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Social and Environmental Concerns in the Poetry of Biplab Majumdar: A Critical Evaluation

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Abstract

Biplab Majumdar is an Indian poet and short story writer. He writes in English and Bengali dexterously. His concern for environment and society has been well expressed in most of his works. There is a long list of contemporary poets who are writing poems about their milieu culture and environment. O. P. Bhatnager, Maha Nand Sharma, Sri Niwas Ramaswami, Sunil Sharma, Jaydeep Sarangi, Ramesh Chandra Dwivedi Syed Ameeruddin, and several others are poets of great eminence. They are writing on numerous subjects like mysticism, humanity, environment, pollution, corruption, and so many subjects which are prevailing in this world.

Keywords- *Culture, Society, Ecocriticism, Milieu*

Introduction

The lineage of Indian English poetry is very large. Henry Louis Vivian Derozio is considered the first in the sequence of Indian English poetry. There are several remarkable poets like Nissim Ezekeil, Toru Dutta, Sarojini Naidu, Rabindranath Tagore, Shri Aurobindo. A.K. Ramanujan, Dom Moreas, R. Parthaswamy, Jayant Mahapatra, Kamala Das, Keki N. Daruwalla, A. K. Mahrortra, Arun Kolatkar, Vikram Seth and so many who have filled literature with thought of Indian sensibility, emotion and mysticism. Vikram Seth is a poet and novelist of great eminence. He was born in Kolkata, India. His poetic sensibility suits to the Indian canons of poetry. His intention of writing poetry is to reform society and environment for better future of humanity. *Mappings* (1980), *The Humble Administrator's Garden* (1985), *All You Who Sleep Tonight* (1990), *Beastly Tales* (1991), *Three Chinese Poets* (1992), *The Frog and the Nightingale* (1994) are some of poetic collections of Seth.

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They created a new constellation and stream in the world literature with their creativity and notions.

Biplab Majumdar is an influential poet and pacifist of the post modern India. He is a bilingual poet. He writes in English and Bengali. He is a reputed poet, social activist, translator, essayist, editor of *Voice of Kolkata* and forensic officer by profession. He has a voice of protest and irony in this age of selfishness, chronic materialism, endemic greed, violent sensibility and terrorism. He lives in West Bengal, India. He is a lover of nature as well as he has great consciousness to the society. He portrays the life and blood phenomena of the world. There is manifestation of social, environmental, anthropocentric concern in his poetry. Several of his poems may be studied from environmental point of view. Since 1990s a new concern emerged in the field of literary criticism. Literature and nature became interdisciplinary, which studied in Eco-criticism. Nature has been all pervasive influence in poetry and other literary genres since the beginning of human civilization. We trace adoration of natural elements in the literature of the world. *The Bible, the Quran, the Bhagavadgita, the Ramayana, Meghadootam, the Purans, the Vedas* and even other religious, scientific and cultural books of the world have dealt with nature and natural beauty and its significance. But since Eco-criticism became the force in the literary studies, we became more conscious about it. It opposes those linguistic and formalistic theories which intensify that the world is made of certain linguistic components.

Majumdar has international fame. His poems like “Wintry River”, “Island’s Dolphin Song”, “Songs of Yellow Season”, “Dead Birds”, “Someone in the Garden at Midnight”, “Towards Sky” and several other poems are very notable to show his environmental concern and consciousness.

Biplab Majumdar has a revolutionary outlook that creates a sense of social consciousness towards tradition and social goodness. He loudly cries against the depleting human values and cultural degradation in human beings. His poetry is an oasis in this world where there is no love lost among human beings. His poetry is compels the readers to restart a new religion and experience of life which has been decadent of love emotion, culture, thought, goodness, value, virtue, thought, and over all compassionate feelings for humanity. He wants to reestablish love and harmony among human beings. He analyses the impact of globalization on society and his poetry is acknowledged as a kind of passion. Poets and critics have endorsed the poetic consideration of Biplab Majumdar. It has caused a great frustration and emotional detachment. He reinforces his outlook of universal brotherhood and optimistic outlook:

From the depth of my heart I think of the welfare of common people, for the betterment of human relation. These may be the humble contribution; but I firmly believe in innate goodness, honesty and ethical values of human

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beings that emanate of out centuries and old civilization. Through my thoughts deeds and creativity I work incessantly for international understanding peace and brotherhood. (Majumdar)

Biplab Majumdar chooses ironical tone to mock at human depravity to suit his motive of social and ethical concern. There is a sense of realization and anguish in his poetry. He has common causes and methodical instruments to rehabilitate every human being in proper order. He rejoices the vision of virtuous living in order to create lovely atmosphere for our life. His poems like 'Tolerance', 'Honest', 'Righteousness', 'Maturity', 'Humility', 'Morality', 'Charity', are some poems through which we come across his vision of virtuous life.

Majumdar expresses his emotions consciously about mankind keeping in view feelings, perceptions, predispositions for harmony and goodwill in the world and among human beings. He seems appealing and convincing the readers to perform duty and be optimistic:

Perform duty, O my dear brothers
With the beat of faith, power, devotion;
Tomorrow's sun must be ours
Shall be proud of glorious nation.

* * *

Let us have optimistic vision
Tomorrow's world would be unified nation,
If the universal peace be our mission
Let humanity alone be the global religion. (*Virtues & Vices*)

These lines show his staunch faith in the welfare of humanity and goodness which according Majumdar must be our mission and vision to maintain peace and love on this earth. According to him moderation, responsibility, contentment, compatibility and flexibility are very important ideals of human life.

Try to change things what you can
Live in peace with what you can't
Know the difference between the two
Remember only then mature you. (*Virtues & Vices*)

He is an emancipating poet of this age of pollution, corruption, brutality, insecurity and degradation of moral and ethical values. He has feelings of pain and solidarity in this stiff age. His wordsworthian vision and intention are well acknowledged among the literary big guns. He accepts his likelihood with Kazuyosi Ikeda and S.C. Dwivedi. Ikeda is a Japanese poet, scientist, humanist, and environmentalist. Ikeda is also well known for his visionary poetic voice. S.C. Dwivedi is an eminent poet, critic, humanist and environmentalist. He is

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currently a senior most professor in Allahabad University. Like Ikeda Majumdar is a poet cum scientist. Both are profound advocate of healing of environmental health, international peace, and brotherhood among human beings. Majumdar has been influenced by Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore is most influential poet of India who was awarded Noble prize for literature for the first time from Indian subcontinent. Majumdar's poetry is connected with the mind and art of William Wordsworth, John Keats, Robert Frost, Thoreau, Kajuyosi Ikeda, Syed Ameeruddin, S. C. Dwivedi, Sumitra Nandan Pant, Surya Kant Tripathi "Nirala" Jay Shanker Prasad, Maha Devi Verma, Atal Vihari Bajpei, Ramesh Chandra Dwivdi and so many humanistic, environmentalist and moralist poets of the world literature. A great critic observes that the voice of Majumdar is an amalgamation of numberless voices of the World Literature. Multifarious ideals come through his mouth regarding nature and mankind. He calls a spade and spade like a post-modernist poet. His poetry is full of rock and talk. It's time to awake because only love poetry or comic extravagances are not enough. Now the aim of poetry is to make us realize that two times meal is not sufficient. Postmodern poetry is not for its own sake but it is for life, environment and development of scientific thought and vision. It is not enough to see what anything is but to watch and meditate upon the menacing problems of the age human civilization and to see it with a poet's eyes. It is responsibility of intellectuals to see things beyond the understanding of common people for the betterment of humanity. In an interview with Arvind Kumar he expressed his deep rooted desire for the pollution free and peaceful world.

Majumdar has got published many collections of poems. *Virtues & Vices* (2001), *Golden Horizon* (2004), and *Island's Dolphin's Songs* (2009) are expressions of the behavior and deep feelings towards mankind. His poems, books, essays and interviews are ample proof of it. Environmental imagination, culture and global humanism are anthropometric concepts which are used to define mankind. He has been consciously working for the betterment of the mankind. His poems are champion of brotherhood, love, sympathy, pity for downtrodden and advocate of harmony among the people. Like Robert Frost he wants to make this world a place for love and virtue. His philosophy is to make humanity the only religion for international peace and global fraternity. In his poems he seems like a great orator like Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore. There is green sensibility in Majumdar's poetic imagination. He loves nature and natural components. He shows his inclination to save the nature and earth from degrading elements like pollution and garbage hoarding in our environment.

There are spiritual and social visions in his poetry through which he glorifies the existence of humanity. He enumerates the cause of our sufferings. We are suffering from because of mouth horses in our body. In a poem he expresses his anguish against the materialistic longings and demonic pursuits of human beings. We are hankering after wealth

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and prosperity that is why we are ignoring our hearts' call. The concept of multiculturalism and globalization is consequence of desire for more and more. Like William Wordsworth, Majumdar warns us. In the poem "The World is too with Us" Wordsworth gives criteria to enjoy nature's beauty. Majumdar has also keen intuition to natural aspect. Majumdar seems pondering on the sense of belonging to nature. The world is full of natural beauty but we not inclined to see its charms and realize it.

Majumdar is always aware of his intuitive sensibility to nature and society. He expresses his outlook that our thinking plays very significant role in the development of our body, soul and behavior. According to him it is nature which gives us our ultimate force of life. He is very sensitive to the changing scenario of human and natural world with physical presence. He takes poetry as part and parcel of the enhancing effect of nature's existence.

Indian poetry

Springs from nature

Deep spirituality (*Golden Horizon*)

Majumdar has a sense of spiritual goodness. He justifies men in the context of God- the creator. It is observed that a religious man less violent against nature and natural aspects. Religion gives a kind strength through which we can stand amid problems and can justify all obstacles. He intensifies our role as spiritual or religious angel to look after the health of nature. Nature is very essential because we cannot survive without it. Robert Frost called this as proper place for love. So we have to maintain the dignity of earth and its healing power. Majumdar has very keen insight to the glory and immensity of natural beauty. Following lines are very important for evaluation:

Coming under a tree I sit silently; blue
Solitude rolls, saffron yellow light falls
On the face of poems at this dreamy
Autumnal moon a lake not so far, soft
Bright sun-rays create magic there. (Majumdar)

Poems Majumdar create a vision in our while we go through it. He is a symbolic and moralistic containing his aspiration for creating a paradise on earth by infusing morality love and sympathy among us. He highlights the mystery of natural beauty which shapes the psyche of the poetic mind:

Strata of colorific clouds,
Allured me all through
Frightening fog often engulfed horizon,
Rainstorm opposed soaring
Don't know why this inevitable selection high clouds
Call me frequently, with its magic mystery. (Majumdar)

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There is use of perfect and sound imagery in above lines. He uses nature as symbol to depict the condition of human beings. He is valuable for us because that voice which we need in this world of pollution and immorality.

He has clearly accepted his debt to nature. He claims that poetry is the result of combined effort produced by the conscious and the subconscious efforts:

In fact, poets are born with certain artistic nerves, unworldly instincts and sensitive soul. They watch the world from a different angle. Not only a poet but also each and every creative person sees and feels the world from his phenomenal perception. The beauty of world, it's people, it's happenings, discourse; everything is noticed by the poet day and night; creates a movement in his subconscious mind. They get matured there with his innate poetic realization; subsequently the process leads him to a pen which ultimately is a conscious effort. (Majumdar)

To conclude it can be said that Majumdar stands as a pole star for us. His philosophy of humanism has compactness of thought and subtle realization of human behaviour. He uses poetry as the vehicle of his concern about mankind, society, environment and all about human beings. He seeks to make this world a peaceful and harmonious place like Robert Frost, Kazuyosi Ikeda, R. C. Dwivedi and Syed Ameeruddin. We must give our days and nights to draw inspiration and fragrance of Bengali civilization and culture. We must take good sensibility from his poetry in order to make this world free from wars, terrorism, naxalism, fascism, feudalism, fundamentalism, pollution, nepotism, regionalism, and selfishness.

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