INTRODUCTION

Indian English Poetry: The Dawn

Indian English Poetry is not just a branch of Indian literature in English. It is now an essential part of Indian-English literature. In fact, it primarily defines Indo-Anglian literature in the sense that in its birth, Indian-writing in English came to the fore with a global recognition. Like American poetry, Indian English poetry is highly distinctive in various aspects. It is not a product that sprang into being in a span of a few years or a few decades. It is a well-furnished product, thoroughly polished from its raw state into its present having undergone an evolution for more than a century since its inception in the early nineteenth century.

True to India’s diversity, Indian-English poetry, the product of Indian soil, is a multicultural, multi-lingual and multi-racial phenomenon. The varied regions, cultures, races, languages and religions existing in India contributed amply to the enrichment of Indian-English poetry.
A product of two cultures, the Indian-English poet manifests in his works, a mixed sensibility. However, there is nothing abnormal and impure about it:

The Indian who writes in English is believed to be a product of two cultures and he possesses a mixed sensibility. However, he builds a bridge between the East and the West through his mixed sensibility that gets reflected in his creative works.¹

Indian English poet, however, retains his distinctive Indian identity wherein lies his uniqueness, strength and grandeur. In the early nineteenth century, the poets were severely assaulted and mercilessly ridiculed for their so-called anti-national Anglophile tendencies. They were condemned and dismissed as the pseudo intellectuals caught in Trisanku Swarga belonging neither to India nor to the western world and were accused of pseudo-Indianism and having borrowed westernism. Nevertheless, the Indian English Poet quite heroically, weathered all the humiliations, battles and crises and emerged successful, asserting his Indianness, vindicating his sterling worth, winning global recognition and reputation.

The birth, growth and evolution of Indian English Poetry make an interesting history that goes back to pre-independence India and links it up to the Post-independence India. The Indian renaissance
that took place in the nineteenth century in the wake of the western impact under the British rule brought about a revolution in the socio-cultural scenario of India. The various socio-cultural factors played a very significant role in shaping the sensibilities of the educated in India during this period. With the introduction of English language as the medium of instruction in schools, colleges and universities, the young in India came in contact with the whole world outside India and interacted with the intellectuals of different countries in the world. They grasped their country’s position politically, socially and economically in the light of their needs. The influence of great social and religious thinkers and leaders like Swami Vivekananda and Raja Rammohan Roy brought about an awakening of national consciousness and a re-discovery of India’s cultural heritage. Consequently, the educated men and women in India began to employ English language quite successfully as a medium to re-examine India’s cultural and spiritual values. Through their creative articulation of English Language, they succeeded in rediscovering India’s cultural heritage.

An amazing array of patriots, poets, critics and orators like Surendranath Benarjee, Gopala Krishna Gokale, Toru Dutt,
Aurobindo Ghosh, Rabindranath Tagore and Srinivasa Sastri came into being during this glorious period of Indian Renaissance. They were profoundly stirred by nationalistic fervour and reformative zeal. These young educated Indians gave vent to their sentiments ceaselessly in their works with the sole, ultimate objective of social regeneration and freedom movement. They chose English as the medium of their creative expression, dictated not by considerations of patriotism or nationalistic or racial ethics, but by an inner compulsion, perfectly Indian in thought, feeling, emotion and sentiment. The operative sensibility as manifested by their works is always unmistakably Indian. This brood of the highly-talented writers made a skilful use of English to express their creativity.

The undeniable historical truth about Indian – English poetry is that in its initial stage, it was under the influence of British Poets. In the absence of any role-models in the native land and under the heavy impact of western education, the early Indian – English poets turned to the British Poets for their inspiration and models. They were greatly influenced by the English romantic and Victorian poetry. They wrote poetry in English, initiating the British romantic poets like Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth and Byron. So quite
naturally, the pre-independent Indian English poetry in its spirit and style is highly romantic, echoing the British romantic and Victorian poetry. Maybe, in the works of these early Indian English poets, an individual voice is found to be missing, but an unmistakable authenticity of feelings is clearly perceptible. What their works reflect is the Indian sensibility, though their chosen medium is English language.

With Henry Derozio (1809-31), a teacher of English and poet, Indian English came into existence. His collection of poems entitled “poems” was published in 1827, marking and heralding the beginning of Indian – English poetry. Born to an Indian mother and Portuguese father, half Indian and half - Portuguese, Derozio became an Indian by virtue of his living in India, his commitment to India and his choice of Indian themes in his poetry. Though his poetry displays the influence of English romantic poets, his themes are unmistakably Indian and the spirit that runs all through his poems is certainly that of India. His most famous poems --“The Harp of India” revoking the glorious Indian cultural past in contrast to the neglected, miserable state of India under the British rule with the metaphoric richness and “The Fakir of Jungheera”, a narrative
poem about the sad tale of a young Brahmin widow and the Indian superstitious custom of Sathisahagamanam, testify to the truth that Henry Derozio is an Indian – English poet who, in his lyrics and sonnets, expressed his patriotic spirit, national fervour and reformistic idealism which later turned out to be the essential traits of earlier Indian – English poets.

In 1830, a book of Indian – English poems “The shair and other poems” written by Kasi Prasad Ghose came out, followed by Michael Madhusudan Dutt’s long narrative poem. “The capture Ladie” in 1849. The poetry of these two poets was highly imitative of English Romantic poets, with occasional flashes of originality. However, both sound authentic and Indian in their feelings, emotions and ideas, especially in their poetic concerns. Compared to Kasi Prasad, Michael Madhusudan Dutt was a more gifted writer. A Hindu converted to Christianity, married to a European lady, a lawyer by profession, with a passionate love for English language, Dutt essayed English verse. His best known narrative poem ‘The Capture Ladie’ depicts the heroic tale of Rajput princess Sanjukta who was carried away by Prithviraj. Treating such an Indian theme in his poem, Michel Madhusudan Dutt projected a historical aspect
of India and it was undoubtedly a significant contribution to the pre Independence poetry in English. Later, frustrated by his failure to win the expected recognition and reputation from the literary world outside his native country, disillusioned with English language, with an acute sense of alienation, Michel Madhusudan abandoned writing poetry in English and turned to Bengali, his mother tongue for the exploration of his creativity and shone as a poet’s poet. However, he is still reverentially remembered as one of the earliest English poets with no mean contribution to the earlier Indian English Poetry.

“The Dutt Family Album” that appeared in 1870 containing about 200 poems contributed by Govind Dutt, his brothers and a nephew, is historically significant as it created an ideal literary atmosphere for the blossoming of young poets like Toru Dutt and provided them with inspiration required for the development of such creative geniuses. It paved a way for the publication of worthy collections of poems. “Ancient Ballads and legends of Hindustan” consisting of Toru Dutt’s poems published in 1882 with an introduction by Edmund Gosse became a milestone in Indian English poetry, making a remarkable phase and ushering into Indian – English poetry, a freshness, novelty, uniqueness and vibrancy,
hither to unknown to the literary world. Though Toru Datt died at a very tender age and her promising poetic career was abruptly cut off, her contribution to Indian – English poetry was really significant. Through memorable poems like “our Casuarina tree”, “The Lotus”, “The tree of life”, and her portrayal of legendary characters like Sita and the Buddha in a number of poems showed to the western world, the true face of India besides the nostalgic beauty of her own childhood and proved the creative potentialities of an Indian – English poet. Through the poetry of Toru Dutt, the west was well introduced to the Indian epics and the epic characters like Savitri, Sita, Druva and Lakshmana and came to know about the great culture of India rooted in the Ramayana.

Later, in 1918, appeared “The Bengali Book of English verse” with a foreward by Rabindranath Tagore and an introduction by one T.O. Dutt from the united services club, Calcutta. This anthology, containing a good number of poems presents Indian themes, Indian legends and deep-felt emotions of India, though they are dominantly influenced by English romantic poets.
The Indian-English poets who came after Toru Dutt began to focus mostly on Indian landscape, Indian rural scene, Indian history, Indian mythology and Indian folklore. So in their poems, India in its amazing, varied manifestations was deftly projected to the appreciation and admiration of the western world. Meanwhile, in 1913, Tagore’s “Gitanjali” won him the prestigious Nobel Prize. The Nobel Prize was not just for the creative genius of Rabindranath Tagore. It was the global recognition and reputation that was conferred on Indian-English poetry. It was really a historical and remarkable phase in Indian-English poetry. Tagore’s Gitanjali, a garland of devotional songs in Indian Bhakti tradition with the Indian mystical concept of man-god relationship and the profound themes of patriotism, humanism and condemnation of the blind worship and idolatry and escapism from duties and responsibilities in the name of religion, lent a new dimension and an impetus to Indian-English poetry. The Indian-English poets became keenly aware of the Indian social realities and the events and changes that were taking place around them including the First world war and its aftermath.
Unlike other poets that appeared during this period, the poets like Sri Aurobindo Ghose, Rabindranath Tagore and Sarojini Naidu wrote with an intense awareness of not only the country’s socio-political needs, but also its spiritual needs. Sri Aurobindo Ghose, the happy synthesis of the East and the West, was the master who imbibed styles and techniques of the western masters like Spenser, Milton, English romantics, Dante and the Greek and Latin masters and grew to spiritual heights, drawing heavily from his spiritual resources. His magnum opus “Savitri” and ‘Life Divine” with their expression of a large single vision, the vision of a future world are indeed landmarks in Indian-English poetry. Sri Aurobindo Ghose and Rabindranath Tagore were not just poets. They were great visionaries, patriots, saints, seers and mystics and stand apart from other Indian-English poets in their stature and creative potentialities. Together, they represent a new tradition that is deeply rooted in Indian cultural heritage and through their voice, one can hear of true India and through their myriad visions, one can perceive the true face of India.

Sarojini Naidu, another distinguished Indian – English Poet, though in her earlier years under the influence of English romantics,
attempted to evoke Anglo-saxon sentiments in an Anglo-saxon setting and at the wise advice of her mentor, Edmond Gosse, she turned to Indian themes, focusing on Indian locale, and turned out a significant body of poetry which is essentially pan-Indian in feelings, imagery and themes. In her poetry, she celebrated India’s legendary past, charms and beauties of Indian landscape and the colour and variety of Indian life and successfully recaptured varied facets of Indian life and landscape. Her well-known poems “Indian Weavers”, “Palanquin Bearers”, “Bangle sellers”. “The Queen’s rival”, “Coromandal fisheries”, “Flute player of Brindavan” and “Song of Radha” testify to the excellent poetic talents of Sarojini Naidu. With passionate love of beauty, lyricism, mysticism, philosophy and spontaneity well reflected in poetry, the Indian-English poets like Toru Datt and Sarojini Naidu demonstrated and proved the authentic and individual voice of an Indian English poet.

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya who was born later, chose to follow the footsteps of Aurobindo Ghose and Rabindranath Tagore, the two great masters and poetic geniuses of India, being himself a visionary, seer and mystic like them. Therefore, Harindranath too belongs to the school of Aurobindo Ghose and Tagore, that
represents the true Indian culture and shows to the world, the essential India.

It was expected that with the attainment of Indian independence and the withdrawal of the British from India, the creative writing in English would die out and there would be no Indian literature in English. Far from dying out, there has been an upsurge of Indian writing in English and the literary yield in poetry and fiction began to grow enormously since Independence, proving the prediction utterly false. In fact, quite paradoxically, since the withdrawal of the British from India and the attainment of Indian independence, Indian-English poetry acquired the quality of genuine Indianess, having emerged out of the shackles of English poetry. The eminent Indian – English poet, R.Partha Saradhi observes this fact:

An important characteristic of Indian verse in English in the mid-twentieth century has been its emergence from the main stream of English literature and its appearance as part of Indian literature. It has been said that it is Indian in sensibility and content, and English in language. It is rooted in and stems from the Indian environment, and reflects its mores, often ironically²
With the appearance of “The Anthology of Modern Indo–Anglian poetry” in 1959, the modern Indian–English poets like Nissim Ezekiel, Dom Moraes and A.K. Ramanujam emerged on Indian literary scene, ushering in a new era of modern Indian–English poetry. After the attainment of Indian independence, remarkable changes came over the socio-political scenario of the country. The Indian–English poet who was also a part of this scenario and environment in his own country responded promptly to these radical changes and absorbed and manifested them so faithfully in what he was penning. Consequently, the reformistic idealism, the spirit of nostalgia and patriotic spirit, the dominant characteristic features of pre-independent Indian–English poetry completely vanished from the works of these modern Indian–English poets, giving way to a new temperament and outlook in the psyche of the Indian–English poet. Politics as a service–oriented commitment deteriorated and instead, flourished as an unethical, lucrative self aggrandizing profession and as a shameless, crude power–game. The moral fibre of the nation was torn off and with the abandonment of idealistic pursuit; there was moral disintegration and economic inequality and social imbalance in the Indian society.
So in accordance with the changing socio-political scenario, the post-Independent Indian – English poet began to assume a unique role of an uncompromising, bitter critic of the contemporary society and became a spokesman of his times and dreams and visions of the society he was living in. These modern Indian – English poets rejected the older themes and forms. They abandoned the ornate, rhetorical style of their predecessors and chose plain, colloquial and simple style, with the sole objective of reaching out to the readers of the modern age and capturing the complexity of the contemporary society. Disillusioned with romantic idealism and reacting against the philosophical mysticism of the earlier poets, hailed as progressives and proletarians, these poets turned more satirical, cynical and ironic, carving out their poetry of protest in a new idiom and a new style. The modern poets began to focus on logical development of feeling, argumentative thought, communication with the reader, formal structure, precision of expression, and clean images. Consequently, modern poetry became more self-conscious, deconstructive, aware of popular culture, arbitrary and more narrative and less lyrical. With the poets like Nissim Ezekiel, Dom Morares, A.K.Ramanujan Jayantmahapatra,
Kamala Das writing prolifically during the 1950s, a new movement in Indian – English poetry began.

The new Indian-English poets responded to the needs of contemporary sensibility and they chose the themes that were truly Indian, socially relevant and aesthetically satisfying. They experimented with form and style. The writers’ workshop, Calcutta, a non-profit and non-political literary body played a creative role and made a significant contribution to the promotion of Indian writing in English by publishing young modern poets like Ezekiel and Kamala Das. The world poetry society in Chennai under the literary stewardship of Krishna Srinivas, an internationally acclaimed poet, dedicated to the promotion of good poetry, published young men and women of sterling poetic talent in its monthly – journal, Poet and world-anthologies of poetry and helped many a young poet to win global recognition and repute. A spate of literary journals that came into existence encouraged the creative writing, publishing poetry written in English by young men and women. Prominent among the literary journals are Indian literature (Sahitya Akademi), The Indian P.E.N., New Quest, Poetry, Chandrabhaga, Art and Poetry today, Journal of Indian writing in
English, Commonwealth Quarterly. Many other journals also published good poetry and the Indian English poets demonstrated the rich potentiality of Indian English and wide variety and diversity in thematic concerns and techniques of Indian-English poetry.

River” (1976), Shiv K.Kumar’s “Subterfuges” and Mahapatra’s “A Father’s Hours”.

With all these collections of poetry turned out by Nissim Ezekiel, A.K.Ramanujan, Dom Moraes, the Indian – English poetry gained a new momentum. A kind of experimentation in the choice of themes, style, language, forms and poetic techniques began to take place and consequently, the Indian – English put on a new face, breathing freshness, novelty, vigour and vibrancy. It was no longer the poetry of the romantic, the idealistic and the nationalistic or the rustic. It is the poetry of the urban and metropolitan society of the contemporary India with much sophistication and complexity, attempting to reach out to the readers of Modern India through its perfect art of communication and presentation in simple, plain colloquial language, devoid of ornamental devices.

Between 1950 and 1976 (mid seventies), there was a great outburst of poetic energy in Indian – English poetry and especially, the 1976 was really remarkable, for it witnessed the appearance of a considerable number of volumes of poetry and the year 1976 can be regarded as the annus mirabilis of Indian English poetry. While new
Indian – English poetry was born in 1950s, in the mid-sixties, more mature and modern poetry emerged with more confident approach and in seventies, there emerged a much more complex, modern sensibility and richer and detailed imagery of modern life with more confident experimentation as in Mehrotra’s “Nine Enclosures” and greater sophistication in imagery and technique as in R.Partha Sarathy’s “Rough Passage” and Jayant Mahapatra’s “A Rain of Rites”. While the pre-independence Indian English poets wrote poetry under the heavy influence of the British Romantic poets like Keats, Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron and Tennyson, the post-independence English poets in the fifties like Ezekiel, Dom Moraes set before them, the modern American poets and British poets like T.S.Eliot, Auden, Ezra Pond, W.B.Yeats as their poetic models though they never blindly aped them. The post-independence poets unlike their predecessors (pre-independence poets) only studied thoroughly the poetic techniques of those modern American and British poets and adopted them to lend modernity to their poetry. However, they never sacrificed their Indianness in the name of the poetic technique for the sake of modernity.
These poets always remain Indian in their sensibility though they, inspired by the modern American and British poets, chose to adopt the modern poetic techniques in their poetry. After all, the question of Indianness is not something that relates merely to the choice of the poetic material, for the Indian – English poet primarily writes for an Indian audience though his poetry inevitably reaches out to the western audience. So consciously or unconsciously, the poet can not help using and presenting his Indianness in his poetry and what his poetry reflects is nothing, but the heart of an Indian and the Indian sensibility. Sometimes, the Indian-English poet chose pan – Indian themes and successfully portrayed them with pure Indian atmosphere against the backdrop of Indian environment. Ezekiel’s poem “The visitor” (The Exact name) dealing with the Indian superstition about the cawing of the crow, “Egoist’s Prayers”, Ezekiel’s, “Night of the scorpion” Ramanujan’s poems presenting the Indian family, as the central metaphor, Ramanujan’s “Prayers” to Lord Murugan amply testify to the pan Indianness of the poetic material handled by the post-Independence Indian English poets so deftly in their poetic works. While the pre-independence Indian – English poets in a simplistic, naïve and direct fashion attempted to
be Indian, even the best, modern Indian – English poets continue to exploit Indianness in an extremely subtle, sophisticated manner.

Bilingualism is another important factor that influences Indian– English poetry. Many Indian – English poets are bilingual or trilingual in their speech and writings. They write in one of the Indian languages besides English language. So quite naturally, the poet’s other languages affect his or her writing in English to a certain extent. However, it is construed and argued that the poet’s bilingualism exercises a negative impact on the poet’s writing in English, compounding the poet’s creativity and impairing his craftsmanship. Contrary to such a view, A.K.Ramanujan, Kamala Das, Arun Kolatkar, Dilip Chitre, Gouri Deshpande who are bilingual poets have produced English Poetry of high quality that won them global acclaim.

For the Indian Poets writing in English for the English speaking world, the “real” English-speaking world outside India (in the west) always holds a special attraction. The modern Indian – English poet, fascinated by the real English-speaking world of the west justifiably longs to be at the centre of English language.
However, he refuses to cut himself off from his own country. Thus, the modern Indian-English poet is torn between two worlds. Some of these Indian English poets settle down either in England or in America and the rest remain in India. However, their allegiance continues to be mixed. The Indian – English poets who have settled abroad temporarily or permanently continue to be insiders though they live outside. On the basis of the poet’s settlement and choice of milieu, the Indian-English poets may be divided into three groups; those who have lived in the west for a few years – particularly during their formative years and returned to India, those who have decided to make their home in the west and those who have never lived abroad for any substantial period. To the first group belong Ezekiel, Dom Moraes, Jussawala, Parthasarathy, Meena Alexander, Ramanujan and Vikram Seth belong to the second group. Ezekiel, Kamala Das, K.N.Daruwalla, Shiv K.Kumar, Dilip Chitre, Gieve Patel, Jayant Mahapatra, Arun Kolat Kar, Aravind Krishna Mehrotra and many others fall in the third group. Whether these Indian-English poets are writing from outside India or inside India, they are distinctly Indian in their choice of themes and display Indian sensibility. However, in the case of the Indian-English poets who
have settled in the west and have written poetry from the foreign soil, the theme of exile appealed so strongly that it continuously dominated their poetry. In the poetry of Ezekiel, Parthasarathy and Adil Jassawalla, writing in the fifties and early sixties, the theme of exile found full expression. However, it is not to state that these poets are preoccupied only with the theme of exile. Apart from the theme of exile there are many themes of contemporary and universal significance handled so dexterously.

The pre-Independent Indian-English Poets like Henry Derozio and Toru Dutt chose the nationalistic themes in fervent pursuit of national cause and typical Indian subjects from Indian mythologies and presented to the world, the pristine glory of India. Others like Sarojini Naidu delineated so delicately and colourfully, the Indian womanhood with all its hopes, dreams and aspirations, the modern Indian – English poets of post-independent era portrayed a wide variety of themes in a distinctive, individualistic style. Hailed as the first modern Indian – English poet who is primarily responsible for ushering in of modernity into Indian-English poetry, Nissim Ezekiel in his poetic works attempted to focus on and explore the “self” of his own in relation to the urban environment. Influenced by Yeats,

Freed from the shackles of imitativeness of British poetry and derivative mediocrity, Indian-English poetry emerged as an individualistic poetry deeply rooted in Indian ethos and with intellectual and emotional nourishment fed by the sustained creative efforts, Indian-English poetry became genuine and mature and established a distinct tradition of its own. No longer trapped in linguistic predicament and with thorough experimentation with the English language, Indian – English poetry evolved continuously:
To consider Indo–English writers as operating entirely within the English tradition is to deny them their gift of fertilizing inventiveness in form and correspondingly their ability to transcreate experience.

The Indian English poets with their mastery of the English language and the fruitful cross-fertilization of the English language with Indian-culture learnt to think and feel in English and transmute their felt experience. So Indian–English poetry can hardly be dismissed as a meaningless, unintelligent stuff of sentiments and emotions and abstract metaphorical and philosophical out-pourings.

Invested richly with complex, mosaic Indian experience, shaped by Indian sensibility and steeped in Indian ethos and Indian milieu and enriched by Indian traditions, customs and myths, Indian–English poetry has grown into a significant branch of Indian–English literature. The earlier Indian English poets of pre-independence era like Derozio dwelt on the nationalistic themes and Indian folklore to awaken nationalistic spirit in Indians. Later poets, Michael Madhu Sudhan Dutt and Toru Dutt, chose Indian legends and Indian myths as their themes and introduced the western readers to the Indian culture. The poets like Sri Aurobindo Ghose
and Rabindranath Tagore embarked on the cosmic themes of immortality and evolution of the superman, and life and death, god-man relationship respectively.

Sarojini Naidu who emerged on the Indian – English poetic sense later took up in the poetry, the themes of love as experienced by Indian women, the Indian-landscape and diverse, rich Indian life with its varied customs and traditions. With the advent of science and technology, the life of modern Indian has become complex and is invariably ridden with too many grim, gloomy and bleeding socio-political and economic realities, challenging the creativity and craftsmanship of modern Indian-English poets. Equipped with the urge to probe, analyse and reveal what lies beneath the glossy surface of modern complex life, the modern Indian-English poets deal with the wide range of themes of love, sex, human relationships, loss of identity, alienation and exile, loneliness, ambiguities and complexities of modern urban life, frustration and discontentment, Indian contemporary scenes, disintegration of human values, crisis of spiritual values, familial past and personal memories. In the poetry of P.Lal, A.K.Ramanujan, Arun Kolatkar, A.K.Mehrotra Keki Daruwalla, R.Parthasarathy, Ezekiel,
Shiv.K.Kumar, Dom Moraes, Gieve Patel and Jayant Mahapatra, these themes are traceable. Each and every theme in Indian-English poetry of pre-independence era and modern age is genuinely Indian in spirit and treatment. Kamala Das, Gouri Despande, Monica Varma, Vimala Rao, Meena Alexender and Eunice De Souza have successfully articulated their feminine sensibility, focusing on love and sex, man-woman relationship, frustration, loneliness and separation – a wide variety of themes handled so deftly and authentically by these women poets.

Dr.Suryug Yadav in support of the distinctive range and power achieved by the modern English poetry in volume and variety remarks:

The territory of Indian English poetry is much larger and more varied today than it was ever before. The new poets have found appropriate techniques for their perception of reality. The range, variety, themes and voices of Indian English poetry have made great strides in recent decades⁴.

Defending the authencity of Indian-English poetry, Bruce King comments:

The only answer to those who claimed that Indians could not write authentic poetry in the English in which they have been, was to write poetry as good as that of British, American and Irish Poets but to write it about Indian lives and conditions⁵.
From all the Indian-English poets of pre-Independence and post-independence eras, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya stands apart as a distinctive poet dedicated to the Muse. A product of pre-independence period, Harindranath began to compose poetry and he continued to write poetry even in post-independence era, exhibiting in his poetry, the trends and techniques, responses and impacts of both pre-independence and post-independence Indian-English poetry. So Harindranath is a bridge between the pre-independence Indian-English poets and post-independence, modern Indian-English poets. He occupies a unique place in Indian-English poetry through his choice of themes, poetic treatment and mystical vision.

He belongs to the mystical school of Sri Aurobindo Ghose and Rabindranath Tagore. He never blindly aped master seer-poets of India and he evolved himself into an individualistic, authentic voice. He is a poet gifted with a vision which is largely mystical like that of Aurobindo Ghose or Rabindranath Tagore. Though he dwells on mystical, universal subjects and spiritual heritage of India, he is modern in his sensibility, perceptions and modes of communication. He portrays contemporary reality in his poetry. He achieved compactness of verse, through economy of words. Harindranath
Chattopadhyaya, unlike most Indian English poets, is a traditionalist and a modernist as well. Like Sri Aurobindo Ghose and Rabindranath Tagore, Harindranath is a Seer-poet with a vision.

The present study of the major themes in the poetry of Harindranath Chattopadhyaya is a humble attempt to lift the veil of oblivion, to reveal the poetic genius of Harindranath. However, this researcher makes no claim of complete exploration of Harindranath’s Muse. Harindranath’s poetry is a fathomless ocean with currents of water surging on its crest, clusters of billowing waves beating eternally against its shores and with millions of pearls lying hidden deep down in its bottom. This researcher has attempted sincerely and dedicatedly a series of dives into the poetic ocean of Harindranath to pick up a few of the poetic pearls. Still a vast treasure of innumerable pearls invites the researchers to embark on further explorations.
References:


