



Book Review

Indian English Poets: Critical Ruminations & Indian English Novelists: Critical Responses, Edited by Ram Avadh Prajapati (with Ashish Gupta and Roopesh Chaturvedi, respectively)

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<p><i>Indian English Poets:</i></p> <p><i>Critical Ruminations</i></p> <p>Edited by Ram Avadh Prajapati and Ashish Gupta</p> <p>Publisher: Takhtotaaz Publication (Allahabad, U.P., India)</p> <p>ISBN: 978-81-922645-2-3</p> <p>Year: 2015</p> <p>Pages: 203</p> <p>Price: INR 845, \$ 70</p>	<p><i>Indian English Novelists:</i></p> <p><i>Critical Responses</i></p> <p>Edited by Ram Avadh Prajapati and Roopesh Chaturvedi</p> <p>Publisher: Takhtotaaz Publication (Allahabad, U.P., India)</p> <p>ISBN: 978-81-922645-4-7</p> <p>Year: 2015</p> <p>Pages: 202</p> <p>Price: INR 845, \$ 70</p>
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Ram Avadh Prajapati, an Assistant Professor and Researcher based in Allahabad, has edited a number of books, especially on Indian writings in English. Two of his latest books are *Indian English Poets* and *Indian English Novelists* which are co-edited with Ashish Gupta and Roopesh Chaturvedi and contain 24 and 23 articles respectively. The editors have shown



judiciousness in matters of selection of articles although the articles are not identical in size and depth. But together they roughly map the changing terrains of Indian Writings in English which has produced enviable quality of novels and poems to compete with English and American literatures.

The first book under review *Indian English Poets* contains articles of such canonical poets as Sri Aurobindo, Sarojini Naidu, Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Taru Dutt. There are articles on much-discussed poets like Kamala Das, Nissim Ezakiel, Jayanta Mahapatra and R. Parthasarathy. What is remarkable about the book is that almost half of the articles are on less-discussed but talented poets like Shiv K. Kumar, Mamta Kalia and Sujata Bhatt, and a host of new poets, like Vihang A. Naik, Ramesh Chandra Dwivedi, S. C. Dwivedi, Jaydeep Sarangi, Aju Mukhopadhyay, Biplab Majumder, 3 poets from Assam and Telugu dalit women poets. While the older poets deserve re-reading and re-evaluation the new poets deserve attention. This volume of critical articles quite fulfills both the contemporary demands felt in Indian academia. The only objection I raise is that five articles on Kamala Das have been published in the anthology. Although the articles present different perspectives, it is not appropriate for a critical anthology of its kind to accommodate five articles on a single poet, however famous he/she is. The strength of the anthology is the critical articles on the less discussed and new poets. Poetry is always a neglected genre outside academia in comparison to novel and short story. Poets like Vihang A. Naik, S. C. Dwivedi and Jaydeep Sarangi have a number of collections of poems, but they do not receive serious critical attention. Prajapati's book can be a helpful reference book for those interested to work on the new, twenty-first century poets.

The second book *Indian English Novelists* also covers a pretty wide area. The veneration for the older novelists, like R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and Anita Desai, is still very strong. They have not exhausted the scholars to re-visit their classic canon.



One article on each of the unique writers, like Bhavani Bhattacharjee, Arun Joshi, Vikram Chandra, Amit Chaudhuri, Rohinton Mistry, Chitra Divakaruni, Salman Rushdie, is there. I'm happy to see that articles on the very-much discussed novels, like *Midnight's Children* and *God of Small Things* do not feature in the anthology. Space has been given instead to relatively less explored novels, like Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh* and Chitra Divakaruni's *Sister of My Heart*. Then, there are articles on the influence of Mahatma Gandhi on Indian English novelists and the realistic tradition in Indian English fiction. I object to the inclusion of Ruth Jhabvala's novel *Heat and Dust* in the anthology. Although the critically-acclaimed novel is based on India, the writer is not an Indian.

Both the books contain the editors' introductions which attempt a general survey of the thrust area. Although the introductions could have been more thorough and analytical they nonetheless are good for an overview of the respective areas. It is not possible to throw light on all the recognized poets and novelists in two anthologies because Indian literature in English is already a bulky area which is rapidly expanding. The editors, however, did their best to collect some fresh critical expositions in the two volumes, albeit under broad titles. A certain standard has been maintained regarding printing and binding of the books, but the covers could have been better.