CHAPTER III

POLITICS AS METAPHOR

Post 1960s Indian poetry in English has acquired certain distinct qualities, which set it apart from the earlier writings. Political, social, economic, and intellectual upheaval in India affected the pattern and themes of Indian poetry during the sixties. The poems composed were full of variety and novelty. The poets were realistic and began to see the world with all its boredom and its horror and devoid of glory. Corruption, politics, exploitation and obsessions formed the main themes of the contemporary Indian poetry.

Earlier it was religion that dominated the scene, but in the sixties politics replaced it. Society is corrosively influenced by the politics these days, and the separation of politics and society seems impossible. Politics has become a metaphor in the hands of some of the well-known Indian poets. O.P. Bhatnagar is one of them. He writes:

Whenever an artist attacks and criticizes any social evil
he touches on some aspect of politics with which the evil
is related for perpetuation in the society.¹

The true poet always seeks to inspire his readers to fight for social justice and to protest against negating forces. His work must inspire people to struggle for basic human values and to condemn tyranny, oppression and exploitation. The poet, in Bhatnagar’s view, cannot afford to act as a mere spectator of crimes committed by

44
his countrymen. It becomes his solemn duty to condemn all that is evil and corrupt and if he fails to do it he is “as much an accomplice in the wrong of the evil doers”. Bhatnagar’s poetry not only reflects the contemporary problems but also makes an underneath search of human values.

Bhatnagar aims at using politics as metaphor because “metaphor breaks up instead of fixing, keeps us on the move instead of letting us down”. Poetry, he thinks must stir human soul to action – action against everything that suppresses the human spirit and human dignity. At present it is degenerate politics that is playing havoc with lives of the people. Bribery, corruption, kidnapping, dacoities, looting of banks, cheating, adulterating are increasing day by day. Bhatnagar incites people to take action. He writes: “The writers and poets therefore must protest and expose realities before the people”. He feels that Indian poets must “revolt against the corruption of human spirit by the protest day politics by making it servile, selfish and sterile”. He also advises the countrymen not to tolerate social ills and contradictions. In his poem ‘Orange for the Sport’, he is pained to declare that “Revolution is not / in our blood”. (Oneiric Visions, p.48).

Revolution to Bhatnagar means not merely political upheavals, to him revolution is a “mode of life that is based on consent, by debate and values by intellect”. Bhatnagar is a committed poet in the true sense, and suffering – specially silent suffering – disturbs him a lot. He believes that suffering paves the way to the slavery while revolt foreruns freedom. Silent suffering is our great tragedy these days. He writes:

The tragedy now lies
In the uneasy silence
Of the wounded survivors
Who suffers death
Without enoblement.

(Thought Poem, p.11)

According to Bhatnagar, to write on politics one need not turn to politics or join a political party; one can do this very well by judging political issues from human point of view. The poet need not offer any doctrine or principles; “Instead the poet must work out the implications of the surface living with the roots”.  

At, times however we find the intensity of desire to revolt in Bhatnagar’s poetry getting weakened due to an unresponsive attitude of the society. Niranjan Mohanty finds this attitude of poet rather amazing. He writes:

This is something very much strange, to Bhatnagar’s poetry, in terms of his attitude to life. The sort of resigation the poet quietly advocates for is a condition of passivity and therefore with such passivity at the heart of the poems the poet cannot redefine or register the still point of his quest, the fixed star of his vision. Such resigned mood must not have crept into the creative vision of the poet.

Occasional suffering may be helpful in gaining energy from experience and zest for action:

If all dreams are to stay
As meant
They must be like logs, cut
Piled dried
Ready for burning
And if one cares
To reach the splendour
Of a flame
One must be wood first.
(Angles of Retreat, pp.10-11)

Any deliberate attempt by the poet to justify his thought process, Bhatnagar says, would his poetry to propaganda. But if the poet attempts to bring out truth before the people "the protest becomes the quest for the values that makes life meaningful and hence worth living". Bhatnagar may not be exclusively a poet of protest but his is the poetry of the protest. His poetry not only reflects the contemporary problems but also makes a search for human values, which lifts his poetry above the level of propaganda. He prefers realism to propaganda. He writes: "Indian poetry in English can afford to be socially conscious or concerned but it must never be a tool of social criticism and force itself to face facts". His poem 'A Protest Play', maintains:

A protest play is ekprastic
Intolerable of prudery
Practising morals from acts
In divorce.
(Thought Poems, p.22)

While presenting criticism of degenerate society he does not set his poetry descend to propaganda. He frankly writes: "But I must not be mistaken for introducing propaganda in poetry". This becomes clear when we make a thorough textual
study of his poetry. His poetry is an attempt to present reality before the people in an unvarnished way. The poetry serves the purpose of a mirror that reflects the degenerate society in such a way that appears to be alive. And as politics dominates the contemporary society Bhatnagar’s poetry present a picture of the havoc it is playing with the lives of the people. His poem ‘Thoughts of Election Day in India’ brings forth the defect in the election system is nothing but a dirty game of money for grabbing votes. The election agents pick up illiterate people from every street and the ignorant voters without any decision of their own put their stamps on the symbols hoping in vain for ‘new political miracles’ in each new election. As Bhatnagar puts it,

*The ignorant voters in their routine*

*Queue up day – dreaming*

*And in the passion of a second*

*Get rid of their oscitant indecision*

*Stamping symbols for men.*

*(Angles of Retreat, p.46)*

Bhatnagar’s reaction to the funny system of election is characteristic of a poet’s revolt. At the same times he bites at the complacency of the educated few:

*With the handful of literates*

*Sealing illiterate favours in steel boxes.*

*(Angles of Retreat, p.46)*
Genuine elections have been replaced by ignorant stampings. The leaders have totally forgotten the common man, who is soul of democracy. The sense of patriotism and sacrifice is an old vintage now and has been replaced by selfishness and lust for power. The man once known for their love of the country, now suffers with political exorcism. The poet tells us:

He ahs got into power with slimy ease
Acquiring property, shares and virtues new
The total is more than an illusion
And rainbow feathers hide
The ugly peacock feet.
(Oneiric Vision, p.42)

Their conscience is sterilized and attaining power with ‘slimy ease’ they acquire much property and gave into a pompous show of ‘rainbow feathers’. The poet compares such leaders with peacocks who appear to be so attractive with their feathers but cannot hide their ugly feet.

Our hard–earned freedom has become meaningless thanks to corrupt politicians. Democracy has lost his vitality. The common man still feels uprooted. ‘The No Man’s Land’ depicts the unbridged gap between the rulers and the ruled, the exploiter and the exploited. The poet regrets:

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)

The tragedy of the Indian masses is that they could not regard India as their own country during British rule, nor can they do it now. We are still living in 'no man's land' dominated by politics and corrupt politicians.

The plight of the modern Indian even after independence is pathetic. In his another poem 'The Still Question' Bhatnagar unfolds the predicament of the common man in the contemporary situation:

I live in the languid sublimity of suffering
With tyranny, exploitations and rapes,
Mixed with prayer, philosophy and fasts
Cock tailed in an antelechy of existence
Served both by the forseeing politicians
And bourgeoisie saints
To make me forget my pains
But the frame of my misery
Hasn't much changed.
(The Audible Landscape, pp.13-14)
The politicians are ironically referred to as ‘forseeing’ by the poet because they just see and observe the miserable condition of common people from a distance and make false promises. The lack of a sense of belonging still prevails in the common man’s heart. This feeling gets reflected in another poem called ‘Displacement More Specious than Space’. The poet asks:

\begin{verbatim}
Any place for me in this overpopulated country
Of Gods, Saints, leaders and martyrs?
The community, it seems is just meant
To bleat like goats
Like all wavelengths absorbed I am white
All space lost I am a refugee.
(The Audible Landscape, pp.34-35)
\end{verbatim}

Bhatnagar is unhappy for those innocents who sacrificed their lives for giving a self-respecting life to the citizens of India. He bemoans the unwanted unwarranted butchery and bloodshed which followed the partition of the country. In his poem ‘On Birth of a Nation’ the poet tells us about the slaughter of an innocent thirteen-year-old girl in her prime. The poet mocks at the theory propounded by the selfish politicians that she would

\begin{verbatim}
...bless it
From above
She was put beneath
The earth.
(Feeling Fossils, p.14)
\end{verbatim}
The poet is pained by the indifferent attitude of the political leaders towards the sacrifice of the girl. To get rid of their responsibility the politician made “a hurried burial of escape”. The selfish attitude of the politicians and their inconsiderate behaviour hurts the sensitive soul of the poet. He is deeply moved by the incidents of massacre taking place all over the world – specially the ones in Bangladesh, Punjab and Vietnam. The poem ‘Mass Killing’ vents the intense pathos that the poet feels:

I have long abandoned the exposures
In the cave of mossy forgetfulness
But the silence of it
Is louder than the shrieks
The dead gave.
(Feeling Fossils, p.30)

The suffering of the father of the innocent children butchered in the frenzy of newly won freedom is depicted in a very emotional poem called “Drying in the Memory Jar”. He presents the pathetic picture of a moaning father who has lost his innocent children during the birth of the nation. The new dawn does not have the same meaning for him. The warmth and affection that he experienced earlier is missing. Now, “He only thinks of those days / when there was no time to be unhappy”(Thought Poems, p.26). He remembers the way his innocent children were butchered, which sears his soul:

Remembering his children butchered
In the frenzy of a newly won freedom
With their limbs served from their bodies
Like trunk from their roots.
(Thought Poems, p.26)

52
The poet seems to conclude that the hard-earned freedom has not brought any fruits to the common man. In the poem ‘What is the Difference’ the protagonist compares his living condition with that of his ancestors. Millions of innocent poor Indians like him had great hopes from the dawn of independence. But it has brought no change in their lives. Rather the condition has gone from bad to worse. In the past his parents used to live in a hut outside the village and he himself lives in a makeshift roof of rag near the dirty rain. For the ancestors at least the surrounding atmosphere was pleasant and healthy. The protagonist tells us:

My parent used to live in huts
Outside the holiness of the village:
I live under a makeshift roof of rags
And tin wastes hung on battered hopes in the city
Aloft a filth choked drain.
(Oneiric Vision, p.14)

The poem ends ironically with a serious note:

Although I have no room on earth
I have a place in the sun:
Tragedy is not my fate
Because I do not belong to nobility
Even by way of fun.
(Oneiric Vision, p.14)

This is the general human situation. His poem ‘Fish Pond’ presents this situation and reveals the contradiction between the condition of fish and man:

Wise fish deep for the pearl
And fools shallow catch at the liquid moon.
Say then, if, any idiomatic barter
You still feel like a fish out of water?
(Thought Poems, p.8)

Violence and corruption are common everywhere. All the promises made by corrupt politicians are of no avail. Violence has been steadily increasing. The poem ‘Of violence and Non – Violence’ exposes the hypocrisy of the corrupt politicians who ‘indulge in violence for fun’, and keep the “ideals folded like umbrella”. Non – violence is considered to be funny by modern man. The poet writes:

Non – violence is a lot funny:
If one strikes you once
Invite him to do it again;
If one takes off your shirt
Offer him to remove whatever remain.
(Oneiric Vision, p.43)

A person with high morals and values is regarded today as a ‘diseased man’. He sits all alone with his ideals without any success in life. On the contrary, those people for whom morals and values are not significant are very successful in life. The man with ideals consumes himself bit by bit and finally writes his own epitaph. The poet’s soul is wounded to see the deteriorating state of modern civilization. He writes:

Otherwise a nobleman
By his own folly faces a fall
A lover of values these days
Is a diseased man
Put away in an isolation ward
Consuming himself ideal by ideal
Writing with helpless pity

His own epitaph.

(Thought Poems, p.18)

S.N. Rath notices the appropriate use of the word ‘epitaph’ in the poem. He writes: “Bhatnagar has used a powerful word picture. It is ‘epitaph’. In the society where values eroded away in rapidity a value conscious man has no other way than to think of his own death”.

The same note continues in another poem titled ‘The New Scale’. The poet presents two scale of morality. On one hand, there is age – old morality which demands all men to be ethical and moral, and on the other, there is a ‘new morality’ which exhorts the modern man to be corrupt, mentally and physically to succeed in life. The poet is disturbed to see that the persons who cherish and uphold values are mocked everywhere while those are unethical, immortal and corrupt rule the world. They take the advantage of the ‘new morality’. We may note the poet’s anguish in the following lines:

A simple, honest man
In the worn out mode
May still himself find
Measuring life in value spoons.
Bribery, corruption and forgery
For him a better poison be
But the clever in it
A meaty situation see.

(Thought Poems, p.15)
The ever-increasing gap between the rich and the poor wounds the poet's heart. He registers his protest strongly against the indifferent rich class who maintain their hollow sophistication in railway trains. He is annoyed with the sight of an A.C. train:

But A.C. trains make me angry
To see money green bodies
And porcelain glazed nabobs
Relax in conscious indifference
Homing high in cathedral cold.
(Angles of Retreat, p.18)

The annoyed of the poor is directed towards the cold conscious apathy of the affluent who travel in A.C. trains. The hatred of the poet with the sight of an air-conditioned train is heightened by the pleasant view of the fishes floating behind the aquarium's cool green glass. Bhatnagar's sympathy lies with underprivileged masses of India. He cannot bear the wrong heaped on them these privileged classes. Through his poems he makes sarcastic remarks on these privileged classes. For example, in his poem 'A Lucky Star to Hang on' he remarks:

While the privileged sunbathe
The power sweat out the heat.
(Thought Poems, p.27)

The poet's anguish is also apparent in other poem 'Over a Chair'. The poem expresses the lust of the corrupt politicians for power. Such people only love power that is hidden in the chair, which is made up of 'old cedar' and teak, rather than the
responsibilities attached to it. The poet ridicules the signification attached to a chair in the contemporary Indian society saying that it ‘holds’ but ‘doesn’t possess’. He writes:

Oh, what a fuse  
Over a chair  
Of old cedar  
And teak  
It only holds  
Eh; it doesn’t possess  
It has long given up  
Its power of a tree.  
(Feeling Fossils, p.21)

Indifference to values and craze for pleasure are the dominant trails of the contemporary society. Corruption is deeply embedded in the society that it cannot be ignored or avoided at any cost. It is for this reason that the poet begins his poem ‘Nailing by the Wall’ with impossible questions:

Can fire be nailed by the wall?  
And sorrow by stars?  
(Thought Poems, p.4)

According to Bhatnagar, we can no longer delve on “The last years of hoped for happiness” and “the glories of our ancients” which in fact are the things of past. We should learn to live in the present. Though corruption is spreading today like cancer, Bhatnagar prefers to live in the present world with all its problems. He writes:

I live for a future  
That nails me by my visions
In the dark.
(Thought Poems, p.4)

In “Crossing the Bar” the poet criticizes the sort of politics practiced in our country. The poem depicts the moral degradation of our country where ‘Thickening conscience to snow / Makes small news in our country’ and

Moral as dense
As thick forests.
(Feeling Fossils, p.13)

Bhatnagar bitterly condemns the plagued politics and lust for wealth that are the main causes of degrading moral values but which make a minor news in our country where the news of floor – crossing is more important. The anguish of the poet is apparent in the following lines:

Passing national secrets
On cold heights
Thickening conscience to snow
The big news in the floor – crossing
To keep our progress moving
Towards unrealised goals:
No faces contort
Nor any eyebrows tense:
Morals of dense
As thick forest
Let no light in.
(Feeling Fossils, p.13)
This is one of the most striking protest poems composed by Bhatnagar. As P.D. Chaturvedi writes, “Bhatnagar’s most simple poems raise most significant issues of our national consciousness about things affecting the destiny of our land”.12

Bhatnagar’s searching eyes yarn for the lost values which are no more seen anywhere. The paradoxical behaviour of today’s man is portrayed in ‘Striptease’. Those who would not allow couples to kiss in public places, have no objection to seeing in cinema halls and enjoying scenes of rape. The poet ridicules this kind of hypocrisy which ‘stripteases’, morally at every point. They change it as quickly as the children change their choices in fun:

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\begin{align*}
\text{We are a nation of spiritual past} \\
\text{Which for its fossil values will} \\
\text{Forever lost.} \\
\text{We may by tickets in black market} \\
\text{To see women raped in films} \\
\text{But our ideal honours women and values more} \\
\text{Than our morals can cast} \\
\text{We do not striptease on stage} \\
\text{Nor couples kissing on waysides} \\
\text{We striptease morals at every turn} \\
\text{Like children changing choices on road.}
\end{align*}
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The poet also exposes the hypocrisy of modern man in his poem ‘Saint’. The person is respected by the society as a symbol of purity according to the old morality. Innocent devotees are led to believe that nothing – neither good food nor wine nor
woman – can lure him, and the innocent people are obliged to ensaint him. To the surprise of the poet, however,

... when he died
More prostitutes came
To mourn the loss.
(Oneiric Visions, p.49)

It is not only the moral values that are decaying but spiritual values have also lost their significance. Holy places where greedy pandas dominate more than the Almighty, have lost their spiritual importance. The poet makes a sarcastically comments:

Man made temples
For gods
Not for human beings
Let stars tell the truth
If dark can be
Generated by light.
(Oneiric Vision, p.29)

The protest of poet against these degenerating forces is also echoed through the voice of the beggar in ‘Beggars can be Choosers’. The poet is shocked by the immediate refusal of the beggar to be reformed or redeemed of his plight and his claim to be better than hypocritical politicians and ruling classes who suffers from alienation, tension or loss of identity. The last beggar in the poem bursts out:

And don’t reform us more
Than you can reform a prostitute
For we are a fall out

60
From collective social sins:
We are the crucified
Therefore, say your prayer to yourself
And you shall be redeemed
Of all your sins.
(Angles of Retreat, p.44)

The poem is one of the best examples of the poet's implicit revolt against the prevailing corruption and hypocrisy. Bijay Kumar Das remarks:

There is no attempt at moralising and the element of didacticism is absent in the poems. Thus the poems are saved from becoming social propaganda and the poet here serves as an artist and not a propagandist.13

Bhatnagar also takes a dig at those intellectuals who renounce their country, move to greener pastures humiliation in other countries. They betray their country for money. This brain-drain and its consequence are projected in 'Look Homeward Angle'. The poet writes:

Their visions have been blurred
By nightclubs and swingers.

The poet advises them to return to their country like migrating birds, 'traversing incredible distances':

Even birds that are forced out of home
At the turn of every season
Return to their land
Traversing incredible distances
(Angles of Retreat, p.38)
All goodness has vanished from life and has been replaced by the corrupt and ignoble ways. The poet is pained to see children dying for want of milk and people standing in long queue for kerosene. He writes in his poem ‘I Can Question Only My Dreams’:

*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.*

He further rises:

*I cannot ask my conscience to revolt*
*For suffering has become our creed.*

It seems as there is no end to human misery and destitution. The poet seems to accepts as they are, but his ability to see through actualities of life cannot be ignored. The poet finally tries to self—analyse:

*I have dreamed more than suffered*
*And escaped the leveling down*
*Of my odd virtues and hopes:*

62
To see the whole truth
I must loosen my eyelids
And bring my visions
To a close.
(Oneiric Visions, p.13)

As Niranjan Mohanty observes, “If Ezekiel’s commitment is frank and explicit, Bhatnagar’s is implicit, closed. But the scene of being in time and place, the magnanimity of sharing others woes in the endless helplessness of man, the sense of being alive responding to the calls of man sufficiently anchor his commitment”.14

Bhatnagar is convinced that even faith in religion, God and Nature can provide no solution to the existing problems. If there is any solution to the problem it is to come from man himself – from his rational and humanistic approach. In the poem ‘The God Game’, he writes:

Man will not search God any more
Is God a sufficient cause
To fight and die for?
The unholy war is over
Its now a question of building memorials
To the numberless
Mouled and Multilated by their faith.
(Oneiric Visions, p.38)

The poet’s disenchantment is not only with religion but also with modern technology. According to him, the trump over modern technology does not provide
any solution to the problems. Modern man has conquered every field and with the space conquest even moon is no more dream. But the tragedy of modern man is that he cannot bring himself out of the complex of ‘superiority’. This human situation is depicted by the poet in his poem ‘Moon Olympics’. When Armstrong first landed on the moon, he was happy thinking that he was “The first human foot down / on the moon”, whereas Aldrin lost his chance and ‘Quietly turned a theist / walking round his soul’ (Oneiric Vision, p.32).

Owing to callousness even historical monuments like Rashtrapati Bhawan are no longer safe. Bhatnagar is touched to see the present condition of the great monument, in which once great personalities dwelt:

This is the place where
In relaxed conspiracies, the rulers like Dracula
Vowed to lengthen their shadows over their land
Now it’s a place not taken over
But made easy for the diplomats to meet
Over toast to the health of poor
The glasses can hold.
(The Audible Landscape, p.32)

Regarding our frivolity, the poet writes in ‘A Woe of Wonder’:

Ours is a multi-headed country
Looking in no particular direction
Trimurti is an all – inclusive vision
From here to eternity risen
Telling the tale of our frivolity.
(Thought Poems, p.24)

64
The strain of political protest runs through Bhatnagar’s entire poetry. He remembers how the great warriors like Maharana Pratap, and Shivaji fought for their country and how our great leaders like Subhash Chandra Bose and Gandhiji sacrificed their lives for the freedom of our nation. Then he poignantly reflects on the present condition of our country. In his poem ‘Risen or Fallen’ he writes:

Our freedom now is like freedom
Freed of responsibility; morals of values
And mind of thought. Our loyalties flutter
Only like drooping flags
Elevated by passing winds:
Flee neither of feudal air
Nor submission oozing our eyes.
Our integration seems as firm
As sensations written on water;
Our unity as steady as amoeba
Proud of mutilation; peace as secure
As a terrorist with a gun.
(The Quest, p.78)

The poet’s anguish is evident when he asks:

Where is the spirit of India
We’re proud of? Where’s the harmony
Our scriptures sing of?
(The Quest, p.78)
And the poet concludes by saying:

*Measure the repair our vastidity needs*

*And decide the extents*

*To which we have fallen*

*Or risen from the fall.*

The poet’s urge for standing up is also apparent in his poem ‘On the Cross – Roads’. He wants to set the world around him right, for which and resistance to evil rather than self – sacrifice, would be essential. The revolutionary tone is apparent in the following lines:

*Uproot the signpost*

*That have aged telling faded routes*

*And bring down the milky – way*

*For the innocents to trend on.*

*(Oneiric Visions, p.18)*

P.D. Chaturvedi remarks: “It is a poem not just social but human. Humanity transcending society is the true goal of poetry which calls for ‘building better home on this earth than castle in Heaven’”.

Being a committed poet, Bhatnagar considers it his duty to keep his ‘countrymen awake’. They should learn to break the bond of slavery. They should come forward and revolt. Then only they will be redeemed of their old – age suffering. The poem ‘Courage of being free’, everyone to be free from bondage:

*Bondage leases security*

*Free its being alone*

*We are afraid of ourselves*
Like path ghosts

Shying away from homes.

(Feeling Fossils, p.11)

Sartre is right when he writes that what distinguishes man from the natural objects in his freedom of self – creation. The character of natural objects is imposed on them from outside. But man’s essence – what he is – necessarily determined by himself. Natural objects are just actualities, but man is a system of potentialities.¹⁶

‘History is a sorry – Go – Round’ is another poem dipped in sarcasm. The poet identifies the suppressed masses and the torch – bearers and mocks at the despotic rulers who deceive them. The poet is optimistic of revolution in future. He hopes that the day will surely come when the suffering masses come forward, like the phoenix from their own ashes, to avenge themselves:

Like phoenix rises from the ashes
The crucified that have but kept
The candle of conscience alight
In the deserted temple of forgotten ideals
Can now rise, cleanse and enlighten
The stained glory of man.

(Angles of Retreat, p.40)

In ‘Getting to Live’, the protagonist suffering from tuberculosis migrates to Bombay in search of livelihood. He is completely frustrated. It seems as if there is
no end to his sufferings and misery. The protagonist being so hungry dreams of ripe fruit and wonders why he cannot squeeze out his disease in a similar way:

Why can't his will squeeze out his disease
Like that saucy boy draining sour juice?  
(Thought Poems, p.28)

This question makes him realise his inner essence as “the true expression and realisation of human essence is the power to raise the questions and register protest”.

Bhatnagar, in his Studies in Indian Poetry in English, admits:

All genuine poetry is interrogative in nature. The very desire for poetry is the desire for query.

Thus we see that O.P. Bhatnagar dwells at length on politics, protest and revolution. He presents the truth with a disarming candour. He advises people to act like Sancho Panza:

Man must act like a Sancho Panza
To his unending dreams
Of visionary valour
Fighting fluid bottles
On cotton thick flakes.
(Oneiric Visions, p.22)
Though Bhatnagar present the sordid reality about degenerating society, his spirit is not crushed. He feels that the readiness is all. He is optimistic about a revolution in future. Analysing a contemporary Indian situation Bhatnagar writes:

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\text{In our context even the antidote to decay founded by Eliot, Joyce, Yeats; Faulkner, and Hemingway in myth and faith would not do. For it has roots has irrationality, surrendering and enslaving the individual to tradition. He will have to seek his catharsis in revolt against evasion misplaced ideals, faded myths, defunct, traditions, acquiescence in corruption and indignities of man.}^{19}
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The solution to our problem will definitely come someday, but it will come from our own common people in the form of genuine protests and revolutions.
References:


4. Ibid., p.4.

5. Ibid.


16. Ibid., p.46.

17. Ibid., p.48
