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## NISSIM EZEKIEL'S POETRY: THE DEPICTION OF INDIANNESS

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### **Abstract:**

*Nissim Ezekiel is one of the most significant poets in Indian English Literature. The poet has made the use of Indian English in his poetry. He has made the use of common Hindi words as Guru, Ashram, Burka, Chapati, Pan, Mantra etc. The poet has made the use of present continuous tense instead of simple present in the poems.*

**Keywords:** *Aggression, Pidgin, Babu English, Ancestors, Indirabehn, Redundant, Outburs, etc.*

Indianness is an idea that strikes one's mind and compels the emotional outburst in a person to relate to the elements involved in a particular event, in this case, it's a literary work. While Indianness as an idea, can be a perfect mixture of all the things mentioned above, anything can constitute the simple idea of Indianness until it connects the reader's mind with India— India that is a thought, not merely a nation.

M. K. Naik offers a beautiful example of two Indian brothers, Aurobindo and Manmohan Ghosh, who went to England to become pucha Englishmen. They both returned home after their education. However, one returned to Indianness and produced Savitri while another kept looking for the disconnect between himself and Indianness and could not produce anything remarkable (Naik, 175).

Indianness, if we look seriously, is a quality that must be present in Indian English Literature, it will appear to be hollow or shallow, if not entirely hollow. Those who write in English naturally disconnect from most of the Indianness because of their language. It is a fact and a truth so named that we cannot ignore it. Moreover, if a literary production in the English language will have nothing that can reflect Indianness, the Literary production will certainly become redundant for Indians as well as the foreigners.

Indianness in Indian English Literature is an action that attracts reactions from the readers. Indianness is about embedding values and history in a literary work that has originated, evolved and transformed on the Indian soil. Any literary production by an Indian in English is Indian English Literature and by default, it has the element of Indianness.

Nissim Ezekiel is one of those Indian poets writing in English who has created an authentic flavour of India by their use of Indian English, Pidgin English, or Bazar English, as it is often called. He has made the use of common Hindi words as Guru, Ashram, Burka, Chapati, Pan, Mantra etc. in his poetry. Ezekiel's poetry seems to be a comment on the Indian social scenario where he tries to present "what" "how" and "why" of the various aspects of Indian society. The various aspects of Indianness are depicted in his poems like 'Very Indian Poem in Indian English' and *Goodby Party for Miss Pushpa T.S'*

In the poem, 'Very Indian Poem in Indian English', he states that he stands for peace and nonviolence. And he wonders why the world is always engaging into wars acts of aggression. He writes:



I am standing for peace and nonviolence.  
Why world is fighting, fighting.  
Why all people of the world  
Are not following Mahatma Gandh  
I am simply not understanding  
Ancient Indian wisdom is 100  
percent correct.

He is puzzled as to why no one is following Mahatma Gandhi who is a great leader and says that the knowledge possessed by our ancestors is highly accurate but the modern generation seems to be moving towards westernization which looks fancy.

He mentions a time when he was reading the newspaper about someone who threw a stone at Indira Gandhi and thinks to himself that it must be a very disturbed young man. The poet also adds that he reads the Times of India Journal everyday in order to improve his own English.

He then uses the popular phrases "Friends, Romans, Countrymen lend me your ears" said by Mark Antony in his speech which created a great impact among the Romans. The poet uses India as an example to show unity in diversity. India is a country where many communities coexist, tolerating each other, even though each has few funny habits.

He then concludes the poem by insisting that the kingdom of God is surely coming one day and he hopes to meet his fellow beings someday. The second stanza describes even more successfully the mistakes and wrong usages of Indian English

other day I am reading in newspaper  
How one goonda fellow  
Threw stone at Indira behn.

In the fourth stanza, he is sad that our neighbouring countries do not behave properly:

Pakistan behaving like this  
China behaving like that  
It is making me very sad, I am  
telling you.

The poem reveals how artistically Ezekiel employs Indian English to evoke a sense of Indianness. In the poem 'Goodby Party for Miss Pushpa T.S.' the poet has made the use of Indian Pidgin-English. The poem misuses the present continuous tense and uses the phrases and syntax found in the Indian language. He writes: "Whatever I or anybody is asking /she is always saying yes".

This poem gives the concept of 'Babu English', which is the deviated form of standard English. This poem is a parody of the way Indians use the English language. Though English is a secondary language, there is still a lot of Indian influence when people try to speak in English, and their culture and traditions are also highly obvious in their dialect. The poem is written in blank verse, with inappropriate use of grammar. The poet writes:

Friends,  
our dear sister  
is departing for foreign  
in two three days,  
and



we are meeting today  
to wish her bon voyage.

The narrator addresses his colleagues as friends. They are gathered to bid farewell to Miss Pushpa. The narrator compliments Miss Pushpa. He calls her their dear sister.

In his poem Night of The Scorpion, the poet has depicted a common Indian situation. It shows that Ezekiel is a very Indian poet rooted in the Indian soil, and actually aware of the common human situations of day to day Indian life. It is a narrative poem. We are told that the speaker's mother was stung by a scorpion on one rainy night. The poet has depicted the love of neighbours, their faith in God as well as their superstitions rooted in their everyday life. The poet also describes their scientific attitude in life. The poet has also depicted the love of mother about her children. He says:

My mother only said  
Thank God the scorpion picked on me  
and spared my children.

In such a way the poet Nissim Ezekiel has made the use of Indian English which has the impact of Indianness.

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