INTRODUCTION

This study proposes to examine Harindranath Chattopadhyaya's poetic and dramatic work in the order of their appearance to trace his development in creative expression. It also tries to place him in the tradition and achievement of Indo-English literature.

It is a curious fact that English education has been put to creative use in India, especially in the field of poetry. By sheer numbers and intellectual quality Indo-English poets seem to outwit other practitioners in arts. It is not for this study to go into the reasons of this curious phenomenon. Overdependence on English literature and lack of touch with the constantly growing English language may be an apparent reason. Anyway, the Indo-English writer expresses himself through literary genres, through overtly literary genres in preference to the living medium of a growing English language.

However, even in poetry the tug of war between the old and the new bedevils the course of the Indo-English poet. The new leadership has shown aversion to the older generation of pre-Independence poets. Harindranath Chattopadhyaya is
partially a victim of this aversion. This study however attempts to study Harindranath at his own level. It makes no attempt to defend Harindranath Chattopadhyaya or justify his chosen genre or level of writing. It accepts his poetry within the common practice of Indo-English poets of the older generation and tries to bring out his powers and imagination within that genre alone.

The commonly heard criticism of Harindranath is that he suffers from "a fatal facility". Once upon a time, facility with which English could be used by an Indian itself was considered praiseworthy. Further, the facility with which Harindranath could marshall his rhythms, words and rhymes used to be a subject of wonder and admiration. Wherever there was an intellectual challenge of some social crisis Harindranath used to respond to the occasion with his characteristic flair and wit.

Those who witnessed his genius both for the occasion and for his general lyricism are saddened by the recent coldness forthcoming from critics of the newer school. This study makes no attempt to answer such criticisms. It shifts its area of interest to the poet's own environment and tries to estimate his achievement in the tradition of the past generation.
The main problem this study confronts is the co-existence of overtly socialistic impulse and the overtly mystical impulse in Harindranath's poetry and the lack of conflict in the two. The study shows how the two impulses could be reconciled at the level of humanism.