

O.P.BHATNAGAR

AS A POET:

A STUDY OF HIS ART & CRAFT

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Preface

I cannot say why I have chosen O.P.Bhatnagar as for my study, but this much I can assure you that he is one of the poets whom we have left out from including in modern poetry and from prescribing his poetry for the students too in our institutions, but instead of that, a few have finished their Ph.Ds. and M.Phils. on him and he is a poet of repute without any doubt. I have known him since I came to read about in K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar and M.K.Naik's history books. I remember the day when I sent post-cards requesting him to send his books and he sent them by post or parcelled them to be returned after having photocopied. So was R.Rabindranth Menon and he too has been left out by the critics as well as the professors and the anthologists. People read Meena Alexander, but why not Anna Sujatha Mathai who is not less than her. Vikram Seth too was not famous, but has become, that I cannot say it. His first work too appeared it from Writers' Workshop, Calcutta. Tabish Khair's poems too appeared in Baldev Mirza's little magazine. Tabish turned into a famous poet, but Baldev could not. But apart from it, Baldev is no doubt a beautiful poet, so artistic and meaningful. Today people discuss Ruskin Bond, but was he more poetical in the beginning? Even the small journal editors too could not judge Sarbeswar Samal and Kulwant Singh Gill. People discuss it Keki N.Daruwalla, Gieve Patel, Adil Jussawalla, but not K.D.Katrak. I do not what it the politics behind. I know it not how is our judgement? How do they become poets? John Galsworthy is right in questioning law and justice casting aspersions with regard to judgement. Who a judge in reality? Who a criminal? Who a convict, who a guard? How to say it? We need to be a pleader of ours just like Portia arguing. George Bernard Shaw's anti-thesis opens our eyes and George Orwell's questioning of irrelevant coloniality debunking the myths. How does colonialism serve it the empire? Did P.Lal

promote some of the post-independence time writers? No, he did not. People talk of Agha Shahid Ali and his Kashmiriyat, but not the Kashmiri pundits driven out of their homes to live in camps or unwanted shelters as refugees. Has Indian poetry in English ceased after ten or twelve poets included in an anthology edited by him? Arvind Krishna Mehrotra too seems to be a propagandist rather than a poet and he too as a history writer is of his coterie rather than of a big heart. Whatever be it the story of approbation or recognition, O.P.Bhatnagar is definitely a great poet whom we failed to evaluate and assess. As a poet he is no doubt exceptionally post-colonial and post-modernist as his approach to poetry itself suggests it. He is not a poet of a mythical base, but is one of social standing and protest. To take the name of O.P.Bhatnagar is to take the name of social poetry and economic poetry and to come to know that myth and mysticism is not the property of his and it lures him not at all. Really, a post-modern, post-colonial poet we could not feel his worth in time. The readers of Indian English poetry still now do not know it that O.P.Bhatnagar too was a poet. Just on the sidelines of it read we him just for a historical reference. But if you ask me to make the syllabus of Indian English poetry for learners, I shall in a different way. I may include in K.D.Katrak, Anna Sujatha Mathai, O.P.Bhatnagar, R.R.Menon, Romen Basu, Krishna Srinivas, D.H.Kabadi, M.N.Sharma and a host of others. If you ask me to make the syllabus for asking to relate to historical past, I would separate the pre-independence period, after including in Joseph Furtado, A.F.Khabardar and some more. While compiling a book of English poems, we forget it to include in the poems of A.E.Russell. If you have to go through Indian English or you want to have a tryst with, read you Emerson's *Brahma*, Leigh Hunt's *The Plate of Gold*, Whitman's *Passage To India*, Yeats' *Meru*, *The Indian Upon God*, Anasuya and Vijaya, Binyon's *Asoka*, Symons' *Indian Meditation*, Auden's *Partition*, Raine's *Milennial Hymn To Lord Shiva*, Ginsberg's *Sunflower Sutra*, *September on Jessore Road*, etc. I would have prescribed John Leyden's *Verses Written At The Island Sagur*, David Lester

Richardson's Sonnet. Written At Benares, In The East Indies, Sir Arthur Comyn Lyall's Siva and Edwin Arnold's Song of The Serpent-Charmers and The Light of Asia. Among the pre-independence-time poets, Manmohan Ghose's London, Dhan Gopal Mukherji's The Tower of Silence, Bhikshu's Song, etc. can be sampled. I think even Keki N.Daruwalla could not feel it while doing an anthology of poems on Indian English poetry. Had Ezekiel been aware of him, I do not know! I think their sense of history, history of Indian poetry in English was not so strong. Could Daruwalla feel it about A.F.Khabardar's poems, The Silken Tassel, Sita-Rama, The Flute of Krishna, Radha's Perplexity, etc.? He was a good Parsi poet, a very good poet. Rudyard Kipling's Tommy, Gunga Din, To the City of Bombay, Buddha At Kamakura, etc. show a different part of him. In Kipling is a heart of Kim which we failed to realize it. Humayun Kabir's Mahatma, Trains, we know them not, read it not his essays. Indian anthologists, what did they include and what did they miss out? What they ought to have?

Before you read R.Parthasarathy's ten Indian poets in English, P.Lal's histories or anthologies or Mehrotra's narratives, I would ask you to read P.Shesadri, Manjeri S.Isvaran, P.R.Kaikini, Adi K.Sett, S.K.Chettur, Armando Menezes and so on. Dorothy Noel Bonarjee, was she not before them? The so-called modern poets of today were not in the scene then. What do you know about Dhan Gopal Mukherji? We do not find the poems of Kasiprasad Ghose, Nobo Kissen Ghose prescribed for our students. Even Madhusudan Dutt's English poems, the boards of studies prescribe it not. How the secular, dubious and leftist or rightist academicians who have forgotten to prescribe A.E.Russell's Krishna, Om, Oversoul, Magic, Karma and so on?

Apart from reading Toru, the poems by Kasiprasad, such as To a Dead Crow, Song of the Boatman to Ganga, Nobo Kissen Ghose's In Memoriam--To Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Hymn To Durga, should have been there, but we find them not. We wonder

how our committees and boards of studies. What do we intend on teaching?

Joseph Furtado's *A Fiddler*, *Kismat*, *Lakshmi*, *Pariah Girl*, *The Fortune-Teller*, *The King-Crow*, *Before A Cage of Bulbuls*, *Brahmin Girls*, etc. take us to the great poet of Goa whom we knew it not, nor strove to know him in full even after independence and subjugation of our land from the Portuguese spice merchants. I do not know if Tagore had been in the know of him or not. But his English is more of the spoken speech part of the language rather than the written practiced part of Tagore. Dostohty N.Bonarjee's *London*, *Noon*, *Morning*, etc. speak of the streak of genius and hidden talent which she had been endowed with so richly. S.K.Chettur's *Red Lotus* is a beautiful piece drawing our attention.

Before reading the Indian English poetry surveys and histories, try to read you and go through the comments and press reviews made on the Indians writing in English. Can you think of Indian English poetry criticism without the introduction by Yeats to Tagore's *Gitanjali*, the prefaces to Naidu's works by Edmund Gosse, without the introduction to *Songs of Kabir* by Evelyn Underhill and so on? There was a good bulk of criticism on the Anglo-Indian or Indo-Anglican poetry writings, but we did not collect them to put up as literature to be kept for posterity seriously.

Similarly if you ask me to prescribe some of the remarkable poems of O.P.Bhatnagar for the students and their courses of studies or lessons to take, I would name *Scaling Heights*, *Oneiric Visions*, *The Speaking Silence*, *Hostage of time*, *Shadows in Floodlights*, *Nailing By The Wall* and a few more.

We have actually failed to understand the heart and soul of Indian English poetry, the beauty of written English and our struggling spoken English as this is our status. Our hesitant speech is a subject of study in linguistics, but our written English a study in grammar as we want to master English through grammatical rules

and regulations, but can a language be acquired? But the grammar of poesy has born out of this dilemma and doubt.

We read Nissim Ezekiel's Night of the scorpion, but do we know about Sarojini's The Festival of Serpents and Edwin Arnold's Song of The Serpent-Charmers. Do we ever like to read poems comparatively, comparing Tagore and Aurobindo's Urvasies, Sita by Toru and Sitayana by Iyengar with Gopalachari's Bharat Milap and so on, Dorothy M. Bonarjee's Noon and Harindranath's Noon, Manmohan's London with Dorothy N.Bonarjee's London.

O.P.Bhatnagar, if one wants to read and go through as for pleasure and joy, one will be quite disheartened for that experience, as he has not written keeping that in mind nor is his style so aimed at giving delight. He is a realist, a socialist of some sort who has but tried to add to the wealth of social poetry; the poetry of protest is his feat. The romantics have not influenced him at all and even if one likes to search for influences and impacts exerted upon, one may look to and quote the surrealists, realists, symbolists, existentialist and social poets. Social poetry, post-colonialism, post-modernism, anti-thesis and surreal pattern form the crux of his poetry. The poet has not learnt to laugh and smile and to read him is to be serious and the poetic diction he uses is one of post-colonial and post-modern stance, there is no doubt in it to say it though he never intended on to write keeping it in view, it has come to be branded lately. Maybe it that we could not assess and evaluate him in time. Maybe it he was ahead of time. Could we feel the significance of G.M.Hopkins earlier? Could we Philip Larkin? Something we realize it after, something we later on.

Had Bhatnagar been colourful, romantic and gay, it would have added a dimension, but he is discoloured, tasteless, dull, dry and dreary in reading as because when we sit to read his poetry, we feel it that we are not reading poetry, but prose. Some sort of nothingness takes it over and we feel it monotony and boredom.

To read him is to feel it the paradox of statement. Dull and dreary facts seems to occupy our minds. A hardcore realist he was and realism his forte and this should have been our prism of reading his poetry rather than from an ironic stand. There is a vacuum to be felt in his poetry, an inner vacuum. There is an outer vacuum too. Frustration is writ large and the face is the index of the mind and this is applicable to as and when we sit to read his poetry. What are we for? Why are we here? Why to suffer? Which is what and vice versa? As the scenes and sights shift so do our standpoints.

I do not know what is the reason for which P.Lal, Keki N. Daruwalla, R.Parthasarathy and others of this brigade did not include in O.P.Bhatnagar? Why have we missed him in standard anthologies? I also know it that there is none to answer me around as the matter is one of the vacant authority. History is not history, it needs to be re-written. It is dictated rather than written. But there is an alternative history too which know we it not. Perhaps we seem to have forgotten our folklore and it too cannot be the basis of all.

His poetry is Larkinian, the poetry of despondence, dejection and dark despair we would like to call it, the poetry of nothingness and nihilistic brooding. We cannot say where will it such a thinking take to, what shall we with such a sort of poetry. Bhatnagar has taken to poetry as he has seen life. Hardships have schooled him differently, the vicissitudes of life have taught him otherwise. There is nothing to do with colour, fancy and imagination. No scope for loose emotions is therein, we can see on our first reading. Just reality, bare reality takes a dig the existential truths in his poetry. A few have come to understand his poetic base which is indeed difficult to make it out.

The last not the least, had he not sent the books to me by post long back, I would not have been able to take up his poetry, as I am taking to now to comprehend his poetry. I sat and re-sat to search for meaning which but I could not. But the poem Scaling

Heights written on the death of the mountaineer's death into the Himalayas struck me though I could not get materials about the American daughter so bereft, devastated and distraught ill-fated to be doomed as now I am finding on the Intranet. Even then in the dearth of materials, I loved to read the poem with pleasure and utmost sorrow in my heart. But he could get the thing then, surely as a news item. Another poem that I shall recommend it now is Birth of a Nation and the poem is a Partition poem no doubt. What does it happen when a nation gets divided or attains it freedom? And such a dastardly, inhuman tragedy happened it during the Partition, leaving people on the footpaths, driven out of their homes and native places to die in harness. Were they human beings who divided, partitioned the nation in the name of religion? Can a nation be in such haste? Perhaps they were not men. Had they been they would not have in haste as for grabbing power as everybody knows it that the transfer of power from one hand to another takes time. Now barring to think about the hapless lot of the doomed people, dislocated, displaced and dismantled from their establishments, what can we say about translocation if the tragedy could strike with such a deadly blow and mortal injury, inflicting upon the psyche, scarred with charred dreams of hope for survival and sustenance?

Rather than discussing his poetry, it is better to go through the works of the poet under our perusal. He is neither a myth-maker nor a dreamer, but a hardcore realist and poetry comes to him through the struggle and suffering seen in life. How have the experiences taught him, schooled him? It is not romanticism that charms him; it is but tragic life which but makes a breakthrough in his poetic works.

I do not think that the study of modern Indian English poetry will be complete if we study it not the poetry of O.P.Bhatnagar and leave him behind. Who is not a self-styled poet? Whose is not a private publication? Was Aurobindo's press not an ashramite one? Since when have we started giving the Sahitya Akademi Award for English poetry written by the Indians? Was P.Lal's

Writers Workshop not a personal enterprise founded on some bindings? Was Kamala Das not personal and private in demeanor? Where is Krishna Srinivas? Why is he not so popular into the realms of Indian English poetry? Was he not a promoter of English poetry through his poetry journal named Poet and its issues? I do not want to discuss all these, I just want to leave these to the good readers to read and say.

In the beginning, people used to discuss O.P.Bhatnagar as one dealing with wit and irony, but now find I the things at a variance with what we held about earlier. He is not an ironist, but a post-modernist, a post-colonialist, an anti-thesis giver and an atheist. He is not an iconographer, but an iconoclast. In a godless universe, he trudges along with pessimism. A frustrated soul, he takes refuge in dejection, despair and desolate prospects as has no option to feel it overjoyed. Colours, seasons, joys, good spirits and emotional bonds have nothing to do with his poetry. Just morbid spirits cannot take us far and he dwells in dark despair and nothingness writ large in his poetry.

On the sidelines of poetry written and criticism attempted as new ventures, surveys made, we find O.P.Bhatnagar making a way into the domains, realms of Indian English literature not as a poet, but as a critic too. Initially, we could not make forays into, but with the time we have come to realize that he was not less than, a writer so post-colonial and post-modern in his standpoint. Rural and the country did not impress him. Only society and social problems twitched him as problem plays and he seemed to be busy with. It was justice, poetic justice which he seemed to be after, but existentialism showed him the door, made him to look upon afresh.

The time has come to look it afresh the history of not only Indian English poetry, but to look at the history of modernism in such a realm. Though an offshoot of English poetry, it but falls within Commonwealth Studies and World Literatures in English a bit. But it is not only a part of that body or corpus of writing, it has an

Anglo-Indian, Anglo-Anglican history of own. As for governance and administration, the things grew out of our interconnections. Basically, it is Anglo-Indian, Indo-Anglican, Indo-Anglian poetry which has but branched out and grown into a full-fledged literature. We still now do not know should they be called English poets or the ones writing in English? What is it in essence?

Bijay Kant Dubey
Saraswati Puja

**For my daughter
Vidisha**

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Chapter I

Introduction

My mother
Became a widow at twenty five
With a son and a daughter
Playing in sunshine
Unaware of dark
The daughter died of cancer
Deep in innocence
Not knowing a river
From a sea
Mother has since lived
In a smiling sneer of loneliness
Wrapped in the moss of time
I, who has watched
The slow drying up of a pool
In the desert,
Feel broken and older than her
When she says---
“What use is dying a century
When I have not lived a day?”

----Dying A Century

(O.P.Bhatnagar, Feeling Fossils, Paul Jacobson & Co., Dehra Dun, Reprinted by the Author, 1977, Rs.12/, p.8)

Strange is the history of Indian English verse right from the beginning, from the days of colonial hang-over to the present times and it passed through several tests of recognition and

approbation and ordeals as there was none to acknowledge and appreciate it, should it be Indo-English, Anglo-Indian or Anglo-Indian, should the Indians write in English, is it Indian poetry in English or Indian English poetry, has it come of age?

So in the paucity of established writers as many dared not write though were good enough, Indian English verse made a way with the mediocre ones, the rhymers, non-poets, commoners, versifiers and poetasters wanting to be the poets and poetesses of English language and literature. But where will recognition come from, from England or India? Even Vikram Seth's book was rejected in the West and it saw the light of the day from Writers' Workshop, Calcutta. Even Ruskin Bond is a verse-writer, but what sort of, I cannot say it? We just want to hear from you. Some of the poets have got recognition and some lie in unrecognized.

Since when have we been giving Sahitya Akademi awards for poetry in English, do you know it? From 1981 and it went to Jayanta Mahapatra for his book Relationship. Even the critic M.K.Naik is an amateur writer of light verse which many of us know it not.

Indian English poetry was not so as we call it today which was but Anglo-Indian, Indo-Anglican, Indo-Anglian in the past and even now it is so. Much of it whether we accept it or not is of Asiatic researches, Sanskrit studies, Oriental studies and historical stuffs. Instead of it something has been continuing as a thin trickle of poetry coming down to us from the nineteenth century. To talk of Indian English poetry is not to limit the stuff and its periphery. Indian English prose is in a better state than poetry. The other thing is this that even now we have not taken a note of our literature written in English. We do not know how to study them.

Modern Indian English poetry is not a study of ten Indian English poets as because there were some modern poets even before Nissim Ezekiel and even if excluding them, think we, there are some poets. Many are in the marginalized ones. P.Lal's Writers

workshop, Calcutta has introduced many, but whom to include, whom to exclude? How can we exclude the poets of the Pondicherry School of Poetry as non-modern? That metaphysico-meditative-and-spiritual stream of poetry had been still running when they starting to write. The second thins is this, Sarojini Naidu, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya and Humayun Kabir were still there as practising or non-practising poets.

Could we ever try to know that Dorothy Noel bonarjee who was from Bareilly, but a Bengali Brahmin Christian, a daughter of a barrister was a law student in England and also a good poetess who never published and brought out systematically, but her poems appeared in newspapers and college journals? She was present even before and even after, but we could nor search her, find her. This is a blunder of history. Where is genius, talent? None can say it. Now the B.B.C. documentary too is on her. S.K. Chettur, who is well-schooled in India and foreign, too wrote over good poems, but none took care of, we mean the critical circles. Manjeri S. Isvaran (1910–1966) too was an Indo-Anglian poet, short story writer, and editor who published profusely. *Saffron and Gold and Other Poems* (1932), *Altar of Flowers* (1934), *Brief Orisons* (1942), *The Fourth Avatar* (1946), *Oblivion* (1954), *The Neem is a Lady and Other Poems* (1957), and *Sinning Heaven and Other Poems* (1984), etc. are his books of poems.

Michael Roberts in his supposed to be a preface contributed to P.R.Kaikini's *This Civilization* writes:

“INSTEAD OF A PREFACE

Here in England we are accustomed to think of Indian poetry as being introspective and mystical; we seldom find in it a delight in the vivid diversity of the outer-world, or an intense sympathy for other people, or those ingenious comparisons and contrasts which are part of the English poetic tradition. Your work, I think, differs from most of the Indian poetry that I have seen: it looks out at the world of science, politics and everyday affairs, and it expresses a passionate sense of right and wrong. At the same time you do not

lose the inward vision ; your poetry is born, I believe, of a struggle between the two, and I think that such a struggle is typical of India today...”

(P.R.Kaikini, This Civilization, New Book Company, Bombay, 1937)

Indian English Poetry (A Classical Reading)

Indian English poetry is not so as it is said today or the surveyors say it, the readers of it, but to charter the course of it, to elucidate the origin, growth and development of it is to discuss the opening of schools and colleges, the impact of English education, the history of British administration, colonial times and the development of Indology, Oriental studies and cross-cultural stuffs. To relate to Indian English poetry is not to count the works by Indian authors, their attempts, but to discuss it in the right way. Indian English poetry has taken time to evolve from Indology, Oriental studies and classical rendering. Indian English poetry is not Indian English poetry if we know we not John Leyden, D.L.Richardson and A.C.Lyall. Indian English poetry cannot be Indian if we know it not Emerson, Thoreau, Poe, Whitman, Ginsberg and others. Emerson's Brahma is enough to say about Brahma Vishnu Maheshwara and Satyam Shivam Sundaram, Shelley's The Cloud too stating it the creative, maintenance and destructive powers and Coleridge's a few lines about Vishnu bringing in the pictures of sailing, floating Vishnu on the sea. T.S.Eliot's Om shantih shantih shantih stands in benediction for world peace, shantih for all. How his use of the Upanishadic words, da, datta, damayata, dayadhvam? Indian English poetry cannot be Indian English poetry if we know it not Edmund Gosse, Arthur Symonds, W.B.Yeats, Matthew Arnold, T.S.Eliot, Christopher Isherwood if we know it not A.E.Russell, Kathleen Raine and others. In the absence of the Beats and the Beatles, Hare Rama Hare Krishna Movement, can we Indian English poetry? W.H.Auden's single poem throws light on the unjustified partition of India done in haste and he sees with awe and suspense

the fanatics and zealots, power-crazy people dividing the nation as per faith and religion. We cannot think of Indian English poetry if we know it not Romain Rolland, Leo Tolstoy, Goethe, if know we not William Jones, Macdonell, Keith, Winternitz, Griffiths, Archer. Indian poetry cannot be Indian if know we not William Radice? You should not, we must know the critics who have worked on Kabir, who have on Surdas, who have on Raskhan, Mira and Jayasi. You talk about modern English poetry and smile I hearing you. If you have not, first read you the Indian poems of English then talk of Indian English poetry and its modern phase one by one. May I ask? Have you read Kurup, Kuvempu, Bharati? If not, go and read before talking with me. Have you Nirala, Prasad? Have you Muktibodh, Ageya, Jibananand? The disciples of Aurobindo and Vivekananda, the critics on them with their own literature, this is how Indian poetry has developed, grown with and taken wings. Rama's history, what do you know it about Ramlila traditions?

We keep reading the works of Kamala Das and go on giving credits to her, but something in out shringa, shringaric rasa which know we not and give not importance to it. Kamala as a poetess seems to be inclined to propaganda and sexuality, libido and lesbian culture and hers is a study in Rajneesh's Sambhoga to Samadhi and Charvak's darshan.

To explain it Prakriti-Purusha, Lingam-yoni, let us try to see in a classical context of discussion with a discussion of Kamsutra in the words of **A.A.Macdonell**:

"The literature which is connected with kama , the third object of life, and which goes under the designation of Kamasastra , or ' Doctrine of Love ', cannot be altogether passed over here. The oldest work on the subject is the Kamasutra of Mallanaga Vatsyayana, whose treatise is evidently modelled on Kautilya's Arthasastra, and who analogously to his prototype may be called the Machiavelli of erotics. The contents of this work appear to us for the most part indecent, but it must be borne in mind that the

Indian is always much more outspoken on sexual matters than we are. Like other Sanskrit manuals, it contains many pedantic divisions, classifications, and definitions."

(A.A.Macdonell, INDIA'S PAST A SURVEY OF HER LITERATURES, RELIGIONS, LANGUAGES AND ANTIQUITIES, OXFORD AT THE CLARENDON PRESS 1927, p.173)

India regressed into darkness during the medieval times with the loot, plunder and invasion of it, sent about reeling under. The golden bird it was remained it not. It was caged and sold in Stupidity Market of barbarism. Brahminical excesses in terms of rites and rituals wreaked it havoc. But India seemed to be rising and rose it with national awakening, where the mind is without fear.

It is really very painful to hear it about the inhuman act carried out of superstition, witchcraft and ignorance which but the critic **Edward Farley Oaten** says it while discussing John Leyden's poetry:

"In the Verses, written at the Isle of Sagur in the mouth of the Ganges, we meet a theme that is not uncommon in later literature. Agonized by some of the cruel things that he saw done at Sagur, the poet cries out:

*On sea-girt Sagur's desert isle
Mantled with thickets dark and dun,
May never morn or starlight smile,
Nor ever beam the summer sun.*

For he had seen the mother deposit her babe in the jaws of the crocodile there, and a " victim, wildy dressed," offered amid the braying of brazen timbrels, as a sacrifice to the Evil Power. And then he asks:

*For pomp of human sacrifice
Cannot the cruel blood suffice
Of tigers which thine island rears?*

At present, however, the stain is indelible:

*Not all blue Ganga's mountain flood,
That rolls so proudly round thy fane,
Shall cleanse the tinge of human blood,
Nor wash dark Sagur's impious stain.
The sailor journeying on the main
Shall view from far the dreary isle,
And curse the ruins of the pile
Where Mercy ever sued in vain.*

**(Edward Farley Oaten, A Sketch of Anglo-Indian Literature,
KEGAN PAUL TRENCH TRUBNER & Co. Ltd DRYDEN
HOUSE GERRARD ST LONDON W 1908 p.36-37)**

It will be better to hear **E.F.Oaten** rather than commenting anything else if the matter is so powerful:

“Henri L. V. Derozio, the Eurasian poet, in his Fakir of Jungheera, displayed a delicacy of feeling and imagination, and a mastery of the music of verse which places him in the forefront of the lesser poets of British India. The story is a tragedy. Nuleeni has been left a widow, and according to Hindu custom prepares to undergo the terrible rite of suttee, the burning of herself upon her late husband's funeral pile. Within her breast takes place a chaotic struggle between her supposed duty and her inclination. Duty conquers, and seated upon the pile she sings a hymn to the sun while awaiting death. The hymn is exquisite and abounds in musical stanzas like the following:

*My native land hath heavenliest bowers,
Where houris ruby-cheeked might dwell,
And they are gemmed with buds and flowers
Sweeter than lips or lute may tell.”
(Ibid, p.55)*

*And then, when the bright death all but quivers at her throat, a
robber-chief, whom she loves comes down from his mountain
fastnesses and carries her off to be his bride; and in his retreat
the robber-love and young Nuleeni*

Share

*Each bliss as perfect as the heart may bear
Ecstatic fancies which but once may be,
Making us quite forget mortality.*

*But such happiness could not last. Nuleeni's angry father gathers
a band of men to recover his stolen daughter, and attacks the
robber-chief. In a martial description of the fight we learn that
the robber-band won the day, but their leader fell, and next
morning the frightened peasants saw*

a form

*So bold, in life it might have ruled a storm;
And fondly ivying round it were the arms
Of a fair woman.*

*It was the twice-widowed Nuleeni, and as she clasped him round,
her*

lips seemed

*Still parted by sweet breath, as if she dreamed
Of him in her embrace: but they who thought
That life was tenanting her breast, and sought
Some answer from her heart to hush the doubt,
Found that its eloquence had all burned out.*

Nuleeni was no longer a widow !

Here is real yet manly pathos, imaginative thought and musical and appropriate diction. And the same traits are to be found in Derozio's lesser poems, in which he shows that in the descriptive, the pathetic and the patriotic style he is equally at home. But it is as a patriotic poet that Derozio deserves most attention. He has some claim to be called the national bard of modern India, if India can in any sense of the word be considered as a nation; and, seeing that in his veins ran the blood of both East and West, the position is not inappropriate. Indeed, he actually makes the claim himself, though with some not unnatural diffidence:

*Many a hand more worthy far than mine
Once thy harmonious chords to sweetness gave:
Those hands are cold, but if those notes divine
May be by mortal wakened once again,
Harp of my country, let me strike the strain.*

(Ibid, 56-7)

Kasiprasad Ghosh is a poetry enthusiast who has written on the Hindu festivals and so on. The Shair and Other Poems which was published in 1830 is inclusive of The Shair, Dasahara, Ras Yatra, Kartik Puja, Janmashtami, Sri Panchami, Durga Puja, Dol Yatra, Kali Puja, Akshaya Tritiya and others of that type and tenor apart from some on natural phenomena and beauties. The evening, the morning, the night, the dawn break and the change in seasons drew him as these still charm a poet with fancy, dream and imagination.

The poetess quotes The Boatman's Song to Ganga at the end of it. Let us see what Landon says it in her book in the content named as Kasiprasad Ghosh:

"This young Indian poet is a remarkable instance of the mind's inherent bent developing itself under the most adverse circumstances. It is curious in all its history to observe, that poetry is a flower which is born and flourishes on what would

seem its most ungenial soil. Certainly our English verse is the last accomplishment we should have expected in the youthful Hindoo.

Kasiprasad Ghosh is of high Braminical extraction, and of independent fortune. At the age of fourteen he was sent to the Anglo-Indian College, where he made rapid progress. He soon shewed a marked predilection for our literature : indeed, he himself says, " I have composed many songs in Bengalee, but the greater portion of my writing is in English, — and, indeed, have always found it easiest to express my sentiments in that language." An essay that he wrote at a very early period, on Mr. Mills' History of India, attracted much attention; and, since then, he has published a volume of poems called " The Shair," the Indian word for Minstrel.

Our English readers must bear in mind the prejudices which a Bramin had to surmount, in order to appreciate the acquirements of this highly gifted stranger. At Calcutta, Kasiprasad Ghosh is universally beloved and admired : and we cannot but think that a vast field lies before him. His native literature is full of subjects for poetry of the highest order ; subjects, however, requiring much fine taste and much judgment, which could only be acquired by a knowledge of European literature. Now our Indian poet has the material, the talent, and the cultivation ; what, therefore, may not be expected from him ?

The following little poem will give an idea of his fervid imagination and Oriental style."

(Letitia Elizabeth Landon, Fisher's Drawing Room Scrap Book With Poetical Illustrations, Fisher, Son, and Jackson, London, 1835, p.18)

W.S. Thomson in his **Preface** to the book writes commemorating the visit of the Prince of Wales to India and the publisher accepting the offer as circulated by the Govt.:

“The result is that over one hundred and fifty poems have been received — more than one-third of the number from Indian authors — in Hindustani, Telugu, Tamil, Bengali, Sanskrit, Gujerati, Mahratti, Hindi, etc. It may be added that these poems have been written by Indian Portuguese, native Christians, Brahmans, Sudras, Rajpoots, Mahommedans, and various types of Hindu castes, and also by Parsees and Eurasians. A few of the Indian poems are in English, and it is a fact worthy of note that two Indian prizes awarded for them were taken by English poems written by natives of India. The verses of Mr. Chuteesh Chunder Dutt and Mr. Ram Sharma will be read with interest.”

(W.S. Thomson , Anglo-Indian Prize Poems, By Native And English Writers, In Commemoration Of The Visit Of His Royal Highness The Prince Of Wales, Published For The Crown Perfumery Company, By Hamilton, Adams & Co., 31 And 32, Paternoster Row, London, 1876, p.v-vi)

Ram Sharma’s Ode on His Royal Excellency, the Prince of Wales’s visit to India speaks of his poetic talent.

Welcome him, Indians ! Welcome him !
Hindoos, — Moslems, — Parsis, — Buddhists, — all!---
Now our cup of joy flows o’er the brim !
Welcome him from street and roof and hall !
All that’s ours from Himalay to sea,
Welcome him with shouts of jubilee !

Cities ! robe yourselves in gay attire !
Glow in golden floods of flashing fire !
Float in perfumes sense and heart desire !
Wake the very soul of harp and lyre !
And so welcome him this happy hour, —
Him the love of Denmark’s sweetest flower !

Fairy palaces, spontaneous rise !
Streamers, shine with rainbow hues in air !
Voice of welcome, thunder to the skies !
Cannons boom ! and trumpets, loudly blare !
Beat, warm heart of Ind, with rapture beat !
Pour thy fervours at the Prince's feet !

Welcome, for thou art our King to be !
Welcome, for this realm's by heirship thine !
Welcome, Guest from o'er the western sea !
Welcome, Heir of Albyn's Royal Line !
Thrice welcome now to India's sunny shore,
Where Victoria's name we all adore ! "

(Ibid, 14-5)

"In Torulata Dutt, however, we meet a different order of intellect. The daughter of Govind Chandra Dutt, who himself wrote tasteful English verse and contributed to The Dutt Family Album (1876), she was in close contact with English or Continental culture throughout most of a very short life. In her English translations contained in Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields (1876) and in her Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan (1882) she came as near success as the difference between the exotic warmth of native impulse and the cooler medium of an alien language would allow. She died in 1877 at the age of 21, before her abundant promise could be fulfilled. A sketch of her life with some of her correspondence was published in 1921."

(Sampson George, The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature, Cambridge Univ. Press, First Publication 1941, Reprinted 1965, p.914)

"Sarojini Naidu (1870-1949) made a more definite contribution to English poetry. She came to England in 1895 and went to Girton. Her ardent literary temperament was fired by the poetic spirit of the Nineties and she began writing verses that are

entirely English in matter and form, but was advised to turn to her native land for themes. Her chief work is contained in the volumes called The Golden Threshold (1905), The Bird of Time (1912) and The Broken Wing (1917). Some of her songs are little more than exotically sentimental utterances that might have come from an English writer who knew the East by hearsay; but others give vivid vignettes of native life and some embody the spirit of Oriental devotion. In general her work is more remarkable for its command of English than for any revelation of India.”

(p.914)

Manmohan Ghose (1867-1924) is the most remarkable of Indian poets who wrote in English. He was educated at Oxford, where he was the contemporary and friend of Laurence Binyon, Stephen Phillips and others who became famous in English letters. So completely did he catch the note of his place and time that a reader of his Love Songs and Elegies and Songs of Love and Death would readily take them as the work of an English poet trained in the classical tradition. Indeed Manmohan Ghose had to endure the tragedy of a long expatriated writer, for when he returned to India and became a teacher and professor of literature, he found that he was neither English nor Indian. That he left no deeply memorable contribution to English literature is a defect that he shares with the numerous accomplished poets of his age. Aravindo Ghose, his brother, was more famous as an exponent of Indian nationalism than as a poet, even though Ireland's ingratitude to Parnell was one of his poetic themes.

(Ibid, p.914-15)

While discussing Anglo-Indian Literature, **Sampson George** writes:

“More generally famous than either is Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) ; but his position in English literature is less secure, for he is a Bengali poet who has translated his verses into English prose. With the value of his native compositions we are

not concerned; but of his English prose-poems we are compelled to say that their absolute worth can easily be exaggerated. Indeed, it is difficult to find in his numerous volumes — Gitanjali (1912), The Crescent Moon (1913). Fruit Gathering (1916), The Gardener and others— anything richer in thought and expression than the pages of the English Bible afford to the receptive reader. The great popularity of Tagore as a prose-poet can be explained by the general appetite for moral reflections, not too deep, with an Eastern setting, not too remote.”

(Ibid, p.915)

The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse chosen by D.H.S.Nicholson and A.H.Lee and published in 1917 too includes in the poems of Sarojini Nayadu, as such The Soul's Prayer, In Salutation to the Eternal Peace and To a Buddha seated on a Lotus.

Fredoon Kabraji (1897-1986), one who is of Parsi descent from Gujarat, emigrated to England to do a degree which but he could not clear, but the love of art, literature and journalism taught him otherwise to contribute to and he has come up with a few collections to put it before. A poet of A Minor Georgian's Swan Song (Fifty-One Poems), The Cold Flame: Poems and some more edited volumes, he writes pure poetry. *This Strange Adventure: An Anthology of Poems in English by Indians* he edited it. Tulip, A Blue Dream, The Lovers, etc. tell of a softer self lying into the recesses within.

Can we think of Indian English poetry without our cross-cultural connections? Can we Mahapatra without muffled Vedic and Upanishadic voices, Baldoon Dhingra without Mira, Tagore without Kabira, Chitre without Tukaram? Can we Mahaptara without Oriya connections, Parthasarathy without Tamil roots, Kamala without Malyali culture?

“I do not mean to say that the most profound interpretation of Siva's dance was present in the minds of those who first danced in

frantic, and perhaps intoxicated energy, in honour of the pre-Aryan hill-god, afterwards merged in Siva. A great motif in religion or art, any great symbol, becomes all things to all men ; age after age it yields to men such treasure as they find in their own hearts. Whatever the origins of Siva's dance, it became in time the clearest image of the activity of God which any art or religion can boast of."

(Ananda Coomaraswamy , The Dance of Siva Fourteen Essays, THE SUNWISE TURN, INC. 2 EAST 31ST STREET NEW YORK 1918, p.56)

"The second well known dance of Siva is called the Tandava, and belongs to His tamasic aspect as Bhairava or Vira-bhadra. It is performed in cemeteries and burning grounds, where Siva, usually in ten-armed form, dances wildly with Devi, accompanied by troops of capering imps. Representations of this dance are common amongst ancient sculptures, as at Elura, Elephanta, and also Bhuvaneshvara. The tandava dance is in origin that of a pre-Aryan divinity, half-god, half-demon, who holds his midnight revels in the burning ground. In later times, this dance in the cremation ground, sometimes of Siva, sometimes of Devi, is interpreted in Saiva and Sakta literature in a most touching and profound sense."

(Ibid, p.57)

Gwendoline Goodwin in the book named **Anthology of Modern Indian Poetry** published in 1927 includes some more names and they too have the modern traits easily available, but they did not get an opportunity. Goodwin has included in the poems of Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, Rabindranath Tagore, P.Shesadri, Fredoon Kabraji, Sri Aurobindo Ghose, Puran Singh, Manmohan Ghose, Sri Ananda Acharya and so on.

An Anthology of World Poetry, edited by Mark Van Doren, The Literary Guild of America, New York, Albert & Charles Bony. Inc., 1928, includes in Sanskrit poems from The Rigveda,

Kalidasa, Amarou, Bilhana. Kalidasa, Bhartrihari and Jayadeva and those who are translators are Romesh Dutt, Arthur W.Ryder, Powys Mathers, Paul Elmer More and Sir Edwin Arnold.

World Poetry, An Anthology of Verse from Antiquity to Our Time edited by Kasharine Wshburn and John S.Major, Editors and Clifton Fadiman, General Editor, published by **Quality Paperback Book Club, New York, 1998**, speak of Vedic poetry and From The Bhagavadgita and From The Upanishads in the initial stages.

Without understanding India, how can one Indian English poetry? **Max Muller** even contradicts the English with regard to their comprehension of India and Indianness:

"In France, Germany, and Italy, even in Denmark, Sweden, and Russia, there is a vague charm connected with the name of India. One of the most beautiful poems in the German language is the Weisheit der Brahmanen, the 'Wisdom of the Brahmins,' by Ruckert, to my mind more rich in thought and more perfect in form than even Goethe's West-ostlicher Divan. A scholar who studies Sanskrit in Germany is supposed to be initiated in the deep and dark mysteries of ancient wisdom, and a man who has travelled in India, even if he has only discovered Calcutta, or Bombay, or Madras, is listened to like another Marco Polo. In England a student of Sanskrit is generally considered a bore, and an old Indian Civil servant, if he begins to describe the marvels of Elephanta or the Towers of Silence, runs the risk of producing a count-out."

(F. Max Muller, India What Can It Teach Us, London: Longmans, Green, And Co., 1882, p.4)

"There are indeed a few Oriental scholars whose works are read, and who have acquired a certain celebrity in England, because they were really men of , uncommon genius, and would have ranked among the great glories of the country, but for the misfortune that their energies were devoted to Indian literature—

-I mean Sir William Jones, 'one of the most enlightened of the sons of men,' as Dr. Johnson called him, and Thomas Colebrooke. But the names of others who have done good work in their day also, men such as Ballantyne, Buchanan, Carey, Crawford, Davis, Elliot, Ellis, Houghton, Leyden, Mackenzie, Marsden, Mnir, Prinsep, Eennell, Tumour, Upliam, Wallich, Warren, Wilkins, Wilson, and many others, are hardly known beyond the small circle of Oriental scholars, and their works are looked for in vain in libraries which profess to represent with a certain completeness the principal branches of scholarship and science in England."

(p.4-5)

Indian English Poetry Through The Western Eyes

Indian English poetry was not Indian, but Indic poetry, Anglo-Indian poetry, Indo-Anglican poetry rather than what we call it today. Without taking the names of John Leyden, D.L.Richardson, A.C.Lyall, Edwin Arnold and so on, can we talk of Indian English poetry? Can we talk of modern Indian English poetry without discussing Arnold, Tennyson, Southey, Eliot, Auden, Yeats, Gosse, Russell, Kipling, Ginsberg and so on? Arnold speaks about moral deliverance and intellectual deliverance and culture in *On the Modern Element in Literature*. Eliot refers to the Upanishadic benediction with the shantih mantra. Auden tells about the nefarious partition. While starting to write about Indian English poetry, nobody likes to trace it back the story of its origin, growth and development. How to say it how we were unable to exchange our words or would have managed to get the words said across? There are some who have really carried it forward the annals and chronicles.

Have you not heard Eliot finishing *The Waste Land* with Om shantih shantih shantih? It is a matter of elation that he included the words, as such Da Datta Damyata Dayadhavam, Himavanti and Ganga. How did Emerson write about Brahma at that time

reminding us of? How could he conceive it? How did Partition frustrate it Auden with the scanty judges? How could they partition such a vast tract of land in haste? Kipling even though we call him British was born in Bombay and was a poet with a Hindustani strain enriching the wealth of Indian pidgin-English. Did Yeats not contribute a preface to Tagore's Gitanjali? Did Ezra Pound not include the poems of Kabir in his anthology of world poetry? Be it negative or positive, Tennyson wrote on the Indian Mutiny. Had the British poets been not the friends of Manmohan Ghose? Did Edmund Gosse not work as the literary mentor of Sarojini and others? Did Huxley not on Benares and Sir J.C.Bose Institute? Whitman's Passage to India still tells about the passages to Indic lands resonating with the chants of the sacred mantras. Did Robert Laurence Binyon not on Asoka? The influence of the Beats and the Beatles we cannot negate it; that of Hare Rama Hare Krishna Movement.

How can we forget the visit of the Anglo-Irish G.B.Shaw in 1933 when he visited Bombay? He saw India, but could not speak his heart freely. There is nothing which can be more poetic than these. Had Neville Cardus been not an admirer of Ranjitsinhji? Did Derek Walcott not write about the Ramlila?

We talk about Macaulay's minutes, but not about Burke's speech in the Parliament? Did William Hazlitt not about the Indian jugglers? Did Goethe not on Shakuntala? Did Tolstoy not about Hindu Kural? Somerset Maugham visited India. Did Southey not Curse of Kehama?

What we could not express and take into **Yeats** did that with a few words in **Introduction to Gitanjali**:

"A few days ago I said to a distinguished Bengali doctor of medicine, " I know no German, yet if a translation of a German poet had moved me, I would go to the British Museum and find books in English that would tell me something of his life, and of the history of his thought But though these prose translations from Rabindranath Tagore have stirred my blood as nothing has

for years, I shall not know anything of his life, and of the movements of thought that have made them possible, if some Indian traveller will not tell me." "

(GITANJALI (SONG OFFERINGS) BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE, 1913, p.vii)

"I have carried the manuscript of these translations about with me for days, reading it in railway trains, or on the top of omnibuses and in restaurants, and I have often had to close it lest some stranger would see how much it moved me. These lyrics — which are in the original, my Indians tell me, full of subtlety of rhythm, of untranslatable delicacies of colour, of metrical invention — display in their thought a world I have dreamed of all my life long. The work of a supreme culture, they yet appear as much the growth of the common soil as the grass and the rushes. A tradition, where poetry and religion are the same thing, has passed through the centuries, gathering from learned and unlearned metaphor and emotion, and carried back again to the multitude the thought of the scholar and of the noble." (Ibid, p.xiii-xiv)

In her introduction to **Kabir's Poems**, Evelyn Underhill puts forth:

"A great religious reformer, the founder of a sect to which nearly a million northern Hindus still belong, it is yet supremely as a mystical poet that Kabir lives for us. His fate has been that of many revealers of Reality. A hater of religious exclusivism, and seeking above all things to initiate men into the liberty of the children of God, his followers have honoured his memory by re-erecting in a new place the barriers which he laboured to cast down. But his wonderful songs survive, the spontaneous expressions of his vision and his love; and it is by these, not by the didactic teachings associated with his name, that he makes his immortal appeal to the heart. In these poems a wide range of mystical emotion is brought into play : from the loftiest abstractions, the most other-worldly passion for the Infinite, to

the most intimate and personal realization of God, expressed in homely metaphors and religious symbols drawn indifferently from Hindu and Mohammedan belief. It is impossible to say of their author that he was Brahman or Sufi, Vedantist or Vaishnavite."

(One Hundred Songs of Kabir, Translated By Rabindranath Tagore, Assisted By Evelyn Underhill, MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED, ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON, 1915, p.viii—ix)

Can we think of Sarojini in the absence of Arthur Symons and Edmund Gosse? Do the people get so great critics at a teenage which but I do not nor have seen it elsewhere?

In the words of **Edmund Gosse** taken from his **Introduction**,

"Mrs. Naidu is, I believe', acknowledged to be the most accomplished living poet of India---at least, of those who write in English, since what lyric wonders the native languages of that country may be producing I am not competent to say. But I do not think that any one questions the supreme place she holds among those Indians who choose to write in our tongue. Indeed, I am not disinclined to believe that she is the most brilliant, the most original, as well as the most correct, of all the natives of Hindustan who have written in English."

(The Bird of Time, Songs of Life, Death & the Spring, Sarojini Naidu, London : William Heinemann, New York : John Lane Company, 1912, p.1-2)

"Moreover, I entreated Sarojini to write no more about robins and skylarks, in a landscape of our Midland counties, with the village bells somewhere in the distance calling the parishioners to church, but to describe the flowers, the fruits, the trees, to set her poems firmly among the mountains, the gardens, the temples, to introduce to us the vivid populations of her own voluptuous and unfamiliar province; in other words, to be a genuine Indian poet of the Deccan, not a clever machine-made imitator of the English classics."

(Ibid, p.5)

Arthur Symons had been quite vocal about her and tried his best to promote her which seemed to be a word portrait of hers:

"It was the desire of beauty that made her a poet; her "nerves of delight" were always quivering at the contact of beauty. To those who knew her in England, all the life of the tiny figure seemed to concentrate itself in the eyes; they turned towards beauty as the sunflower turns towards the sun, opening wider and wider until one saw nothing but the eyes.

She was dressed always in clinging dresses of Eastern silk, and as she was so small, and her long black hair hung straight down her back, you might have taken her for a child. She spoke little, and in a low voice, like gentle music; and she seemed, wherever she was, to be alone."

**(THE GOLDEN THRESHOLD BY SAROJINI NAIDU
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY ARTHUR SYMONS,
LONDON WILLIAM HEINEMANN, 1905)**

To be enlightened upon the topic more, we would like to quote **William Archer:**

"Hindustan — " Aryavarta " — is the nursery and home of all true religion, philosophy and culture ; and, when her present period of eclipse is past, India is to arise in her glory for the salvation of the world. Such is the sentiment expressed by that very cultivated woman and true poetess, Sarojini Naidu, of Hyderabad, in her ode :

TO INDIA

Oh, young through all thy immemorial years.
Rise, Mother, rise regenerate from thy gloom,
And, like a bride high-mated with the spheres,
Beget new glories from thy ageless womb.

The nations that in fettered darkness weep
Crave thee to lead them where great mornings break. . .
Mother, oh Mother, wherefore dost thou sleep ?
Arise and answer, for thy children's sake.

The Future calls thee with a manifold sound
To crescent honors, splendors, victories vast ;
Waken, oh slumbering Mother, and be crowned.
Who once wert empress of the sovereign Past.

It is only fair to assume that “ the nations ” who are represented as waiting to be liberated by India are nations within her bounds, she being conceived for the nonce as an ideal entity, distinct from the geographical or racial divisions of which she is composed. But even if we thus limit the meaning of the second stanza, we can scarcely interpret in so limited a sense the line “ Who once wert empress of the sovereign Past”. The poetess does not mean that India was empress of her own past, but of the past of the world ; and, as it is manifest that this was never true in a political sense, we must interpret it spiritually, as an assertion of bygone but recoverable supremacy in the realm of intellect and soul. And to thousands of Indians this is an article of faith. Far from being conscious of any drawback of race, they hold themselves a chosen people, the depositories from of old of all the highest wisdom of the world. In this belief, moreover, they are encouraged and established by plenty of Western testimony.”

(William Archer, India and the Future, LONDON: HUTCHINSON & CO., PATERNOSTER ROW, 1917, p.22-23)

“India to-day abounds in living men whose noble spirituality of aspect puts all the carven gods to shame. Is there a single Buddha, from Peshawar to Kamakura, that can compare in spirituality with Rabindranath Tagore ?”

(Ibid,p.194)

In **Introduction** to the book, **Ernest and Grace Rhys** write:

“THIS book of Puran Singh's poems is the latest offspring from a famous old root. It is founded on the Granth Sahib, and most of the songs that follow are in one way or another derived from that inspired book, which has sometimes been called the Sikh Bible. But as that is the youngest of the bibles, so these songs and lyrics are re-charged, we shall find, by the spirit of youth in poesy. It may be that the ideas, images and figurative expressions in these poems are often openly borrowed, and a fairly close transcript of certain passages may even at times be given. But whether the rendering be close or free, the religious emotion is always in essence the same, and it is always authentic. It runs right through the songs from beginning to end, and no reader can fail to be touched by its sincerity, grace and fervour.

English versions of the Granth Sahib have already been given to the public in the six volumes of Mr. M. A. Macauliffe's remarkable work on The Sikh Religion, and with his versions any reader who likes can compare Mr. Puran Singh's poems, and will find the comparison most interesting. In The Sisters of the Spinning Wheel we have a living emotional verse that conveys the ecstatic mood of the original, while it adds a new impulse to the old one. In the other work we have a series of careful scholarly translations, faithfully rendering the Indian texts.”

(Puran Singh, The Sisters of the Spinning Wheel and Other Sikh Poems, LONDON & TORONTO, J. M. DENT & SONS LTD. NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO., 1921, p.v-vi)

Bob Dylan raked by the dilemma if he really deserved the recommendation, a musician-composer, a singer-songwriter, he felt the dichotomy of being split in two rather than corroborating the stuffs and hesitated to accept the Nobel Prize for Literature for the poetic part merely, but in reality the song too is a part of poetry as the lyrical and singable qualities are quintessential

while dealing with the same. Bob Dylan as a singer of the modern pop culture has tried to imbibe the vibes of American life and culture, the nuances of American speech and slang, the idiosyncrasies of the language.

In him too we can see the twangs and tinklings of the saffronite Bauls singing and dancing with one-stringed wooden instruments and anklets tied to their legs lost in devotion and love coming to in the form of the tambourine man.

Leonard Cohen's visit to India too has emboldened our stance, but it came to as a private affair. Had it been publicized it would have been great.

Is our English good enough? Our English is written English, grammatical English. We look up the words for use and application. English is not our mother tongue. We are not competent with the nuances and the idiosyncrasies of the language. Even now we try to be conversant with the language taking spoken English classes. If this be the thing, how to cultivate the linguistic aspect, the phonetic feature and the ironic base? The matter is one of Somerset Maugham and his essay, *Learning To Write*. If we are fluent in English and have a command over only then we can take contemporary aspects. If you are able to think in a language only then you can be able to express. Our English had been hesitant and we used to haltingly and so was our poetry in English. Our poetry in English was a translator's version. What shall we say if we do not know it even that George Orwell was born at Motihari in East Champaran of Bihar? His house we could not locate it for years and years.

Contemporary Indian English Poetry: Latest Entries

We are the hollow men

We are the stuffed men

Leaning together

Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!

Our dried voices, when
We whisper together
Are quiet and meaningless
As wind in dry grass
Or rats' feet over broken glass
In our dry cellar

Shape without form, shade without colour,
Paralysed force, gesture without motion;

Those who have crossed
With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom
Remember us-if at all-not as lost
Violent souls, but only
As the hollow men
The stuffed men.
----T.S.Eliot in The Hollow Men

To discuss and deliberate upon contemporary Indian English poetry is not to leave the historical past and legacy, the shaky beginnings of it when the genre made a way for itself in the first quarter of the nineteenth century with the unknown writers and authors trying to understand India or Indian culture and society or the Indians deriving from cross-cultural syndromes in the spurt of the moments, the wisps and whiffs of British education. To talk to about Indian English poetry is not to come to it directly, as it had not been so, as we are calling it. Perhaps Indian English poetry is a misnomer to denote it as it connotes not properly. Where's English, whose English, is the question in askance to be replied. Be sure of it that Indian English poetry had not been Indian, but Indology, Oriental Studies, Asiatic researches, India studies and translations studies. To talk about it is to discuss the presidencies of Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi and Madras and to delve into British administration in India, the opening of schools and colleges and hospitals, the courts and other office complexes.

India had not been so, but regressed into darkness, medievalism, as for the years of misrule , loot and plunder of it but the foreigners who kept marauding the spirit of it did not spare it with their barbaric, blood-thirsty caravans and hordes. The purdah system finished it all what good it was in society and the pushed womankind wept at a corner, hiding the face. Taxashila, Nalanda, Vikramshila, Odantapuri lay in ruins and we could not write the history of our art and culture and historiography. There was none to save her; feel the emotions and the Sati system, child marriage, patriarchal preference, all those wreaked havoc which but the British took notice of and tried to bail out of the rampant crisis. A society segregated by caste, class and sect got united under the British education and the feeling of nationalism dawned upon to add to the fervour. New discoveries and inventions bedazzled them. The railways, the tram, the post-office, the telegraph, the motor car, the watch and all these added to the melody of life in re-fashioning them. The craze for English education grew it together with the development of the vernaculars and modern Indian languages. The connectivity in terms of dams, bridges, roadways, footbridges, connect ways, cross-overs and fly-overs gave a new dimension to impregnable India of varied and vast landscapes, wooded and hilly.

People describe the history, origin, growth and development of Indian English poetry in a different way, but the things are not so, as because Oriental studies, Indology and Asiatic researches did it more; the translation and rendering of the Sanskrit texts gave a wider scope to the understanding of the East. The West took to notice and started attaching to Indian scriptures and ancient lore rather than missionary zeal shown for expansion. The schools were opened which a few could avail of. Rammohun, Vidyasagar, Ranade, Dayanand and others added to the dimension with their new thinking and idea; the spectrum of vision.

In the midst of all that, against such a background, the bell tolled in India, Derozio learnt and strove to write in English, one of a mixed descent, from the Indo-Portuguese father and the English

mother. The things seen by the riverside on the banks of the Ganges at Bhagalpore would have cast an impact on the young and reasonable mind of the poet and he envisaged all through The Fakir of Jungheera. Michael Madhusudan Dutt went after them, but drew back after taking the native stock in confidence, coming to terms to realization that he must continue in the mother tongue, but his attempts no less than bearing fruits in the writing of The Captive Ladie and other sonnets. His love of Europe and Europeanization took him to foreign and he entered into marriage alliances with foreigners, ate, drank and dressed like the sahibs, but could not feel satisfied. Money-laundering, divorces and other setbacks jolted him for a return. Toru and Kashiprasad and thereafter Manmohan trekked along the uncharted course of it. Sarojini sang like a cuckoo, but the voice stopped it after switching to the politician's chair. We do not know it if poetry was a mode just to come into power. A Christian convert Toru could find solace finally in the mythical characters of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Bengali culture adapted to irony, doublespeak, artificiality and imitation; theatrical and histrionic attitude can be felt through apart from the Vaishnavite and coastal influences. Something of the opera, of the theatre, of the Krishnalila remained as a residue to be seen all through linguistically.

Even today we speak of Aurobindo's Savitri and other poems, analyse and interpret them in our courses of studies where it is classified as Indian English poetry portion or special paper containing it, but forget to prescribe and include in K.D.Sethna. There must be something on the Aurobindonian School of Poetry Writing which may be designated as The Pondicherry School too. Even on the moderns the shadows of the pre-1947 and the Pondicherry school poets hang over them whether we accept it or not. Tagore's influence too can be felt. The visits of the foreigners, airports, exchange of fellowships and company jobs too have given a boost up to it. Had Gandhi, Vivekananda and others not popularized Indian culture, could they have been?

Jones, Goethe, Winternitz, Keith, Grierson, Maxmuller, Deussen, Schopenhauer, Thoreau, Emerson and others have themselves given to it and we cannot think of Indian poetry in absence of them. Still now Jayanta Mahapatra's *Relationship* is full of echoes from Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*.

Contemporary Indian poetry in English does not mean it that Jayanta, Daruwalla, are not, as because they too are still writing and contributing to. The word, contemporary is a vague term, never ending, ever new. Actually there are three types of poets and poetesses into the realm of Indian English poetry. One is the group propped by P.Lal and his Writers Workshop, Calcutta, another is that of the media-limelight and the Sahitya Akademi winners and the Padma Shris or something like that, another of the self-published. But this needs to be noted in that P.Lal too was a self-published poet. So was Aurobindo as his books arrived from Pondicherry Ashrama. P.Lal too flourished in the negation of the Maharshi, but was not so much successful, as he seemed to be closer to metaphysics.

The post-1947 period writers are actually not the things of concern here as what they had to get have got. The established writers of today used to send their poems to the editor, C.R.Mandy as for publication in the *Illustrated Weekly of India*, but the editor had not been totally satisfied with the quality of the verses written by the Indians. Even K.R.S.Iyengar had been disillusioned with as for chartering the course of it and the goals to achieve. Today we call them great. Most of the poets and poetesses whom we see them today are the Writers Workshop, Calcutta products; really a factory of creative writers. Just after seeing the manuscripts of Gieve Patel and Kolatkar, Naik said a lot about them in his critical studies. The Bombayans hung heavy on the critical studies of Naik and the Calcuttans on P.Lal. Nissim too supported it while the rest of India remained cut off from their circle of study so elaborately.

To think of poetry in the aftermath of Nissim, Lal, Kamala, Daruwalla, Jayanta, Gieve, Arun and so on is definitely a tedious task to be dispensed with as because sidelining them we cannot think of Indian poetry in English and this has become indispensable. But has Indian poetry in English stopped after them; the publication of the slick volume of the ten poets by R.Parthasarathy? Will there be no poets after Nissim and Kamala? One thing also disturbs us is this that many like to call themselves as Kamalas. What others should have, but instead of they themselves are calling.

Nissim prides over for being a convent-educated boy and this is for he laughs at the patriot's English, the freedom fighter speaking in, yea, Bapu's khadi-wearing blunt or dedicated student some of which have just drawn the pension falsely. Some of those jailed were just small boys then without any idea of the freedom movement. The geography department professor too speaks in errantly using broken English. But there is nothing as that can be said of Indian thought, culture and tradition in Nissim. Kamala too is obsessed with sexuality and is mad after sex. She is not a Radha, but a false Radha.

What it pains us most is this, while writing critical papers, I.K.Sharma, D.C.Chambial, T.V.Reddy, P.C.Katoch, R.K.Singh, they even like to say about themselves which is but a trend of ours and of which none is an exception though we know it man is born selfish by nature cannot be contradicted. Even M.K.Naik has talked about his poetry in his latest critical study as R.Parthasarathy has in the anthology.

A.C. Sahay, Narenderpal Singh, Krishna Srinivas, V.S.Skand Prasad, Kulwant Singh Gill, Hazara Singh, Simanchal Patnaik, Har Prasad Sharma, Maha Nand Sharma, Pronab Kumar Majumder, Manas Bakshi, Ravi Nandan Sinha, O.N.Gupta, R.R.Menon, I.K.Sharma, Niranjana Mishra, D.H.Kabadi, Baldev Mirza, I.H.Rizvi, Madan Lal Kaul, R.V.Smith, Shiela Gujral, S.C.Dwivedi, Amar Nath Dwivedi, T.V.reddy, R.K.Singh,

I.K.Sharma, H.S.Bhatia, Romen Basu, P.C.Katoch, Vijay Vishal, Kedar Nath Sharma, D.C.Chambial, Anil K.Sharma, I.H.Rizvi, Charu Sheel Singh, Syed Ameeruddin, Stephen Gill, etc. are the poets of the new age and the new times which one may confront and contradict too, but the thing is not that the major poets have been left behind and the journal poets have been highlighted. This is just to focus upon the current scene which may be helpful from the developmental point of view.

What is more important to be noted is this that Indian English poetry is a study in slender volumes and minor poets. The authority is unavailable and we judge it on the basis of Sahitya Akademi and Padma Shri and Padma Vibhushan awards given to the writers, how can it be? It is such a realm where the poet too is a no-man and the critic too a no-man and the literature an exchange between the two no-men. Even the Sahitya Akademi awards given to Indian English poets from 1981, be that . Generally, the small poets and poetesses turned to the editing of literary journals like to indulge in mutual admiration and self-praise which is but harmful to any creative literature and this can be marked today. For the Career Advancement Scheme, the journals can be upgraded by asking them to be indexed, referred and refereed and peer-reviewed. The research scholars and the teachers are equally after the Academic Performance Index score, calculating in terms of points, a business world map to be struck, a promotion to be enjoyed. Numbers have to be in the quantitative, not the qualitative to make a way for. The sly will run so as usual, just beyond the catch of law as for the lapses of it.

R.R.Menon, K.V.Murti, O.P.Bhatnagar, I.K.Sharma, are the poets who appear on the sidelines of critical papers, but have evolved in due course of time. I.K.Sharma has promoted himself too in the exchange journals while the others have not been attended so much.

R.R.Menon is quantitatively as well as qualitatively strong enough. *Ode to Parted Love and Other Poems* (1958), *Dasavatara*

and Other Poems (1967), Seventy Seven (1973), Straws in the Wind (1973), Shadows in the Sun (1976), Grass in the Garden (1978), Heart on a Shoe-String (1978), Pebbles on the Shore (1980), Poems (1985), Sounds of Silence (1993), etc. are the books of his poems. Most of the poetry-volumes of R.R.Menon have arrived from Writers Workshop, Calcutta, but fame did not go in his favour well.

Just a poem named Radha And Krishna will suffice to do it:

The proclamation of your intense love

keeps me prisoner. Like Penelope I weave
my dark tensions in the eye of light, and wait.
You, an unfettered swinger ever on your toes,
live on sixteen hundred and eight hopes your toes,
among many more uncounted, all led astray
by lilting tunes you turn your flute to play.

Anger makes you crimson and the rose
is shame-struck. What do you really propose?

Mind it is that matters, no matter what the mind
can't see. Every moment sees us both combined.
I am that universal feeling set afloat
in hearts so pure like yours as they row the boat
alone. Music moves them, and the wave image
of seas that envelope endures. Only in its umbrage
they conjure up some passing selfish thought.

The pin-holes make from a monochromatic source
on wave-lengths of love images of immense force.

(Straws in the Wind, R.R.Menon, Writers Workshop, Calcutta,
1973, p.12)

Om Prakash Bhatnagar has Thought Poems, 1976, Feeling Fossils, 1977, Angels of Retreat, 1979, Oneiric Visions, 1980, Shadows In Floodlights, 1984, The Audible Landscape, 1986 and Cooling Flames of Darkness, 2001 to embolden his stance as a poet.

I.K.Sharma had not been so, but has come of age and has evolved. His progress had been very slow, moving at a snail's pace he has reached the height. To talk about him is to describe irony, humour and satire. The Shifting Sand-dunes, 1976, The Native Embers, 1986, Dharamsala And Other Poems, 1993, Camel, Cockroach, and Captains, 1998, etc. are his thinner collections of poems.

H.S.Bhatia has more than three collections of poems, The Necklace Wild, The Burning Petals and The Music Comes. He is rooted into the soil; society and its problems are the things of his poetry. He is earthly and direct to the grassroots level. Social consciousness, reality and concern are the things of his poetry.

K.V.S.Murti who had been from Vishakhapatnam was concerned with wit, metaphysics, logic and fact . Something as syllogism destroys the beauty of his poetry. Allegory of Eternity (1975), Triple-Light (1975), Sparks of the Absolute (1976), Spectrum (1976), Symphony of Discords (1977), Araku (1982) and others of his can be mentioned in this context.

Dwarakanath H.Kabadi is without any doubt a major poet whose flickers flick it all with its dazzle and glow, patterned like the haiku, but without the punctuation marks inserted in, which is but his major contribution to Indian poetry. A Kannada-speaking auditor by profession, he has done marvels which the words fail to put in. He is a compendium of thought, idea, image and reflection; a store-house of information.

Let us see a few from Kabadi's book of flickers:

a wandering gypsy girl

gathering butterflies

for her memory garden

(Rye On The Ravines, Poets International Organisation,
Bangalore, 1985, p.107)

her dimples

so cute and deep

ripples in a lotus pond (Ibid, p. 115)

that typist clattering

on thought board

mistakes mistakes and mistakes (Ibid, p.137)

Maha Nand Sharma who used to teach at Meerut University has given to us *The Pageant of Seasons* (1956), *Flowers and Buds* (1984), *A Rudraksha Rosary & Other Poems* (1987), *Scattered Leaves* (1991), *A Spiritual Warrior* (1991), *Divine Glimpses* (1996), *Gushing Streams* (1996) and *Flowering of a Lotus* (1998), *Autumn Strains* (2004). The poet fails to strike through his smaller poems, but delves deep in the poems of the epical format dealing with Indian thought, mythology and our ancient lore.

Pronab Kumar Majumder, a bureaucrat writing poems in English and Bengali, has tried his hands at all sorts of writing, ranging from poems, short stories, short novels to one act plays. This he has accomplished through editing his journal, *Bridge-in-Making*, published from Calcutta and the publications brought out. Pronab's poetry is a time bomb dropped, heat and dust ruffling it all, storms gathering and crows crying, everything but full of hullabaloo and pandemonium. Kalpurusha is his protagonist, the Age Persona, the Time Keeper. *Time Mechanical* and *Time Cosmic* come under the purview of his delineation very often and

he derives from to dwell far. The wrist watch, the tower clock and the alarm, the daybreak, the midnight and the twilight too supplies the poetic notes and hints to him symbolically.

Dialogue With Time, Replies of Time, Life And Eternity, In The Ruins of Time, Creating Killing Cosmic Time, Where Time Is Dead, OnTime UnTime, Time Never Returns to Console and Other Poems, Sparkles of Time, My India: Through The Corridor of Time, Where I Is A Noun, Faces of Love, Passage to Peace, Random Poetry, Sundown Poetry & Other Poems, Haiku Fair, Dialogue with Rimi, Poetry House, Adieu: Dear Rimi, etc. are the collections of poems. Pronab has a great love for Rimi working as a home keeper, a saleswoman or a beautician; an air hostess, a media anchor or a manager, but speaks she very sweetly. Rimi is his heartbeat and pulsation of busy, fast and active life. Wearing the goggles, smiles she sweetly at the plaza while taking pizzas. At the bus terminus and the airport, she can seen waiting for to catch the bus or to take the flight. Boarding the train goes she to attend her office duty and work, returns back to in the evening to attend to her family work and this is none but the guts of Rimi to adorn life in such a way. Poetry House too tells of the poetry stock and store of Pronab, we mean the book depot of his. Even at the haiku fair, not in Japan, but in India, he makes his presence felt and registered. Rimi: An Endless Poetry, Poetry: Contemporary And Classical are the latest entries. The pace of life; the rhythm of speech at least can be felt in modern life and its expression. The poet searches for the sun dial of William Hazlitt.

I.H.Rizvi appears on the scene with Falling Petals (1975), Unfading Blooms (1984), Thirsty Pebbles (1986), Wandering Fragrance (1989), Wounded Roses Sing (1993), Snowflakes of Dreams (1996), Gathering Broken Glasses (1997), Clouds In Cages (1999), Fettered Birds (2002), Dripping Wounds (2004), Love Never Dies (2005), Haiku & Other Poems (2005), The Valley Still Blossoms (2007), Bleeding Flowers (2009) and others added to from time to time. Rizvi's romanticism can be

viewed in his use and application of scenic and thematic penetration. He is a poet of love and its lyricism, fancy and imagination.

Though a poet of the romantic trend and tenor, T.V.Reddy is closer to the latter-day romantic poetry and the Victorian mode of reflection and brooding. Something of Cowper and Goldsmith is in him and these can be marked in the dictum, man made the town, God made the country and the portrayal of the village master. A poet of pensive memories, broken rhythms, melting melodies, fleeting bubbles and raining grief, he is sad, gloomy, forlorn and dejected describing the things under the fall of the twilight. Heart-broken and love-lorn, he takes to the course of his own as per his melody's sake.

Kulwant Singh Gill is definitely a master poet of symbolism and the symbolical use which one can feel it while perusing his poetry volumes. A poet of the Punjab, and that too Ludhiana, he tells of his native land, the problems of the country, love and terrorism in a free-flowing language. The verve and worth of his excellence can be felt only after reading his narrative poems, often telling some muted in stories with flow and ease. Kulwant Singh Gill's *Scattered Beads*, 1989, *Beyond the Spectrum*, 1990, *Passionate Pilgrim*, 1994, *Thus Spake Punjab*, 1999, *Saint Soldier Supreme: Guru Gobind Singh*, 1999 and others are enough to tell of his trials with poetry.

Simanchal Patnaik, a Senior Subordinate Judge, who had been from Berhampur, Orissa excelled in writing the verses for the occasions. Mainly events, happenings and news items formed the crux and base for his poetry. A few of his solid texts are voluminous and bulky enough. *Delightful World of Poems* (1982), *Bedroom Poems* (1986), *Sonnets & Other Poems* (1989), *Poetry in Tranquillity* (1991), *Poetry of Himalayan Wisdom* (1995), *Queen of English Poetry* (1999), *Gems of English Poetry* (2003), etc. can be counted. To him, poetry is but a book of

general knowledge and the poet a reader of it. A newspaper reader, he is a converter of news items.

Sarbeswar Samal who used to teach at Ravenshaw College, Cuttack is also a poet of note and distinction. My India And Universe, Blossoms of Heart, Where Shall We Turn? and others as his volumes of poesy tell of love, beauty, patriotism, pilgrimage and temple towns.

Narenderpal Singh who got the Sahitya Akademi award for his Punjabi novel Ba Mulahaza Hoshiaar in 1976 has also brought out a few collections of poems in English from Writers Workshop, Calcutta. Narenderpal is very funny and lovable. He can lure and tempt and can crack jokes upon. Charitable blood-donors are one such example while the other of the pundit sprinkling the Ganga water for the cure of a boy in high fever.

Romen Basu, a writer of novels and short stories, is a UNO official so it is quite natural that the things of elsewhere, the round the globe will make inroads into the thematics of his poetry, tending to us beautifully. Romen's poems remain dotted with the description of different cultures, climes and etiquettes, variegated and varied in tone and tenor. Gliding on Silent Waters, The Unquiet Waves, The Surrendered Self, Wings at a Distance, Committed Footprints, are the books of his poems to consolidate his position as a verse writer, but the critics had not been kind enough to him .

Kedar Nath Sharma with Song of Life, 1989, The Whiff, 1991, Our Ancient Orchard, 2001, Raceme, 2003, Paradise Returned & Other Poems, 2014 and others has come a long way to carve a niche for himself in the domain of Indian poetry in English. Sometimes his language turns turtle. A poet from green and mountainous Himachal, he sings of the hills, dales, vales and the wilds, mystical and shadowy, lurking in beautifully.

Onkar Nath Gupta's Lilacs in Lab appeared in 2001, Mosaic of Love And Legends in 2005, Prism of Poetry in 2011, Spilled

Feelings in 2014 and others tell of his fine mixing of satire with mythology. He is down to realities and can regale well. Onkar Nath Gupta has several collections of poems to recreate out of irony, humour and satire. Society is the field of his attraction and delineation.

Vijay Vishal's Speechless Messages appeared in 1992 and Parting Wish too from Writers Workshop, Calcutta in 2001. The poet means to say that the poems may be speechless messages, transmuted, but expressive enough to hint to. Why does modern man love cacti so much, why does he like to exchange it now-a-days? What ails our society comes under his purview of description. The death of wife comes to him as a shock and he strikes down with Parting Wish in the Elizabethan style of writing, a tribute to the dead and departed soul.

Stephen Gill as an Indo-Canadian has The Dove of Peace, The Flowers of Thirst, Songs For Harmony, Divergent Shades and others to talk of peace, humanism, love and friendship. Sometimes it appears that he sheds crocodile's tears and the peace he talks of is impossible which the warring nations and races will not take to understanding.

P.K.Joy too has The Final Goal, For A More Beautiful World, Forced Smiles and others as his volumes of verse to make us burst into a laughter. Bubbling humour draws our attention. There is something of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's Art of Living in him, not sure of whether he has or not, but the elements seem to be soothing the tensions of life, its unnecessary and unwanted cares and anxieties.

P.C.Katoch as a poet goes after Matthew Arnold, T.S.Eliot and the other moderns. Mainly narratives form the base of his poetry. The loss of value and tradition can be felt in his poetry. Arnold's poetry as the criticism of life and Eliot's emphasis on tradition and individual talent form the crux of Katoch and his poetry. He searches for meaning in life and it is really inspirational to go through his literary ventures, endeavours put down for analysis.

Amarendra Kumar who hails from Hajipur, Bihar is a poet who often likes to draw from the modern masters of British poetry. Phonetics is his love, but it does not show any sign elsewhere in his poetry. *The Real Episode* (1981), *Sound and Shell* (1986), *Stage Dilemma* (1988), *Song/Anti-Song* (1996) and others are the books of poems.

Baldev Mirza who used to edit *Skylark* from Aligarh was very artistic and full of imagination. Buddha had been the love of his which he turned into his poetic theme too. *Shall I speak out*, *Words on Fire*, *Buddha My Love*, *Across the falling snow*, *When the stars ache*, *Theatre of Silence* and others are the slim volumes of his poesy.

Vatsyayana's *Kamsuttras* are the source of inspiration for R.K.Singh and he derives from Khajuraho, Konark and others. The sculptures in love and erotica are the things of the poet which he loves so much as did love Kamala and D.H.Lawrence. R.K.Singh is spiritually sick and his is a story in paradise lost, a study in temptation, the fall of man resulting in the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden. Rajneesh, Freud and Lawrence seem to be his mentors. *Sambhoga to samadhi* is the substance of his poetry. But Singh should know it that sexual bliss cannot give permanent joys.

Syed Ameeruddin's *Visions of Deliverance* and *Visioned Summits* tell of the poetry of love and its vision. The aesthetic and metaphysical sides of love are there in his poetry.

Hazara Singh as a poet is very, very inspirational and hale and hearty enough to tell about life techniques, healthy living and how to keep fit. Generally, freedom fighters, patriots, martyrs and nationalists form the company of his to partake his experiences of life. The struggle for freedom, India's liberation from the shackles of slavery and the ruthless Tommy is the thing of his reminiscence and recreation. But the historical point is not in him, just the Baconian and Russellean epigram and wisdom take the space of his poetry.

Madan Lal Kaul as a poet is of the godmen and religious verses as those by Rossetti and Herbert, Newman and Hopkins are. A disciple of the Sai Baba of Puttaparthi, he is a poet of spiritual progression of soul and the divine journey of life.

D.C.Chambial who has Broken Images, The Cargoes of Bleeding Hearts & Other Poems, Perceptions, A Cobweb of Words, Gyrating Hawks & Sinking Roads is societal, romantic, caustic, romantic and artistic. Words convey, trap and glisten as gossamers; cobwebs in the sun with the dew hanging onto. The forays into the realms and domains of consciousness are penetrating no doubt and here he is very adept in handling them.

Manas Bakshi imprints and impresses with his shorter, but long-lasting poems, just as the blocks of thinking. He says little and it says more is the thing to be felt with regard to Manas and his poetry. Perhaps some artist's vision is in him; that of a dreamer who keeps dreaming. How the poetic brush and paints of his! Really, the golden boy of contemporary poetry! Long Awaited, In The Age of Living Death, The Welkin is Blue Yet in agony, Of Dreams And Death, From Adam To Myself, Not Because I Live Today, Man of The Seventh Hour, The Midnight Star, Between Flower And Flame, etc. as his representative works can show them the best.

V.S.Skand Prasad used to edit Samvedana from Mangalore. R.V.Smith who had on the Indian Express too is a poet apart from writing a book on Delhi. The list of the practitioners will not exhaust which is but our history and tradition. Indian English poetry in reality is a study in minor voices and slender anthologies. To read the history and tradition of it is to be lost in the crowds of nameless faces. Quantitatively it is bulky no doubt, but qualitatively it is so weak to be called firm and stable. The poet too is a no-man and the critic too a no-man. Whose priority is it none can say it. The authority is silent.

What it pains us most is this that the researchers visit the house of Jayanta Mahapatra just for a courtesy call, but after visiting him ask for joint photographs and interviews to be kept personal not, but to post on the internet. Many small editors wanting to be poets use their journals as exchange copies for promoting and popularizing each other. Many of the aspirant teachers have just started them as for to vent their dormant wish of becoming reputed poets within a shorter span of time without suffering, struggling and sacrificing for literature.

There was a time when the old-timed, classic-read professors used to frown upon working on the Indian English poetry collections. Sahitya Akademi itself has started giving the award from 1981 and this can show it all. There were no takers or buyers of the theory then and it used to sell not then. Side by side it was also difficult to work for one's Ph.D. on British stuffs. But when the UGC pressurized upon, the peer teams advised to include in as per the advice of the sympathetic scholars among them, the universities started prescribing them. Even the poems by Tagore or Aurobindo were not in English courses of Hons. and P.G.levels. The Ph.Ds. done on Indian stuffs used to appear as third-rate dissertations. But when the Ph.D. was made compulsory for career advancement, the dormant teachers too started searching for new and greener pastures. Sometimes a small Indian English prof-poet helps the research student in writing the thesis and that too on his poetry himself and the incumbent too after the award of the degree prides over in being a student of his and starts calling himself or herself a small poet or poetess not, but a great master.

Indian English poetry lacks in classical scholarship and cultural stuffs as most of the contemporary poets and poetesses too hail from city spaces and centres so the urban things hang heavy on them. India whose soul dwells in villages remains cut off from. There is none can enlighten upon Indian thought, culture and philosophy; religion, faith, belief and spirituality; metaphysics, theology and cosmology.

Many like to turn to Indian poetry in English as for cashing cheap popularity and as it is easier to be a poet here rather than in a modern Indian language as there is a tough competition. But it has been seen that a writer of first poems too has changed over into big name. Just a collection is enough to pedal one's own name and fame.

Sometimes it disheartens us to hear it that the M.Phils. are done on the lesser known poets and poetesses rather than the solid ones. We do not mean to forbid them from getting registered on the new topics as for their dissertation paper, but there should be impartiality in the selection and judgement.

A few poet-profs who have the opportunities of heading the institutions of higher learning have manipulated and manouevred the things in their favour by encouraging to get candidates registered on the friends' poetry and also by introducing the mediocre colleagues as critics which is but harmful for Indian English poetry. A few journal editor-poets like to edit literary journals just to highlight themselves and it will be quite natural that the varsity professors and research students will like to oblige them by writing articles on their poetry just to please them. Sometimes the editors write the articles on their own poetry and ascribe and attribute them to distant teachers or subscribers to be published in their names which is very bad for it. The politics of poetry and of the practising poets is strange to be stated. Sometimes, when the mood turns to worse, we want to designate it as a study in poetasters and versifiers. The catalogue of Writers Workshop, Calcutta is not the only catalogue of Indian poetry in English as for bibliography's sake.

Globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation too have added to the rise and growth of Indian English poetry. Spoken English, fashion and apparel designing, film and cinema studies, photography, theatrical performances, catwalks, city centres, love marriages and so on have added to life-style and thinking. Had there been not the television set, the mobile handset and the

internet, the things could have been otherwise. Now the world has shrunken to be put on the palm of the hand and information technology can connect even the farthest through its towers. Had it been not, the people from the north after having domiciled in the northeast would not have their best to present themselves as the critics of English poetry from the northeast. Had there been, we would have heard from M.K. Naik and K.R.S.Iyengar. One can definitely translate the oral dialects and its treasure of folk literature. Had there been not the English newspapers, we would have failed in our sentence construction, syntax and vocabulary as for to avoid grammatical lapses and errors. It is also a fact that the Indians may not write well if they mark not the contemporary tendencies doing the rounds in English poetry. Without reading Wyatt, Drayton, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Herrick, Marvell, Herbert, Donne, Pope, Dryden, Scott, Blake, Gray, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Byron, Coleridge, Tennyson, Arnold, Hardy, Lawrence, Eliot, Pound, Yeats, Auden, Bridges, Spender, Mare, Masefield, Hughes, the Indians cannot begin with their verses. Inspiration comes from them and it cannot be negated; new thoughts and ideas.

Today there is a trend that one will not be a poet if one domiciles not abroad, settles not there in foreign countries. To be a poet is to be a diasporan and it is essential for acceptance as a poet otherwise there will be no takers of his or her in India. The other thing is this that one has to beat one's drum in this world of today if one wants to be in the limelight. Arrange for book releases and launches, parties and live flashes in five-star hotels and there must be some media managers or big authors to cut the silken ribbon.

Let us see the first stanza from Baldev Mirza's Theatre of Silence:

I have raised a theatre
of silence
with scraps of rags and newspapers
for silence to grow
like a creeper and curl
around me

All night I sit crying
for words
frozen on my tongue
suddenly
headlines begin to rattle
--murders
--rapes
--bride burning
--rapid pace of industries
--people dying of hunger

(Theatre of Silence, Baldev Mirza, Skylark Publications, Aligarh, 2004, p.5)

The gods of small things they go ploughing the fields of poesy in their own way unsure of what they are going to reap and harvest. The practitioners are many more, but who to catalogue and bibliograph them? What good is it in Vikram Seth God knows only and the media persons? What deal has he struck with them? Why is Tabish Khair famous? Who can but say it? But there was a time when Tabish used to edit a small journal named Rachna from Gaya. Poetry of prizes and competitions or the lottery draws of Kaun Banega Crorepati, believe we not in.

In this world of today, poetry too is turning towards eco-centric notions and theories as it is the need of the hour. How to save Green Earth from climatic change, acid rain, atomic summer and its radiation, environmental pollution and ecological disaster concern us most. Are we really on the brink of extinction depresses us to think about it. Many a flora and fauna is about to be lost; many a species to lose the way, all these the things of our cares and anxieties. So, to be environment-friendly is the talk of the day, be it the domain of economics, commerce, chemistry, history, politics or society.

Another poet Anil Kumar Sharma is like a conglomerate; a gourmet of all, history, politics, culture, materialism, law, jurisprudence, metaphysics and spirituality. A cocktail of all is his poetry pieces, jumbling, dovetailing automatically and breaking, attaching and detaching. What a sadhu or a dhongi, telling of maya and bairagya as well! Sharma's is a confused poetic diction, perhaps interdisciplinary in essence. But the lapses of law as pointed out by Galsworthy and Housman have not come to us from his pen. Instead of, he does marvels and poetry distils out of his pen.

To sum up, we may take two small poems from H.S.Bhatia's *The Burning Petals*, named 'Ages' and 'Justice' one by one for our perusal:

Ages

I've seen
the ages pass---
long processions,
colourful and bloody,
headed by gay musicians,
the tails, long tails,
trailed by sombrous sighs
and doleful depressions.

(The Burning Petals, H.S.Bhatia, Sita Publications International, Khanna, 1983-84, p.36)

Justice

The Burning Petals
will not wait
for the day of doom,
the day of judgement
to get a fair and honest
nod.

They'll fly right
into your face
to get the things out.
(Ibid, p. 40)

These poets appearing in journals and books too have a diction and pattern of their own seconded by a poetic definition which we can feel after going through their poems.

Manas Bakshi writes very beautiful lines, lyrical and sonorous indeed which can be marked in the poem Substitute :

This is not
Perhaps, the time
I could give you
A red rose of total change—

Instead, I give
The imprint of an age
Poems of love, pain and mortality
Have retained.

(The Welkin Is Blue Yet Again, Manas Bakshi, Firma KLM Private Limited, Calcutta, 1995,p.7)

There is beauty of art; beauty of style in him and these distil as pure lyrics of love and reflection from his pen. We may take another poem named Bitter-Sweet for our study from the same collection:

Sunrays on a sunflower
Never betray it
With a kiss

But human being does---

Not content with
Whatsoever
Earned or promised!
(Ibid, p.21)

The white horses run past Konark and the Sun-God comes on the chariot of His drawn by them at dawn break as Jayanta Mahapatra comes to envisage in his relationship with Orissa and its historical past, legacy, myth and mysticism of the land. But Pronab Kumar Majumder as a man keeps marking the score-card and recording the fall of the wicket and the hat. He is a man of time; a poet of time, a registrar of it initialing the deed and the document to say that lands are settled, not measured exactly. The earth is the same, human life and existence so and the sky is the limit, as he has come to grapple with after holding parleys and long, long interesting and boring dialogues with time, sometimes easily passed, sometimes passing they not. Time seems to be his good friend, philosopher and guide, and counsellor and he a recluse of time. To read him is to be reminded of the bells told historically in Gray's Elegy, Traherne's resounding church-bells and so on. Time's watch he keeps it with him to read and denote. But on the pathway Rimi intercepts and interrupts him while going somewhere in a hurry and he stops to listen to her, how the things going with her, how she maintains it all single-handedly. Together with Pronab we too like to see the modern girl Rimi, smiling and in the goggles, doing ta-ta, bye-bye and going to work as a beautician, a saleswoman, a business manager in the

office, but on the return journey a home-keeper hurrying down to see her son and daughter at home. Only in Rimi there is a departure from his as usual theme and it can be seen as a herald of change in his writing style.

Just to change the style and the talk, we may take Chambial's in Freud's Horizon how he uses in the unconscious, the subconscious and the conscious reservoirs and layers of consciousness, improvising to be used in for a poetic dip:

Night walks,
snakes writhe, horses run
wild like whales in sea.

Infinite stars
are born and die
in the womb of sky.

Horses
long to gallop through fair
daisies, pansies and lilies.

Dare not
throw pebbles into serene
lake on Freud's horizon.
(Gyrating Hawks and Sinking Roads, D.C.Chambial, Kanta
Sahitya Prakashan, Maranda, 1996, p. 26)

To conclude, what else can be better than quoting from and putting in Torso of A Woman by Nissim Ezekiel as for an artistic vision:

Here it is again,
in colour or in stone,

not the whole woman
but her, 'torso':
arms cut off
just below the shoulders,
legs cut off
just below the knees,
unperturbed, for art's sake.

I hate it,
however great the image,
Praise the form,
praise the modelling,
praise the dynamic movement
and the complex synthesis
of muscular tensions:
the woman plainly needs

Rasa, Dhvani And Alankar And Indian English Poetry: A Taste of The Un-tasted

Rasa, dhvani and alankar, when we talk it about, we feel it to be awkward and bewildered as for what to say and what not? What is it rasa? What it to do with dhvani? The sound is one of English, Teutonic origin. What it alankara? The Indian poets who sought to write in English did not keeping in view rasa, dhvani and alankara. They just chose to express, put in, they just thought of expressing in imitation. We do not think that the poets have written adhering to the rasa-dhvani theories as Indian poetry in English is trying to come of age or has come now, this we shall come to know as and when we sit to study the poems of the evolving poets substantiating their positions.

There is prem, love, love for the motherland, desha-prem in Derozio; there is the desire to reform and correct what it ailed our society and he seemed to draw the attention with his ideas and thoughts. The Sati he could not take to and it broke his heart, the

poetic heart with vedana, pathos and pain for which the heart needed to be cleansed. A sin, a great sin was it; a crime, a great crime committed against humanity it was unpardonable. How could we sin it? How did we err it? Itihaasa, history, pauranic itihaasa, Puranic history he delves deep into to bring about the sublimes; the relics and the fragments of time and gone-by age. Derozio is a poet of Bharat's gauravamayi gaatha, India's glorious annals and history. There is something of kranti, vidroha, revolution, rebellion in him; a picture of a samaj-sudharak, of the social reformer in him apart from that of a guide and an educator.

Kasiprasad Ghosh is a poet of the utsava, festivity and melas, fairs; Indian festivals and the things connected with. He is a poet of the Durga Puja, the Kali Puja, the Kartika Puja, the Saraswati Puja and so on. Deepavali, the Festival of Lights and Holi, the Festival of Colours he describes them beautifully and he does it for the introduction sake.

Michael Madhusudan Dutt as a poet is historical, Miltonic and legendary, but somewhere he falters it, fails in attaining craftsmanship and perfection. A poet who went after the European and the English way of life and manners, he was epical, but elegance he could not achieve that.

In Manmohan Ghose, there is paaschatya chinta-dhara and visleshan; Western thinking-line and its characterization and it is but vishaad, despair which takes it over and this very despair has born out of feeling like a fish out of water in India as he was educated in England, got his education from, lived in and had an association with and for the untimely loss of his wife too which he suffered it most. Actually, he is a poet of the sandhya-bela, the eve-time, the solitary and despondent eve. Western love and its dreamy hue impresses him most and takes the images away from him. He is a poet of Valentine's Day and red roses and keeps waiting for his darling. Dukkha, sorrow takes him over and he seems to be breaking under personal loss, grief and pensive brooding.

In Aurobindo, there is a shift of paradigm, from revolt, rebellion, patriotism to nationalism to Narayan darshana to yoga-sadhna to illumination and the kundalini-awakening flowering like a lotus. How the chakras doing the rounds? How to attain the samadhi? Aurobindo sees it all through the prism or the lens of yoga. Aurobindo's poetry is one of Savitri and Urvasie.

In Tagore's Stray Birds, there is vicharan, thoughtful wandering, straying and hopping; antardeshiya, international things. There is something of brahmana literature, travelogues; tours, travels and visits. In Gitanjali, there is bandhan, the bandhan of prem; there is bonding, the bonding of love, affection and sympathy which but binds it man into a whole, vasudheva kutumbakam, the whole world is but one family, our relative and we from the same family tree which but pervades the mood and mind of Tagore learnt from the Vedas, the Upanishadas and the Puranas. Bhakti, it is bhakti which but opens the inner door of the temple of God. It is knowledge which but opens the inner door of mind and heart. How does gnan come to? It comes through realization, sadhna and tapasya, penance. It is but sadhna which but leads to the acquisition of light. Mayar bonds, maya's bindings Tagore ruminates it over in his poetry, as for when the soul departs, what will it happen to the body? Mayar khela, maya's play only a bairagi can feel it through detachment. Why to be attached to this body? The potter too makes the earthen pots and utensils rounding the wheel and moulding the clay. Similar is our body. Naked have we come, naked shall we go there, empty-handed, bare-footed and this is but our life, human life. In Tagore's The Crescent Moon, there is baal-manobhava, child psychology and its depiction. In The Gardener, the poet seems to be a gardener caressing the garden of flowers blooming. But who the Gardener of gardeners? Whose is the Garden of Nature? It is but of God's. Whose flowers are these? You can understand it. Saundarya, beauty it is there in Tagore's The Gardener.

Tamaso maa jyotirgamaya, lead us from darkness to light is the thing which illumines the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore

drenched in bhakti rasa and the prayer is for deliverance, mukti, nirvana and moksha, nishpapa-manna, cleanse You, my Lord the paapi manna, the sinful soul. Arnold's moral deliverance is in Tagore's Gitanjali. Vidya, gnan, mukti, Tagore prays it for. How to light the lamp, the lamp of light? How to spread it education which is but vidya, knowledge, light, logic, reasoning? And what light do it? It lights the self, broadens our spectrum.

In Sarojini, there is a pratilipi, a true copy representation of the swara, the sound, the musical sound pleasing to the ear and its representation and kavya coming to us as songs. Her persona is like a classical dancer saying swagatam, greeting with the folded hands in a delicate way, bidding it welcome with floral sprinkling and the blowing of the conch and the smearing of the sandalwood paste on the forehead of the visiting guest. Sometimes not, but often she presents the tamasha, the spectacle of which the bhaluwallah, the bandarwallah and the jaadugar, the bearman, the monkeyman and the magician are a part of. Poetry is but Bharat-darshana for Sarojini and its representation. The snake-charmer with the wooden instrument named the beena famed for melodies breaking and haunting music and the deadly, fatal cobras hooded and hissing dancing and swaying to the tunes of the awkward fellow seem to be pleasant to the eye, arousing pity, karuna for the charmer, bhibhatsha rasa, fearful awesome horrendous feeling in us as for the tamasha with the dreadful creature, a play with it so risky and life-taking if handled in a casual way. Her swara-lipi is one of music, musical melody as is a music-maker.

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya's soon is a mystic noon reminding us of Kalbhairava going with a dog or a tantric doing sadhna in his hut at some nook and corner and the dog is panting. How beautiful the image, the picture! The sense of alankara is so much strong in him when he talks of pottery works and the art of the potter. But sarcasm and Marxism affect his poetry badly.

Jayanta Mahapatra is a poet of shantam rasa, tranquil, calm tenor in whom we can hear the Vedic and Upanishadic chants against

the backdrop of Odisha and Orissa landscape and cartography. The historicity of Kalinaga he has not forgotten, the Daya river, Ganga kings he sings of; the Jain ruins he pictures, the Konark Sun-temple and the seascape around the Jagannath Puri temple. Bimba-bidhaan is a feature of his poetry.

Kamala Das as a poetess is one of *mithuna*, *kaam-vasana*, *ashakti*; *prem*, *bhog-vilasa*. To read her is to delve deep in feminism, male domination and women rights on the one hand while on the other in sexuality, libido, abnormal psychology and so on. Her poetry is not only pleasure-giving, but is erotic, pornographic. Her poetry is one of *ananda*, *bhakti*, *ehalokik*, *mundane*, *physical*, this worldly consummation. *Prem-vasana*, *love-fascination*, *internal attachment*, *infatuation* for, are the main things of her poetry. We may call it *shringaric*, one of *prema*, *dehik*, *laukik*, *physical*, *worldly*, *material pleasure*. It is *prem* which but gives *ananda*; it is *aashakti* which but gives *pleasure*. *Pleasure* is in *bodily meeting*. She draws and derives from *achetan manna*, *unconscious inner mind* and its *reservoirs*. It is but *agya*, *ignorance* when she talks of *childish innocence*, but when she talks of *man-woman relationship* she talks of *worldliness*, our *earthly connection*. When she talks of *extra-marital relationship*, she talks of *cchala*, *tricks*, *deceit*, *coquetry* and *bhoga*, *consummation*, *attainment of sexual pleasure* and *worldly satisfaction*. In her is a *mantra* of a *nari*, the *inner mind* and *heart* of a *woman* which but we need to read it. But as for the *dhikkara*, *self-rebuke* from which comes it out *ghrinaa*, *hatred*, she gets *misled* and *deviated* in her life. The *haas-vilasa*, *prem-bhava*, *saaj-angikaar*, *vichar-avivakti*, *dhikkar*, *ghrinaa*, *bhoga*, *cchala*, *tripti*, *vichitra manobhava* and so on. To see it otherwise, her poetry is a picture of her *vikrit-manodasha*, *depressed mental state*.

To read R.Parthasarathy is to feel the hang-over of the South Indian temple drums, procession of elephants, rock-built temples and grand sculptural motifs and carving of and he walking down past under the shadow of Dravida rites and rituals, *samskaras*.

In Daruwalla, there is the wail of the kroncha which but Valmiki felt, but Daruwalla is hard of heart and the falconer seems to be the protagonist. Cartography, map and mapping; geography, topography and landscape form the crux of the poetic matter.

In A.K.Ramanujan, there is vakrokti, oblique approach and he says it with a tinge of irony and his presence is astrological, horoscopic and astronomical. To read him is to see a South Indian horoscope-maker; to be reminded of the Swami and his friends. R.K.Narayan's Father's Day and An Astrologer's day will explain them best. Just as we play the ludo, the snake and the ladder so is the case with his crossword poetry. His poetry is a chess player's joy of living and passing time. Prem Chand's Shataraj Ke Khiladi, not of ludo will match him most. To read him is to be other-worldly, one dwelling far into the galaxy of dosha-guna, nakshatras and grahas, janma-kundalis and rites and rituals. The raasi-chart is the chart of his poetry and he not a khagolshastri, but a karmakaandi. Boddha Gaya's pundits engaged in pinda-dana rituals will suit him most. Mimicry is a part of his poetry and he keeps mocking.

Nissim Ezekiel as a poet is one of irony and doublespeak and to say the things with a cutting edge is a specialty of his. Hashya-kautuk is the chief poetic property of the poet who wants keep us regaling with comic, caricature and announcement or anchoring apart from prem-parinaya, love and nuptial thing. To write love letters and to love stealthily is the hidden dream and agenda of Nissim Ezekiel. But from his within he is an orthodox fellow.

As far as Vikram Seth's poetry is concerned, his is but of paribhraman, tour and travel, continental visit and its circuit. His poetry is one of the paryatak's, a traveller's, a visitor's. There is nothing to be so emotional and to be drenched with rasa. Samalingik aashakti, gay literature, there is a bit of it in him.

In Shiv K.Kumar's there is kaamoshakti, there is fascination for kaam and aashakti. Erotica and carnal desire leave him not behind and he is bodily, physical and sexual.

In O.P.Bhatnagar's poetry there is hatasha, desperation, a desperate state of being; there is kinkartabyabimudhata, the feeling of being at a loss and bewildered. Shunyavad, astittavavad, nihilism, existentialism take the centrestage. Vishad rasa, the sad and solemn, the note of despondence and dejection is prominent. Things appear to be unsubstantial and gloomy, dismal and bleak.

Chapter II

O.P.Bhatnagar: A Biography & A Reading of His Poetry

“Another academic, O.P. Bhatnagar, has made an anthology of Indo-English Poetry for Commonwealth Quarterly, and his own work is collected in Poems, *Angels of Retreat* and *Oneiric Visions* (1980). He says candidly:

My visions are oneiric,
visual, immediate and self-owned
offering no mysticism
mixed with farce
like bird songs
in cage enclosed...

A poem is smile: a framed sand-dune: a dream captured. When we try to imprison its essence, it eludes us — or the capsule bursts. The reading of some of these poems — ‘Like Phoenix risen from the Ashes’, for example — can become a dream-experience too.”

----- K R Srinavasa Iyengar in Indian Writing In English, Sterling Publishers Private limited, New Delhi, Reprint 1993, p. 720

“O.P. Bhatnagar, himself a practicing poet, has recently dubbed alienation as an ‘elitist mode’ and ‘the most easily borrowed fad’.”

---- Prof. M.K.Naik in Indian English Poetry from the beginnings upto 2000, Pencraft International, Delhi-110052, 20009 , p.158

Poetry as some suggestive art; words, ideas and images coming to as suggestions, made or given to help the readers in understanding them; poetry as the ironic mode, with the curves and diagrams of its own, with the rising and falling pitches of its own is the case to be pondered over. All the suffering and struggle of life lie in expressed ironically. If somebody puts before O.P. Bhatnagar as to comment forth, in his reply to, what is poetry?, he would perhaps respond it that poetry is ironical statements, falling short of becoming satiric and the writer himself a satirist. He has definitely the emotion and feeling of a writer, but he uses and applies them for irony sake.

Sometimes broken rhythms and statements make us assess his poetic stature otherwise the nuts of wit and wisdom we feel it difficult to crack them. Bhatnagar's is an intellectual base rooted into the social realities of modern life and the world. The ironic mode which he uses and applies falls short of making him a satirist which but he muffles down too to keep it suppressed. Apart from his emotional intensity, there is obviously intellectual monotony in him doing the rounds. Sometimes the poems appear to be verbose and jarring; the word-puzzles and cross-words. The age of reason and treason with the anxiety of living and intellectual monotony add to the poems. Somewhere he strives; struggles to say it. Western thoughts and their influences can be underlined no doubt. Urban society and culture, townsmanly living and thinking, this is the periphery of his poetry and he has not come out of that circle. Wit, intellect, fact and fiction seem to be the chief properties of the poet. His irony is the irony of living; tragic sense and vision realized. What can more tragic than to be befallen with tragedies, if life itself turns in a tragic living?

A poet of the 1970's, Om Prakash Bhatnagar, who used to teach English at Amravarti, Maharashtra, before settling down in New Delhi, took to creative writings in English long back as for to carve a niche for himself into the uncharted domains of nondescript Indian English poesy and by doing that, he succeeded a bit too. But what it should have come his way, which did not. The apathy of the critics may be another reason for that. But what ails us most is this that most of the men practicing criticism are the commoners. Had the olden-age, specs-laden classical scholars evaluated and assessed it, the

things would have better rather than commonly-evaluated assessments. Many youngsters too proclaim to be the stalwarts of Indian English poetry criticism, but how can be this? An editor and a critic, he made a tryst with his destiny as a poet who was so much concerned with such a realm of writing as his companions were, as for example, H.S. Bhatia, I.K. Sharma, R.R.Menon and others too. Instead of the critical vacuum existent and the absence of an authority all over this, they worked in their own ways as for its furtherance and evolution in the best possible ways. His poems continued to appear in little magazines rather than in bigger ones, but apart from that, research scholars and supervisors evinced an interest into his poetic write-ups. There is something which but upholds it and it was because of that many did their Ph.Ds. on his poetry.

Thought Poems, published in 1976, had been the first poetry-book which Bhatnagar authored, followed by the second, titled as *Feeling Fossils*, 1977. *Angels of Retreat*, brought out in 1979, was the third one to see the light of the day. *Oneiric Visions*, which appeared in 1980, strengthened his stature as a creative writer of verse. *Shadows in Floodlights* saw the light of the day in 1984. *The Audible Landscape*, which appeared in print in 1986, too was a good attempt on the part of the practicing poet. *Cooling Flames of Darkness*, published in 2001, is the last one to see the light from the poetic pen of the poet. A poem to Bhatnagar is either fossil-feeling or sand-dune formation. The bitter experiences of life turn him into an ironist, but apart from it, emotions and feelings leave him not behind. Had he utilized, he would have scaled higher, but the technique drew him back and he turned to the ironic mode and its application as for experience sake and cute and curt expression. The poet feels the fossils and sees the sand-dunes with the creative curve and dimension of his own.

We do not know if his poems have been prescribed for any courses of studies and his biography put for our evaluation and assessment rather than researches for our self-interest. If the students read not in the classrooms, what utility will it be there in introducing him? The commonly available academic anthologies of Indian English poems carry not his poems for graduation and post-graduation courses generally and this has

got some purported reasons, which is in some ways quite understandable. Barring passing references, there is not much in the standard history books though a few have appeared in print now quite recently. Whatever be the justice or injustice meted out to, he has certainly evolved in course of time and has come of age and can no doubt be studied. He was a poet not of the media glare and felicitation ceremonies rather than lukewarm response which he got for his comparably hectic literary service. Instead of, the attempts made in this regard took him to the pedestal and his name finds mention and we cannot help without thinking about him and his contribution.

O.P. Bhatnagar as a poet seems to have drawn from the age of anxiety and that of reason. Wit, irony, intellect, fact and fiction form the basis of his poetry. The intellectual element muffles the natural play of emotion and feeling. A consummate craftsman, he handles with so much dexterity and ease. The tragic vision which he is endowed with comes through his sense of struggle and suffering, all that muted in and muffled down to the core of his poetry. Somewhere intellectuality and urbanity break the lines loose and destroy the intrinsic qualities and features inherent in these. Something he lacks in and something it is in him ironically. This is how we have narrated our experiences; how we have felt them.

We do not know it why have we selected Om Prakash Bhatnagar as for analyzing his poetry for an assessment. Whatever be the reason, we are taking up his poetry as for an analysis from the thematic point of view primarily. It is themes which but give an idea and a thought with regard to the poet and his views which he seeks to pass it on. We do not like to go by what others have said about him. Even if the accolades and prizes cannot tempt and hinder across in personal opinion already formed and judged within. The media, the ways and means of it, have never been the priority. The small editors ambitious enough cannot sway the whiff of judgment. It is very difficult to say where lays the talent which often goes unrecognized. Time, circumstance and fate too have some role to play. A poet of the seventies, he rubbed the shoulders with the rank and file of Indian English poetry, be he or she the stalwart or commoner of such a genre of poetry.

To talk of O.P. Bhatnagar is to take into consideration several things, related to the growth and development of modern Indian English poetry. We generally take the names of Nissim Ezekiel, Keki N. Daruwalla, Purshottam Lal, Arun Kolatkar, Rajgopal Parthasarathy, Kamala Das, Arvind Krishna Mehrotra and so on as for those who have furthered modern Indian English poetry, but it will not be appropriate to say if we take not the names of the poets of the transitional period, covering it all both, the pre-1947 period and the post-1947 time-span. Similar is the case with O.P. Bhatnagar. Only the poets and poetesses from Writers' Workshop, Calcutta, published by P. Lal, cannot be called the writers. Bhatnagar's name does not figure in the list of standard publications and history books as because his books have appeared from small presses and independently too. Had he managed to get them published from elsewhere and had immigrated outside India, it would have been great and the critics would have appreciated as for being a diasporan or an expatriate academician. But it did not happen it so. He chose to dwell in here and to write from here. But instead of it all, he has the verve and vigor, the required wit and intellect to take the canvas.

Born in Agra in 1932, O.P.Bhatnagar did his schooling from Dehradun, later on college education from Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh and all this took him to Maharashtra as for employment and he taught there till his retirement and after this, moved to New Delhi. A modern-age poet, Bhatnagar too is of the same track which the modern hollow men have been pursuing and perusing it all along. Modernity, urbanity and intellectuality are the things of modern man which he prides over and this is there in him. O.P.Bhatnagar cannot be an exception to that. Indian philosophy, thought, culture and tradition are certainly not the things of the poet to delve deep and penetrate through. A modern man, urban and townsmanly, he takes to his own recourse as for delving. The city culture, town life and urban thinking are the poetic stuffs of the poet.

A poem to O.P.Bhatnagar is a vision, which can be made and unmade; a sand-dune forming and disfiguring. A small poem like this can express it succinctly what the poet has to say about the art and craft of writing; how the poems figure in poetic visions. The poem *A Framed Sand-Dune* can be an

example to illustrate the point under our discussion:

A poem is a vision
Which one can make
And unmake it
Till it is lost.
To find it
One must go
To the desert
With wide-eyed wonder
Looking for shapes:
For a poem is
A framed sand-dune.

(O.P. Bhatnagar, *Oneiric Visions*, p.15, Rachna Prakashan, Jaipur, 1980, Rs.20/)

O.P. Bhatnagar (1932-2001) as a poet is definitely one who belongs to the age of reason as his wit, irony and intellect take to where he dwells within really. Again, a small poem like this can marvel us with the precision of words and phrases. The poem has enough to communicate, but less to be stated into words. The gist is so thin to be lengthened. The poem *Feeling Fossils* can be put as for our example. The poem follows the whole poetic process and the things happening thereof.

The age of reason
Overshadows feelings
Like moon shadowing sun.
The eclipse lasts a small hour
But feelings sink to the shadow:
Fail to reappear like sun
And go fossil
Till they are broke open
And salvaged by words
Resolving mysteries
By miracles of thoughts.
(Ibid, p.35)

The longer not, but the shorter poems of O.P.Bhatnagar are excellent ones thematically as well as from impression. Many of the sadhus who pose to be are not, but the ganja-takers and disciple-keepers. The poet takes those pseudo-sadhus under his poetic cudgels to dispense with. India is but full of such

godmen and their miracles, doing scandals and scams in order to stain sacrosanct guruhood and these are not yogis, but the bhogis of India. When the myth is busted, they turn into the men of the racket and from the god men slip into the bad men. A poem of just nine lines named Saint can work marvels and is so epigrammatic:

He preached abstinence
All his life
Keeping women away
At a light's distance
In an absolutely purity of thought.
People ensainted him:
And when he died
More prostitutes came
To mourn the loss.
(Ibid, p.43)

The art of composition differs from poet to poet and the craftsmanship of it so. Feelings, shadows, fossils, words, mysteries and miracles of thoughts are primary to the understanding of the poem in our hand and are also quite indicative of the poetic art and the process of his composition.

The poet seeks to say it that the age of reason overshadows like the moon shadowing the sun and by the way the eclipse lasts for a small hour, but the feelings sink to the shadows formed. Deeper within, the poem has got all the complexity of expression. Precision and brevity frolic in here as for statements. Similarly the poet too feels like the eclipsing moments and imagery seen and drawn from.

The small poem under our perusal talks of the making of a poem. The poems can fossils to be felt and marked. Our emotions and feelings too go fossilized sometimes. The mushrooms too can speak of an image viewed otherwise. How the emotions and feelings underneath, this only the poet can say it all!

Words and thoughts try to salvage the whole panorama; the scenic happening, taking place as some spectacle. Even if poets go by reason, fact and logic, all artificiality and intellectual monotony, they will not be able to leave by

emotions and feelings wetting man. A poem of just eleven lines, it has all the things a poetic piece should have. The inward play of thought and action is intrinsic no doubt. Bhatnagar has of course the feelings and emotions, required for better writing but lets them to be down by wit, irony and intellect. It is the words which give thoughts to the ideas and images, and this is what he means to say, relay them here. The eclipse-scene and the fossil-feeling too have the qualities of their own to be viewed and felt through. The poems *A Framed Sand-Dune* and *Feeling Fossils* are alike in theme and expression as they contain in the poet's thoughts with regard to craftsmanship and dabbling in verse.

To My Nearea, Dying a Century, Memories, Boundaries, Courage of Being Free, I Have Promises To Keep, Crossing The Bar, Birth of a Nation, Of Floods In India, Scaling Heights, The No Man's Land, Insomnia, Over a Chair, Fear Is a Lock, Trading, Pearl, Harvest, A Poem For The Pantheists, Punishing Silence, etc. are the poems which lie in included in *Feeling Fossils*.

Bhatnagar as a poet is quite known for his succinct and short expressions, laying the poetic truths realistically. He is not a romantic poet who will speak coloring the things, but busts the notions of such a sort. 'Brevity is the soul of wit' holds true in respect of the poet.

Trading is a small poem included in *Feeling Fossils* collection of poems:

Women
Hurled to helplessness
Trade
On their flesh.
Men
Aren't different
They trade their prowess
For flesh.

(*Feeling Fossils*, Paul Jacobson & Co., Dehra Dun, 1977, p.23)
Pearl too is small, but epigrammatic, if we come to mark the idea in its kernel:

Pearl is formed

Because it shies away
From the light
And bears the burden
Of the restless sea
In silence.
(Ibid, p.23)

Not to Die of Life as a small is a realistic piece:

We hope
Not to die of frustrations
Dream
Not to die of realities
To die of truth
We have no heart
In order not to die
Of life
We have art.
(Ibid, p.47)

One will need to see the artistic images and drawings of Picasso before going through Bhatnagar's poems. The poem entitled *Pablo Picasso* has much to deal with the art of the proclaimed experimentalist artist:

Pablo Picasso
Was not a visionary
But a divisionary
Who set everything apart
Making harmony from images depart.
He made suns sweat
And eyes like horizons part.
Rejecting the myth of mystic forms
He presented the dissociation
Of perceptive norms
And exploded the pretentious pose
Of profundity in art.
(Ibid, p.50)

A few have come to understand the poetic base and the features of Om Prakash Bhatnagar as he saw poetry into the ironies and complexities doing the rounds and forming his poetic base instead of the emotions and feelings which he so

richly had been endowed with. Right from the 1970's, he has been writing and perfecting it to contribute to and add to otherwise the things would not have been so as we see them today in the form of evolving things. Those days too needed his service.

'*The Best Time To Love*' is the first poem with which the collection *Angels of Retreat* begins with and it is no doubt one of the best representative poems of Bhatnagar, showing the art and craftsmanship of the poet under our review and perusal. *Shadows in Floodlights* as a collection starts with the poem of the same title. *To My Nearea* is the first poem of the anthology titled *Feeling Fossils*, but the second poem *Dying A Century* is personal and reflective, pathetic and painful indeed. *The Crowded Metaphor* is the first poem with which the collection, *Thought Poems* begins with. *Nailing by The Wall* is one of the finest poems ever included in *Thought Poems*. Bhatnagar as a poet deals with the sense of loss and the tragedy of our living. There is nothing as to as that caters to and tickles happiness and pleasure. Every moment when we seek to take up, he appears to be tense and laden. Something as that of having a hard life is quit suggestive of this.

A stanza from the poem entitled *Indian Widows*, taken from *Thought Poems*, may be put as an example wherein he states, widows are windows, with the shut in past at variance with the present, this is the present status to be reconciled with, as they can see the future as something far remote and the fading horizon viewable at dark.

He uses similes and metaphors deftly, as for example, the small poem *Desires On Death* in whole:

Desires on death
Sit in quiet evening arrays
Like amused sparrows
On naked electric wares
Watching with muted wonder
The fading glory of the dying sun.

(Thought Poems, Skylark Publication, Aligarh, 1976, p.7)

The Audible Landscape as a poetry-collection is inclusive of the poems, such as *A Prisoner is More Free*, *The Walls of*

Prisonhouse Remain, Can Facts be Destroyed by Ideas?, The Still Questions, The New Morality, The Second Conversion, The Second Coming, Digging for Myths, Of Pains and Art, A Tribal Variation in Hunger, Grandeurs of Self Deceit, etc.

Shadows in Floodlights, Light in Being in Illusion, A Visual Truth, The Speaking Silence, Of Self and True Self, Ending a Beginning Before its End, Making a Poem, An Artful Jest, Of Poetry, Revolutions and Dreams, My Creation, A Poem for a Poem, etc. are the poems which figure in *Shadows in Floodlights*.

A stanza not, the whole of the poem *Shadows in Floodlights* from the book of the same title may be quoted as for our perusal and ready reference:

How much of dark does the sun hide?
How much of light does dark evade?
Are questions for diamond eyes
That see a stick bent in water:

Railroads meeting in a distant vision
Of the lighted dark.

Answer to this all has something
Like trees made capable of fire in wood
Wisdom trapped in a desert mirage.

This vision of dark is not a vacuum;

Light a substance

Nor nothingness a space

Between lights feeble enough

To contain the dark.

Darkness has its own way

Of subduing light

Like mother waiting to close

The eyelids of naughtiness

At night.

How much of light does the dark hide?

How much of dark does the sun evade?

Are questions for restless eyes

Arrested by equal charm

Failing to fix the shadows

In floodlights.

(Ibid, p.7)

(*Shadows In Floodlights*, Skylark Publications, Aligarh, 1984, p. 7)

A Visual Truth tells about the audio-visual grapplings of the modern poet of the modern age visiting city centers, art galleries, digitech parks, techno markets and shopping malls, but the context is different here:

Lest beauty evade

Like happiness

A bird pecks at its image

In the glass

A girl smiles at her beauty

In the mirror

A thinker dresses his ideas

In the mind:

All looking through

For themselves

As if coming dimensions

Too good for reflection

To make the picture

A visual truth:

Eying the eyed beauty

In the smile

Of a Mona Lisa.

(Ibid, p. 9)

We are but the hollow men, hollow from our within, hollow from outside.

The poem, *The Stuff We are Made Of* is a poem of some nothingness, as we come out from and mingle with it:

Are we made of nothing
With something filling it
From outside
Or something getting emptied
From inside of it?

Simply by following an echo

One could get at the hollow

Without getting at words

For meaning doesn't return

After the words have diffused

In the ambition of expansion

Looking for limits beyond dark

Any going deeper or farther

Is pursuing novelty that never was

Nor could be arbitrating

Circumferences for counter roles.

All knowledge arises out of hollows

Making echoes sweat for forms

Till a filled emptiness of silence

Becomes meaningful

A stranger made familiar with himself

In unfamiliar surroundings.

(Ibid, p.33)

Bhatnagar as a poet has been listed in the Encyclopedia of Post-Colonial Literatures in English, Routledge, London, 1996.

Even though he has not made a major breakthrough, but in spite of it, his is a name to be reckoned with in the history of post-modern poetry and is definitely not less than anyone of the great moderns. *Cooling Flames of Darkness* is perhaps the last collection of O.P.Bhatnagar to have appeared in his lifetime. *The Turn Of The Century* is the first poem with which the collection opens and closes by with *The Virtual Reality Of A Handy God*. The poet does not take to the normal recourse to life, but to reveal it how unnatural and abnormal have we grown in our sympathies to life. This is what twitches him; maligns the poetic self of the poet and he longs for an expression in words.

The Turn Of The Century as a long poem of the four stanzas has a story of sardonic reality, sarcasm to clutch along and to take on:

Like the sun, the self-illuminated self
Which, once used to smile
Like easy cheer in marigold
And guard the hostilities
Of both, evil and good, weak and strong
Mending ruptures of conduct
Now stands split and crumbled
Like river banks in flood
Bristling with grey uncertainties
And the comic in dark doubts:
If Buddha was a tamarind style nihilist
And Christ, a de-caffeinated lover of compassion:
If Shahjehan was just a recycled prodigal
And Napoleon, a leg-break rishi:

If Einstein was the ancient scholar
Ravana, by rebirth: And Stalin
By his moustache, a late Gita fan.

All this is serviette to wipe clean
The slush and waste of long-lousy conduct
Made deadly even for normal.
Living-relationship and growth.
That's why uneasy feels the head
With a Maruti-dent in the conscience
That wears modernity for a mask
And hides the shortcomings, stuffed
In the restless graves of old-spice souls
Convulsing with much painful anxiety
Of unrelieved pains: Living or dead
Relive the time of change
Like light or dark present
Both at dusk or dawn.

With leaping forest fires and rumbling volcanoes:
Crippling earthquakes, devastating tornadoes
And persistent floods
The turn of the century closes in like octopus
Drawing peace, harmony and happiness
To damning convulsions of misery, turmoil
And unrelenting grief, lamenting
What man has made of existence and man

Groping for a future into which
One may let one's country awake:
Light discover its face.

In this age where doubts overcome solutions
Questions overpower answers; Drought, rains
People may be happy with magic
Or make-up for inspiration
To plug fissures and divides
Spring cleaning their cordless souls
To live really, not just virtually
Battling truths from the sunbaked cultures
Of tired times: combing winds from the skies
And waves from the sea.

(O.P.Bhatnagar, *Cooling Flames of Darkness*, Samkaleen
Prakashan, New Delhi, p. 1-2)

*The Age of Anxiety And Its Impact, Poetry of Loss &
Bewilderment & The Question of Marginality*

Bhatnagar as a poet seems to have drawn from angst and the age of anxiety, faith eclipsed by doubt and suspense and tragic experiences of life making him suspect it all and he sees no good at all, not in anything else; an existentialist, a nihilist of his stature.

The present is an age of doubt, one of angst, bewilderment and anxiety, with a strange vacuum of own, with nothing to believe, nothing to draw from and enlighten upon. The survival of existence is itself in askance and what it to say it more? What to do, where to go, is the thing of the crisis? It is a question of survival. How to sustain, how to survive?

*The Turn of The Century, The Half-Hurt Brothers, Song of
The Innocents, Ravaged Children of the Civilized Times, The*

Primitives of the Age, The Janus Faced Politicians, Kite Flying, Appetites at Kalahandi, Risen or Fallen, Restless Peace, Refracted Images, Of Beauty and the Beasts, Beauty Queen, Of Dreams, Realities and Truths, Looking at My Solitude, Death Wish, Deathful Lie, Ceasing Come Alive, Life and Death Face to Face, The Vacuumatic Centre, Something to Nothing, The Art of Creation, Of Shadows and Substance, An Ungodly Poem, Some Wonders, The Scarecrow, The No-End of End, Hell of a Heaven, The Nuclear Suffering, The Space Within, When Something is Ready to be Told, Thoughtographs of Recollections of Vidarbha, The Senior Citizens of Morgan Town, The Trapped Cause, The Advanced Age and The Virtual Reality of a Handy God are the poems which appear in this collection of poems. Cooling Flames of Darkness is the latest work discussed herein for our perusal and stuff. He is a poet of anxiety and it is anxiety relayed through words, nourished and nurtured by doubt and suspense.

O.P.Bhatnagar is often discussed not as one of the mainstream but on the sidelines of Indian English poetry and we do not know what it is that makes a way for this type of bias and prejudice or the error committed by mistake. Whatever be that, Bhatnagar is no less than; he is of course of the modern age, a modern poet writing modern poetry. To discuss him as a poet is not to turn to ancient Indian thought and tradition, but to modern life and living, the concept of modernity, how modern are we, how the feelings of ours? There is of course a feeling which twitches him often and that is his deploring of the loss of values and ideals. We may have become advanced materialistically, but not spiritually. The poet often questions it, how humane are we indeed?

Poetry to O.P.Bhatnagar is a series of thoughts, feeling fossils and oneiric visions; angels retreating to after a tryst with social poetry of protest and dissemination. In Bhatnagar, one can mark a tragedian in the making and his works fall short of becoming tragic or problematic pieces. A few poems included in Thought Poems show it themselves. Desires on Death is a small poem all about modern life and living. The circumstances and situations are as such that we cannot hold back. Feeling Fossils as a poem speaks of how wit has been

used and applied in, the fact and fiction of life.

The No Man's Land is another to take us by strike:

Before the British came

The land wasn't ours

After they left

It was not ours too

The land belongs

To those who rule

The others merely inhabit

The no man's land.

(Feeling Fossils, p.19)

Of Emotions & Thoughts from the collection named Oneiric Visions deserves a mention as and when we think of in terms of ideas and thoughts in application:

When emotions are barred from thoughts

They look like fishes quivering

In an aquarium

Diffusing seas into an image of glass.

How do they feel their significance?

Lost in the sea is a lot better perhaps?

They can share their insignificance

With the sea.

When emotions are framed in a poem

they share their insignificance

With inaccessible thoughts.

(Oneiric Visions, p.34)

If we take to Bhatnagar, a poem can be a smile affecting it

heart to soul; maybe it a simile. A Poem Is A Smile is the first poem of the collection under our perusal which keeps the ball rolling:

What can a poet say
That words cannot feel
In similes, metaphors,
Symbols or wits
In any suggestion of art.
A poem is a smile
That spreads
From eyes to heart
Using gestures
That have hidden
Their meaning
In an ecstasy
Of being beautiful
Presenting visions
After the femininity
Of a woman
Emerging from a happiness
Locked in blue waters
Revealing its unconscious beauty
In parts.
(Oneiric Visions, p.7)

What Is Poetry In The Eyes of O.P.Bhatnagar? The Split In Between Romance And Realism

O.P.Bhatnagar as a poet writes the poetry of Pablo Picasso, Don Quixote and Hamlet; the poetry of fragmented time and this tragic living of ours marked by drastic social change and economic disparity. To read him is to feel the angst of living; the despair of living. A wounded and inflicted self lies it within the cover of his poetry. Many of us have failed to understand O.P.Bhatnagar as they mean it not so easily. As a modern poet, he is caustic and laughing and is ironical and witty side by side. Romanticism is not the poetic forte of his as the romantic emotions fades away before reality and the wings get clipped. He constructs not, but deconstructs myth; he is but a post-colonial writer.

He also busts the myth of romanticism and punctures tyres. The angst and bewilderment of the age, the anxiety and depression of it have taken a toll over us. But it is also a fact that only conventionalism and old and obsolete thoughts cannot take us far. A thinking not, re-thinking can tell you what it is in O.P.Bhatnagar, a consideration not, but a re-consideration. Try to re-consider your critique of him. The tragedies of life, what to say it about? Sorrows seem to hang heavy upon him and sufferings too have bowed him much, but instead of it he writes taking his stand and stance.

In the poem, A Framed Sand-Dune, O.P.Bhatnagar discusses that a poem is a vision which one can make and unmake it and for this one must go to the desert with wide-eyed wonder to see the landscapes the sand dune framing and forming. It instantly takes us to Rajasthan and Maharashtra in the form of sight-seeing. To read the poem is to start searching for the landscape of such a sort so scenic with sand-dunes and sand-dune imagery which is but a geographical phenomenon.

O.P.Bhatnagar takes a different standpoint in defining poetry and to him a poem is but a vision which can be made and unmade. But visions come and go and one may use and apply in as well as

may not. If the visions are used for making poems, they turn into beautiful poems of different shapes. So is the thing with the dune. How do they get built and how do they get reshaped? The process of making and un-making continues it and so are the poems and their shapes. If one can see the dune scenery, one may come to understand the art of nature. How do they get shaped? What are the ingredients and factors making them? How the process? Poems too are the sand-dunes of some sort.

Poetry as a suggestion in art, this is the message the poet seeks to give to us. Similes, metaphors, symbols and wits are the parts and it depends on the poet to use and apply in. Words are but suggestive of them. A poem may be a smile affecting the heart after the eyes. Love takes wings and flights only after taking an aerial view or a face-to-face reading. The portrait of an artist as a young woman and the portrait of a lady dance before the eyes just as ideas. How does romance get born?

How do we gesture to? How is love born? How do we start liking and loving? Only our heart knows it. A poem is smile and keep you smiling, but in the trail of it comes it the simile, the metaphor and the rhetoric. The poem reminds us of the art of satire as well as the art of romance. But how many of us smile it innocently, simply? We are not smiley, but construed from our within. What to say about the modern smiles cutting across as we have forgotten to smile and laugh? Now-a-days laugh we not from our hearts. Just or show smile we outwardly, externally, not internally.

Man Is Lived

The man
Whose dear one dies
Is bereaved.
Others keep sun in a bag
And distribute griefs
Dipped in moonwater.
But the man who dies knows

That man does not live
But is lived
And dies only as thoughts
In an image.

(Oneiric Visions, p.12)

Man just lives in memories and reflections. Time is not his own. Those who die they can only feel it what it is like dying, what can the bystanders understand it? The moments lived with tell of all that.

But when a man dies, he leaves for ever, he will not come back again. This is but granted. God knows, what will it happen to the family in trouble? Who will help them and who not? And how will be that Good Samaritan in the end? Widows can feel it best. There is nobody to help them.

O.P.Bhatnagar as a poet tells about the tragedy of living as he too has suffered most in his life.

Feeling Fossils as a poem tells of favourite poetic theme and the way of professing to poetry. The poet means to say that our feelings and emotions have frozen. Salvaged by words, Resolving mysteries, by miracles of thoughts add meaning to the poem.

An age of reason overshadows us like the moon shadowing the sun. But for how long will the eclipse continue? The feelings sink below when faced with reality. Again they will reappear as fossils and we shall start resolving the mysteries surrounding it. How had it been the Jurassic Park? Nature's Jurassic Park or ours? Only words can salvage them. With the cold touch of reality, we too go fossils.

To Bhatnagar, poems are fossils, if you have not, first go and see and then say to how your feelings and emotions on seeing them, discovering them.

Pablo Picasso is a beautiful written by Bhatnagar and here one can find him professing a superb theme in form and content. But

apart from picking him, he applies his things in delineating his genius.

Pablo Picasso, we hear the name with curiosity and astonishment which seems to be endowed with. Who this Picasso is? But can we think of evolution if know we not Leonardo da Vinci, Picasso and Beethoven? They have really added to the evolution of human thought and idea and were the geniuses par excellence. To read the poem is to see the images and paintings of Picasso. Without seeing them, one cannot what it is in this poem. The specialties and features of his art the gallery-visitors and art critics can say it best what it is in his art and symbols as many mean it not as he was ahead of time and age.

To Hamlets is a glaring example of his repudiation which he applies from being accepted to contradict and form his anti-thesis and the poem is a good example of that method to be marked herein. What Hamlets do we need to embark upon our journey of life?

A clever concealing
Merging light with dark
Makes it difficult to say
Whether masking or disguising
Is open to any hidden worth.
Masks shield who wear them
Disguises fool the wearer
But plain faces end up
Only in being signs of idle mirth.
How many Hamlets shall we then need
To unmask faces: Build stage on stage
And on frequent soliloquies embark?
For all the dead do not haunt as ghosts
Instead prefer going back into the earth
And stars are always lovely
Against the dark.
(Ibid, p.28)

How beautiful the lines which but we could not feel it then! A man can be understood not from the covering he dons. Try to see him when he is unmasked. Ask him to take off the mask and you will come to see him, feel his inner self. The outer covering cannot lay him bare. To peep into the inner self has something to divulge it really.

Don Quixote
For the brave
There must always be
Something to conquer
For the generous a beggar.
For the coward
Something to shy from
For the sentimental a tragedy.
Man must act a Sancho Panza
To his unending dreams
Of visionary valour
Fighting fluid battles
On cotton thick flakes.
We are indeed brave
To seek reality
And then nothing is left to seek.
Tired of this stasis
We look for something Kinetic
And recreate fresh illusions
Till imagination joins the parted ends.

(Ibid, p.22)

A small poem exhorts us to read Cervantes and his works and characters. There is a wide gap in between dream and reality. Only chivalry cannot take us far. Many fools and illiterates appear to be as knights, but are not. We need to be down to realities. Quixotic characters cannot be role models.

Indian Quixotes will supersede it all, Quixotes not, superstitious, illiterate, uneducated, country swains as Paglets showing it to be

over pious, over holy so bound to old and obsolete thoughts and ideas, rites and rituals, never taking logic and reason to be on their side, so lethargic, fatalistic, inactive, backward and undeveloped from their within.

In the entitled Reality Born of Romance, the poet beautifully states that Mona Lisa's smile is one thing, but the indifference she hides is different, romance is just one side of the moon, the other side is dark.

Bhatnagar's Mona Lisa is a different Mona Lisa whose smiles modern-day men can understand it best if they can derive and draw it from. What sort of da Vinci is he that dreams fly away at his hands? How the painting of his? The poet has succeeded in delineating and divulging the smiles of Mona Lisa. How the smile of Mona Lisa? The poet means to say that before the grim realities of life everything but flies away and vanishes out.

Oneiric Visions is one of the best representative poems of O.P.Bhatnagar where he tries to define and clarify his standpoint.

There will be fairies to live with
After death: a fair deal
Granted to our deeds.
Others assure of a rest
Till the Day of Judgement
And yet many more visions
To frighten or to please.
Poems of vision may be concrete
But the vision of poems may be vague
For half-seen visions act
Facts sprayed with lies
Like poetry written in prose.
My visions are oneiric,
Visual, immediate and self-owned
Offering no mysticism
Mixed with farce
Like bird songs

In cage enclosed.

(Ibid, p.33)

O.P.Bhatnagar is no mystic of any sort and his poems offer it no mysticism at all, these are but exercises in irony and realism. When the spell of romanticism fades, where does it land us? The grim realities of life let us not slip away and only those can, who are but escapists and like to escape it from otherwise they would not have taken shelter under the facades of dream and fantasy.

Chapter III

Poetic Theme & Discussion

O.P.Bhatnagar as a poet derives his poetic stuffs from welfare economics, developmental studies, from sociology, poverty and underdevelopment and these add to his poetic crux of the matter. If we read from this perspective, we shall come to find it that Bhatnagar does not seem to be a literature student, but a social science one which is also true to him to some extent as because he has read economics to some level and the things of economics leave him not behind. The poet describes as he has seen life, the vicissitudes of it, the pity and pathos of it only those who suffer can only know it. The path is life is not easy and smooth-going.

Widows are windows
To shut the past from the present
And see the future as remote
As the fading horizon at dusk.
They are like strangers
Not feeling at home
Forever peeping out of the window
In an indistinct anxiety to go;
Their feelings grow like caterpillars
Flying out as butterflies
Flitting from flower to flower
Eluding the fingers of man
Or like bats hung upside down
To see the world in right perspective
Making endless flights in the room
In a confused hurry missing all windows.

(Thought Poems, Skylark Publication, Aligarh, 1976, p.16)

Indian Widows as a poem reminds us of the struggle and suffering of the widows. What treatment have they got so far? How our mind-sets and mentality? How have we seen them over the years? Where is golden Vrindavan? How did it Mira feel it? How did the medieval period change it the whole gamut? How have they struggled? How have they suffered? Above all, what treatment have they got at our hands? We forbade them to wear red and colourful saris? We forbade them to smile. We got their long hair cut short and made them wear white clothes, barred from wearing colourful bangles. How did we snatch the smiles even from their faces? We imposed a flurry of restrictions on them. The Sati system sparks a lot about them. The child marriage too reveals it how was our custom and how was India then! We do not know how have the social evils grown?

In reading the poem, several things dance before our eyes and conjure upon the mind's plane. How was Mirabai treated when she took to the company of Krishnite saints and sadhus, fakiras and minstrels abandoning her royal robe? How did it Mahadevi Varma? How does it augur the poem of Nirala, Bharat Ki Vidhwa? Was Kabira not the child of a Brahmin widow who threw it the new-born baby out of shame into the bushes to be reared and picked by the Muslim weavers?

Lifting the blinds of the window, they have nothing to peep into as their future is doomed, as their destiny lies it darkened where is there is a complete black-out, there is no room for any light to be seen.

How pathetic and penetrating are the lines! They are like strangers, refugees in no-man's land partitioning for what. They do not remain the same in-dwellers but turn into the aliens from a different space. Just like the NRIs, non-resident persons they are treated.

They go on hopping from flower to flower, go on dreaming, as human imagination takes one to, but the dreams turn out it not to be real, nor has it anywhere. The caterpillars will remain

caterpillars. Beyond the grasp of man and his fingers, they keep eluding. Who are they in reality? What their entities?

To change the metaphor, the simile, they are like bats hanging upside down, the Gulliverian characters. The closed doors, the closed windows are the housing s and flats of their own from where they can go it nowhere.

O.P. Bhatnagar as a poet is one of social ideas and thoughts. To delve into his poetry is to delve into the sphere of social poetry and tragedy matter. To turn to him is to turn to Beckett and Shaw and Galsworthy where debates and discussions take the centre space in the want of romantic heroines, and we feel it boredom and monotony.

What it is existent now? How the residues of meaning? How the windows of the past? Where to peep into? How the windows showing future? Should the blinds be drawn out or drawn in? Can she shut herself from the past? Where is her home? Where her land?

She seems to be leaving all that in a confused hurry, going to where, who can but say it? Widows of O.P. Bhatnagar remind us the widows in lines, rows or queues waiting to enter the Great Temple of Jagannath as it is in Jayanta Mahapatra's Dawn at Puri. The future is just like a fading horizon of the dusk to them. If the insiders turn into outsiders, what will it happen to? How will the things appear to be? Stark realities keep us bleeding, naked realities, bare truths, pinching bitter truths.

Thought Poems as a collection begins with The Crowded Metaphor:

Loneliness has an ego
Which inflates emptiness
To struggle with silences
Beyond the shadows of restless calm.
The streets like a crowded metaphor
Are better than the lonely ones

To tell the powdered tranquility
Its worth and warmth.
When hollow serenity saunters
The much trafficked roads
Greying visions mooned by suns
Crowds, by the chaotic response
Of their indifferent counterpoise,
Displace and resolve
What loneliness complicates
And shuns.
(Ibid, p.3)

Round And Round as a poem may be quoted in to reflect upon:

We may go round and round a temple
Yet never be around God

We may go round and round an idea
Yet never be around thought.

Poetry is meaning
Like a deity enshrined

Words upon words the edifice built
What is the idea?

Where is God?

Who will tell what the artist sought?

(Ibid, p.5)

Of Tongue in English Chains opens the Pandora's box, Prospero's box of postcolonialism and postcolonial stuffs. A single poem like this can foreshadow Bill Ashcroft's postcolonialism. Let us see how O.P. Bhatnagar gives his anti-thesis, how he constructs and deconstructs. The story is one of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and for to know it we need to refer to the drama and dramatization and the understanding of characters.

Caliban got colonized and alienated for a tongue. Who is this Caliban? Is he a symbol of the colonies and colonization? Is it of

slavery and native culture? Shakespeare blurs us with Othello and Prospero. How did the process start in? How were the lands subjugated and brought under? This has a history of own. First, how could Shakespeare dream about? How could be apply black magic and black art? We had voices, but how could they be silenced? The minutes of Macaulay too forebode it not wrong. Even before his minutes we had a rich linguistic stock of scripted and unscripted languages. But the lack of the historical sense and to record it could not be and something we lacked in really as had been prone to foreign invasions and superstitions. Medievalism hung it heavy upon us, the load of rites and rituals and above all, the impregnable exotic tract, the vast stretch of land so diverse, ethnic, racial and multi-faceted full of dense forests, brimming rivers, rugged mountains and difficult hills, dales and valleys standing at variance with and separating from each other. It was submission with laughter to the two virtues of Prospero-- aggressiveness and homosexuality and these colonized even Ferdinand as a robot for Miranda. Ferdinand even felt helpless before and so was Miranda before. But what to do under the situations, in the island of spirits, monsters, black art and magicians?

But the new tongue did not prove out to be witchcraft. Though it did not do any harm to, but we took time in mastering it, mastered a bit and faltered too. We held the tongue in cheek and appeared to be beetles into the cracks of walls. We could not be English even a fifth of that. But a variant like American English or Caribbean English cannot be denied. The language did not do any wrong, but instead helped in learning the magic, helping Caliban grow. We used and applied the same language in arousing the nationalistic sentiment. The language but hinted us with regard to the shunting of old and obsolete thoughts which would have crept in, superstition and medieval thoughts to abandon them. But the lessons of history we got it from it after mustering ideas.

Is our language one of Caliban? Has native culture been subjugated? Did we too do it in terms of Aryan and non-Aryan?

Is it the same in the existence of Black American literature? Did Prospero not understand it? Was Prospero a colonizer? A colonizer of the mind?

Has the time come to explode the Prospero myth and to play football with the prisoners of war as did they?

Of Tongue In English Chains is a different poem in which the poet talks of deconstruction and busting of the age-old myth of colonialism. He tells in brief the history of colonization and the colonized. How was it slavery and how did it come to be eliminated?

A poem of two stanzas, it expresses with novelty in thought the art of writing poems in a second language and the ideas concerned with that. It may be taken as his use and application of the language. His tryst with the alien tongue lies herein expressed. Of Tongue In English Chains is all about his grapples with the acquired language:

Caliban got colonised
And alienated for a tongue.
Were we Calibans?
We had our voices
Beyond the livingness of signs.
The trick was not in the tongue
Not the minutes of Macaulay:
It was submission with laughter
To the two virtues of Prospero--
Aggressiveness and homosexuality,
Which colonised even Ferdinand
As a robot for Miranda:
An egg in sand,
A male figure in Greek art.

The new tongue didn't prove a witchcraft
Nor a marijuana to feel psychedelic:
But an unconsummated symbol
Telescopic of revolt
Eagling out the dispenser its prey.
We kept the tongue in cheek
Like beetles living in the cracks of walls.
No more English or filth
Nor a passivity endemic to prostitution:
But a variant like American or Caribbean
To explode the Prospero myth:
And play football like Germans
With the prisoners of war.

(The Audible Landscape, *ibid*, p.42)

Nailing By The Wall, What an excellent proposition, supposition of fire being nailed by the wall and the sorrows by the stars! In O.P. Bhatnagar's poetry, there is some pain and anguish to be felt at the inner level, the burden of grief hangs it heavy upon. Sorrow strikes us. Truth is always different and hidden and reality far from. Reality is ever ready to give a lick of dust. Where is it happiness, say you? Hope for a good living is but a dream. How to say when will it happiness dawn upon? When shall we be happy? None can say it. Happiness is but a mirage.

To read him is to read with a heavy heart. He is a poet of faded dreams and luster bereft of. We get down from the stars to the earth. Bhatnagar does not let us keep soaring into up above, high into the skies. Living on earth, he cannot think of star wars. His is poetry of social protest, silent suffering as has been ordained by fate. There is something of absurd drama drawn from in him. Social reality is far from. How difficult is it to live it here and struggle and suffer and to eke out a living? Hardcore realities make us lick dust letting us a toilsome life full of struggle and suffering.

O.P. Bhatnagar is not a dreamer in verse but is a realist. He knows what it is personal suffering, loss and tragedy. False promises cannot show us a dawn. Hardships come into life, never let off simply and these need to be overcome. At that time when grief comes to inflicting deaf and dumb, few stand by during those moments of pain. The time is hard and full of suffering. When was it not? The destiny of man is as such. To bear the brunt is our time. We are here for to bear silent suffering. Whom to complain against? Where to lodge the complaint? Who the giver of pains? We cannot say why we suffer and for what and nobody can say it why is suffering there in our life.

He too wants to win over the love and heart of Helen, but is Helen in his lot? Where to debunk the ships of Troy? Where to devastate the ships? He thinks of living by future, which is yet to come, but how will it be none can guess it about. Whom we think saints are not as they appear to be coming from different places. This is a time when we get misled, gone astray. What are morals? A bundle of contradictions is it. Immortal is but mortality. Can we be immortal? Can anything on earth be? Ghosts seem to be sitting around the desolate ramparts of time, leaving not behind, walking past, following behind as the shadows cast around. Can we dislodge the ghost of the past? What is our past? How the past of man? How the story of suffering? Why do all of us suffer? Who is good? How much is he good?

A man lives by his visions so are that of his. But how will it be the future? None can say it.

Tragedy, struggle, suffering and pain are the main things of his poetry. His is a type of social poetry. Life has taught him otherwise making him tread on the dusty ways.

Can fire be nailed by the wall?
And sorrows by stars?
Drowsy hopes bite off
Half the facts of their truth
And render dreams a tragic boast.

The lost years of hoped for happiness
Are winter logged
And the glories of our ancestors
A lived out past
The horizons of the present haunt with desolation
And reek of cancerous corruption in bones.
Talking in the rhetoric of sleep
The future looks faded
Like the blooms of cacti after dawn.
The saints from bars, brothels and nightclubs
Tasting of casinos and underworld
Turn morals, values and virtues to ice cream
Licked by fun loving children in cones.
Immortal as mortality I wander like a ghost
On the ramparts of desolate times
Unable to relieve the past
Or feast on the present in high robes.
Wish burning a thousand Troys
To win a Helen
I live for a future
That nails me by my visions
In the dark.

(Thought Poems, Skylark Publication, Aligarh, 1976, p.4)

Nailing By The Wall by O.P. Bhatnagar is one of the best poems included in *Thought Poems* published in 1976 and herein one can mark the beauty of his poetry, how his poetic statement. How is the tongue of truth? How the tongs of fire? Who is for what, God knows, who can but say it, how is the truth? Are our truths but half-said?

O.P. Bhatnagar is a poet of a different order as because apart from being ironical and satiric, he is a poet of social reality and this absurd living of ours. He is unsentimental and unemotional about the poetry of struggle, suffering and hardcore realities he writes

about. He is a poet of thoughts and ideas. Protest poetry forms the base of his poetics. Nihilism, skepticism, and bleak hope form the core-content of his poetry. How does it break? The mud plaster too reveals the story behind, so is the roof telling a tale.

The houses of silence, men in silence, and as thus we go on making, meaning, searching for sound and speech intelligible to us. The dwellings of man, the habitats of his are the things. Who inhabits and who deserts? How?

Here the poet applying his poetic vision tries to write down a new line and length. Silence speaks has a narrative of its own kind.

The Speaking Silence is from Bhatnagar's *Shadows in Floodlights*. The poet means to say that silence speaks the depth of speech it is made of. Every man is a deserted hut speaking the tale. Whose thought who is relaying? Eyes peep out through. What is the meaning and who interprets it as what; how to say it?

Everything is but a thought making a way into the realms, and something ruffles it down to make it say about. Had it been not, how would the speech come from the depths of silence? We just go on creating and re-creating out of. Have you studied, what the deserted huts say, communicate to, the huts of men and civilizations? How did the things come into existence and for what? What were the things elemental in having them or letting out?

But thoughts once created never end and as deserted huts they appear to be even though men are not in them.

Every silence defines the depth of speech
Of which it is made,
Every man a deserted hut
To speak.
Silence takes nothing
To create words sweat for
Man nothing
Silence to labor for.

The tired apartness of life.
May make one come close to silence
A deserted hut is made of
To hear it speak in silence
Much that was unspoken
And much that was lost to speech.

The mud plaster holds the hands
That stuck it there
The roof the vision the eyes located
Through chinks.
Once it was a thought
Inhabited by someone.
But its desertion hasn't made it lonely.
For thought once created
Is never deserted:
Only its silence becomes more vocal.

(Shadows in Floodlights, Skylark Publication, 1984, p.10)

Harvest is one of the poems of O.P. Bhatnagar which deal with our agriculture and economics. A poor man's economics, who has striven to know? A farmer's life, have we at least tried to know? Indian agriculture, Indian economics is the thing of discussion. An Indian farmer's life, have we tried to look into? There had been times of droughts and famines and we struggled to come through.

Indian crops are a gambling with the monsoon. If the rains 'are good, plenty of crops can be expected. But their life is very painful and so full of strenuous toil. They keep busy with all day long labor. In the evening they come from the lands. But what do they get in return? Manure too is needed for good production. Poor irrigation costs them bitterly. The poor fellows they fail to do cultivating in a well-planned way. They depend on the rain gods for the rains. Indian farmers in *dhoti* and *ganjee* and with a towel on the shoulders, this is a typical image of his. What prices

do they get for their harvests? Just the skies and the heavens are their solace. Just with labor, what can they do? Tattered economy is their property. They toil and till to keep the fight in life. When the crops fail, they too break down. Taking debts from, they make a tryst with destiny. Crops show the golden dreams to them. Harvest figures in Bhatnagar's Feeling Fossils collection of poems. The poem itself speaks of the matter discussed in. If the crops show them the otherwise dreams, take it for that they are but the shooting stars.

Indian farmers:
Stars on the firmament
Of our tattered economy
Take no sleep
And look to skies
And spaces wide
To make their next harvest
Rich.
Soon they see stars shooting
Down their fields
And they harvest them
With a heart hit
With depleted crops.

(Feeling Fossils, Paul Jacobson & Co., Dehra Dun, 1977, Rs.12/, p.24)

Hostage of Time is one of those poems of Bhatnagar which remind us of the meaninglessness of life and the things, how we have been held hostage. What is this world made of? What is that counts it here? What things are we? What shall we become one day? Have we thought it about? What are we doing and where are we going? What we see it is nothing and nothing is what see we.

We see things pass by, passing out of sight, turning into dust and the things too watch us die, but which is what none is able to say it. We are no philosophers in the absence of matter and others. Even if we are, what can we for matter and mass?

Events too keep happening, taking place as well as obliterating.
We do not why do they happen, take place and why do they
disintegrate and scatter in the end? Why do they get wiped off?
What it in a subject? What it in an object? Staircases lead it to
nowhere. Gestures may be noted, but cannot be explained.

Have we been kept hostage by time? Are we the prisoners of
time? Who is for whom a philosopher? We do not know why are
we here, what it our purpose, why do the things happen, take
place?

What is this mass? What is this matter? How does it assemble?
Why do they disintegrate? Can we imagine?

Hostage of Time is enough to corroborate it:

We see things pass by
Things watch us die
We are no more philosophers
Without the existence of matter
And others: Events
Self-sufficient at every moment
Obliterating as they proceed
Like words destroying meaning
By a tilt:
Objects raped subject
Staircases leading nowhere
Gestures noted but not explained.
(Shadows In Floodlights, Ibid, p.13)

Scaling Heights as a poem starts with a note from the poet put
within a bracket, such as, (Analysis of a poem on the tragic death
of Dr. Willie Unsoeld's daughter, Nanda Devi, on an expedition
to the peak of Nanda Devi in the Himalayas, September 8, 1976.
Dr. Willie Unsoeld is a devoted American mountaineer.), for our
deliberation and to take into account.

O.P. Bhatnagar starts the poem with the hint given along with the poem kept under a bracket just at the beginning. How did the tragedy befall the family? How was a tender life snuffed out? Whom to blame? It happened as it had to happen. Who can have a control over the writ of destiny? We as the readers of the poem keep opining as thus as the write-up is about the fall, tragedy, mishap, loss and mourning and grief overtaking the family. But who can thwart the unseen? Everybody knows it that mountaineering is not within the reach of all. The tragedy is almost like that of *Riders to the Sea* of J.M. Synge.

When we read the poem, it dances before the eyes the photo of Nanda Devi, the daughter of Dr. Willie Unsoeld and her tragic loss and mourning thereafter. How dared she scale the mountain peaks, how was she lost in the mountain tracks! Here mountaineering as a subject maligns us with its daredevilry as well as keeps us spell-bound with its undaunted bravery. To reach the top, to scale the mountain peaks it is not easy. How to narrate the unnarrated stuffs? How the history of climbing? To read the poem is to open the pages of climbing and mountaineering. How were the climbers in the past? How the tracks and treks? How are they now? Who climbed when who knows it? Just the locals can say it about or they remember it not the things of history. Himalayan sadhus did they penance and vanished into their rigorous sadhna as because they had not anything to do with worldliness and name and fame. The *Burial of Sir John Moore after Corunna* by Charles Wolfe too is a poem of that sort reminding of the memorial service done in a huff or jut for name sake.

What can it happen in scaling heights? They only know who climb the unscaled mountains, climb taking as for the call of the mountains and the snow-clad or dawn-lit peaks.

How had it been her fate? What was it in her destiny? One from across the seas came she to transcend the mountains, the rugged and treacherous held aloft and magnanimous peaks always full of

risks and dangers and dared to take up out of passion and mountaineering. But the writ had been written it otherwise. She fell sick seriously and succumbed to while venturing into the Nanda Devi. A girl named Nanda Devi after the mystery, beauty and dangerous mountains got lost into the mythological blizzards and avalanches of its climbing, mountaineering history.

The death in snow, on the snowy paths, hairs stand on in thinking about the same. How could it have been her death, she writhing in pain over the trekking paths and the tracks laden in snow, high above, who to hear her call there? It was really a difficult time. It was really a difficult situation to grapple with.

How graceful was she? How much beautiful and innocent she was? Where from did she come and with what mission and zeal and what did it happen to here? Destiny too could do it noting.

The daughter of Nanda Devi she went to Nanda Devi. Perhaps this was her fate, her destiny, bad luck, ascension favoured her not, the falling health took a toll upon. Leaving unto God, what more to comment in this regard?

To see the lofty mountains and its peaks shrouded in mystery and snow, the mythology taking over and the sunrise glowing mysteriously still make us reminded of her, the American daughter scaling the heights. Who says that she died frozen death? She has turned into the mystery surrounding it, into the mythology of the mountain ranges, though tracks and treks of it. The mother's child the mother taken her away. Still she is in the lap of her mother, Nanda Devi, the Goddess of the mountains. So, why to grieve?

The poet has beautiful words for her, transoceanic elegance, born of love for the mountains, bewitching beauty of the Himalayas, the wondrous womb of America, snowy mountain dream.

A transoceanic elegance

She was born of love for the mountains

That had willy nilly enamoured Unsoeld

To the bewitching beauty of the Himalayas.
He had especially fallen for Nanda Devi
To bring forth a child
From the wondrous womb of America
Naming it no different
Than his snowy mountain dream.

Languishing in the heady splendours
Of the hoary Himalayas
A lily, she grew
Twenty two years in grace and snow
Blooming bright in the vintage of fistful memories
Of materializing the native unsold
American dream
Of giving Nanda Devi a warm family embrace
On its luring frozen heights.

As all heights are treacherous
She died of high altitude fever
Writhing with severe abdominal pain
The young to fall and understand
Lord Krishna's philosophy of 'Karma'
Or Hemingway's snowball
Of the killer and the killed.

In emotions mixed with morning dew
To soften the adventurer's boast
Of scaling infinite heights,
Her father believed
"She died doing things
She loved most".
And of the many roles longed for
She took the one least boasted by.

In the twilight mood of liquid clarity
One can still see her scaling heights

On the path which has no turning
And from where
There is not turning back.

For the American Pilgrim Father
The way was the dream
And the dream
An ever present feel
Of the far seeing eye
Founding high roads
And scaling new heights for humanity.

(Feeling Fossils, Paul Jacobson & Co., Dehra Dun, 1977, p.16-17)

A single poem like this has the quality of making him immortal into the chronicles and annals of Indian poetry in English which we come to notice in the form of it. A rare poem it will go down in the history of poetry. Unexpected human tragedy, loss and mishap, how can these add to one's misery? Have we thought it about? How can it break us?

Reality Born of Romance as a poem is about the cute and curt smile of Mona Lisa which we have failed to mean and explain.

Mona Lisa's smile is one thing
But the indifference she hides
Is different,
Romance is just one side
Of the moon,
The other side is dark.
What begins as romance
Always gives way to
Children, kitchen, clinics and parks.
Gas, office and soaring prices
Chase all dreams away
Like beauty
Conceived by moss in sands.

Sun brittles even memories
And breaks the nets
That romance once laid
On sands
To hold what they could
And what they actually
can.

(Oneiric Visions, Rachna Prakashan, Jaipur, 1980, p.9, Rs.20/)

The things are like My Last Duchess of Robert Browning which one may come to notice after going through him.

How was Mona Lisa? How was the smile like? Can you say it? Will anybody? How was the smile? Was she smiling or not? Did she look arrogant? Is her look aristocratic or not? Should we go discussing it, somebody's smile or not? Who painted with what image and feeling? How to put it before? Is Mona Lisa like Shakespeare's *The Dark Lady* or not?

Here in this poem O.P. Bhatnagar tries to construct and de-construct it, what he means to say with regard to romanticism and the flight of imagination. Where can fancy and imagination take to and where can it dislodge too? How our flights of romanticism which has nothing to do with ground thoughts, bare and stark realities? While reading this, the images from O. Henry's *The Last Leaf*, Katherine Mansfield's *A Cup of Tea* and Oscar Wilde's *The Model Millionaire* conjure upon the mind's eye as for a delving.

To read the poem is to feel an impetus within to see the painting of Leonardo da Vinci. How did it look like? What is the mystery of her smile? Why does it lie muffled in so far, why does the mystery not get revealed, unfolded? How the blanket of mystery, the shroud folding it from being unfolded? How the tracing paper of art and the painting upon? How was the brush of Leonardo? Is it a replica of the renaissance shaded in that? But Browning's poem is full of suspense and doubt. Only a villain will say, how did you smile on seeing him? Suspicious men, doubtful

personalities often question it in the likewise manner as is the case with us. Why had Allauddin been after Padmavat? The smile of a Burkhawalli, one may paint reminding us Andrew Marvell's To His Coy Mistress. A realist O.P. Bhatnagar he busts the myths of romanticism. Anton Chekov's A Swan Song too may opine us in some different way here. How to balance pride and prejudice, sense and sensibility is the matter here. How to say it about her pretence and hypocrisy? How it the real side of her portrait? A portrait of an artist, one may do it, but in which gallery to keep it?

Under the cover of romance and romanticism, he says it how dream, fancy and imagination give away before reality as the songs of the nightingale fade away in Keats' Ode to a Nightingale. How long to carry along the burden of Mona Lisa's heart? Why to be laden under the smile of her? What is that she hides in? How the pretense of hers? Is she from her heart within? The interior may not be just as the exterior. So is the case with romance and romanticism which but fades away and reality is something far different. The case of love is the same which started it with the eating of the forbidden fruit. Something maybe it in the heart of Mona Lisa which she goes about hiding and something that Leonardo knows it about, reveals it not. This may also be the side of truth. The romantic side is but the dreamy, the imaginative side mere.

The romantic side and the realistic side are two different sides. Romance generally ends into despair. Romance cannot continue for long. The dark side of romance and romanticism one knows it not. The bars and restaurants appear to be lovely, but their storerooms cannot please you so is the case here with romance. Reality is something different. After the grand wedding, when romance fades it away, reality pins you down with problems, children and daily needs. Romance just lasts for some time and after that reality starts clawing at. The moss on a sandy base gives the idea of beautiful greenery, but can sands taken into confidence? So is the base of romance on false dreams and false promises. The mirage may take you there, but water is never,

never there. Water is there into the well and the tank. It is beautiful to see the moonrise and the moonshine, the milky white icy cool shine, but when the lunar eclipse happens it, the picture gets blurred, disturbed. When the bridal dreams give away, the kitchen, medicine, milk, vegetables and cereals start engaging the space. Something one needs to take too in life. The shrieks of the cursed newborn baby in Blake's London at midnight too disturb us with the image of her mother being away for her profession and forced lifestyle.

Chapter IV

Poetic Art & Style

O.P.Bhatnagar as a poet is but a social poet as because society is the main crux of concern for him and without depicting it he cannot help. Social evils twitch him for an expression and he longs for to put it down, but romance is not in his bag. Those who turn up to him as for deriving joy, for pleasure sake will be frustrated in their attempt. Tragedy of living, loss, bewilderment, angst, anxiety, suspense, suspicion, fear, doubt and dilemma form the subject-matter of his poetry. Unnecessary struggle and suffering, bearing of pathos and pity in life, are we for these, is life meant for them only? Can man be never happy? Is happiness not possible? What the way out? The poet broods over the present-day living conditions of man. How does he struggle to make out a living? Poor lives, who takes a note of? There is a gap in between romance and realism, in between what we dream and what we do. Reality is far from and makes us see the things with our bare eyes. Absurd plays, problem plays, tragedies, absurd dramas, existential stuffs and the things of such a domain interests him very much and he is similar to Keki N.Daruwalla, as there is no doubt in it to say.

The New Tragedy

Death in modern times
Leaves man more naked
Than dead
For unwelcome death
Is not worth dying

People do not die
Of growth these days
Instead struck dead
By deadly diseases
Or dreadful atrocities of man

The tragedy now lies
In the uneasy silence
Of the wounded survivors
Who suffer death
Without ennoblement.

(Thought Poems, Skylark Publications, Aligarh, U.P., India,
1976,- p.11)

O.P.Bhatnagar here in this poem talks about not natural age and ageing, death and dying, but how diseases take a toll upon unnaturally making us deaf and dumb! We do not die naturally, but accidentally. How to tell it about modern life and living? How the problems of it? How to survive and sustain is the main problem? How to keep it going the cart of life? So fraught with problems and difficulties, how to carry it on the load? Who is whose? How to say this? Who will help in which way? None is sure of. When tragedies rake the family, it strikes us dumb, we feel it aghast as for what to say, what not. Our family tragedy turns into a social tragedy. What will the outsiders do rather than seeing? There is none to help, extend a helping hand to. Only the family bears it. Only the family members share the load of. Even in the family all are not equal in feeling and emotion. When a tragedy takes us over, befalls the family, we just keep watching silently, bearing the brunt of agony and pain. Apart from taking family tragedy, the poet here in it is autobiographical too. Something lies it as the traces of memories and reflections observed and borne silently. The scars and chars can never be wiped off. Something of that will definitely get reflected in.

Who to console in the times of tragedy, loss and mourning? When tragedy strikes us, we feel it speechless. Just like a spectator, stand we watching the happenings, events taking place as we cannot do anything, everything is not within us, within our reach.

The opening lines start the things as they are, how is life and this living of ours, how the fall of the modern age, how the modern tragedy of living, how is it fraught with!

People do not die these days of growth. They are but struck dead by deadly diseases. Even sometimes atrocities of man force them to be dead. To read the poem is to be reminded of social tragedies, modern tragedies doing the rounds. Cancer, how has left us dumb and deaf! How has it rattled us! How the trauma of living! How our pain and agony of living! What can we do before it? How powerful are we before it? Can you say? You are but answerless.

You have no answer to tend to, extend. Sometimes car tragedies turn into family tragedies. Suicides have left scarred. What the cause of it? Why are they committing? We do not know it. We are clueless with regard to it. We do not have time to peep into other man's sorrows. How pitiable have we become! How dubious our standpoint!

Are we really morally hollow? Where are we going to? What have we become? How hard of heart have we grown?

Have we become ruthless? Where is our morality of extending support and help? How merciless have we become indeed with the growing age? How have the times changed it? Are we really the hollow men of Eliot? Are we the absurd dramatic personae of Beckett? The last not the least, what sort of man are we!

How tragic is this life of ours! How fraught with social and family tragedy! We do not know what we are waiting for, what it to befall us, what it lies awaiting us. The survivors who live as wounded personae know it best what this life is, what it in living

a life! If our suffering be as thus, what charm will it remain in living a life?

There was a time of plague, small pox, malaria, cholera and so on. Still now we can see defunct cholera wards, malaria wards and sanatoriums. Tetanus used to claim lives. Our eye hospitals used to be filled with patients and the British doctors used to treat them as for cataract and others.

Even a little before we had Covid-19 as for to feel the pulse, a highly contagious and infectious one, a deadly flu, taking the globe in its stride as a pandemic, accounting for deaths and organ failures and respiratory disorders making us gasp for life. But what is more tragic is modern deaths when the expectancy of life cannot be lengthened and death lies it before our naked eyes. The highway accidents wreck us badly and we feel it helpless before. What can we do as men if life turns into a hell? Side by side the poet speaks about the troubles and sufferings of Indian widows. God even cannot how they have suffered over the ages. There is none to stand by us in the times of trouble and tribulation, hard and difficult to bear with.

The New Tragedy can be no doubt be put in for ready reference as per to prove his verve and stamina, worth and relevance.

From Puri Temple as a poem is different from that of Jayanta Mahapatra and here one can mark skepticism and doubt, a mind rising in suspicion.

Holy visions do not make
All Shankaracharya.
A line of lepers
A swarm of supplicants
Snatching horror from the eyes
And pandas playing nine pins
Shrivel the soul to a stub
Dying in the full heat of the sun.

Enchanting figures in erotica
Accost from the high temple walls
Calling forth a virulence
Just lost.

Are these figures
Part of this temple

Or the temple
Part of these figures?

Man made temples
For gods
Not for human beings.
Let stars tell the truth.
If dark can be
Generated by light.

(O.P. Bhatnagar, *Oneiric Visions*, p.29, Rachna Prakashan,
Jaipur, 1980, Rs.20/)

From Puri Temple is one of the Puri temple poems included in *Oneiric Visions* poetry-collection of Om Prakash Bhatnagar reminding us of the Indian temple complexes and the same people found all round us. Who goes with what, how to say it? How is one's bhakti? Who is for what? What is more important is confession which we seem to have forgotten its meaning of it. Is it not our activity sinful for which we must pray for redemption? Sometimes we feel disgust in viewing the lepers. If God has this creation, why has He? Is there God? If He is Almighty, why are they so? Sometimes the pandas vex us as for charges and taxes. The people who come to worship, how is their reverence doing the rounds? Are they pure from their within? Are we really pure? This is but a question which we ask it, but find it not the answer. Where is God? Why is this cycle of sukha-dukha? If he is benign and benevolent, why does He pain? Why are they poor? Why are they diseased? Why is this punishment? The line

of lepers sitting at the entrance even vexes the European tourists and visitors. The temples are classical and rock-built, but why are they sitting near and begging for alms?

Holy visions cannot turn one into Shankaracharya of some sort. Just with it one cannot be a dharma-guru. Does it not require goodness and nobility? Does it not innocence and chastity, purity of heart and living? What are the pandas doing? Are they contractors of or for help in getting the puja done as guides? How the people distort the images, construe the things? The mind gets boggled in seeing the lepers, the supplicants and the pandas.

Above all, how the lines and rows of supplicants waiting to enter the Great temple and to offer their worship even bearing the brunt of heat and humidity? All are drooping, feeling tired of, reeling under heat and humidity. Is it a pariksha of some sort? Or, a waiting of some absurd drama character? No one question we often feel it, ask it not. Why are we here? What our purpose of living? Is it purposive or purposeless? Who to say it?

But what is more appalling is this who made the erotic figures? What is the purpose of putting them up in a place of worship? Does it show the lust of the makers or the masons? Should it have been? Does it ask to keep lust under control? The sadhakas too are tested in a similar way. We do not know what is the purpose of inscribing sculptures and figurines in love and attachment.

One question, we made the temples for the gods to house, not for our ourselves. We could not develop it our houses from the shanty and the hutment. The foreigners when they come to India and ask about the masons they get appalled to see them living in hut. How can it be those who made, constructed such magnificent buildings, can they be under such wretched conditions?

The figurines and sculptures in relationship and love-making, embrace and tempt and charm as well as intimidate our sacrosanct faith and purity of the heart lest it be lost. Should we take them for unwanted? Or, for tirades or kaam-vasana overtaking us? Who

are these personae? Are they yoginis, mohinis or mayavi shaktis? Are they sexual or mystical personae? Who are they in reality? What is their purpose of being here? Now the stars can only answer, tell the truth if the dark has been generated by light.

When waiting to enter the temple in a queue, line or row, we feel it within. How long is the wait and line? When will the turn come? How hot is the day? How strong the sun falling upon? Does God make one wait? Will God meet or speak? The feeling is almost like the Milton of 'When I consider how light is spent' and that of the waiting for Godot to turn up in Samuel Beckett's book. But what can God give to?

Not To Die of Life is a very small poem, but is witty. Here the poet plays with words and meanings. Let us see the poem directly rather than making a comment. The lines keep contradicting with the thesis and the anti-thesis.

We hope
Not to die of frustrations
Dream
Not to die of realities
To die of truth
We have no heart
In order not to die
Of life
We have art.
(Ibid, p. 47)

Go With A Smile also toes the same line and length of expression. Even though you in trouble, try to bear with. Do not be disheartened with sorrows. Do not heavy with. Do not feel you the heaviness of the moment.

Man is wounded
Hurt, agonized and pained:
Heaves a heavy heart
But finds it hard to go.

The weight is heavy.
Can't lift it or leave it back
For it is his own.
Grief over fate
Or pity from heavens
Gather weight like cotton
Soaked in water:
Saints, religion or philosophy
May enlighten him but
Smile alone will lighten his weight
And make his going light.
So go with a smile
Bleaching sorrow from your bones.
(Ibid, p.52)

Of The Copy And The Original (Being a poem on the life of the famous painter Gainsborough) exists as a poem written in the form of ideas and thoughts:

Artists aspire
To realize their visions in concrete
But never did it pose such a problem
As in the life of Gainsborough.
He sat eleven anxious days
Painting the eluding portrait
Of easy Miss Burr.
She was so delighted
With the fine copy of herself
That she readily proposed
"You are presenting a copy to me.
How about having the original
For yourself?"
The artist was puzzled
He thought of Plato's idea

Of the original in heaven
Brought so within his reach.
But as an artist
He chose to keep
The copy for himself.
(Thought Poems, ibid, p.20)

Light Is Being In Illusion is also one like the other poems of O.P.Bhatnagar. The poems which they have come from the poetic pen of Bhatnagar are but a type.

Appearance and reality
Are not two but a stick
Bent in water
Showing curves:
When two rails meet
Only dark can separate them
Into two:
Light is being one
The illusion of light
Resolved only by dark.
Whether the sands of the Red sea
Are atoms of Democritus
Or Newton's particles of light
Are mocked at by Rousseau
And Schopenhauer
As glamorous illusions
Like sea growing old in a fish
Time growing old in continuity.
When life enters death
It creates a dilemma for death

For not being dead:
A poet's vision consumes his poetry
Not without alternatives
Like snow staining its chastity
Trees molested by moonlight
In dark.
(O.P.Bhatnagar, Shadows In Floodlights, SL, p.8)

Chapter V

Poetic Diction

What is poetry for O.P.Bhatnagar? How has he taken it for? What it that has engaged him structurally? A study in poetic ingredients and characteristics will show that the poet uses Western poetics, post-modern and post-colonial things as for dwelling upon the topic. Though he never would have thought of starting or ending as a post-colonial and post-modernist poet, but the things took a turn as thus and the happenings of his life took to as for a reckoning in a similar way. How his poetic diction? How his syntax, phraseology and vocabulary; how his poetic metaphors, similes and other deices! How the use of his poetic words!

O.P.Bhatnagar as a poet constructs it not, but goes on deconstructing with his rebuttal of theories which do the rounds and we take them for granted. He busts the myths of poetry and his is a social poetry and the poetic range and dimension of it. Everything he sees it in a post-modernist and post-colonialist perspective. Poetic Impression is really a post-modern poem and we have failed to understand the poetic themes, thoughts and ideas of O.P.Bhatnagar which now we are trying to grapple with reading after reading, sitting after sitting. Bhatnagar's is poetry of experience as because the intensity of emotion and feeling moves him not so emotionally and is not receptive from that side. Poetry is not a recording of impressions. It is not like a view from the running train. If this be as such, earth photographed from the moon is the thing. Truth cannot be known from a mannequin behind the glass walls. The pain of the poor who has striven to know them? Those who are naked, who ever tries to cover them up? Have you thought about the unsheltered? The cry of the hungry who has heard it? The tint of Westernization cannot add to and show the truth. We forget our base and contacts with earth

in our imitation of the West. The wronged too are not wronged from the beginning. The virtuous too may err. Who can but say it? Poetry is not an impression, but an experience. Poetry is an outlet of suffering merely. It is a volcano with the lava coming out. Who can ever say what it ails us? From a window-view we cannot arrive at conclusions. Realities are ever bare, truths are ever naked truths. Experience, bare experience changes the chemistry of thought. Galvanize your impressions with your bare experience of reality and naked truth. As a poet, he is not sensitive and sensuous, but is social and down to realities. Poetry is not a trail of imagery, romantic notions and ideas, but the ideas laid bare of, shorn of imagery.

What is poverty? What is suffering? What a life of struggle! A few can it about. A train-view of life can offer no solutions. A world seen from a window-view cannot give a right view. Poetic Impression as a poem can be put as an example:

Impression is not experience
Like a rainbow steady for a while,
Poetry recording impressions
Only serves like a view
From a running train:
Earth photographed from moon:
Truth placed as a mannequin
Behind glass walls,
The pain of the poor, the naked
And unsheltered
And the cry of the hungry,
The exploited, the virtuous
And wronged
Offer Indian-English poets no more
Than a visionary essence of suffering
After the unsoiling bases
Of western perfumes:
The wearer more poised
For tingling the nostrils around.

Poetry is neither an impression
From outside nor a traditional belief
At variance with acquired doubts
But an inner sympathy
Dynamic of revolt:
An experience alike a shiver of cold
Changing perception
In the chemistry of thought.
(O.P.Bhatnagar, *The Audible Landscape*, Skylark Publications,
Aligarh, p.40)

Poetry to O.P.Bhatnagar is an exercise in thought poems, fossil feelings and oneiric visions. He sees life through the naked eyes, the bare experiences of life. Hardships and miseries met and seen in life harden his standpoint and view to take to poetry. Fossils of feelings seem to be poetic flowers as for Bhatnagar and he delights in viewing. It is only him for whom poems can be thoughts or who says it about thought poems. To *My Nearea* is the first poem of *Feeling Fossils* collection of poems followed by *Dying A Century* and *Memories*. But be sure of it that his poems will not interest you at all and if this be the quality of his poetry, what to say it about? Anti-thesis cannot take us along all the time. Paradoxical statements perplex and puzzle the mind and brain which he is so full of in passing them in his poetry. His poetic notes are a lesson in monotony and we feel it dispirited rather than happy and gay. Something we definitely require it for philosophical clarity and reckoning, but everything we cannot interpret negatively as he does it. But somewhere he captivates us with his thought and idea.

Birth of A Nation as a poem is splendid as for poignancy and cursory penetration. It is one of the best poems which have come from the poetic pen of O.P.Bhatnagar who can transmute the things better than anyone else. Here the poem is in the format of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, Krishan Chunder's *Peshawar Express* and Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*. What will you say about the birth of a nation or the partition if

history is gory, rooted in violence, bloodshed, killing, stampede, coercion, capture, loot and plunder? We are ashamed to think of the partition. Who did it and on what basis? How hard of heart were they who just saw them callously? Were they not men? Or were brutes?

The poem reminds us of the gory partition written in blood, how were people murdered, killed and were driven out homes to take to the footpaths? What history shall we write if history is not history? The history of murder, killing and religious frenzy cannot be the history of man and his annals.

What do you speak about the birth of a nation, the division of the sub-continent? Everything is but nonsense. Communal history cannot be our history if the nation is assimilative of it since the start. Who has it not been given shelter?

Who are the guilty men of the partition? Who were those fundamentalists and the fanatics with daggers drawn? Mark it, the victory of the bloody sword cannot last it long.

What did the people think and what liberty did they see it? It came in such a way that many could not see the light of the day and perished it before. Many had just wanted to sit on chair rather than thinking of the ill-fated people driven out of their homes and lands.

Nothing is what it seems and what it seems is nothing. If the fields and fallows are searched, the skulls and skeletons of the partition may come out from undisclosed locations bearing a testimony to it how the innocent people were brutally eliminated, how did they perish in their strenuous journey. God will not forgive those criminals of the partition, be sure of it. Nobody is holy or unholy, your virtues are your identity. Blind faith cannot take us far. We must resist fanaticism be it of any kind. We must resist narrow mentality and closed door humanism.

Had she been alive, she would have the dawn of the day, had she been, she would have, but she was bidden adieu untimely. Can

this be called the attainment of independence? Now the fields are calm and quiet, maize has grown up and is fluttering, but hiding in a history, an alternative version of it which but we do not know it, how did she lose in her precious life, how did the partition turn into a horror for her? How did it cost her innocent life?

But even when he visited the borders lying across after the partition, he could not trace it out her grave. He forgot it even the barren field behind his house where she was buried. The house too got forgotten without a stone to tell of its existence. By referring to the narrative, the poet means to say that the things keep changing, transforming in due course of time. Good earth hides in all we see it today and we forget all that happens.

To read the poem is think, how were the satans of the partition? Who the guilty men? Who the demons and devils? Who the criminals of the partition? Lands are settled, but not partitioned and divided in such a way as they did it. The refugees can tell it the best the story of the partition rather than us. How was it their woe and suffering? How tragic was the partition? The mass killing, havoc, violence, murder, genocide, bloodshed, is just the untold side of the partition done in a huff and the most cruel and pathetic way. We think, can man be callous in such away? How could they partition in such away without knowing territories and peoples? How could they demarcate lands? How was power transferred to and at whose instigation? Is blind faith greater than humanity? Does one's religion teach it revenge, hatred, jealousy, misanthropy and killing in the name of faith?

Birth of A Nation as a poem has been included in the collection named Feeling Fossils which appeared in 1977. K.A.Abbas' short story The Refugee can be quoted in this regard. The poem refreshes the memory of Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children.

What it in mapping, re-mapping if it leads to animosity, hatred, malice, envy, revenge-killing, death, murder, genocide and blood-letting? What it in partition if it could be so gruesome, bloody and bestial?

What it to say it? What is it called the Partition? How were the lands partitioned which the Partition has taught us? She was only thirteen when she was butchered, the lamp was snuffed out. So, as she could not see it taking place bodily, she seemed to be viewing from there, blessing us from above. She was put beneath earth, moving earth on her, we buried her and did with behind our courtyard and forgot her to move ahead, leave behind what it happened, the blood-smeared gory incident. The world remembered her not, came to feel it not after. We too could not locate and trace her grave when we crossed over the border to see and feel it. Time wrapped it over with its sheet of forgetfulness, the shroud of mystery. Is this called the Partition? Can the Partition be as such? Who is to answer it? Who will say? Who will give the answer? Yes, we gained freedom at the common man's sacrifice. Foreigners and invaders always looted and plundered India. A few took to it as their own, taking to be its pain as their own. None tried to understand it, the lore of India, the myths of it. None strove for the development and eradication of its poverty. People escaped, but she could not. A victim of the sub-continental tragedy, she lost her life and lay in the embrace of Good Earth. But when we visited, the poet says, we could not trace her, locate her, the house lying on that side of the border which was but our own then. Just the maize plants, green plants seemed to be greeting from the fields seemed to welcoming and greeting with hands. Whatever brutal, bestial and bloody it had happened, that gruesome night, we forgot it in course of time and the things turned into history and its blurred pages to rewrite in a prejudiced and biased way our forgotten tale hearing in a folktale version intermixed with pseudo-truths, the bloody chapters of the Partition which read we not then, just read them now as a discourse for our seminars and talks. Was the Partition so? A blood-letting, inhuman blood-letting, we could not forget it.

Had she been live, she too would have joined us in the celebration of the event, has she been would have seen her family. But her life was cut short. She lost her precious life at the hands of the

narrow-minded, small and bloody bastard cut-throat fanatics, zealots and conservatives.

Now it is up to the readers to say, what Partition was it? What birth of a nation was it in essence? Did we approach for such freedom? Did we ever want such independence? It shook us emotionally and we do not have words to say, we do not have the requisite speech to condemn it the mass killing and genocide they carried out in the name of Partition, the Partition of India.

She was only thirteen
When she was butchered
On the birth of a nation
So that she could bless it
From above
She was put beneath
The earth
In a barren field
Behind my house
In a hurried burial of escape
So much in the embrace of earth
I failed to trace her grave
On my visit across the border—
She must be married
Rearing children of grace.
A rich crop of maize swirled
As if waving at me with hands
That had long been folded stiff
In peaceful sorrow rest.

(O.P.Bhatnagar, *Feeling Fossils*, Paul Jacobson & Co., Dehradun, Reprinted by the Author, 1977, Rs.12/, p.14)

Let us see what he narrates in the poem named Birth of a Nation wherein he deals with the tragedy of the Partition, what the others have left, he says that in just a few lines of poetry.

It was not in reality a partition, but a mindless killing, some sort of blood-letting that did we in the name of independence,

attaining of freedom. Had we felt free, we would not have such a thing. Had we enjoyed freedom, we would not have at least in an inhuman way. To be independent is to not inflict injuries upon each other. To be free is not to impose one's own faith and liking. Lands can never be divided on the basis of narrow thinking. History is not history if it is smeared with blood. Try to think about humanity, this mankind at least rather than you about yourselves.

In a beautiful way he wants to know if fire can be nailed by the wall and sorrows by stars. Where do our dreams lead to finally the point of deliberation? Hopes and expectations have a reality of own, but we like to go with the optimistic view. In another poem named Round and round, he speaks that we may be round and round a temple, but can never be around God. We can be round and round an idea, but can never be around be thought. Where is God? God is for us to feel.

What can death take away from man
Formed ripe like a fruit
Except unformed hopes
Drying like sunshine
On vanishing lonely dreams.

Death can take away from man
Not his image in the seed
The victory not being of gravity
But of the fruit that knows life
To be the museum of death
With transparent spaces
For more lives
In the transience of
Unlived needs.

Mirror has no face
Except of the one
Who sees into it
To put one there
In a captive spectacle
Of the still heartbeats.

-----What Can Death Take Away From Man?

(O.P.Bhatnagar, Shadows In Floodlights, 1st Edition: 1984, SL Publications, Aligarh, p.32)

Of Beauty And Truth is really a great poem which the poet has penned:

The presumptuous ego of Shah Jahan
In creating the Taj for his love
Wasn't as genuine as marble.
It only assuaged his sorrow
That had bent him to his woes
In the Red Fort
Tired of eyeing the lost-truth
Of his love
In a frame of beauty.
The beauty of the marbled sorrow
Was not all truth
Nor the truth of it all beauty
For the sculptors had defied both
By their devotion skilled in art
Growing finer than all the passion
Love could part
What remains is the white flame
Of their sweat carved in marble
Not the entombed vanity
Of a royal romance.

(Thought Poems, Skylark Publications, Aligarh, U.P., India, 1976, p.13)

Love and romance are not the things of flirtations for him as Bhatnagar is not a romantic. The Land of The Rising Sun proves it. A small poem like this shows it how his state of mind, never steeped in love. We do not know who girl is, a Korean or a Japanese.

We met
When the sun was setting.
She was in a hurry and said
She was from the land of the rising sun
And left me to search her in the moon.
When dreams ran dry
She real came close to me
And stayed with me
Till the sun rose in land.
(O.P.Bhatnagar, Oneiric Visions, p.55)

In light diffused by smiles
When the will to create
And wish to destroy
Are the two versions of existence
Let mystics and space shuttles probe
If owls were before earthworms
Or revolutions before dreams—
Distant and unreal like high clouds
Threatening or holding hopes
In invisible seams:
From Plato to Pound and Pablo Neruda
It's been a puzzle disrobing poetry
Transparent enough to be nude
Like chandeliers in streets:
If streaking must be a rhetoric of style
Between a child and a broken dream is a world?
Quiet, unloud and serene,
Enduring what one can't imagine

Sifting illusions yellow from green:
We can't value poetry more than its contents
Like vice more than its purity
And frustrations behave a whore:
For poetry in itself is a revolution
Undreamt of in dreamt undreams.

-----Of Poetry, Revolutions And Dreams

(O.P.Bhatnagar, Shadows In Floodlights, SL, 1984, p.17)

Chapter VI

Conclusion

The first freedom of slaves
Is a re-enactment of days unfree to treasure:
Of times spent in slavery with leisure.
Much with us, in fact, is bondage
And a perpetual struggle for freedom
Without ever winning it:
A submission like a prostitute
Insensitive to assaults.
We do not have identities
Pulsating with will
We only create effects of being free:
A simulation, a deferral
Drawn from a Mallarme, a Valery
A Bataille or a Borges:
A play not action
In the hermeneutics of closure.

-----Of Slavery And Freedom

(Shadows In Floodlights, ibid, p.40)

We wonder how has he been left out, how could he not grab the limelight as did they, why could he not get awards and prizes? Perhaps literature is not in these and O.P.Bhatnagar is an exception to it. Instead of coveted prizes and awards given or received by him, Bhatnagar has come to be reckoned with and there is none to negate him. A poet he is uniquely post-modern and post-colonial at par with. But when we take the name of O.P.Bhatnagar, sit to finalize upon, the names of R.R.Menon, I.K.Sharma and K.V.S.Murti also come before the eyes and their memories. O.P.Bhatnagar as a poet is of social standing and his poetry the poetry of social protest, of angst, anxiety, loss and

bewilderment, a product of the Age of Anxiety, down to earthly crude realities and bare realism, awe-struck by pain, grief and sorrow, telling of trauma and tribulation which he has undergone, borne with.

O.P.Bhatnagar, they have not spoken of, how to evaluate and assess him and his poetry? Should we read him or leave him out? But on the margins we can find his poetry, on the sidelines of poetry which keeps running along. In the collection titled as *Oneiric Visions*, the poet speaks of a poem being a smile, the suggestion of art that it gives, reality born of romance specifying the mysterious smile of Mona Lisa, how we live up with emotions and feelings even after someone's death, a poem is a sand-dune making, unmaking, oneiric visions as visuals devoid of mysticism and so on.

O.P.Bhatnagar as a poet is terse and tedious as because he draws from economics, socialism, surrealism, politics and current topics and to read him is to be taxed. What is in poetry if it cannot give joy? The Audible Landscape begins with the poem *A Prisoner Is More Free and The Walls of Prisonhouse Remain*. The poet means to say that the lands may be free and independent, but the prison houses still remain they with prisoners. How are they convicts and criminals booked under law? For what crime they been under? What is their fault? What is justice? There are so many things to ponder over. Who the justice-giver and how is it given? How free are we today? What is freedom after all? What do you mean by it? The poems appear to be Shawian, Galsworthyan and Orwellian. Which is what, who can but say it?

Can Facts Be Destroyed By Ideas? and *The Still Questions* as poems present with unique propositions and suppositions. How free are we today? Have the villages developed? Do they not reel under poverty, hunger, underdevelopment, scarcity of food and resources, amenities, basic needs and survival stuffs? Do they not look oppressed, ill-treated, humiliated and strange?

In the poem, The New Morality, O.P.Bhatnagar questions our morale. How moralistic are we indeed in essence? Are we really good? The answer is, we are not at all. Was there not the Sati system which wreaked it havoc? What about the gang-rapes?

Pecking at the Image, we may quote as for showing brevity of thought and content:

Tired of endless scaring

Thoughts seek shelter

And like birds dart into a window

Barred by a transparent wall.

A likeness flashes on the other side

And in an anxiety made uneasy

Peck at their images in the glass.

(Thought Poems, Skylark Publication, Aligarh, 1976, p.21)

I Can Question Only My Dreams, just through it, he can say the things of his heart, what it is on his mind, how has he undergone and borne with! The situations of life had never been smooth, never is it smooth even now.

When I see a crowd

Line up for a bottle of kerosene

In tiring queues to light up

Their hungry hours: The numberless

Go blind of adulterated oils

Making a smooth passage to dark:

And children thin out to death

For want of milk in the water

Served to them as feed

I cannot ask my conscience to revolt

For suffering has become our creed.

I can question only my dreams

That have made me different

Like trees growing different
In different lands. May be
I have dreamed more than suffered
And escaped the levelling down
Of my odd virtues and hopes:
To see the whole truth
I must loosen my eyelids
And bring my visions
To a close.

(Oneiric Visions, *ibid*, p.13)

The Best time To Love?, All Beautiful Things In The World Are
Chinar, To Discover Truth, Kashmir Autumn Scene, Death By
Law, Pyramids, AC Trains, Melting Ice In Antarctica, Adam And
Eve, Trees In Autumn, Alienation, Sex Is Not A Baby Food,
Morning Thoughts From Night, The Way To See A Thing, etc.
are some of the poems from *Angels of Retreat*. As a poet he was
instrumental in promoting new poetry running on the margins and
he supported the marginalized poets.

Angels of Retreat as a collection of poems begins with the poem
named 'The Best Time to Love?'. A mere deliberation of the
poem shows it how unsentimental and unromantic is he in his
penning down of poems! Again the backdrop of a dusk, he says
the things, he paints the feelings and emotions undergone through
love. Rarely is there a poem where he is simple and meaningful.
To distort meaning is his poetic feat. A modern poet, he is hard
and difficult and it is not easy to mean his lines of poetry as he
has never written for meaning sake, but to muffle it.

Dusk?
When vision is blurred

Dark,
Reality faded into outline

Dawn?
When hidden forms begin to re-emerge

Day?
When shapes are laid bare

None knows the best time to love
Too late or too early,
Here when it is not desired,
Withdrawing when most aspired,
Then expresses it in haste
Or delays when the occasion calls.

The human is always distracted
Always awkwardly tuned
In the perpetual harmony of love
Is the child drawn
Never scaling love by time
But like water reflecting
Every ray of light
Piercing gods in heaven

Or soft waking the dead in their tombs.
(Angels of Retreat, Samkaleen Prakashan, p.9)

Melting Ice in Antarctica as a poem cautions against our plays
with Antarctica. Let Antarctica be Antarctica. So many
expeditions to it will mar its beauty. If it melts, what will it
happen? Dreams when they vanish out, what does it happen, do
you know?

As children
We longed for gas balloons
By a thread in the air hung,
Held tight by a hand
Of dream-fingers.

In age
We run out
Of all tingling fancies,
Discover their fulfillment
A mirage.

Hopes, dreams and desires
All disappear
A gas balloon
Snapped from its delicate hold
By the thrust of some indifferent
Jostling-go-ahead.

We have recently learnt the trick
Of melting ice in Antarctica
And keeping our grandchildren happy
While their parents are busy
Staring with unseeing eyes
The flight of their fancies fall.

(Ibid, p.19)

Sex Is Not A Baby Food is actually about sex education. Repression and suppression of sex out of modesty and culture cannot add to our life. Sex is a basic need and the urge cannot be negated. Morality and intellect deter us politely from accepting the hunger that we feel it within, we feel it shame in expressing it. But in a sound body can only live a sound soul. The body is the centre of it all.

Of sex I had a narrow view
Till I came by a divorce
Whose mind made mellow
By her minty adventures
Could blatantly foresee
That sex is not a baby food

To stick to only one brand
Lest it may cause indigestion
To one's delicate system in growth
She was completely honest
In announcing her faith
That the best test of one's growth
Is one's capacity to digest everything:
Sex should come as a Challenge
Not as shame or consolation
Or something to shy from:
It's a pleasure on which body grows
And soul feeds like honey
Made rich by the extracts of different flowers:
Serving ideas with a different hue
Causing wide stomach upsets
Agreeable but only to a few.

(Ibid, p.25)

Of Art, Fact and Artifact is a poem where he wants to discuss poetic ideas as one confronts in a seminar, a poetry festival and an international cultural gathering.

Starting off with a cute idea
Up their fanciful sleeves
Of enlivening creative Writing in English
Round the world in eighty days
A group of young fervent Journalists
Approached Raja Rao and asked –
How do you get your ideas?
He said: In agitation.

They asked a Czech poetess--
Do you think poetry is a medium
Of a controlling mental agitation?

It's a medium of re-formation
Of ideas under a situation--

Stressed the young poetess
And they published – Reformation.

Next came the German playwright
Accosted with the question--
How do you reconcile a foreign language
With native experience and sensitivity?

You have to have high, strong feelings
To remove all the barriers to language,
And they publicised – High Strung Feelings--
Spreading more careful fiction
Than fact about art.

Reporting is more of a stuff
A streaker is made of
Stripping facts beyond nudity
And one wonders with agonic agitation
Whether the artifacts of Burroughs
Or what Nabokov writes--
Be more of apodyterium
Than literary apomixis.

(Ibid, p.36-7)

O.P.Bhatnagar has the substance to put it before just as the post-colonial, post-modern discourses are given and he has succeeded a bit in forwarding them to his readers and we are lucky enough to have him, but monotony leaves him not. There is nothing as romantic and colourful in him. Every time we sit to read him, he appears to be writing with a deep anguish and poems are born out of that commotion haunting him. The struggle, suffering and hardship seen in life he fails to discern them.

O.P.Bhatnagar, how to read his poetry? How to comment on his poetry? What are the norms of recognition? Journals or prizes or posts? Or, self publications? Should there be some referees? He talks about the fossils of emotion and feeling, talks about the poetic sand dunes of images forming, deciphering, talks

about poetry as thought-sharing. The poet uses paradox, anti-thesis and sarcasm to say the things of his own in a very complex way. Is this the way of putting things? Paradoxical statements though they open the eyes cannot take us far. Poetry must please the readers and listeners, to give joy and delight, but his poetry frustrates us and we feel it disgusted with his poetry. But apart from that, there is something which but we cannot discern it. His poems have layers of meanings to be understood and it cannot be so easily. It requires several sittings and sessions to go deep into the realms as they follow a modernistic course of their own to say the things lying muffled in within poetic textures. We wonder, why are his poems not in books for readings? If dissertations can be done on him, why can the poems be not taught in classrooms? As a writer of poetry, Bhatnagar is but a nihilist, an existentialist, a surrealist, a skeptic, an atheist and an agnostic.

O.P.Bhatnagar as a poet is one whose works have not appeared from Writers Workshop, Calcutta, but is of his own reckoning. His works have appeared from different small presses and publication houses falling short of being called self-publications, but whatever be thing he has now come to stay and has ample material as for to put before a wide readership. Compared to modern masters, he too is not less than in his poetic stature and prominence. It does not matter whether we came to read him on the margins of Indian English poetry or not, but instead of it he drew our attention and we went for his poesy to register. It is not his fault, but the fault lies with us that we could not judge his worth and excellence in time. It is a lapse on our part; a lapse of our judgement as we lacked in criticism. Our poetic criticism could not evaluate him. Just our survey cannot help us.

What are the best poems of O.P.Bhatnagar? Somebody may definitely want to know with regard to him and his poetry. Bhatnagar is an urban poet, one of the urban world, cities and towns and his imagery drawn from economics and sociology. He has nothing to do with romance and romanticism, has nothing with Nature. He has but a world of own. Some sort of vacuum

engages him most. So desperate and dejected, gloomy and morose is his poetic space, so sterile and barren, bereft of landscape and scenery.

O.P.Bhatnagar as a poet, his art and craft, a few have learnt to comprehend, how the working of the poet's mind, how his vision and poetic range. To make an assessment of the poet is to go through his books which he has authored, as such *Thought Poems*, 1976, *Feeling Fossils*, 1977, *Angels of Retreat*, 1979, *Oneiric Visions*, 1980, *Shadows in Floodlights*, 1984, *Cooling Flames of Darkness*, 2001, etc. to add to the corpus of modern Indian English poetry. A distinguished post-colonial, post-modern poet of some note, he takes into account social and economic matters and his poetry comes out in the form of protest and disillusionment. Though he may be on the margins of modern poetry and poets, but is no less than and we wonder why he has been omitted from being included. Why are K.V.S.Murti, I.K.Sharma and R.R.Menon so? Why has K.D.Katrak been left out from the Parsi quartet of modern poets? If we charter the course of Indian English poetry, review the contemporary phase of it appearing in journals and magazines, we shall come to mark the latest developments to be presented on a comparative basis. To mark the growth of such a genre of literature is to inclusive of more poets, like, Krishna Srinivas, R.R.Menon, K.V.S.Murti, D.H.Kabadi, Simanchal Patnaik, P.KJoy, A.N.Dwivedi, S.Samal, M.N.Sharma, K.N.Sharma, I.H.Rizvi, Baldev Mirza, Romen Basu and a host of others. But O.P.Bhatnagar is so prominently one among them.

A poet of the seventies O.P.Bhatnagar is a poet of tragedy, loss and suffering, anxiety and bewilderment, of the angst of the modern age and the stress and strain of living in modern times of modern life and living, of sham living of hollow man, stark realities of life seeking for humanitarian help, but the good Samaritans find we not. Bhatnagar is but a modernist who penetrates deep into jointless times so disintegrated and self-centred, holds parleys with himself trying to do the self talk in

poetry, he is a poet social concern, transmuted silence, of Caliban and his tongue, sand-dunes making and deciphering, fossils found from. On the margins, the sidelines of Indian poetry in English, he figured on, O.P.Bhatnagar, a poet of his own right, pedalling through his verses collected in *Thought Poems* (1976), *Feeling Fossils* (1977), *Angels of Retreat* (1979), *Oneiric Visions* (1980), *Shadows In Floodlights* (1984), *The Audible Landscape* (1986), etc., making a way into the realms, as a known or unknown personality, whatever you like to call, you may, as we know it. A poet heralding the age of reason, going after it, one of irony, satire, wit and realism, he is basically one of thoughts, modern life and modern times, this tragic living of ours, anxiety, worries, angst and bewilderment, agony and anguish which he himself felt it, bore and underwent them personally in his life and suffered it too. Human frustration and despair, loss in ideals and values, dual living standards, lies, pretense, flesh trade, woman trafficking, the conditions of widows, land settlement and partition form the crux and thematic of his poetry, a poet who has been evolving from time to time since the start with his first work.

I know these streets
These doors and windows
And these painted fronts
To show the living men
By signs.
But now all these are dumb
As faded paper
Escheated by the missing dwellers,
Dumped in unbelled camps
Punishing women
With silence.

-----Punishing-Silence

(O.P.Bhatnagar, *Feeling Fossils*, Paul Jacobson & Co., Dehradun, Reprinted by the Author, 1977, Rs.12/, p.27)

Floods of tears are enough
God need not threaten us with more.
Console the veiled brides
Who waited with floods of emotions
Their grooms.
Tell them of pantheism
Dust unto dust and all that
In words as wet and cold as water.
Have they still to wait
For the Day of Judgement?
-----Of Floods In India

(Ibid, p.15)

You are my light,
Glow and illumination.
And am called a moon.
Bu sometime
Something disturbs this consolation
Darkening my being
And leaving me to a thin existence
Of an arch.
It's your pride
That moving on its own axis
Makes an elliptical orb
And robing me in its shadow
Robs me of my existence.
-----The Eclipse

(O.P.Bhatnagar, Thought Poems, SL Publication, 1976, p.10)