring* (1991). A rather disturbing feature of technique on Mirrored, Mirroring is the use of a device as old as E. E. Cummings : sudden, unorthodox, word-breaking, as in : 'har/ bours', and 'Wat/ersedge', word-breaking can be a very meaningful and effective device, which can create special effects like hesitancy or uncertainty but a casual and gratuitous use of it can be disastrous. It is

also surprising that Patel uses imagery very sparingly, since he is a noted painter also.

Arwind Krishna Mehrotra (1947) began his career as a poet. Image was all dominant in his verse. His earliest collections were *Bharatmata : A Prayer* (1966) and *Woodcuts on Paper* (1967), *Poems/ Poems/ Poems* (1971) and *Nine Enclosures* (1976). *Distance in Statute Miles* (1982), *Middle Earth* (1984) followed in the 'eighties' and recently *The Transfiguring Places* (1998) appeared. Mehrotra writes image centered poetry full of games, riddles and accidents. Mehrotra shows influence of Whitman and Hart Crane and one expects from him poems of more integrated expression and structure.

Pritish Nandy (1947) is a prolific writer having published more than a dozen collections. They include *Of Gods and Olives* (1967), *The Poetry of Pritish Nandy* (1973) and *Tonight This Savage Rite* (1977). Nandy's imagination seems to be obsessed with urban horror and violence, sex and death; and his favourite technique seems to be the sudden juxtaposition of images drawn from oriental and occidental cultures. His poetic technique is marked by a Whitmanesque footlessness; hence nimiety rather than concision seems to be his motto. The general impression his verse creates is of wild energy and verbal belligerence not always amenable to discipline. He writes mostly in prose-poetry genre, sometimes with the excess of rhetoric. To conclude with the words of Naik : "Curiously enough, Nandy has published no poetry after 1977. One wonders whether he found the wild fire and the red-hot belligerence of youth difficult to sustain, as time marched on. During recent years, he has had a brief flirtation with journalism after which he has found refuge in the succulent pastures of politics" (2006: 61).

(c) 1970s : Four new poets arrived in the seventies : K. N. Daruwalla, Shiv K. Kumar, Jayanta Mahapatra and Arun Kollatkar. The most substantial of these is Daruwalla, who began his career with *Under Orien* (1970), which was followed by *Apparition in April* (1971) and *Crossing of Rivers* (1976). He has added five more collections to his oeuvre since then : *Winter Poems* (1980), *The Keeper of the Dead* (1982), *Landscape* (1987), *A Summer of Tigers* (1985) and *Night River* (2000). A police officer by profession, Daruwalla has observed human beings in different situations. He is satirical without being sentimental. His modernism consists in his skeptical attitude towards his own religion (Zoroastrianism) as well as that of others. This attitude is also visible in his images and symbols which are often violent. Another significant feature of the later work of Daruwalla is the variety of locale – India to England, Yugoslavia, Sweden, Russia, the U.S.A., Egypt, Iran and the Gulf.

In his concluding note on Daruwalla, Naik observes, "Daruwalla's most memorable poem is perhaps 'the Mistress', which is probably as apt a description of Indian Writing in English as Kamala Das's well-known poem, "An Introduction". "My mistress is half-caste. Perched/ On the genealogical free somewhere/ Is a Muslim midwife, and a Goan cook./ But she is more mixed than that/ Down the genetic line, babus/ And Professors of English/ Have also made their one-night contribution" (2006: 62).

Shiv K. Kumar (1921-) has served as the Professor of English at various universities. He published his first book of verse, *Articulate Silence* (1970) when he was on the threshold of fifty. His subsequent collections are – *Cobwebs in the Sun* (1974), *Subterfuges* (1976), *Woodpeckers* (1979), *Trap Falls in the Sky* (1986) and *Woolgathering* (1998). He is both confessional and ironic. Widely travelled, many of his poems are set in foreign situations. His images show emotional intensity and a certain amount of nakedness in relation to experience.

Jayant Mahapatra (1928), an academic, like Shiv K. Kumar, has published not less than a dozen collections – *Close the Sky, Ten by Ten* (1971), *Svayamvara and Other Poems* (1971), *A Rain of Rites* (1976), *Waiting* (1979), *Relationship* (1980), *The False Start* (1980), *Life Signs* (1983), *Dispossessed Nests* (1987), *Burden of Waves and Fruit* (1988), *Temple* (1989), *A Whiteness of Bone* (1992), and *Shadow of Space* (1997). Two volumes of selections are *Selected Poems* (1987) and *The Best of Jayanta Mahapatra,* edited by P. P. Ravindran (1996).

Mahapatra deals with Indian tradition and with traditional subjects and figures : the patient-woman, the bazaar, the cow, the prostitute, the land – in his case the landscape of Orissa – snakes, crows, temples, rickshaw-pullers, shrines. The poet K. N. Daruwalla writes of Mahapatra in *Two Decades of Indian Poetry, 1960-80 :* "Mahapatra's poetry is restrained and balanced. He does not indulge in verbal excesses nor does his voice turn shrill decrying the world around him. There is a built-in irony in his poetry, but it is muted, subtle and spread over a long passage so that it never really develops a sting" (1990: 148).

Arun Kolatkar (1932-2005) writes both in English and Marathi. In English he has published *Jejuri* (1976). Many of his short poems are uncollected. His poems have a surrealistic vision enabling the poet to have many-sided visions. *Jejuri* is the name of a temple near Pune and the poem of that name has thirty-one short sections. The technique works by juxtaposing the temple with the railway station which clearly shows how Indian poetry in English has not shied away from using post-modernist techniques. What is ironically put is people's faith in a dead tradition. *Jejuri* has also been compared with Eliot's *Waste Land,* but, as

A. K. Ramanujan also puts it, it lacks the social and religious dimensions of Eliot's poem and is fragmentary in vision. Nevertheless it certainly remains a substantial attempt by a modern poet to review his ancient heritage.

Keshav Malik (1926) has had quite a long poetic career. His publications are – *The Lake Surface and Other Poems* (1959), *Rippled Shadows* (1960), *Storm Warning, 26 Poems* (1982), *The Cut-off Point : Poems* (1988), *Islands of Mind* (1991), *Outer Reaches* (1998), *Ozone Layer : Selected Poems* (1996).

Malik's earlier verse was marked by leisurely musing marred by lapses into pseudo romantic flourishes. The later verse does show greater artistic control, but one gets the impression that he has not yet been able to exercise the ghost of pseudo-romanticism, which has been the bane of several of his compatriots also.

Pradip Sen (1926) published his *Collected Poems : 1948-1996* in 1996. A Catholic by faith, he makes perhaps a better showing in religious poems like "Golotha" and "An Open Letter to Jesus". G. S. Sharat Chandra (1938) published – *Bharat Natyam Dancer and Other Poems* (1996), *April in Nanjangud* (1971), *Once or Twice* (1974), *Heirloom* (1982), *Immigrants of Loss* (1993), *Family of Mirrors* (1993). As a sensitive expatriate living for long abroad, Sharat Chandra is naturally a poet of memory, who derives his themes from 'remembrance of things past'. In his later poetry, Sharat Chandra appeared to be moving towards a poetry with a strong sense of situation and character.

In addition to these foregoing poets, there are a number of minor voices, (many of them being 'One Volume Poets', published by the indefatigable *Writers Workshop*, Kolkatta, whose place is evidently in the Bibliography.

What is the achievement of the modernist school? These poets have certainly learnt well all the lessons taught by their modern British masters; but it is significant that they have produced their best work, only when they have seen themselves in relation to their roots : as Ezekiel does in *Hymns in Darkness,* Kolatkar in *Jejuri* and Mahapatra in *Relationship.* They may not always conform to tradition, and in fact, dissent from it, but the very fact that they find it necessary to refer back to it shows that it is essentially their 'Still point in a turning world'.

The Nineteen seventies produced not only great poets – K. N. Daruwalla, Shiv K. Kumar, Jayanta Mahapatra and Arun Kolatkar – but also witnessed the rise and publication of a number of anthologies of poetry. The significant anthologies were – *Modern Indian Poetry in*

English : An Anthology and a Credo (ed. P. Lal, 1972); Saleem Peeradina's *Contemporary Indian Poetry in English* (1972); Pritish Nandy's *Indian Poetry in English Today* (1973) and *Stranger Time : An Anthology of Indian Poetry in English* (1977); Gauri Deshpande's *An Anthology of Indo-English Poetry* (1974). Adil Jussawalla's *New Writing in India* (1974) and R. Parthasarathy's *Ten Twentieth Century Poets* (1976).

The details of the periodicals and journals have been stated in the introduction note of 'The Post-Independence Poetry in English'.

d) 1980s Onwards : The publication of anthologies of poetry, the appearance of new periodicals and the literary journals and the established poets like Ezekiel, Kamala Das, Mahapatra and Vikram Seth – not only inspired the younger poets but also provided guidance to all those who were interested in poetry.

The first group that invites attention is the 'Bombay Poets'. These poets are young and also they hail from Bombay. Many of them found an excellent mentor in Nissim Ezekiel. The 'Bombay Poets' are– Saleem Peeradina, Santan Rodrigues, Manohar Shetty, R. Raja Rao, Ranjit Hoskote. There are a number of women poets led by Eunice de Souza.

1) Saleem Peeradina (1954), the oldest of this group, is the author of *First Offence* (1980) and *Group Portrait* (1998). In his first collection, Peeradina mostly celebrates Bombay life with great understanding and admiration. "Morning Glory" offers a fine vignette of Bombay at day break : 'mile-sirens, milk booths, phlegm-bursts, ... broom-dust, tea and newsprint.'

Group Portrait shows the 'Family Man' looking into the 'Family Mirror, with middle-aged eyes. The picture of the mirror shows is one of delightful domesticity, with the 'Angel in the house' presiding lovingly over an 'all-woman' household of two daughters and so on.

2) Santan Rodrigues : has two publications at his disposal. *I Exist* (1976) is the first collection. *This Far* (1978) is another. The former focuses on the handiwork of a callow youth, who has far greater self-assurance than is good at his age. The latter contains fourteen poems, included in the *Three Poets.* This collection of fourteen poems reflect upon the poet's childhood memories in Goa. The poet provides us the vignettes of the Goan scene : the fenni-sipping labourers in the small taverns; the families huddled together in large houses to save the angleus; and the white Ghost, which reportedly haunts deserted roads.

3) Manohar Shetty (1953) : Manohar Shetty is the most substantial poet of the 'Bombay School'. His publications are – *A Guarded Space*

(1981), *Borrowed Time* (1988) and *Domestic Creature* (1994). In his poetry, he has focused on – his interest in animals, large and small, urban experience.

4) R. Raja Rao (1955) : published two collections – *The Alien : Poems and Stories* (1982) and *Slide Show* (1992). Poems like "Self-Portrait", "Carrying my Father's Ashes by Train to Nasik" reflect on the poet's deep controlled emotion.

5) Sanjay Bhatla (1956) : *Looking Back* (1990) is the collection of his poems in which he has observed carefully people in different situations and pinpoint the incongruities in what they think, say and do. "An Ageing Spinster" and "An Unknown girl at a Picnic" are the best examples to illustrate his observation of people. A long poem, "A Sinner Says" was supposed to follow *Looking Back*; however, it is yet to appear.

6) Ranjit Hoskote (1969) : Ranjit Hoskote is perhaps the youngest of the group. His *Zones of Assam* appeared in 1991. Hoskote is a poet acutely aware of social and political developments of his time. He responds, with deep emotions, to the Massacre at Tianamen in China ("Ceremonial Spring"), the death of a Manipuri revolutionary ("October Laughter") and the killing of the heroic Safdar Hashmi in 1989 in Delhi ("Assassination of an Artist"). But Hoskote's vision is not confined to the present alone. Figures drawn from history, mythology and legend also seem to interest him equally.

Having seen the 'Bombay Poets', let us see some of the poets who live in India and abroad. These poets are : Vikram Seth (1953-), Sudeep Sen (1964), Hoshang Merchant (1947), Agha Shahid Ali (1949-2005), E. V. Ramakrishnan (1949) and G J V Prasad.

1) Vikram Seth (1953) : His publications are – *Mappings* (1981) and *The Golden Gate* (1986), *The Humble Administrator's Garden* (1985), *All Who Sleep Tonight* (1990) and *Beastly Tales Form Here and There* (1992). A detail note on Seth is dealt in 'Critical Appreciation'.

2) Sudeep Sen (1964) : Another expatriate like Seth, Sudeep Sen has been more prolific. His books include : *Learning Against the Lamp-post* (1983); *The Lunar Visitations* (1990); *New York Times* (1993); *South African Woodcuts* (1994); *Mount Vesuvius in Eight Frames* (1994); and *Dali's Twisted Hands* (1995). *Post-Marked India* (1997) contains new and selected poems from the earlier collections. Of all his contemporaries, Sen has perhaps the largest affiliations. His setting ranges from India to Italy, and America to South Africa. He moves with effortless ease from Mathura to Hiroshima and Kali to Dali. Sen's verse exhibits a wide range of themes as well. Love, nature, death, politics and urban life interest him

equally. He is equally at home with traditional forms like the sonnet and Ottave Rima and stanza forms of different kind, and free verse as well.

3) Hoshang Merchant (1947) : He is the author of *Hotel Golconda* (1992); *Jonah and the Whale* (1995); *The Home, the Friend and the World* (1995); *Love's Permission* (1996); *The Heart in Hiding* (1996); and *Birdsless Cage* (1997). *Talking to the Djinns* (1997) is a prose-poem.

Merchant's verse is unique in its frank and uninhibited celebration of homosexual love. His persona tells us how he wants to dive down the spine to bring up the 'anul sun' and make it resplendent like the sun of the world.' The poet records the varying moods and vicissitudes of homosexual love, its tragedies and its triumphs. But one is not sure how far he has succeeded in clearly showing how exactly his variety of love differs from the normal (humdrum) variety.

4) Agha Shahid Ali (1949-2005) : Unlike Merchant, Agha Shahid Ali had preferred living in the U.S.A. But his heart was in India, particularly Kashmir, where he was raised; he also stressed his identification with north Indian Muslim culture. His publications are– *Bone Sculpture* (1972), *In Memory of Begam Akhtar* (1979), *Half-Inch Himalayas* (1987), *A Nostalgist's Map of America* (1992), *The Beloved Witness : Selected Poems* (1992).

Conscious of his Muslim faith, his family heritage and his roots in Kashmir, Ali celebrates all three in his verse.

5) Tabish Khair : Tabish Khair settled in Denmark. But he keeps thinking about the smells of Gaya in Bihar, where he grew up. His collections are – *My World* (1991), *A Reporter's Diary* (1993) and *Where Parallel Lines Meet* (2000). Although a Muslim by birth, he is very well-versed in the ancient Hindu heritage. Khair has written some light verse also. His *The Book of Heroes* came out in 1995.

Having seen the expatriate poets and their individual contribution to Indian Poetry in English, let us see some poets from Orissa who have been inspired by Jayanta Mahapatra, as the young poets of Bombay were inspired by Nissim Ezekiel. These poets are – Bibhu Padhi, Niranjan Mohanty, Prabhanjan K. Mishra, Rabindra K. Swain.

1) Bibhu Padhi (1951-) : published his four collections – *Going to the Temple* (1988), *A Wound Elsewhere* (1992), *Lines from a Legend* (1933) and *Painting the House* (1999). Less densely structured and more transparent than the poetry of Mahapatra, Padhi's verse is equally saturated with cogitations. His quest is for "the truth of things, behind things/ In spite of things, because of things." Padhi's inward-looking verse is often set off in motion by some external reality or event or

memory, resulting in perceptive comment as when he finds that trees are "earth-bound souls/ In green concealment."

The other three 'Orissers' seem to follow Mahapatra even more closely emulating the Master's quiet meditativeness slightly touched with sorrow and nostalgia, his preoccupation with the religious and cultural ambience of Orissa, and even his dense utterance, in which meaning is only hinted at, seldom fully grasped.

2) Niranjan Mohanty (1953) : There are five collections at his credit – *Silencing the Words* (1977), *Bloody Game* (1980), *Prayers to Lord Jagannath* (1994), *On Touching You and Other Poems* (1999) and *Life Lines* (1999).

3) Prabhanjan K. Mishra (1952) : is the author of *Vigil* (1993) and *Lips of a Canyon* (2000).

4) Rabindra K. Swain : Swain has published *Once Back Home* (1996) and *A Tapestry of Steps* (1999). These poets are perhaps yet to emerge from the (huge) shadow of Mahapatra, which one hopes they do in the near future.

The contribution of the 'Bombay Poets', the expatriate poets, and the poets inspired by Mahapatra thus enriched Indian poetry in English. There are poets after 1980s who wrote Light verse and subsequently light verse has come to an independent genre in Indian English poetry quite recently. Light verse occupies a permanent place in Indo-Anglian Poetry.

Light verse is a genre much neglected in Indian English literature so far. It has come to an independent genre in Indian English poetry quite recently. Apart from S. Santhi (*Rhyme and Punishment :* 1975), S. Mokashi-Punekar ("Hunger made my Spirits Reel") and K. S. Wye (*It Couldn't be Verse or Worse Either* : 1998), Ashok Mahajan (*Uniformly Crazy* : 1993), Ira Gardner Smith (*Carry and Rice* : 1994), Dwarakanath H. Kabadi (*Glimmericks* : 1994) and Tabisha Khair (*The Book of Heroes* : 1995) there are practically no other notable practitioners of this kind of writing in Indian English literature. And even these writers have not produced a substantial body of light verse so far, having remained apparently content with publishing just a collection or two. Emken's (M.K. Naik) seven collections must therefore be regarded as the first conscious attempt to make a major contribution to this genre. The seven collections are :

1. *Indian Clerihews* (1989)
2. *Indian Limericks* (1990)
3. *More Indian Clerihews* (1992)

4. *Indian Pot Pourri* (1993)
5. *Beowulf and All That ; An Unorthodox History of English Literature* (1999)
6. *From Anne Bradstreet to Main Street and Beyond : An Unorthodox History of American Literature* (2001)
7. *Ancient World Clerihews* (2002).

Till his retirement, Naik was known as a 'scholar extraordinary', but after his superannuation he seems to have given free play to the comic spirit in him suppressed long since. Makarand Paranjpe rightly observes : "After retiring from teaching, Professor Naik has allowed the poet in him to step out of the closet ... And the result is this charming, witty, erudite and highly entertaining collection (Indian Clerihews)" (1992: 7).

Naik is the first Indian to use the clerihew form on an extensive scale. Emken brings to it wit of a high order, as when he caps E. C. Bentley's (the originator of the Clerihew) well known clerihew, "Geography is about maps/ And biography is about chaps", by adding : "And history is/ what chaps do to maps." As a writer of Indian Clerihews, Emken is unsurpassed. In many ways he is an Indian Edward Lear, a Prince of Trifles. Some of Emken's limericks combine humour and pathos like Edward Lear. "There was an old man of Cologne/ who was terrified of being alone/ It was a sight/ To watch him every night/ Craw to bad into the telephone."

A host of critics and reviewers like H. M. Williams (*CRNCE Reviews Journal, Australia*), Shyamala A. Narayan (*Journal of Indian Writing in English*), Manju Jaidka (*The Tribune*), Makarand Paranjpe (*Kavya Bharati*), K. S. Yadurajan (*Littcrit*), Durga Dikshit (*Journal of Indian Writing in English,* Vol. 22, No. I : Jan – 1994) have highly praised Naik's contribution to light verse. To conclude with the remark of Durga Dikshit : "Emken has certainly put India on the literary map of quality light verse. The best in his four collections is in no way inferior to the writings in this genre by Edward Lear, Lewis Carroll, T. S. Eliot (in *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*), W. H. Auden (*Academic Clerihews*), E. C. Bentley, Hilaire Belloc and Ogden Nash" (1994: 74).

III. Modern Women Poets :

It is to be noted that there are hardly two women poets before Independence in India, and they are Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu. There are virtually no minor poets at all to add to this list. In contrast with this, the last half a century after Independence has seen not less than two dozen women poets of note, though not all of them can be called first rate. This is another mark of the slow but steady empowerment of women in India

during recent years. In fact, the changing face of Indian womanhood is clearly reflected in the work of the women poets. With this brief introduction, the researcher would like to embark upon the detail contribution of women poets to Indian Writing in English. Realising the limited space, the researcher would like to restrict himself to the major women poets who have contributed to poetry in particular and Indian Writing in English in general.

Kamala Das (1934-2009) : According to Naik, Kamala Das is one of the best of Indian English poets of any time. She is a bilingual writer, who writes in her mother tongue Malyalam also, Das is the author of *Summer in Calcutta* (1965); *The Descendants* (1967); *The Old Playhouse and Other Poems* (1973); *Collected Poems* (1985); and *The Soul Knows How to Sing : Selections from Kamala Das* (1997). A close study of her poetry reveals some of the following features : First, the most obvious feature of Das's poetry is the uninhibited frankness with which she talks about male and female bodies, and their functions and sex. Secondly, Das is primarily a confessional poet, and much of her own life and suffering have gone into her poetry, as her autobiography, *My Story* shows. She sings mainly of love, and the different roles it plays in human life. Thirdly, Das's poems have a dramatic quality, and like Browning's Women, her persona also sees herself in different situations against a clearly visualized scene and setting in each. The intensity of her lyrical utterance sometimes results in a lack of verbal discipline, and her constant harping upon sex cannot escape the law of diminishing aesthetic returns. There are also moments when she lapses into romantic claptrap, but the final impression that Kamala Das's poetry leaves is one of a bold, ruthless honesty fearing passionately at conventional attitudes to reveal the quintessential woman within.

The contribution of Das's contemporaries is also great. Monika Verma (1966) has six collections to her credit : *Dragon –flies Draw Flame* (1962), *Past Imperative and Alakanada* (1976) are the more significant of them. Verma often reveals an acute responsiveness to nature, but she seems to succumb too easily to sheer poetizing, and her sense of diction is so unsure that she permits herself to write a line like : 'bivouac of bulrushes bordering the pool.'

Within the space of four years Gauri Deshpande (1942-2003) published three poetry collections : *Between Births* (1968), *Lost Love* (1970), and *Beyond the Slaughter-House* (1972). Like Das, Deshpande too tries to recreate the drama of man-woman relationship, but on a much more limited scale, and in a far less challenging manner. Like Das, she too has her moments of sentimentality. Deshpande wrote no poetry in English after 1972, and turned to writing fiction in her mother-tongue,

Marathi, reportedly on the advice of Nissim Ezekiel, who advised and guided several young poets of the time.

Mamta Kalia (1942) published – *Tribute to a Papa* (1970) and *Poems* (1978). Kalia speaks with saucy irreverence about many 'scared cows' of our culture, including parents, patriotism etc. Her persona tell her father, "Who cares for you, Papa? /Who cares for your clean thoughts, clean words, clean teeth?" It is a pity that Kalia has now turned to writing in Hindi; her mother tongue alone. Next, we have Suniti Namjoshi (1941) who began her career with *Poems* (1967) and has been active well upto the end of the 'Eighties'. Her subsequent books are – *Cyclone in Pakistan* (1971); *The Jackals and the Lady* (1980); *Authentic Lie* (1982); and *From the Bedside Book of Nightmares* (1984). Her *Blue Donkey Fables* (1988) are in prose, but they contain some poems as well. Namjoshi subjects traditional Indian notions about love, marriage, parenthood and life in general to a sharply ironic treatment, exposing the clay feet of numerous idols. She wrote a feminist novel, *The Mothers of Maya Diip* (1989).

Margaret Chatterjee has published five books of poems in twenty years, her most recent collection being *The Rimless World* (1987). A senior teacher of philosophy, Chatterjee writes a verse marked by quiet reflection, without however offering any startlingly new insights.

Under the guidance of Nissim Ezekiel, Bombay produces a number of men poets to whom we label as 'Bombay School of Poets'. On the other hand, we have women poets who have been influenced and inspired by Ezekiel.

The senior most poet of the school is Eunuce de Souza (1942) who published *The Author of Fix* (1979), *Women in Dutch Painting* (1988), and two books of Selected Poems : *Ways of Belonging* (1990) and *Selected and New Poems* (1994). A generally irascible critic, de Souza produced better artistic results in her verse where the waspishness is under better control.

The prevailing tone in *Fix* is bitingly ironical, as the poet pillories the bigotry, hypocrisy and duplicity in the traditional Goan Catholic society in which she grew up. The poem, "Catholic Mother" presents Francis X. D'Souza, 'Father of the Year' and 'Pillar of the Church'. His boast is : "By the Grace of God/ We have had seven children/ (in seven years)/ Lovely Catholic family/ Says Mother Superior/ ... the Pillar's Wife/ Says nothing."

In *Women in Dutch Painting,* we are given figures of woman who exhibit the spirit of serenity, maturity, and calm. The bitter satirist of Fix has at last found her haven of peace.

Love is not one of the values of life which de Souza seems particularly to care for; but it is at the very centre of the verse of Tara Patel (1949). In her *Single Woman* (1991), she touches upon several facets of love. It is unfortunate that Patel's single woman has remained single. She reportedly told her friends that she was dissatisfied with her own work, and hence had decided to write no more poetry.

Kavita Ezekiel (1953) published *Family Sunday and Other Poems* (1989). As she was the daughter of Nissim Ezekiel, naturally one raises great expectations. Playful irony is at work in a few poems like "Love Poem after Marriage", which lays down a new Love's Commandment : "Change the baby's diaper, Dear"; and "Family Sunday", which leaves the parents happy and the children bored. Unfortunately, however, the poet is not able to sustain this ironic tone for long.

Imtiaz Dharkar (1954) was a rare Muslim poet. She published *Purdha* (1989) and *Postcards from God* (1994). She appears to look at the world through the eyes of an intelligent and sensitive Muslim woman, reacting to her experience in different ways and changing moods, because as she herself puts, "There are many of me." She speaks of purdha as a symbol of religious, moral and social taboos, which a spirited young woman would like to break. The poet adds, worst of all is the 'purdha of the mind'.

Charmayne D'Souza (1955) focuses on man-woman relationship. She published *A Spelling Guide to Women* (1999). The title poem sets the tone of the book "Woo men/ Womb men/ Woe men/ Whim men/ Warm men/ Who, men? no, woman."

Unlike D'Souza, Melanie Silgardo (1956) has little use for wit. Her poems first appeared in *Three Poets* (1978), and her first independent collection, *Skies of Design* was published in 1985. She takes an unblinkered view of all human relationships; her irony is generally corrosive, when she employs it, and her tone usually blunt.

Surrealistic imagery is also the forte of Menka Shivdasani (1961) in her Nirvana (1990). Here God dies of "indigestion/ the raw rice they kept giving to him must have proved too much."

Urban life is also one of the preoccupations of Mukta Sambrani (1975) whose *The Woman in this Room Isn't Lonely* (1997) is probably the latest of the School of the Bombay women Poets. The theme of womanhood and all it spells is central to Sambram's work. The speaker

in "Two Ways of Being", declares, "There are two ways./ a woman can become a coconut or a coconut tree/ either she shoots up/ or falls and turns soft inside."

Apart from the Bombay School, there are several other women poets elsewhere in India and abroad, whose work compels attention. Chronologically considered, the first of these is Sunita Jain (1914), a bilingual who has written in Hindi as well. Her first collection, *Man of My Desires* appeared in 1978. This was followed by *Between You and God* (1979), *Beneath the Frost* (1979), *Lovetime* (1980), *Silences* (1982), and *Find Me With Rain* (1984). *Till I Find Myself* (1986) is a representative selection. *Sensum : Collected Poems: 1965-2000* contains 27 previously unpublished poems.

The important feature of her poetry is that she is 'romantic'. But there is nothing derivative and imitative in Jain's romanticism. She speaks about the tenderness, and joy of love, but is equally a live to its disappointments, and destructiveness also.

Unlike Sunita Jain, Meena Alexander (1951) is a poet with a far wider range of reference. Her publications are – *Stone Roots* (1980), *House of a Thousand Doors* (1983), *River and Bridge* (1995), *The Shock of Arrival* (1996).

Though living in a foreign country, yet her roots are in Indian soil. She has brought a strong political awareness in her poetry. She also attempted at reflective poetry. Alexander's imagination needs a concrete external prop, in the absence of which it flounders, resulting in half-articulated thought, which tries to pass for reflection.

Suma Josson (1951) published – *Poems and Plays* (1982) and *A Harvest of Light* (1994). To adapt one of her lines, Josson the poet seems to be 'marooned' in the making of her own mind'. Hers is an intensely inward-looking kind of poetry in which external reality, diurnal happenings, and personal memory are only so many starting points for the journey within.

Vasantha Surya (1942) published *The Stalk of Time* (1985). Tradition, religion, society and marriage are the usual objects of her irony. "Lord of the Seventh Hill" is a poem where the hill deity is presented as an efficient professional : 'Your charge of consultation is reasonable, considering your experience in the field and your varied clientele...."

Surya Lakshmi Kannan who hails from the south published *Exiled Gods* (1985). A close study of her poetry reveals the fact that she is very particular about the southern heritage. Feminism is also one of Kannan's

preoccupations. She upholds the Feminist banner, describing Woman as a "tired tenant/ eager at last to own a house. And not be owned by one." And Kanyakumari is 'the eternal virgin/ frozen in history'; she lives within 'every woman/ reserved, aloof.'

Sujata Bhatt (1956) published her first book, *Brunizem*, in 1988. *Monkey Shadows* (1991), *The Stinking Rose* (1995), *Point No Point : Selected Poems* (1997), *Augatora* (published in India as *My Mother's Way of Wearing a Sari* (2000) are some of her publications. Bhatt's poetry reveals her as a citizenness of the world. Her verse too deals with three continents : Asia, Europe and America. She is a widely travelled poet, and we encounter her in the New York subway, the Durban Botanical Garden, supermarket in Gronningen, and even in a bathub in Belfast. In her later poetry, we notice that she did not neglect her oriental heritage. Still in later work, she shows a growing interest in the character – sketch and the monologue. Variety of character, scene and setting is admirable, but is of little important in the absence of an individual vision.

An expatriate like Bhatt, Debyani Chatterjee (1952) reflects in her poetry the fate of the immigrants in a western land. Though she is 'British born' yet she is an Asian woman. The title poem in her *I Was That Woman* (1989) also reveals her as a committed feminist. Beginning with Eve, the first rebel, she examines the roles of Sita, Draupadi and Joan of Arc, ending with the modern typist girl.

Rukmini Bhaya Nair (1952) published *The Hyoid Bone* (1992) in which she offers considerable variety of scene and setting. She whisks us from a medieval castle in England to Singapore, and from California to Japan. This variety of locale, however, does not seem to yield many startlingly new insights. *The Ayodhya Cantos : Poems* (1999) is an ambitious long poem dealing with the demolition of the Babri Masjid by Hindu fanatics in Ayodhya in December 1992.

Like Nair, Chatterjee and Bhatt, Rachna Joshi (1963) also takes us abroad frequently in her *Configurations* (1993), but her heart is clearly in India, always preoccupied with configurations of memories, mostly familial. There are happy memories of the affection of the grandmother and sad memories of 'Past miseries'. The most persistent memories are those of the 'Old House in Lucknow'. "What does it matter if the old house was not exactly a paradise? I thought I never wanted a patch of earth/ patch of full of discord, feud,. Vendettas? But I'm weakening now. For home is always home, simply because it is home.

Other poetry collections of the last two decades include : Vera Sharma's *Random Thoughts* (1980) and *The Blind Musician and Other Poems* (1988); Rooma Mehra's *For You* (1985); Achala Bhatia's *The*

Awakening (1989); Renee Ranchan's *Pain Propels* (1989); Malavika Sanghvi's *Poems : Recent and Early* (1989). Vijaya Goel's *The Autumn Flowers* (1990); Ruth Vanita's *A Play of Light* (1994); Anju Makhija's *View from the Web* (1995); Neelima Wig's *Among the Stars* (1996); Sukrita's *Folds of Silence* (1996); Dineka Rayasam's *Phases of the Moon* (N.D.); Sheela K. Sharath's *Imagery : In My Mind's Eye* (2000) and Deepti Diwakar's *The Tree of Verse* (2000). The critic Leela Gandhi's *Measures of Home* appeared in 2000. Divya Rao (b. 1985) is perhaps the youngest Indian English poet to have published a book. Her *A Drop of Knowledge in the Ocean of Truth* (1997) appeared when she was only twelve. Senior to her by two years, Natasha D'Souza published her *Stepping Stones* in 1998.

In addition to these, there are several women poets who have published their collections. These women include : Anila Bal (*Songs in My Heart*, 1987); Nirmala Nambiar (*Poems*, 1996); Angela Lobo-Cobb (*Roots and Rootlessness*, 1998); Maia Katrak (*Between Two Worlds*, 1996); Rumki Basu (*An Ode to Memory*, 1997). Shree Devi (*More Shades of Green*, 1996); Chitra Banrejee Devakaruni (*Dark Like the River*, 1987). There are still a host of women poets. The researcher, for want of space, restricts himself to these poets.

To conclude, Naik calls these women poets "The Fair Voice : Modern Women Poets"; Bruce King (*Modern Indian Poetry in English*) calls women poets "Women's Voices : Kamala Das, de Souza, Silgardo"; Sunanda P. Chavan calls them "Fair Voices in Indian Poetry". In spite of their great contribution, there are several charges levelled against them. One of the charges is that their poetry lacks the universal touch; they have remained mainly personal and lack social awareness which has led to dearth of themes. It could be partly because of their being restricted to the four walls of home. Another charge is that the women poets lack the creative stamina and have produced only a few and lack continuous flow.

Despite these charges, it is to be noted that women poets have added a new dimension by widening the range of poetry. Their poetry shows the search for adjustment and identity in the Indian context. Though they are concerned with personal life they also show a significant degree of awareness of the relationship with modern world and its problems. Their predicament holds by itself a promise for a richer and subtler poetry. In their rebellion against the traditional role of Indian women the women poets, led by Das, had to fight against the kind of diction used by such poets as Varma and Deshpande in which refined, lady-like language was associated with a conformity of behaviour and attitudes. Just as in rejecting the spiritualism of Aurobindo the male poets insisted on precision and economy, the women in expressing new

attitudes required a new, more appropriate way of writing about their emotions, experiences and consciousness of themselves as women.

IV. Critical Articles :

1. i) *Jejuri* : A Thematic Study

   Or

   ii) Arun Kolatkar's *Jejuri* and the Three systems

   Or

   iii) A Cock and Hen Story : Arun Kolatkar's *Jejuri*

2. A. K. Ramanujan and the Search for Roots

3. A Tale in the Sting : An Analysis of Nissim Ezekiel's "Night of the Scorpion"

4. 'Drama Talk : The Poetry of K. N. Daruwalla'

5. Two World : The Imagery of Jayanta Mahapatra

6. The Poetry of Sri Aurobindo : A Revaluation

7. Rabindranath Tagore and Saint Tukaram : A Study in Comparison

8. "How do I Love Thee?" Sarojini Naidu and Kamal Das as Poets of Love

9. Change, Continuity and Unity in the Poetry of Dom Moraes.

10. Gateway to What? Vikram Seth's The Golden Gate"

11. Alienation and the Contemporary Indian English Poet.

At the outset, it is to be noted that the limitation of space does not permit detailed attention to each of his critical appreciations. An attempt, therefore, is made to indicate the range and quality of the work.

1) Arun Kolatkar's *Jejuri* :

Naik's views on *Jejuri* first appeared in *Perspectives on Indian Poetry in English* (1984); later it appeared in *Dimensions of Indian English Literature* (1985); after a gap of twenty-one years, it appeared again in *Indian English Poetry : from the beginnings upto 2000* (2006). Each time, the title is changed, but the note on *Jejuri* remains the same: "*Jejuri* : A Thematic Study"; "Arun Kolatkar's *Jejuri* and the Three Value Systems"; "A Cock and Hen Story : Arun Kolatkar's "*Jejuri*"." Naik's contemporaries and later generation made a lot of attempts to analyse critically and place it in Indian English Poetry. The critics who made attempts on *Jejuri* are : Bruce King (*Modern Indian Poetry in*

English : 1987, P. 162); Madhusudan Prasad (*Living Indian English Poets:* 1989, P. 119); John Oliver Perry (*Absent Authority : Issues in Contemporary Indian English Criticism* : 1992, P. 190); P. K. Jain (*Changing Traditions in Indian English Literature* : 1995, P. 100); Shirish Chindhade (*Five Indian English Poets* : 2001, P. 91); N. Sharda Iyer (*Musings on Indian Writing in English,* Vol. 2 Poetry : 2005, P. 241). B. K. Das (*Contemporary Indo-English Poetry* : 2005, P. 57) and a host of others. The critical notes appear now and then in journals, literary books and newspapers. If one makes a careful study of these various critical books on *Jejuri*, one naturally finds the difference between Naik and others. With this perspective at the back of mind, let us see Naik's analysis
of *Jejuri.*

Arun Kolatkar, born in 1932, is an internationally distinguished Indian-English poet. He, like Kamala Das and Dilip Chitre, is a bilingual poet writing in English as well as in Marathi – his mother tongue. Writing over past two decades, he has published poems sporadically. Some of his poems, published in the now-defunct journals and magazines of the sixties and early seventies, are still uncollected. A non-prolific poet, he has so far produced only one book of poems in English, titled *Jejuri* (Clearing House, Bombay, 1976) and also only one book of poems in Marathi titled *Arun Kolatkarchya Kavita.*

Jejuri, a bunch of thirty-one poems, is Kolatkar's first volume of poetry. *Jejuri* has been regarded as a 'quest poem'. Naik goes a step further and says that *Jejuri* is more than a quest poem. If one regards it as a presentation of modern urban scepticism impinging upon ancient religious tradition, one is going to lose its thematic complexity. A close analysis reveals that while a scrutiny of ancient religious tradition is certainty a theme in the poem, it is not the sole theme but only a part of a larger thematic complex which is actually a conscious attempt to present in sharp contrast three major value-systems viz.

a) those of ancient religious tradition;

b) those of modern industrial civilization;

c) a value system older than both these – the Life principle in Nature and its ways.

Jejuri obviously exploits an age-old poetic theme of pilgrimage. Manohar, the protagonist, makes a trip along with friend, Makarand, to *Jejuri*, a place of pilgrimage some thirty miles off Pune in Maharashtra, now a wreck of our old crumbling civilization. The god to whom *Jejuri* is dedicated is very popular and is worshipped both in Maharashtra and

Karnataka and "has even Muslim devotees to whom he is known as "Mallakhan". Manohar is a modern, educated, rational (and hence sceptical) man – an average educated Indian of today – and he goes to *Jejuri* in quest of enlightment; but his sharply analytical mind discovers the place devoid of any religious sanctity and awe-inspiring mysticism, for all he notices there is aridity, ugliness, squalor decay dilapidation, ignorance, absurdity, materialism and perversion. The poems like "The Bus", "The Priest", "Heart of Ruin", "The Doorstep", "Water Supply", "The Pattern", "The Horseshoe", Shrine", "Manohar", "An Old Woman", "The Priest's Son", "A Song for a Vaghya", "A Song for Murli", "A Little Pile of Stones", "Makarand", "A Kind of a Cross", "The Cupboard", "The Blue Horse", "The Temple Rat" and others throw light on the religious theme of *Jejuri.*

"The Railway Station" has six sections with separate titles, depicting different vignettes briefly. The first section titled "the Indicator" presents a satirical comment on the concept of time and timelessness. The railway station becomes a temple having "a modern saint/ in need of paint." Like Yeshwant Rao, the indicator too has no hands. Like Maruti temple having dogs, the railway station, in the second section, too has a dog that looks like "doing penance for the last/ three hundred years under/ the tree of arrivals and departures." The "eight armed railway timetable" reminds us of the "eight arm goddess" in "A Low Temple". In the third section, the tea stall keeper, reminiscent of the priest's son, avoids replying to the question of the protagonist, as the priest's son has done. The station master, in the fourth section, is a satirical parallel to the priest in the earlier poems. The "two headed station master" is "superior/ intelligence" and that is why the booking clerk directs others to him. The mock ritual depicted in the fifth section, "Vows", is a mockery of the materialistic aspect of *Jejuri.*

The poems like "Ajamil and the Tigers", "The Butterfly" reveal the theme of Life-principle which predates all civilization and tradition. The concluding section of *Jejuri* shows how of the three value system presented in the poem, the Life-principle has rightly the last word. This section describes the setting sun, and the sun is an apt symbol of the Life-principle itself. It is the setting sun, and not the rising one, but the last two lines : "The Setting sun/ large as a wheel" clearly suggest that with the turning of the wheel of time, the setting sun is bound, in due course, to become the rising sun, so that life goes on.

Jejuri, because of its thematic complexity, is a deeply impressive classic that, in the entire spectrum of contemporary Indian-English poetry, compels attention. *Jejuri* won the prestigious Commonwealth poetry Prize in 1977. It was translated into German language. *Jejuri* still attracts

plenty of critical attention. To conclude with the observation of S. C. Harrex "*Jejuri* can be read (and many have been so intended) as a modern, slightly ironic version of bhakti poetry, a version especially appropriate to an age in which scientific rationality and religious faith are sceptical of each other" (1989:P.141).

2) A. K. Ramanujan and the Search for Roots :

A. K. Ramanujan was thirty-seven when *The Striders* (1966) was published. Thereafter like Philip Larkin's, his books of poems appeared at the rate of one per decade, *Relations* in 1971 and *Second Sight* in 1986. When his *Collected Poems* came out in 1995, its fourth and last section consisted of *The Black Hen,* the collection he was working on and had almost completed at the time of his death.

Ramanujan's poetry is essentially Indian in material and sensibility. Ramanujan explains this paradox himself in a note in *Ten Twentieth-Century Indian Poets* (pp. 95-96) : "English and my disciplines (linguistics, anthropology) give me my "outer" forms– linguistic, metrical, logical, and other ways of shaping experience, and my first thirty years in India, my frequent visits and fieldtrips, my personal and professional preoccupations with Kannada and Tamil, the classics and folklore give me my substance, my "inner" forms, images and symbols. They are continuous with each other and I no longer can tell what comes from where" (1990 : 153). Ramanujan's rootedness in Indian culture and involvement with American culture has resulted in his skilful articulation of both the Indian and the Western ideas with ease. As a poet, linguist, folklorist, translator, and literary theorist, he is one of the world's foremost intellectuals. He is unique in bringing together two great cultures having been at home in both. With this perspective at the back of mind, let us see what Naik has to say about Ramanujan and his 'Search for Roots'.

As usual, Naik begins his note on Ramanujan with the quotation of R. Parthasarathy : "There is something to be said for exile. You learn roots are deep" (1950). There could be no better illustration of the truth of this statement than the poetry of Ramanujan. It is perhaps his long sojourn abroad that explains Ramanujan's persistent obsession with his Indian past – both familial and racial. This obsession constitutes a major theme in all his poetry. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the present-day American scene and setting impinges on his mind but rarely as in "The Striders" and "Take Care". Even here the foreign setting sometimes only serves as a means to evoke a contrast between the western scene and the eastern, as in "Christmas". Like the protagonist in his poem, "A Lapse of Memory", the poet would seem to "recognize nothing present/ to his concave eye groping only/ for mother and absences." So important is

the past to Ramanujan that a consciousness of it colours his love-poetry as well. In "Love Poem For a Wife – I", he regrets that "Really what keeps us apart/ at the end of years is unshared/ childhood."

On the personal plane, this insistent preoccupation with the past produces a poetry in which memory plays a vigorous, creative role. In fact, Ramanujan appears to make demands on memory which it cannot completely fulfil, leaving him lamenting that "Memory, / in a crowd of memories, seems/ to have no place/ at all for unforgettable things."

These memories are mostly of life seen through the eyes of a sensitive and observant boy growing up in a traditional middle-class southern Hindu Brahmin family. Early impressions recorded with almost total recall are of various kinds.

First, there is the terror felt when "a basketful of ritual cobras" with their brown-wheat glisten ringed with ripples" comes into "the tame little house." The memories are seldom as pleasant as the shared past of family relations in "Love Poem for a Wife". In "Breaded Fish" memories recall a half-naked woman dead on a beach. While the memory is not explained, there is a symbolic relationship between the affectionate gesture of a woman specially preparing the fish for him and the dead woman 'breaded/ by the grained indifference of sand'. The association of death and an indifferent universe is brought to mind by the dead fish. There are a number of poems like "Snakes", "Still Another For Mother" which reflect upon terror felt memory. Contrasted with this, there is the far more pleasant memory of the wonder at the strange alchemy which gradually transforms the water in the grandfather's shaving glass from a drab white into a wine dark mystery, when potassium permanganate is added to it. Poems like "History" register a further development.

A preoccupation with personal familial memories leads to a search for racial roots. The vital connection between the two is clearly started in "Self portrait" in which the speaker declares, "I resemble everyone/ but myself, and sees in a mirror the portrait of a stranger/ date unknown/ often signed in a corner/ by my father. In another place, the poet's person finds his entire personality bred in an ancestors bone and 'ancestral crocodiles and tortoises often haunt his imagination. The view of oneself as the only product of one's racial, ethos leads the poet to ponder over his racial heritage and assess its strength and weaknesses. 'I must seek and will find/ my particular Hell in my Hindu Mind", he declares. Poems like "Small Scale Reflections on the Great – House" throw light on Hindu heritage Ramanujan ponders over his racial heritage and assess its strength and weakness. "A River", "the Hindoo", "Christmas", "A Hindu to His Body" and others deal with the strength and weakness of cultural heritage.

To conclude, despite its rootedness in Indian cultural traditions, Ramanujan's poetry can be read on its own as English-language poetry with modern themes and forms. Thus, he achieves a rare blending of the ancient and the modern, the Indian and the American idioms. As in T. S. Eliot, in Ramanujan too, there is continuity from tradition to modernity, a continuity between his poetry, translation, and scholarship.

3) A Tale in the Sting : An Analysis of Nissim Ezekiel's "Night of the Scorpion" :

The Post-Independence Indian English poetry saw its new poetry in the fifties. Among the new poets like A. K. Ramanujan, R. Parthasarathy, Shiv K. Kumar, Kamala Das, Monica Verma, O. P. Bhatnagar, Gauri Deshpande, Adil Jussawalla, Ezekiel occupies a prominent place. His versatile genius can be found in his poetry, plays, criticism, journalism and translation.

Ezekiel has written many poems on the subjects that immediately surround him. He has centred his attention most on family relationship – the interaction between the poet and his immediate family – wife, children and parents. His mother is vividly remembered in "Night of the Scorpion". "Night of the Scorpion" integrates the family with the community, the superstitions with the rational and the scientific, the concern of the father, the children and the neighbours for the mother, stung by the scorpion, and the mother's strong love for her children :

> "My mother only said,
> Thank God the scorpion picked on me and spared my children."

With this perspective at the back of mind, let us see Naik's analysis of the poem.

In the opening of his analysis, Naik made a hard study of the critical material available on the poem. Various critics like Rajeev Taranath, Meena Belliappa, Christopher Wiseman, Chetan Karnani have been noted and their views on "Night of the Scorpion" have been analysed. Four distinct attitudes are sharply differentiated in the poem. The first is the traditional, popular Indian (Hindu-Buddhist) view of it, which is a curious mixture of metaphysics, faith and superstition. This view is represented by the peasants. Diametrically opposed to this view is that represented by the father, "sceptic, rationalist". For him a scorpion-bite is just a case for the employment of experimental medicine, "powder, mixture, herb and hybrid." He even pours a little paraffin on the bitten toe and puts a match to it.

When both traditional faith and modern science have registered failure, what steps in is something older than both, i.e. magic which

belongs to the days of the infancy of organized religion. The 'Magic doctor performs his rites "to tame the poison with an incantation.," though without registering any success.

The concluding lines – "My mother only said/ Thank God the scorpion picked on me/ and spared my children" – record the last of the four reactions which is more ancient than all the three noted so far, for it is maternal love, rooted in the biological instinct. Having analysed the poem, Naik goes a step further to see the structure of the poem.

According to him, the structure of the poem is marked by perfect economy. From this point of view of form, 'Night of the Scorpion" belongs to the class of poetry which may be designated the 'poetry of situation' – an art in which Browning and Robert Frost excelled. It begins with an incident and ends by throwing light on significant aspects of human nature and life. A significant feature of style is its utter bareness, virtually, shorn of all imagery, there being just one simile and one metaphor in the whole poem. The simile – the peasants come "like a swarm of flies" – stresses the rural setting, while the metaphor – 'giant scorpion shadows' – reiterates the scorpion motif central to the poem.

Like its solitary simile and metaphor, the poem employs just one external symbol – the 'steady', 'endless rain'.

While its thematic richness and its technical finesse make "Night of the Scorpion" one of the finest of modern Indian English poems, another significant aspect of it deserves special mention. It is a poem which only an Indian English poet could have written, since the experience and the responses to it recreated here are rooted in the modern Indian situation. And an art rooted in the soil has a freshness and a vigour which no amount of clever pastiche dressed up in sheer technical virtuosity can ever hope to possess. This is another lesson that "Night of the Scorpion", the tale of which is in the sting, appears to drive home.

To conclude, Ezekiel's "Night of the Scorpion" is often quoted by the critics in anthologies and the editors have published in books and text-books. The poem is remarkable for its content and form.

4) 'Drama Talk' : The Poetry of K. N. Daruwalla :

Men of profession like Gieve Patel (a doctor), Jayanta Mahapatra (a teacher of Physics) and Keki N. Daruwalla (a police officer) have also contributed a lot to Indian Poetry in English. K. N. Daruwalla, being a Police Officer, published a number of volumes of poetry. He has his own theory and creed of writing. About his poetry, Daruwalla says "There is little that is urbane or sophisticated about my poetry. I avoid a well-groomed appearance and strive for a sort of earthy poetry – I tend to make

my verse as condensed and harsh as possible ... Significant incidents I turn into what I call "incident poems". However, I try and involve myself with attitudes to things rather than the incident itself" (2008: 294). Many poems dramatise incidents as if reported by an angry, concerned journalist. A Daruwalla poem is not content merely to note and observe; it acts like an exhortation to action, even if the action is an act of the mind. With this perspective at the back of mind, let us see what Naik has to say about "'Drama Talk' : the Poetry of K. N. Daruwalla."

In his 'Dialogues with a Third Voice', Daruwalla has three sections entitled 'Myth Talk', 'Poetry Talk' and 'Tragedy Talk' respectively. Taking one's cue from this, one is tempted to characterize Daruwalla's most successful poems as 'Drama Talk', for the voice heard in them is unmistakably the second of the 'Three Voices of Poetry' noted by T. S. Eliot i.e. 'the voice of the Poet addressing an audience, whether larger or small, and not the first voice, which is 'The Voice of the poet talking to himself or to nobody.' In these poems, Daruwalla's poetic strategy is to present a character in a concrete situation and intensive scrutiny reveals that he succeeds best when his presentation is marked by clear visualization, the presence of a substantial thematic core, an integrated approach and a well-ordered structure, and that consequently, the absence or the relative paucity of one or more of these elements spells varying degrees of failure.

Being a police officer, Daruwalla does not simply study men and watch their behaviour, he responds to their situation in a number of ways and creatively too. Hence, he makes the evocative distinction between, 'easy' and 'difficult' animals. The 'easy' animals are 'all that moved on legs/ flew on wings/ crawled on the belly/ inhaled through fins', the one 'difficult animal being Man' ('Easy and Difficult animals').

The characters that appear in these poems operate in different worlds of human activity – Orion, Carvak, Karna, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Maulvi Saheb. At places, the protagonist in a Daruwalla poem is drawn not from the human world but from the realm of the divine. There are two poems on 'Shiva'.

Some poems like 'The Ghagra in Spate' centre round forces of nature. Like forces of nature, the animal world also provides Daruwalla with some of his protagonists and in spite of the distinction made between 'easy' animals which include birds and beasts and 'difficult' animals (i.e. human beings), the 'easy' animals in Daruwalla's poetry do possess, a 'difficult' dimension. 'Haranag', 'Death of a Bird', 'The Fighting Eagles' are some of the poems which reflect upon birds and beasts. Poems like 'Indian English, the language that I use', 'To Fellow Indian poets' throw light on the literary phenomena.

The wide variety of scene and setting in these poems attract the attention of the readers. Nature, society, religion, politics, culture and literature – all those provide locales for Daruwalla's poetry, thus underscoring the need of a strong underpinning of actuality for his art. In the midst of all this wide variety, the one element that does not seem to change is Daruwalla's imagery and this is as it should be because, while it is rather limited in range, his imagery at its best is eminently functional and its ethos is all of a piece with the 'drama talk'. The two dominant images used in the poems are violence and dirt-disease.

Naik while praising Daruwalla for his 'Drama Talk', does not hesitate to show his limitations as a poet. He, with the help of the poems such as 'Evangelical Eve', 'Under 'Orion'', 'Crossing of Rivers', 'Curfew - 2' points how the unity of effect is spoiled by a needless shifting of the point of view.

In this essay, Naik has shown how theme and tone, structure and imagery interact in creating an absorbing human drama which has few parallels in Indian poetry in English.

5) Two Worlds : The Imagery of Jayanta Mahapatra :

Jayanta Mahapatra began his poetic career late. Sahitya Akademi gave him an award for his *Relationship*. There is a remarkable spontaneity that indicates that poetry comes natural to him as a dream. The range of his subject is wide. His themes are characterized by the private and public, the religious and metaphysical, the national and universal, the contemporary and the perennial, superimposed by his hermit like meditativeness revealing a contemplative centrality. Mahapatra was fond of images. Certain words and images recur throughout the book and become motifs. Many of Mahapatra's later symbols are present – the sky, the crows, flames, trees, the seasons, walls, distance. Commenting on the significance of images, Bruce King observes "The use of recurring motifs and images is a means of giving unity to a volume of poems and bringing the individual lyrics into closer relation, so that they seem continuous meditation on such themes as loneliness and personal relationships" (1987: 196). With this perspective at the back of mind, let us see Naik's analysis of Mahapatra's poetry in general, and imagery in particular.

Naik begins by quoting Mahapatra's views on imagery. "Today's Poem" Mahapatra has said, "utilizes a number of images and symbols to form a whole, leaving the reader to extricate himself with the valid meaning or argument from them ... This is true of much of the poetry I have written." Later, he adds, "a seemingly obscure poem does', in its content, contain the hidden voice for its ultimate understanding." He also

believes that "a great poem lets us embark on a sort of journey or voyage through symbols and allusions to encompass the human condition." He calls this kind of poetry a new 'Surrealism' and argues, "if contemporary life is no longer what it was, say, twenty-five years back, can one expect the same content, the same form, the same substance from contemporary poems."

Analysing the relation between a poem and the reader, Mahapatra envisages three possibilities : "This experience might (1) reach the reader almost immediately spontaneously – in the manner of electric charge passing through a good conductor such as copper or iron; (ii) reach the reader with difficulty, slowly, under great stress, like that of charge passing through a bad conductor like glass; or (iii) not be able to pass or communicate at all, as though there was a break or gap between them... The capacity or power for conducting the essential experience of the poem will primarily depend upon the poem itself – on the poem's design."

Imagery appears to play a dominant role in the shaping of this design, except in some of the recent works of Mahapatra. As he himself observes, "perhaps I begin with an image or a cluster of images; or an image leads to another, or perhaps the images belonging to a sort of 'group' ... The image starts the movement of the poem ... but I do not know where I am proceeding in the poem or how the poem is going to end. It is as though I am entering a region of darkness, a place of the mind which I have never visited before. Or if I have visited it, I have not been able to see into all the corners of that place. Therefore, without a conscious reason, I grope from one level to another in my mind and try to reach the end. That's how the end of a poem of mine comes about, and it is exploratory no doubt, I don't know myself how the poem is going to be."

An intensive scrutiny of Mahapatra's imagery reveals that his images are drawn from two worlds viz; the exterior world of phenomenal reality and the surrealistic world and the way these two worlds are related is equally significant. The image is for Mahapatra not merely what Wyndham Lewis called, the primary pigment of poetry; it is almost his characteristic way of reacting to experience, ordering it and recording it. It becomes in his work "a single language" sometimes "so hard for others to read or guess". The exterior world and the surrealistic world have different kinds of images. Within the scope of a dissertation, one cannot make a comprehensive examination of every type of image that Mahapatra employed in his poetry. The researcher is, therefore, compelled to jot down the types of images being employed in the exterior world and the surrealistic world.

The images employed in the exterior world are drawn from nature, animal, diseases, domestic science, religion, inanimate things, and imagery concerns with body and its physical functions. Mahapatra is least bothered for images drawn from politics and war. Images that he made use of in the world of surreal experience are called 'images of wonder'. Mahapatra's surreal imagery does not always lend itself to such clear and plausible interpretations.

One of the limitations of his employment of imagery is incoherence and opacity which ultimately fail to produce cogent artistic communication. As he has observed himself "When I reread the poetry I have written, I find many of the poems confused, made up of abstractions which fail to connect with the reader." Later, he defends himself against the charge of incoherence.

Despite its limitations, this scrutiny of the nature and scope of Mahapatra's imagery and the way it spans the two worlds of phenomenal and surreal experience has served to indicate the variety and complexity of his poetry, the sources of its strength and the factors that make for its limitations.

6) The Poetry of Sri Aurobindo : A Revaluation :

Manmohan Ghose and Sri Aurobindo Ghose played crucial role in the development of Indo-Anglian literature. Both brothers have poetic output at their disposals. Aurobindo Ghose wrote lyrics, narrative poems and a cosmic epic and a large body of philosophical poems and a few poetic plays besides translations, and illustrates the range of his poetic genius. Sri Aurobindo was a seer, a philosopher, a poet and a dramatist. With this perspective at the back of mind, let us see Naik's assessment of Shri Aurobindo as a poet.

Sri Aurobindo is probably the most unfortunate of Indian English poets. In that most critics seem to react to him only by adopting extreme positions. The pendulum seems to swing regularly from starry-eyed adoration to contemptuous condemnation. People seem to view him only by either wearing rose-coloured spectacles or dark-coloured blinkers. And this has been going on for half a century and more since he left the world in 1950. It is high time one saw Sri Aurobindo 'steadily' and saw him 'whole', without any preconceived notions. One must approach him neither as a committed disciple nor as a carping modernist. A perfectly objective judgement is difficult in a case like this, but at least a beginning can be made in that direction.

Naik takes into consideration the opinions of critics, historians, literary historians, poets and a number of others with a view to put

forward his revaluation of Sri Aurobindo as a poet. R. C. Mujumdar (Mitra, 1976, 12), Iyengar (Indo-Anglian Literature, 1973, 144), Sisirkumar Mitra (Mitra, 1976, 155), C. R. Reddy (Mitra, op. cit., 195) have praised for his works. *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature* (Sampson, 1946, 515) devoted lines less than two and a half lines to Sri Aurobindo, by describing him "more famous as an exponent of Indian nationalism than as a poet." According to the *History*, Manmohan Ghose is "the most remarkable of Indian poets who wrote in English" (Ibid.). Naik does not agree with History.

The fashion to debunk and devalue Sri Aurobindo began in India with the advent of modernist poetry soon after Independence. The editors like P. Lal and K. Raghavendra Rao and the poets like Nissim Ezekiel, K. N. Daruwalla and K. D. Katrak express poor opinion about Sri Aurobindo Ghose as a poet.

In view of such extreme stances adopted by both Sri Aurobindo's admirers and detractors, it is all the more necessary to try to arrive at a balanced judgement.

Naik points out a number of reasons which accord Sri Aurobindo as a great poet of Indian writing in English. First, his range is deep and wide. He wrote copiously in several forms including epic, narrative and lyrical poetry, drama, literary criticism and philosophical and religious prose, apart from functioning as one of the most prominent leaders in the Revolutionary movement before he turned a Yogi. Naik goes a step further and points out in detail the work of Sri Aurobindo. For want of space, the researcher could not go for details.

To conclude, one highly original epic poem, and a host of devotional lyrics marked by authenticity and power should ensure Sri Aurobindo a very high place among Indian English poets. Perhaps he wrote too much, and too much which is merely derivative and imitative, but in his stronger moments, he certainly has 'the strength of ten.'

7) Rabindranath Tagore and Saint Tukaram : A Study in Comparison :

Rabindranath Tagore was from Bengal and Saint Tukaram was from Maharashtra; both were devotional poets; the former was living in the 19th century, and the latter was in the seventeenth century.

Naik, in his assessment of both, points out certain differences between the two devotional poets, and some common shares in between them. First, it is to be noted that Tagore hails from a refined and sophisticated family whereas Tukaram comes from a poor class. Secondly, Tagore's God is by and large an abstract force shaping human

life, while Tukaram's God is highly personalized. He is the deity at Pandharpur, with goddess Rukmini by his side. Thirdly, the radical differences between Tagore and Tukaram in terms of birth, upbringing and social ambience are perhaps best illustrated in the various approaches to God in the Marathi poet, which Tagore could not even dream of. For both the poets, God can be a companion or associate. Fourthly, Tagore writes primarily as a poet, and not as a mystic or saint. Tukaram on the other hand, is primarily a devotee, and poetry is only a by-product of his quest, as far as he is concerned. Finally, the difference between Tagore and Tukaram is perhaps most noticeable in respect of form and style. Tagore employs free verse in *Gitanjali*, whereas Tukaram employs a closed stanza structure, with regular rhymes. His *abhangs* normally have two kinds of structure, both rhymed. Tagore's imagery is drawn from nature, the sky and the ocean, light and darkness play a major role in it. Tukaram, on the other hand, seems to do without any kind of imagery, as if his forthright utterance abjures it most of the time. Having seen the differences between the two, let us see the common things between them. First, both were devotional poets. Secondly, both poets employ the Beggar-Donar analogy in describing the Man-God nexus. Thirdly, it is common for a devotional poet to raise the question and answer it. Fourthly, both Tagore and Tukaram are true to Hindu thought in their view of death.

These differences notwithstanding, Tagore and Tukaram are essentially poets who share a common vision and goal, though they differ radically and inevitably in several respects. They heard the same 'drummer', though in one case, the poet had to ask, "When my work shall be done in this world ... shall I stand before thee face to face?" While the other considered himself blessed when he beheld before his eyes "the comely figure, standing on one brick at the holy locus of Pandharpur in Maharashtra."

8) "How do I Love Thee?" Sarojini Naidu and Kamala Das as Poets of Love :

Sarojini Naidu and Kamala Das are eminently representative of their respective generations. Born and brought up in a Bengali Bhadrolok 19th century family, Naidu naturally subscribes to the Victorian idea of womanhood, which in her case was grafted on the Indian tradition which she shared. In both these traditions woman was mostly seen as a weak, delicate, clinging creature, wholly dependent on Man. And this is how Naidu seems to view Woman, though in her own personal life she did break the mould.

The Woman in Naidu's poetry is all surrender : "Take my flesh to feed your dogs if you choose/ water your garden-trees with my blood if

you will/ turn my heart into ashes, my dreams into dust/ Am I not yours, O Love, to cherish or to kill" ("Devotion"). Naidu's ideal of womanhood is represented by the speaker in "The flute player of Brindaban"; "So where thou goes I must go/ My Flute-player with thee ... / Where ever thy subtle flute I hear/ Beloved, I must go."

In Naidu's treatment of the theme of love, we find nothing but superficialities. "A Rajput Love Song" expresses the longing of lovers for each other; the poet in "The Poet's Love Song" is lost in dreams; "Alone" emphasizes the loneliness of the beloved; in "The Garden Vigil", separated from her lover, the beloved seeks consolation in addressing the morning star. "A Love Song from the North", "Caprice", and "Longing" stress the pathos of separation occasioned by the lover's absence or desertion and "The Festival of Memory" dwells on the sweetness of the memory of love.

The cluster of love poems entitled "The Temple" is perhaps more ambitious than the poems already referred to. Here again it is vain to look for any depth or penetration. The poems in this sequence are no doubt an expression of passionate feeling; but the idealization of love which she attempts does not come out successfully beside the sentimentalization of masculine domination and the abject surrender of womanhood which she seems to advocate in them. Even humiliation at the hands of the lover is described as a sweet experience. The beloved is prepared to pardon all the wrongs done to her, though broken-hearted she is. Her devotion to love is so great that she does not mind any moment of sacrifice at its altar. She, therefore, asks to be crushed by her lover like a lemon leaf or basil bloom or to be burnt like a sandal grain. And in the end when the surrender to the lover is complete, we notice an emotional exaggeration, not only insincere but positively ugly :

'Take my flesh to feed your dogs if you choose,
Water your garden-trees with my blood if you will,
Turn my heart into ashes, my dreams into dust,
Am I not yours, O Love, to cherish or kill?

This kind of emotional untidiness occurs in an earlier love poem too. There she sings defying all logical sequence :

'Hide me in a shrine of roses,
Drown me in a wine of roses
Drawn from every fragrant grove!
Bind me on a pyre of roses,
Burn me in a fire of roses,
Crown me with the rose of love!

But in spite of all its trials and tragedies, Love remains a prime value for Naidu. In the closing pages of *The Sceptred Flute*, she asks "Why should my true love falter or fear or rebel?" and declares, "So shall my year nine, Love at last/ Grow sanctified/ Thro sorrow find deliverance/ From mortal pride/ So shall my soul redeemed re-born/ Attain thy sid" (*ISF*, 231).

Kamala Das, who has published only three slender volumes of poetry, *Summer in Calcutta, The Descendants,* and *The Old Playhouse and Other Poems*, has established "her reputation as the femme fatale" of Indian English poetry. K. N. Daruwalla writes "Kamala Das is pre-eminently a poet of love and pain, one stalking, the other through a near neurotic world. There is an all pervasive sense of hurt throughout. Love, the lazy animal, hungers of the flesh, hurt and humiliation are the warp and woof of her poetic fabric. She seldom ventures outside this personal world." (2000: 99). Love is the central emotion in woman's heart. She craves for union with man for the fulfillment of love but she is disillusioned and frustrated when it degenerates into sheer lustfulness and bodily pleasures. Her poetry deals with unfulfilled love and the celebration of sex poems like, "The Freaks", "Convicts", "A Request", "An Introduction", "In Love" and "The Sunshine Cat" deal with Das's the theme of love and sex.

While assessing both as poets of love, Naik tries to focus on modern love which "has more perplexities and paradoxes than could be dreamt of in 19th century philosophy." In his concluding part, Naik says that Naidu's love poetry represents, by and large, the songs of the innocence of Love ... Kamala Das, on the other hand, is the poet of the 'songs of experience'. She has her moments of innocence and even naivety, but she is essentially a poet who has looked upon the Gorgon face of Love, and has lived to tell the tale : "Ah, why does love come to me like pain/ Again and again and again?" ("The Testing of the Sirens").

9) Change, Continuity and Unity in the Poetry of Dom Moraes :

According to Naik, Dom Moraes invites comparison with John Milton. Both were precocious poets. Like Milton, Moraes started his poetic career 'at the age of 12'. By 15, W. H. Auden had read and liked his poems. Stephen Spender published them in *Encounter* and Karl Shapiro did, so in *Poetry Chicago*. At 19 he published his first book of poems, *A Beginning*, which won the Hawthornden Prize for the best work of imagination in 1968. Moraes remains the first non-English person to win this prize and also the youngest (*Collected Poems*, Blurb. The autobiography – *My Son's Father* reveals how his familial background and upbringing shaped his personality in rather negative ways, so that

loneliness, exile, alienation and rootlessness came to be dominant elements in it.

In the first phase of his work, the theme of alienation, leading to rootlessness, homelessness, and loneliness is constantly harped upon as in: 'I have grown up, I think, to live alone/ To keep my old illusions, sometimes dreams/ Glumly, that I am unloved and forlorn, /Run away from strangers, often seem/ Unread to myself." The poem "The Pilgrims" illustrates his feeling of homelessness. "Cainsmorning reflects upon the same theme."

In his later poetry, the alienation theme changes. "The Princess", "Gladiator" reveal his attitude towards alienation. In the earlier phase, when the poet portrayed a character in a given situation, as in "Cainsmorning", the purely descriptive mode adopted was probably far less effective than the later dramatic monologue. The poem "The Pilgrims" contains the theme of loneliness which gives unity to Morae's poetry, whatever changes it undergoes with the passage of time, ensuring an unmistakable continuity.

10) Gateway to What? Vikram Seth's "The Golden Gate" :

Vikram Seth, one of the outstanding among Indian English novelists, was born in Kolkatta in 1952. His publications are – *From Heaven Lake*, a travel book, *The Humble Administrator's Garden*, a collection of poems, *All You Who Sleep Tonight*, a collection of poems, and *The Golden Gate,* his first novel in the sonnet form.

The Golden Gate (1986) has received exceptionally high praise from reviewers, both in India, and abroad. Most of them were dazzled by the innovativeness shown by the poet in form and style.

The Golden Gate consists of 593 sonnets, including the acknowledgements, table contents and the author's autobiographical note. It is written in iambic tetrameter that has been out of fashion, for over a century. He was inspired to use the poetic form for novel by Alexander Pushkin's master piece, *Eugene Onegin* (1831) which uses the poetic form skillfully.

The Golden Gate, divided into the following thirteen chapters thematically depicts alienation and isolation that characterize contemporary life, life of young professionals, a succession of romantic relationships, including a homosexual one, anti-war demonstrations, hobbies, wine making, cats and pet iguanas :

1. The world's discussed while friends are eating.
2. A cache of billets-doux arrive.

3. A concert generates a meeting.
4. A house is warmed. Sheep come alive.
5. Olives are picked in prime condition.
6. A cat reacts to competition.
7. Arrests occur. A speech is made.
8. Coffee is drunk, and scrabble played.
9. A quarrel is initiated.
10. Vines rest in early winter light.
11. The winking Owl fills up by night.
12. An old offer is renovated.
13. Friends mediate on friends who have gone.

Besides these 13 chapters, it contains one sonnet each on Dedication, Acknowledgements and about the author. In the Dedication the writer feels relief after the completion of the book :

> I am free
> Of this warm enterprise, this heady
> Labour that has exhausted me
> Through Thirteen months, swift and delightful.

Seth owes gratitude to Steels, a fellow poet, to whom the book is dedicated.

It is a novel on California. The theme of *The Golden Gate* which revolves round John, who is the protagonist, Jan Liz and Phil is a powerful tragedy. The novelist reveals that true love lends charm and beauty to life. "Seth's style", says Naik, "is lucid and colloquial, and though he employs imagery sparingly, it is always appropriate, as in 'The Dow-Jones of my heart's depressed and 'You are the DJ of your fate, the urban ambience of which suits the milieu of the poem. Nature imagery is inevitably rare, but suddenly an image like 'caught in the kelp/ of loneliness' surprises us.

To conclude, Khushwant Singh has highly praised the work of Seth. Naik does not remain behind. He says that "*The Golden Gate* is a great technical triumph, a tour de force, which can perhaps never be repeated again, not even by the poet himself" (2006: 143). *The Golden Gate* is an unrivalled masterpiece in Indian English novel because of Seth's compassionate treatment of various issues including homosexuality and pet animals and Seth's comical yet profound insight into human psychology and his magic with words. It is perhaps the finest book to emerge from the hands of an Indian writing in English language.

11) Alienation and the Contemporary Indian English Poet :

In his essay on "Alienation and the Contemporary Indian Poet", Naik points the reasons for alienation. He states a number of reasons such as the spirit of the modern age; an age of science and technology; the Indian poet mostly belongs to the urban or semi urban middle class; influence of the West; the traditional religious ethos; socio-cultural mores; existential alienation. These reasons and some more cause the poet's alienation.

Later, he gives a brief history of the poets who have attempted alienation in their poetry – Arun Kolatkar's *Jejuri,* Shiv K. Kumar's "Broken Columns"; A. K. Ramanujan's "Prayers to Lord Murugan", G. S. Sharat Chandra's "Tirumalai"; Nissim Ezekiel's "Jewish Wedding in Bombay". Eunice de Souza's "Fix", Jayanta Mahapatra's "The Tattooed Taste", K. N. Daruwalla's "The Son Speaks to the Dead Rake"; Gieve Patel's "Nargol"; Gauri Deshpande's "Migrane"; A. K. Mehrotra's "Eleven Cross Sections and Dilip Chitre's "Travelling in a Cage".

V. Issues/ Problems and Position :

1) Echo and Voice in Indian Poetry in English :

M. K. Naik, the chief editor of *Journal of the Karnatak University* (Humanities) published his article 'Echo and Voice in Indian Poetry in English' (Vol. XIII, 1969). The same article appeared again in *Indian Response to Poetry in English : Essays in Honour of Dr. V. K. Gokak presented on his Sixtieth Birthday* (Madras : Macmillan and Company, 1970, P. 267).

The essay plays an important role when the pre-independence English poetry was rejected by the critics, describing as imitative and derivative. It became the general fashion to ignore pre-independence poetry altogether. R. Parthasarathy even declares that Indian English poetry 'did not seriously begin to exist until after the withdrawal of the British from India'. Naik did not agree either with the Indian critics and poets or the Western critics. This is an astounding pronouncement; surely an entire century of literary effort can not be wiped out like this by a rash stroke of an irresponsible pen. Naik bluntly answers to these critics by saying 'If the best that Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and Sarojini Naidu wrote is not poetry, we must then have a new definition of poetry altogether" (2006: 5). With this perspective at the back of mind, let us see what Naik has to say about the origin and the development of Indian poetry in English.

The title of the essay reveals what Naik intends to say in a couple of pages. There are two voices in Indian poetry in English : the first is

authentic voice and the second is an 'echo'. That is, Indian poetry in English shows the two strains of imitation and authenticity at work. Later, Naik points out a number of reasons that are responsible for the imitation of poetry– English education, Macaulay's introduction of English, the role of social reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, impact of the Georgians and the Romantics, influence of John Milton, Modernism etc. During this period, the 'echo' is seen from the beginnings of Indo-Anglian verse to the present.

But the voice of the true poet has also been always heard in Indian poetry in English. We have had enough of Indian Miltons and Indian Shelleys and Indian Eliots – what we really need is the 'Indian', Indian poet in English. The most obvious form authenticity has taken is the choice of specifically Indian themes, setting, and frame of reference.

Naik illustrates the authenticity of voice by taking the examples of Kashiprasad Ghose, Sarojini Naidu, Sri Aurobindo, Nissim Ezekiel, etc.

Naik concludes his essay by saying that the voice of the true poet has always been heard in Indian poetry in English though it has perhaps been more overheard than heard so far. The timbre of this voice will certainly be enriched if the Indian poet in English evolves poetic rhythms of his own, based on his own native speech-rhythms. Naik quotes the examples of Raja Rao (*Kathapura*), Mokashi-Punekar (*The Captive*) and Sri Aurobindo (*Savitri*) with a view to indicate the 'voice', the authentic voice. He observes, "It may be 'a sparrow's voice at present, but nevertheless it is an authentic voice which, as it develops and matures, may in the fullness of years, be heard, 'breaking the silence of the seas', across the wide English-speaking world." (1970: 279)

2) The Indianness of Indian Poetry in English :

Naik frames the following questions :

1) Is Indian verse in English only sometimes "Indian" and only occasionally poetry?

2) Must Indian poetry in English be "Indian" before it can be true poetry?

3) In what exactly lies the genuine "Indianness" of Indian poetry in English?

In the next paragraph, he takes each question and tries to answer it. The first question that he poses is "Is Indian verse in English only sometimes 'Indian' and only occasionally poetry?" All Indian verse in English produced during the last century and a half from Henry Derozio to the present day does not automatically qualify as genuine poetry. The

second part of the question is "Is Indian verse in English only sometimes Indian". The question refers to non-authenticity of poetry. That is, the poetry is imitative and derivative. We have a gallery of echoes rather than a chorus of authentic voices. Indian poetry in English is thus only occasionally poetry and only sometimes Indian. But why, it may be asked, most Indian poetry in English be always "Indian", whatever that term might mean? Why insist that the Indian poet must produce his passport and establish his nationality, before he can be cleared through critical customs? Wherein exactly lies the 'Indianness' of Indian English poetry? All genuine literature is rooted in a culture, a place and a time, which imparts to it a unique flavour. The term 'Indianness' has been illustrated by giving the examples of the poets such as Eunice D'Souza, Nissim Ezekiel, Agha Shahid Ali. The Indian poet may express his 'Indianness' through several forms and shapes. The Indian poet's Indianness may also find expression through his imagery. Examples of Tagore's poetry, Sri Aurobindo's poetry and Dom Moraes's poetry could be given to show the Indianness of the Indian poet.

Finally, Naik draws our attention to the ethos. This ethos is unmistakably present in the *Gitanjali* of Tagore, in Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*, in the finest lyrics of Naidu and in the best work of some modern Indian poets in English. The poetry of A. K. Ramanujan shows how an Indian poet in English can derive strength from going back to his roots. Naik, in his concluding part of the essay, expects "India too should be a poem in the eyes of her poets. When that consummation has been perfectly achieved, it will no longer be necessary to talk about the Indianness of Indian poetry in English" (2006 : 180).

VI. Conclusion :

Naik makes a concise attempt to study the entire range of Indian English poetry, from its beginnings upto the year 2000. It comprises general survey of periods and schools; evaluation of prominent periods; analysis of outstanding poems, long and short; and consideration of significant issues, such as Alienation and Indianness in respect of Indian English poetry. Prema Nandakumar rightly observes "'Thorough' is the code word that describes all Prof. Naik's work – be it research or criticism – and this is seen too in his present meritorious exercise in literary history" (1983: 48). What she has observed in *A History of Indian English Literature* (1982) is also applicable to other works of Naik such as poetry etc.

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