

***BORN OF THE SPIRITUAL SPRING ROMANTICISM INFLUENCED THE  
INTELLECTUAL VICTORIAN POETS***

**By Aju Mukhopadhyay**

**Spirituality Enriched Romantic Poetry**

Moving to the heart of Romantic Period in England we can find its essence in *Coleridge Poetry and Prose*. The introducer, H. W. Garrod, writes about Coleridge,

“In conversation and, and in the Conversation poems, he was forever pouring out magnanimously, or with a grandly calculated carelessness spilling, the wine of a spirituality limitlessly fecund . . . thrice in his life he punctuated the else unintermitted vocality of his inspiration by a pause of supernatural silence; and was content to hear, and thereafter with curious fidelity- as though he were an instrument purely passive- to record those eyrie voices of nature which speak to us articulately in the ‘magical triad’”. (Coleridge: Introduction)

A resonance of this experience is resounded differently in his poem, “To Nature”;

It may indeed be a phantasy, when I  
Essay to draw from all created things  
Deep, heartfelt, inward joy that closely clings;  
And trace in leaves and flowers that round me lie  
Lessons of love and earnest piety.

Coleridge 142

This type of direct communion with Nature and deeper inspiration from the divine source spilling the wine of spirituality was more or less common with other poets of the romantic period like Blake, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and others. These poets were absorbed in the subjective world, engrossed in Nature, in communion with it as if with an entity having separate personality other than their objective existence without reference to what was happening in the world, in British Colonies, in their immediate surroundings. These were their mystic experiences and their

creation many times depended on such direct experience without being tested by the magic wand of material verification and objective test. Such experiences were so intense, absorbing the self of the poets that their creations emanating from such hearing, suggestion and other means of communication were pure and original which made them so great. Neither the Victorian period nor the modern age could replenish the loss of such great creations like the “*Rime of the Ancient Mariner*” or “*The Tyger*” or “*Prometheus Unbound*”.

### **Sri Aurobindo a Spiritual Poet**

Here is a very pertinent question: When such poets of a particular age received things occasionally from Beyond which were the sources of their great creations what would happen to a poet who was also a yogi whose main work was communion with God, becoming one with Him, merging in Him? We repeat what Garrod said about Coleridge, “Thrice in his life he punctuated the else unintermitted vocality of his inspiration by a pause of supernatural silence; and was content to hear, and thereafter with curious fidelity as though he were an instrument purely passive- to record those eyrie voices of nature.” (Coleridge: Introduction) The poets of the Romantic period were genius having contacts with the beyond only sometimes when they became passive instruments but Sri Aurobindo, who was brought up in England and began writing poems from his childhood, in his later years became a Yogi of such excellence and super power that many intellectuals like Romain Rolland mentioned him as the last of the ancient Rishis of India. Poet Sri Aurobindo used to sit with pen and paper and received poetry constantly for pages after pages. In his mature years he used to dictate such poetry as heard or otherwise received by him. Beginning from his early youth he composed a spiritual epic, titled *Savitri, a legend and a symbol*; writing, dictating, rewriting and amending according to revised suggestions and inspiration received up to the last of his life. It has more than 24,000 lines of poetry based on spiritual experiences; it is the largest in English language and fourth largest in any language of the world worth mentioning. It is a super romantic-spiritual creation the purport of which has been extended to the deeper future till man, if really interested and capable, would decipher full meaning of this creation. It is a work given to the whole of humanity by the philosopher of *The*

*Life Divine* who always aspired for world Peace and Divine Life for the humanity. Sri Aurobindo wrote more than 50,000 lines of poetry in English.

### **Victorian Poets carried the Romantic influence**

Sir Maurice Bowra, in respect of the Romantic Age and poets wrote,

“with the death of Keats in 1821 and of Shelley in 1822 the main movement of English Romanticism came to an end. It is true that Coleridge had another twelve years to live and Wordsworth another twenty-eight, but so far as Romantic poetry was concerned, their work was done. Both were still to write good poems, but neither was any longer inspired by the visions which had once made him great. The Romantic genius seemed to have been buried beside the Pyramid of Caius Cestius in the protestant Cemetery in Rome. The new poetry turned from vast mysteries and intoxicating ideas to delicate sentiment and careful description. A greater sense of security grew as the shocks of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars receded into the past, and the emergence of a new moneyed class, conscious of its worth and its destiny, hushed the eager, searching questions which had troubled rebellious aristocrats like Shelley and Byron. Poetry contracted its ambitions and was content to combine mild instruction with grace and charm.” (Bowra 197)

Of the literary historians, Louis Cazamian seems to have a broader view about the romanticism of the Victorian era though he too refers to spiritualism which makes a real difference between the two periods. He views that romanticism lived in some poets. He writes, “Neither in literature nor in the inner life of the soul can it be said that the properly Romantic inspiration is exhausted after 1830. It is seen in mixed forms, and combines with the other psychological elements which characterize the new period. There is scarcely a poet from now onwards who does not reveal, in some degree, the reciprocal penetration and fusion of the influences in conflict . . . .

“There is an element of Romanticism in all the Victorian poets. With many, this remains the strongest and most obvious characteristic. But the spiritual change that has taken place and the atmosphere of a different age give their art another aspect. . . . The poets who show most clearly in their work the decline of purely Romantic themes no doubt derive their inspiration from the restless activity of the mind; they are occupied with mere truth. . . . But all their poetry is impregnated with a diffused romanticism, which at times crystallizes in words that seem to be but the echo of those of yesterday. (Literature 1161)

### **References**

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### **Bio**

**Aju Mukhopadhyay** has written more than two hundred Essays for books and journals besides larger numbers of features in newspapers. As an essayist he received Albert Camus Centenary Writing Award, 2013. His essays and books contain such important subjects as Sri Aurobindo (Life, Philosophy and Literature), The Mother of Pondicherry, Subhas Chandra Bose, Rabindranaath Tagore, Sant Kabir, Albert Camus, Saadat Hasan Manto and among the latest writers and poets he has written number of essays on Mahasweta Devi, Jhumpa Lahiri, Bibhuti Bhushan Bandyopadhyay, Satyajit Ray, Khushwant Singh, Arundhati Roy, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and others. He has written some essays specially on India like Rebirth of India and other essays and books on India. He has critiqued large numbers of contemporary poets of India besides such important subjects on Poetry as Sufi and Bhakti Poetry, Devotional Poets of Modern India, Spiritual and Mystic Poets. On animals he has contributed mainly to Creature

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