

Core English 316

06. 'Indian Poetry in English'

[1] Introduction:

△ *Indian English poetry is the oldest form of Indian English literature, which has the attained, both fecundity and excellence.* It represents *various phases of development* of our multitudinous cultural and national life right from the *beginning of the nineteenth to the mid-nineties of the twentieth century.*

△ *Indian poetry and Indian literature* in general, has a long history *dating back to Vedic times.*

△ *Alienation and exile, the crisis of personal identity and of cultural identity, childhood memories, familial relations, and love, nostalgia for the past and cultural traditions* are therefore constitute the themes of Indian poets.

△ *Henry Louis Vivian Derozio* is considered the first poet in the lineage of Indian English poetry followed by *Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Sarojini Naidu, Michael MadhusudanDutt, and Toru Dutt, among others.*

[2] Origin of Indian English Poetry:

△ Indian poetry and Indian literature in general, *has a long history dating back to Vedic times.* They were written in various Indian languages such as *Vedic Sanskrit, Classical Sanskrit, Ancient Meitei, Modern Meitei, Telugu, Tamil, Odia, Maithili, Kannada, Bengali, Assamese, Urdu, and Hindi.*

△ *Poetry in foreign languages such as English* also has a *strong influence on Indian poetry.* The poetry *reflects diverse spiritual traditions within India.* In particular, many *Indian poets have been inspired by mystical experiences.* *Poetry is the oldest form of literature and has a rich written and oral tradition.*

Δ *The entire gamut of Indian English poetry or Indo-Anglian poetry spanning nearly a hundred and fifty years, written by the British serving in India and on Indian themes, began during the 80s of the eighteenth century.*

Δ *Kamala Das: The Mother Of Modern English Poetry In India.*

****[3] The Identity of Indian English Poetry:****

Δ Post-independence Indian English poetry is characterized by a number of distinct features, including: *Cultural Hybridity.*

Δ The *poetry written by the Indians in English in the last 150 years may be said to have three phases: the imitative, the assimilative and the experimental.*

Δ *Indian poetry has a deep and prosperous history dating back to ancient times.*
Poetry in foreign languages such as Persian and English also has a *powerful force on Indian poetry.* The *poetry reflects distinct metaphysical custom within India.* In particular, many *Indian poets have been inspired by magical experiences.*

Δ Poets like *Derozio, Toru Dutt, Aru Dutt, and Kasiprasad Ghose* carried the *initial flame of Indian English poetry.* Later, *giants like Sri Aurobindo and Tagore, successful word artists Sarojini Naidu and P. Lal, ardent observers Ezekiel and Mahapatra, revolutionaries Kamala Das and Kolatkar, and a few other curious scavengers of memories and metaphors Ramanujan, Parthasarthy, and Keki N Daruwalla* turned that *flame into a full-fledged YagnaKund that occasionally saw chants of powerful Mantras.*

****[4] The Growth & Development of Indian English Poetry through various periods:****

The poetry written by the Indians in English in the last 150 years may be said to have *three phases: the imitative, the assimilative and the experimental.*

~ (1) 1850-1900 Colonialism:

The period from 1850 to 1900 is the 'Imitative phase' when the Indian poets were romantic poets in the Indian garb. *The British romantic poets like Wordsworth, Scott, Shelley, Keats, Byron* etc. were the *chief sources of inspiration* for the Indians.

△ The first phase of Indian poetry was the period of literary renaissance in India.

*Derozio's poems, Kashiprasad Ghose's *The Shair or Minstrel*

And other poems, Michael Madhusudan Dutt's *The Captive Lady*, Manmohan Ghose's *Love Songs and Elegies** are a testimony to the

Creative upsurge occasioned by the romantic spirit kindled by the

Literary renaissance.

~ (2) 1900-1950 Nationalism:

The period from 1900 to 1947 is the 'Assimilative period' when the Indian poets still romantic tried to assimilate the romanticism of the early nineteenth century British poets and the "new" romantics of the decadent period for expressing the consciousness of the Indian renaissance.

△ To sum up, the *Pre-Independence Indian English poetry is a development from neo-romanticism to mysticism and to neo-modernism.* From *Derozio-Sarojini it is the hub of romanticism. Toru Dutt, Tagore and Aurobindo started the neo-romantic, philosophical and tradition of mystic poetry.*

△ The poets of the second phase, *still romantic in spirit were Sarojini

Naidu, Tagore, Aurobindo Ghose and Harindranth Chattopadhyaya.*

Δ Romanticism of these

Indian poets were fraught with *nationalism, spirituality and mysticism.*

Δ *Indian

Romanticism widened the poet's vision.* While *Aurobindo's was the Search for the Divine in Man and Tagore's was the quest for the Beautiful in Man and Nature. Both were philosopher poets.*

Δ *Sarojini Naidu's romantic muse underscored the charm and splendor of Traditional Indian life and Indian scene. She had a fine ear for verbal Melody as she was influenced not only by English poetry but also by The Persian and Urdu poetry.*

Δ *She excelled in lyricism. She was a true Nightingale of India.*

~ (3) 1950- 1980 Modernism:

The ethos of the post-independence phase of Indian English Literature is radically different from the first two phases. Its relation to

The first two phases are that of *the modern age in English literature to Victorianism.*

Δ *When the question of political independence was

Resolved in 1947 with the partition of India, the tensions of the Indian Psyche suddenly relaxed.* The *post – independence era of hope and Aspiration was replaced by an era of questioning and ironic exposure.*

Δ **Some of the prominent poets of this era include Nissim Ezekiel, A.K. Ramanujan, Kamala Das, Dom Moraes, JayantaMahapatra, and ArunKolatkar.* Each poet brought their *unique voice and perspective to Indian English poetry, contributing to its diversity and richness.**

Δ *Indian poets were influenced by the modernist movement, which *emphasized innovation and experimentation with language and form.* *They adopted free verse, unconventional structures, and symbolism to express their ideas and emotions.**

~(4) 1980- Present Post Modernism:

**From 1980 to the present, Indian English poetry has witnessed a shift towards postmodernism, marked by a diverse range of themes, styles, and voices.*
Postmodernist poets in India have explored *fragmented identities, hybridity, globalization, and the blurring of boundaries between cultures and languages.**

Δ ***Here are some key aspects of postmodernism in Indian English poetry during this period:***

- _01. **Fragmented Identities,**_*
- _02. **Hybridity & Multiculturalism_ ,***
- _03. **Metafiction & Intertextuality,**_*
- _04. **Political & Social Critique,**_*
- _05. **Experimental Forms & Styles_ ,***
- _06. **Ecological Consciousness,**_*
- _07. **Digital & Performance Poetry, etc._***