"MODERN" INDIAN POETRY IN ENGLISH: SOME CRITICAL ISSUES

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Any examination of the key issues and controversies that have been plaguing the critical agenda of so-called "Modern" Indian Poetry in English (I.P.E.) since the 1950s needs to attend to the historical development of I.P.E. and the critical appreciation of that particular body of poetry, starting from the first anthologies and works of criticism till the present. Most critical writing on I.P.E., especially (but not only) in the first decades after Independence, was produced by Indian critics who were poets themselves (belonging either to the new or "modernist" poets or to other, earlier schools), and thus a study of the critical scene of Modern I.P.E. should be closely connected to the poetics and critical practices developed by these poet-critics throughout the years. Another group of prominent critics writing on Modern I.P.E. is made up of western critics who became interested in what was initially termed Commonwealth Literature or New Literatures in English. A general pattern of critical practice and canon-making, which underlies the dynamics of I.P.E. criticism, comes to the surface only when a particular poetics encounters another and when its tenets are interrogated by a new generation of poets and commentators.

The moot points investigated here touch on the problematic of literary historiography in I.P.E., literary/cultural categories and aesthetic value systems. Western concepts like modern, modernism and modernity, which are commonly applied to post-Independence I.P.E., have a very wide semantic field as literary (aesthetic), historical (chronological), cultural and philosophical meanings converge in them. The problem is aggravated when these categories are adopted by Indian literary critics and poets to operate in a multi-cultural and multi-lingual environment. The following paper is a metacritical assessment of some of the critical issues related to historical and aesthetic concepts and concept-making in post-independence Indian Poetry in English.

1. Historical analysis in I.P.E. criticism

When analysing a particular poet´s work or a poetic movement like modernism in post-Independence I.P.E, critics often lose sight of the historical development of Indian poetry written in English *and* in other Indian languages. Despite the fact that Indian poets have been writing in English for over 150 years, an in-depth analysis of its "*slow evolution*"[1] or something like a comprehensive "History" of Indian Poetry in English is yet to be produced.[2] Barring a few exceptions, most of the post-Independence poets and critics seem to be unwilling to acknowledge the historical dimension of poets, poems and poetics or "movements." Several reasons may be cited to explain this.

The very idea of a history of I.P.E., and with it the related concepts of a literary past, heritage or tradition, have been heavily debated. For instance, an eclectic critic like John Oliver Perry has for various reasons rejected the idea of a historical development in I.P.E., dispatching it either as a western conceptual construct or as a revivalist "*ideological campaign*." In a similar vein A.K. Mehrotra and other post-independence poets have eschewed the past as something better to be forgotten, or have argued that I.P.E. is a tradition in "*the making*".[3]

The marginality issue also plays a role in this context. The English language and Indian poets writing in that language belonged for a long time mainly to the urban elite (academics and other middle-class professionals). Today there are poets from all corners of India publishing in English, and it is not a culturally homogenous group. Yet some commentators, like the poet K.N. Daruwalla and the American critic Bruce King, to name just two examples, have preferred to de-link post-Independence I.P.E. from the Indian regional cultures and thus from a local tradition, instead of placing it within a wider cross-cultural and cross-linguistic map. Against this attitude a comparatist approach with regional language poetries is posited by comparativist scholars like Ayyappa Paniker and Vinay Dharwadker, and nativist-oriented critics like Makarand Paranjape, as being essential for a proper understanding of the history of I.P.E.: "*the only true history of Indian English poetry can be written only after that study* [of the varied interplay of Indian Poetry in English with that of the regional languages] *has been completed*."[4]

It is only in the late 1980s and 1990s, when a new generation of poets and critics born after Independence came to the fore which had not lived through the post-independence cultural crisis or struggle for self-definition, that an "inclusive" historical or historicist[5] perspective was brought into I.P.E. studies. It may be argued that it is historical distance, or the ability to

look back from a distant vantage point, what allows for a more comfortable and comprehensive assessment of that which is already past or "made."

2. The validity of western terms: "modernism" and "modern"

The usefulness of these concepts in I.P.E. criticism and Indian literary criticism in general has often been questioned. Perry strongly criticises Bruce King in his landmark work *Absent Authority* (1992) for employing western historical categories like modern and postmodern, which imply a viewpoint that "*crassly* [universalises] *the Euro-centric historical "development" and value system*." Perry´s argument is that, since I.P.E. and its criticism lacks a "*firmly operative tradition*" and is thus essentially "*non-historical*," it shall better be described as being in the process of producing a "*contemporary tradition*."[6]

Since Perry is preoccupied with the shaping of a "contemporary" indigenous criticism for Indian literature in his critical work, he suggests that it should not be developed from a misleading western historiography:

> *...Indian English literature* [is] *essentially "contemporary," not necessarily "modern" nor, though composed after 1947, properly "post-modern." Both those latter terms, no doubt, have some usefulness within Indian criticism for tracing the relevance of well-defined Western literary movements to Indian ones. Yet obviously not all Indian literature that is contemporary, or post-Independence, should be described and analysed according to those western dominated critical terms that emphasise the avant-garde*.[7]

Nativist-inclined Indian critics agree that Indian literature and its criticism (including writing in English) should be operating in a non-western terminology. In his award-winning *After Amnesia* (1992), for example, G.N. Devy analyses crucial western concepts and assumptions inherited from the colonial experience:

> *The key terms that appear in any account of modern Indian criticism are "colonialism," "Renaissance," "modernity" and "Westernisation." The logic behind these terms is that colonialism triggered off the Indian Renaissance, and the impact of Westernisation on literature was to endow it with modernity. It is assumed that the colonial impact caused the Indian attempt at a grand synthesis of the East and West, now termed "Renaissance," and that the assimilation of Western literary forms and critical paradigms led to the assertion of self-identity and modern self-awareness in Indian literature*.[8]

Devy himself uses the term "modern" in a variety of contexts in his work *After Amnesia*, which includes chapters on "Modern Indian Intellectuals and Western Thought," "Modern India and the Sanskrit Tradition," "*Bhasa* Literatures and the Modern Attitude" etc. In his latest essay of literary criticism *"Of Many Heroes." An Indian Essay in Literary Historiography*,

published in 1998, he refrains from employing such western terminology gratuitously.

Whereas other academic critics of I.P.E. (besides Perry), like H.H. Annaiah Gowda,[9] S. Peeradina, Chirantana Kulshrestha, Kaiser Haq, and P.K.J. Kurup have tried to avoid the term "modern" by replacing it with "contemporary," most anthologists from P. Lal´s and Raghavendra Rao´s 1959 anthology *Modern Indo-Anglian Poetry* to Mehrotra´s *Twelve Modern Indian Poets* have preferred to use "modern" to refer to poetry after the 1950s.

Some confusion, however, arises out of the fact that the terms "modern" and "modernist" were initially (in the fifties and sixties) adopted in I.P.E. criticism to define a specific poetics or a group of poets belonging to a poetic "movement" that was influenced by the European modernists and needed to be distinguished from the Romantic pre-Independence poets. In later years "modern" came to be used also as a historical term to name a literary period in I.P.E., i.e., usually the poetry written after Independence, or after the 1960s, according to others.[10] The multiple meanings of the terms "modern" and "modernism" in Western history and literary criticism, and the fact that, concerning Indian poetry, they can have Western and/or Indian connotations, make a precise reading of these categories in I.P.E. criticism more than difficult. In addition, Indian critics rarely qualify these terms when they make use of them.

A U.S. based critic like Vinay Dharwadker, for instance, understands as "*modern Indian poetry*" all the literary forms which appeared in India during the twentieth century, i.e. "*the variety of movements, schools, factions, and styles that have shaped* [modern Indian poetry in the major Indian languages including English] *in the last hundred years or so*." At the same time Dharwadker makes also indirect use of the designation "modernism" to describe "*a nation-wide movement that started in the 1930´s* [and] *was the Indian counterpart of Anglo-American modernism*."[11] Following Perry´s suggestions, one could argue that, whereas the usefulness of the former historical term ("modern" understood as "modernity") is questionable in the Indian context, the latter application of modernism can be meaningful in that it traces "*the relevance of* [a] *well-defined Western literary movement to* [an] *Indian one*."[12]

3. Modernism as a literary import or as an indigenous historical phenomenon

Critics generally refer to Indian poets writing in English in the fifties and sixties either as the "new" or the "modern/ist" poets. The western terms

modern and modernist/modernism were adopted by Indian critics from Western literary history and applied to this new trend or movement in I.P.E. for mainly two reasons. Firstly, for lack of another English term as an alternative, besides the adjective "new," which was already in use in many regional languages to denote the changing trends that had surfaced in other Indian-language literatures. Secondly, since many of the "new" poets were said to have turned to British and American so-called early or high modernist poets as a source of inspiration. The western poets of the early twentieth century (Pound, Eliot, Auden etc.) had been widely read and studied by Indian poets writing in English. Moreover, many of the "new" Indian poets were English Literature teachers and academics. Indian poets had found that western modernist aesthetics, partly born out of the deep social changes of the inter-war period in Europe, had a relevance to their own context. And so western modernist poetics provided a model to simply imitate or, in the best of cases, to absorb and indigenise creatively.

Most scholars and commentators of I.P.E. have maintained that a deep identity crisis (described sometimes as a typical post-colonial situation) drove them in search of new ways of expression and of aesthetic values that would address the needs of the individual as opposed to those of a nation. They differ, however, when assessing the extent to which this was a reflection of the profound social and political changes that had taken place in the post-Independence years in India. Moreover, when critics refer to the Indian social (urban or regional) context, they may do so with entirely different intentions: in some cases for comparative historical reasons (Dharwadker) or to assert the "authenticity" of modernist poetry (Parthasarathy), and thus its "Indianness", but also (interestingly) to justify the use of western terminology (King).

Regarding the impact of western literary movements like modernism, avant-garde, existentialism etc. on Indian poets, Dharwadker remarks:

> *Using a range of* [Western sources] ... [Indian poets] *concentrated on such themes as the disintegration of traditional communities and familiar cultural institutions, the alienation of the individual in urban society, the dissociation of thought and feeling, the disasters of modernisation, the ironies of daily existence, and the anguish of unresolved doubts and anxieties.*[13]

Going by these observations G. S. Frazer´s description of modernism in the West as "*an imaginative awareness of the stress of social change*" could fit the Indian context quite well.[14]

Each regional version of modernism obviously had its own contexts, peculiarities and life-spans, but the new trends which emerged in Indian literature in the1930s and 1940s and flourished in the fifties cannot,

according to Dharwadker and other comparatist critics, be separated from the social changes (disintegration of traditional social structures etc.) that took place in India during that period. Modernist poetics and ideas from the West were able to "invade" India when the appropriate historical conditions for it had taken place, particularly among the urban classes: social change, disillusionment, identity crisis etc. The modernist stance was then to a certain extent "indigenised" which resulted in a new poetics for I.P.E. Or, in other words, when the need was there for a "modernist" expression, outside models were imported to suit the Indian context(s).

Bruce King, on the other side, only sporadically refers to the Indian social-historical context, and fits it into a Western idea of progress and development: "*The new poetry was part of the post-independence modernisation of Indian society and emerged first in and is still often a phenomenon of the larger urban areas*."[15] King has no use for a sociological criticism that looks at the particular Indian context(s).[16] As in other countries of the Commonwealth the "modernisation" of Indian society brought forth a "modernisation" of Indian writing in English, and *"the better writers have moved from modernism to post-modernism*," according to King. "*It is clearly impossible*," he feels, "*to have the fruits of the modern and keep traditional culture*."[17]

For entirely different reasons Indian poets, critics and anthologists in the 1960´s and 50´s struggled to proclaim the "Indianness" of Modern I.P.E. The abstract concept of Indanness was eventually rendered useless as a literary criterion, but served poets writing in English to assert their national identity and come out of a "*freak*" situation[18]. The "new" poet and anthologist R. Parthasarathy needed to emphasise in several occasions that, despite its linguistic and cultural problematic, post-Independence (modern) Indian poetry written in English is rooted in its Indian environment and is an integral part of its culture and society.[19] To prove his point he quoted a famous statement by Nissim Ezekiel, who is often called the pioneer of modern I.P.E: "*India is simply my environment. A man can do something for and in his environment by being fully what he is, by not withdrawing from it. I have not withdrawn from India*."[20] In the 1990´s a few Indian critics, influenced by post-colonial theories and by a new trend of nativist critical writing, pointed out that Parthasarathy´s widely read anthology *Ten Twentieth Century Indian Poets* (1976) was part of a paradoxical yet highly influential effort to claim the entire "Indian" nation-culture for a handful of poets writing poetry in English that fitted into the canon of an imported modernist poetics, which Parthasarathy himself followed.[21]

A more balanced double-fold approach to modernism in Indian poetry in English is recommended by the renowned post-independence academic critic and (less well known) poet Syed Amanuddin:

> *There are two ways of looking at modernism in Indo-Anglian poetry, one as an Indian response to the spirit of modernism in British and American literature, and two, as a product of the stress of social and political changes in Indian life; Indo-Anglian poetry like the poetry of other former British dominions and colonies has both imported and indigenous elements.*[22]

Likewise, the literary historian M. K. Naik has stated that alienation, the archetypal mode of the modern writer, has to be analysed in I.P.E. in the light of both the Western inputs and the "*specific Indian context*."[23] Refuting O.P. Bhatnagar´s charges that alienation in the Indian poet in English was mainly an "*elitist mode*" and "*the most easily borrowed fad*,"[24] Naik identifies "*three broad aspects of the phenomenon of alienation*" in the Indian English poet:

(i) alienation from the traditional religious ethos as an urban middle-class citizen.
(ii) alienation from accepted social-cultural mores; the poet is deeply affected by the contrast between the pre-Independence values and those of the modern age in India.
(iii) existential alienation.

He argues that "*the theory and practice of western modernism naturally has a great attraction for* [the Indian poet writing in English] *and the resulting spirit of emulation may have intensified his alienation further*."[25]

The interpretations given so far differ substantially from what G.N. Devy and Makarand Paranjape have to say on the arrival of modernism in India. Indian critics with a nativist agenda have their own reasons to describe modernism in India not as something that arose (even partly) out of an indigenous social, political or economic situation, but as an attitude that entered India through literary channels alone. Thus we have Devy´s comparison of modernism in Europe and in India: "*"Modernism," which in Europe was a product of a genuine social upheaval and cultural breakdown, reached India through literary models rather than economic developments and social crisis*."[26] Paranjape endorses a similar theory, which was already postulated by the scholar Mokashi-Punekar in 1978:

> *Mokashi-Punekar surmises and rightly, I think, that the modernist sensibility in India owes itself chiefly to the influence of Eliot, Pound, Leavis, and Richards. In other words, its sources are literary rather than social or political; moreover they are imported and extraneous, rather than indigenous and locally engendered.*[27]

Like Mokashi-Punekar and O.P. Bhatnagar before him, Paranjape assumes

that "*modernism to Indians was not so much "a fact of life" as an attitude" or "pose" that they learned* [from the West]."[28]

4. Modernism in I.P.E. as a rejection of a "useless" tradition

There is in I.P.E. criticism almost a standard critical version of the literary-historical circumstances that affected Indian poetry written in English during a particular period when Nissim Ezekiel, P. Lal, Dom Moraes, A.K. Ramanujan and a number of other young poets appeared on the literary scene in the1950s and 1960s. The common belief that a modern Indian poetics and aesthetics in English developed out of this group of poets was fostered over the years by the modernist poets themselves through their anthologies and critical commentaries. Bruce King has given a detailed account of this version of I.P.E. literary history in his groundbreaking work *Modern Indian Poetry in English* (1987).[29] In the fifties and sixties a relatively small group of poets, mainly concentrated in the big urban cities of Bombay and Calcutta and with living experience in the West, are said to have radically changed the literary panorama of I.P.E. by reacting strongly against the romanticism, nationalism and mysticism of the earlier pre-Independence poets Sarojini Naidu, Aurobindo Ghose and Rabindranath Tagore.[30] Many of these new poets were reputedly influenced by the British and American modernists of the beginning of the century:

> *In the fifties arose a school of poets who tried to turn their backs on the romantic tradition and write a verse more in tune with the age, its general temper and its literary ethos. They tried, with varying degrees of success, to naturalise in the Indian soil the modernistic elements derived from the poetic revolution effected by T.S. Eliot and others in the twentieth century British and American poetry*.[31]

In valuing the new and avant-garde, these writers held a modernist poetics to be superior to the earlier grandiloquent poetic inclinations prevalent in India. It was by establishing the anthological form in I.P.E. that they were able to propagate their own "new" poetics and forge a canon which was tailored to their tastes as Indian professors of English practising not only a new type of poetry, but also American "New Criticism", which was the dominant mode of literary analysis in most Indian universities at that time. This is a key issue that affects not only I.P.E. but also the critical history of Modern I.P.E. It is said that the poetics of the early modernist or "new" Indian poets and poet-critics writing in English (Nissim Ezekiel, P.Lal and the *Kavita* manifesto, and later also Parthasarathy and Mehrotra) bear the indelible mark of T.S. Eliot. It is fairly easy to relate common

practises in I.P.E. criticism, both by Western and Indian academic scholars, to the critical tenets of New Criticism which derived partly from T.S. Eliot and I.A. Richards´s essays, and which were the reigning mode of critical thinking among writers and literary critics in India and the West for many decades. In the critical process of valuing or disregarding "tradition(s)" in I.P.E., Eliot´s notion of a "usable past" may have been a very influential tool for Indian poets and critics.

5. The present condition: modernism or postmodernism?

Since many critics and anthologists apply the term "modern" even to poetry written in the 1980s and 1990s, it could be argued that "postmodernist" or "post-modernist" features are not (yet) dominant in I.P.E., or that Indian Writing in English is indeed intrinsically "non-historical" or "non-modern", as Perry and Nandy have posited.[32] It could also be contended that contemporary Indian literary critics, and I.P.E. criticism in particular, are now in the process of identifying and constructing an indigenous historiography, honing a non-western theoretical framework out of their nativist or post-colonial agenda. A "postmodern" awareness is nonetheless fairly strong in criticism of Indian Fiction in English. "Postmodern" techniques are said to have been employed in many novels since the 1980s and in recent years "postmodernism" in Indian Fiction has been discussed in a number of critical works.[33]

Only a few of the established critics have openly acknowledged that a younger group of Indian poets writing in English have been taking new directions since the late eighties and nineties. A second "new" generation of poets and critics were able to find a space in the I.P.E. scene partly due to the interest shown in the early nineties by new commercial publishers of I.P.E. Indeed, in the early nineties a new phase in I.P.E. and criticism was being heralded by attention-hungry poets and critics. As with the anthologists in the 1960s, it was again a young "rebelling poet-critic", Makarand Paranjape, who took the reins of his generation by championing the post-modernist cause in two anthologies published in 1993: *Indian English Poetry*, a survey of poets from the initial stages in the 1820´s until 1980, and *An Anthology of New Indian English Poetry*, which introduced a new group of poets born after 1950. These two anthologies approach post-Independence I.P.E. from a historical perspective and set the tone for a "postmodernist" discussion in I.P.E., as well as for new controversies:

> *… it is possible to argue that modernism in Indian poetry in English was a glibly and unconvincingly internalised Western imitation; that in its excesses it was insulting and*

> *destructive of Indian cultural traditions; that the modernists themselves have realised this and are going back to translation, bilingualism, and religious poetry ...*[34]

Paranjape firmly criticises Mehrotra´s anthology *Twelve Modern Indian Poets*, published only a couple of years earlier, as an attempt to perpetuate the "modernist" canon:

> *Mehrotra extends the scope of "modern" by including the newer poets* [Agha Shahid Ali, Vikram Seth, Manohar Shetty] *... By equating modern with "good" and by avoiding the use of "modernist," Mehrotra ensures the continuing currency of modernism. Apart from this extension there is little new about this anthology. Rather it well illustrates the modernists` obsession with closure, hyper-selectivity, and conformity*.[35]

A similar critique could be extended to Bruce King´s *Modern Indian Poetry in English* (1987 and 2001), where the new poets of the 80´s and 90´s are considered as "modern" poets, alongside with the first generation of post-independence poets. Makarand Paranjape, using a radically different and rather challenging approach in his anthology *New Indian Poetry in English*, claims to be the first[36] I.P.E. critic to proclaim that "*modernism is dead*:"

> *Modernism in Indian English poetry, with its notions of a literary avant- garde, its emotional restraint and repression, its preference for irony and scepticism over all other attitudes to life, its self-conscious and precious craftsmanship, its belief in the image as the supreme poetic device, its aloofness and alienation from India, its secular dogmatism, its outright rejection of the past, and, above all, its arrogant narcissism and self-absorption is, thankfully, now passé*.[37]

Other critics have strongly disagreed with Paranjape and insist that such a proclamation was nonsense (e.g. Bruce King) or that "*it is difficult to demarcate the line between Modernism and Post-modernism in Indian English Poetry*."[38] According to his own comments, Paranjape was also the first to announce "the birth of postmodernism." He described postmodernism in India as an affirmation of "*not conformity, but "difference", whether of language, region, nationality, politics, ethnicity, gender, or sexual preference*." The poets, according to him," *are also more comfortable with themselves, less insecure culturally, and consequently more self-assured artistically*."[39] Yet Paranjape is not willing to adopt the western terms "modern" and "post-modern" gratuitously, for he is well aware of the peculiarities of the Indian context. In his response to a questionnaire on the state of criticism in India, he stresses the nativist point, giving his version of a tripartite relation in India:

> *Speaking of the problematic of modernism/postmodernism, we in India have our own unique contribution to make to it. For us the debate is not so much between modernity and postmodernity as between tradition, modernity* and *postmodernity. There is so much in our society that is not yet modern. That is why I believe that India is a space which allows*

> *coexistence of contradictory ideas and phenomena unlike the West which lives through substitution and suppression of the other. An interface between tradition and postmodernism offers exciting theoretical and ideological possibilities which are unavailable to the West.*[40]

Makarand Paranjape, on the other hand, suggests a periodisation of I.P.E. which "*uses a combination of prevailing political and poetic ideologies*" to label the literary-historical phases of Indian poetry in English:

-1825-1900: Colonialism
-1900-1950: Nationalism
-1950-1980: Modernism
-1980 and after: Postmodernism

Paranjape gives these time frames on the basis of several somewhat paradoxical assumptions that testify to his post-modern position:

(i) There are no "*clearly demarcated phases nor a consensus over how to characterise them*."
(ii) Modernism became only the "*dominant tone*" after 1950, and thus there were modernist precedents before 1950 and poets writing in the Romantic tone after 1950.
(iii) Modernism died in the 1980´s and has given way to post-modernism or a new phase in I.P.E. [41]

Curiously, history repeats itself here. As a post-modern poet *and* anthologist Paranjape is employing the same empowering medium and critical strategy that the first modernist poet-anthologists of the late 1950s (starting with P. Lal and Raghavendra Rao in 1959) and later poet-anthologists up to Mehrotra (1992) availed themselves of to declare the pre-Independence Romantic poetry dead.

If we travel back to the fifties we may remember that Lal and his fellow Calcutta poets had claimed in the *Kavita Manifesto* of 1959 "*that the phase of Indo-Anglian romanticism ended with Sarojini Naidu*." Another poet of the "modern" generation, A.K. Mehrotra, declared in his anthology: "*much of the poetry* [that the term "Indo-Anglian"] *describes, especially that written between 1825 and 1945, is truly dead*."[42] Paranjape represents a generation of poets and critics who value pre-Independence poetry within its historical context, and seek a continuous tradition in I.P.E., while they criticise the post-Independence modernists for their dissociation from their immediate predecessors. Yet this is precisely what his post-modernist "manifesto" pursues: a break with the earlier (modernist) generation.

These inevitable contradictions notwithstanding, for the new generation of Indian critics, many of whom also happen to be poets, the "post-modern" is a bridge with the past; not an abstract past as might have been claimed by the Romantics or Nationalists of the Indian Renaissance, but one that leads to the discovery of local particulars. This generation of poet-critics believes that postmodernity in India is a "celebration of difference" (Paranjape), and thus there can only be a plural poetics for the post-modern (or postmodern) poets, which embraces the diversity and complexity of India´s heritage. In this sense the Indian "post-modernist" poets and critics, unlike their western counterparts, might realise the task of "healing the wounds" that the so-called rupture with the (pre-Independence) past, brought about by the modernists, could have caused.[43] Yet this task may just be part of the natural process of interrogating one´s own critical agenda by questioning that of the immediate fore-fathers, which makes for a another kind of "difference": not only literary or aesthetic, but indeed historical, not a celebration, but a (re-)affirmation.

NOTES

1. K. Ayyappa Paniker, ed., *Modern Indian Poetry in English* (N. Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1991) 14.
2. G.J.V. Prasad´s *Continuities in Indian English Poetry* (Delhi: Pencraft International, 1999) was perhaps one of the first critical studies of the entire history of Indian Poetry in English. Other works that include a historical survey of some Indian poets writing in English are: A.K. Mehrotra, *An Illustrated History of Indian Literature in English*. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003. M. K. Naik, *History of Indian English Literature* (N. Delhi, Sahitya Akademi, 1981). The first scholar to attempt a critical history of this literature was K.R.S. Iyengar. His first works *Indo-Anglian Literature* (1943) and *The Indian Contribution to English Literature* (1945) are basically historical accounts concerned with defining the nature and scope of a (still) colonial literature. Even his famed *Indian Writing in English* (1962, 2nd edition 1973) was not able to properly record the important modernist developments of the post-colonial era. Iyengar, K.R. S. *Indo-Anglian Literature* (Bombay: International Book House, 1943). *The Indian Contribution to English Literature* (Bombay: Karnataka Publishing House, 1945
3. John Oliver Perry, *Absent Authority: Issues in Contemporary Indian English Criticism* (N. Delhi: Sterling, 1992). A.K. Mehrotra, ed., *The Oxford India Anthology of Twelve Modern Indian Poets* (N. Delhi: O.U.P., 1992). R. Parthasarathy, "Indian English Verse: *"The Making of a Tradition"*," *Alien Voice: Perspectives on Commonwealth Literature*. Ed. Avadesh K. Srivastava (Lucknow: Printhouse Publ., 1981) 40-52.
4. Paniker 13. Vinay Dharwadker in his anthology proposes a comparative study of all major Indian-language poetries. Vinay Dharwadker, "Afterword: Modern Indian

Poetry and its Contexts", *The Oxford Anthology of Modern Indian Poetry*. Eds.Vinay Dharwadker and A.K. Ramanujan. (N. Delhi: O.U.P, 1994).

5. See Perry, "In Pursuit of the Archaic," *Mapping Cultural Spaces. Postcolonial Indian Literature in English. Essays in Honour of Nissim Ezekiel* Eds. N.E. Bharucha and Vrinda Nabar. (N.Delhi:Vision Books, 1998) 155.This essay is a review of Makarand Paranjape´s anthology *Indian Poetry in English* (Madras: Macmillan, 1993).
6. Perry, *Absent Authority* 49, 280.
7. Perry, *Absent Authority* 49.
8. G.N. Devy, *After Amnesia Tradition and Change in Indian Literary Criticism* (N. Delhi: Orient Longman, 1992) 102. See also Makarand Paranjape, "Preface", *Nativism. Essays in Criticism*. Ed. Makarand Paranjape. (N. Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1997).
9. H.H. Anniah Gowda, "Contemporary Creative Writers in English in India," *The Literary Half-Yearly* 10.1 (1969): 17-39, and Gowda, "The Use of Images in Contemporary Indian Verse in English," *World Literature Written in English* 20 (Nov 1971): 61-76.
10. See B.K. Das, "Post-1960 Indian Poetry in English and the Making of the Indian English Idiom," *Indian English Literature since Independence*. Ed. K. Ayyappa Paniker (N. Delhi: Indian Association for English Studies, 1991) 114-123.
11. Dharwadker 186, 187.
12. Perry, *Absent Authority* 49.
13. Dharwadker 189-190.
14. G. S. Frazer, *The Modern Writer and his World* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1970) n.p.
15. Bruce King, *Modern Indian Poetry in English* (London: O.U.P., 1987) 11-12.
16. See Perry, *Absent Authority* 280.
17. Bruce King, "What is Home?," *Debonair* (September 1988): 65, qtd. in Perry 280 (underlining mine).
18. See Nandy, "Introduction", *Indian Poetry in English Today*. Ed. Pritish Nandy. (N. Delhi: Sterling, 1973) 6.
19. R. Parthasarathy, "Introduction", *Ten Twentieth Century Indian Poets*, and Parthasarathy, "Indian English Verse: The Making of a Tradition" 42.
20. Nissim Ezekiel, "Naipaul´s India and Mine", *New Writing in India*. Ed. Adil Jussawalla (Harmondsworth: 1974) 88, qtd. in Parthasarathy, *Ten Twentieth Century Indian Poets* 5.
21. See Suman Gupta, "Reinscribing Nation-People in Anthologies of Indian English Poetry", *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 31.2 (1996): 101-115. Also Rajeev Patke, "Canons and Canon-Making in Indian Poetry in English", *Kavya Bharati* 3 (1991): 13-37, and Patke, "Once More unto the Canon or Rebottling Indian Poetry in English" *Kavya Bharati* 5 (1993): 13-28.
22. Syed Amanuddin,. "Modernism in Indian Poetry in English," *World Poetry in English*. Ed. Syed Amanuddin (N. Delhi: Sterling, 1981) 45.
23. Naik, "Alienation and the contemporary Indian English Poet," *Studies in Indian English Literature*. M.K. Naik (N. Delhi: Sterling, 1987) 76.
24. O.P. Bhatnagar, "Introduction," *Rising Columns: Some Indian Poets in English* (Amravati, 1981) 5.

25. Naik, "Alienation and the contemporary Indian English Poet," 76-77.
26. Devy, *After Amnesia* 116.
27. Shankar Mokashi-Punekar, *Theoretical and Practical Studies in Indo-English Literature* (Dharwad: Karnatak University, 1978.). Paranjape, *Indian Poetry in English* 22.
28. Paranjape, *Indian Poetry in English* 23-24.
29. King, *Modern Indian Poetry in English* 11-90.
30. These three "isms" go often hand in hand in Indian writers. The poet Aurobindo Ghose, for instance, turned from political activist to mystic poet to spiritual guru. Tagore, also a nationalist, romantic poet and guru, wrote most of his poetry originally in Bengali and then translated it into English.
31. Naik, *History of Indian English Literature* 192.
32. Perry , *Absent Authority* 49, and Pritish Nandy, *Indian Poetry in English Today* 74.
33. An often cited example of a postmodern Indian novel in English is Shashi Tharoor´s *The Great Indian Novel* (1989). For a critical survey of postmodernism in fiction see Viney Kirpal, *The Postmodern Indian English Novel: Interrogating the 1980s and 1990s* (N. Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1996).
34. Paranjape, *Indian Poetry in English* 25.
35. Paranjape, *Indian Poetry in English* xvii-xviii.
36. See Paranjape, "Modernism and its Discontents" *Mapping Cultural Spaces. Postcolonial Indian Literature in English Essays in Honour of Nissim Ezekiel* 51.
37. Paranjape, "Preface," *An Anthology of New Indian English Poetry* N. Delhi: Rupa&Co., 1993).
38. See K.N. Daruwalla, rev. of *An Anthology of New Indian English Poetry, Sunday Times*, 20-26 June 1993. The quote is from B.K. Das, "A Modernist Poet or a Post- Modernist? A study of Nissim Ezekiel´s Poetry", *Mapping Cultural Spaces. Postcolonial Indian Literature in English Essays in Honour of Nissim Ezekiel* 129.
39. Paranjape, "Preface," *An Anthology of New Indian English Poetry*.
40. Paranjape, "Indian (English) Criticism" 75.
41. The quotes are from Paranjape, *Indian Poetry in English* 8, 7, 19. The summary of his critical tenets is mine.
42. P. Lal and Raghavendra Rao, eds., *Modern Indo-Anglian Poetry* (N.Delhi: Kavita, 1959). Mehrotra 1.
43. Paranjape, "Modernism and its Discontents" 55.