



STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF SYED AMANUDDIN'S 'DON'T CALL ME 'INDO-ANGLIAN'

Ms. Preeti

Assistant Professor
Department of English,
University of Rajasthan, Jaipur,
India

Syed Amanuddin is a poet with a blend of Indian essence and American flavor in his writings. He writes about human experiences and each of his work has a deep emotional fervor in it. Syed is a versatile writer who has written books of poetry like *Adventures of Atman* (1977), *Gems and Germs*, (1978), and *Challenger Poems* (1988), his critical works include plays *The King Who Sold His Wife* (1978). He wrote a novel *Passage to the Himalayas* (1979), and a collection of essays including *World Poetry in English* (1981). He is also the founder and editor of two literary magazines: *Poetry East west* (1967-1972) and *Creative Moment* (1972). His poems have been widely translated into French, Urdu, and Kannada.

Amanuddin has a very distinguished style of writing which resembles to that of the American poet E.E. Cummings. Both of them introduced the avant-garde poems which experiment the conventional rules of syntax and punctuation. He plays with language liberally using the poetic license he holds while writing. He used to believe—

Poetry is essentially a verbal art—a result of contrived and controlled use of language. Language is an over-used medium, but the poet supplies it with vitality by adding freshness to words and creating new contexts for them. (Dwivedi 173)

This belief of adding freshness and new contexts to the common medium of language marks the style of this poet. He deals with variety of themes ranging from human experience to science. In a very lucid style he delivers technological, scientific and the unfathomable. He is such a connoisseur of words and plays with them so well. The poem 'Don't Call Me Indo-Anglian' unfolds the liberties Syed Amanuddin takes with the syntactic structures.



Amanuddin was born and brought up in India and later migrated to America. This is the reason that his poetry unifies the Indian clarity and American modernity. Amar Nath Dwivedi in one of his papers on Amanuddin states:

As a poet, he is closer to Americans rather than to any English or Indo-anglian poet. The question of paramount significance is not *where* one learns one's art and technique but *how* one absorbs and executes them. (Dwivedi 165)

This poem presents the lack of belongingness and identity crisis of a poet who thinks he is Indian but is not accepted there as he has migrated to another country and on the other hand that country does not accept him as he is a migrant. He seeks his belongingness and the search becomes a frustration. This poem becomes an outlet of the aggression he holds against this non-acceptability.

1. Negation:

The title itself suggests his inner fury, which starts with a negation "Don't Call Me an Indo-Anglian". This negation comes like a threat to the addressee something like— 'don't dare you call me indo-anglian'.

The most remarkable thing that marks the poet's style is his audacity to challenge the linguistic norms. It seems like he exploits them in a rage against their non-acceptability. If he does not belong to them then their rules do not belong to him. In a similar fashion of John Donne, he opens his poem with a very abrupt declaration:

No, I don't want to be
A hotchpotch of culture
A confusion of language
A nullity of imagination
An abortive affair between an indo n an anglo (Kurian 10)

He denounces being addressed as an indo-anglian. In a staccato speech pattern, he designates the word 'indo-anglian' as 'a hotchpotch of culture' which suggests lack of belongingness to either of



cultures. 'An abortive affair' this alliterative labeling unfurls the flight of imagination of the poet. It seems he feels himself illegitimate when somebody assigns him as indo-anglian and it 'aborts' his identity as an individual.

His usage of negative words like 'hotchpotch', 'confusion', 'nullity' and 'abortive' unveil the disgust he feels towards this signature word- indo-anglian. His repression can be sensed in his over usage of plosives like /d/, /k/, /g/, /t/ and /b/. The title itself consists of three plosive sounds starting from /d/ in 'don't,' /k/ in 'call' etc.

2. Orthographic Experiments:

Amanuddin, like E.E Cummings, challenges the linguistic norms with his orthography in his writings. He breaks all the conventional standards of English writing such as spellings, hyphenation, capitalization, word breaks and punctuation.

2.1 Capitalization:

When it comes to capitalizations, Amanuddin ignores the set norms to capitalize the first letter of sentence, the singular first-person pronoun and the proper nouns. He opens his poem with a small, non-capitalized 'no' and continues to write in the same manner. He does not even capitalize 'I' or the proper nouns like names of Indian poets Kalidasa and Kabir, Italian poet and philosopher Dante, Persian poets Khayyam and Ghalib and Chinese poet Li Po:

I would rather roam with kalidasa n kabir

Or go on a spiritual journey with dante

Meditate with khayyam on the mathematics of existence

Or sing with ghalib the anguish of love

Or drown with li po kissing the moon's reflection in the river (Kurian 11)

Capitalization denotes significance and Amanuddin's ignorance of it suggests nothing is significant for him except one thing i.e. 'POET'. He has only word capitalized in his poem and that is when his identity crisis satiates. He capitalizes the whole word to emphasize its significance in the poet's life. According to him 'ammannudin' is not his identity but being a 'POET' is.



I am a POET

I have lived forty centuries under various names

I am now amanuddin (Kurian 11-12)

2.3 Punctuations:

Syed has stanchly taken liberties with punctuation marks. In a blithe spirit he lets his thoughts flow, defying all the set norms of punctuations. He does not seem concerned about putting commas, periods or full stops, exclamation marks or question marks or hyphens. Not a single punctuation has been used in the whole poem.

This lack or complete absence of punctuation marks suggests urgency. Urgency to spit out the aggression, frustration or of the repression of the anger he has been undergoing from long. Subjugation of his self into a hyphenated identity of being indo-anglian, is the Freudian repression he was going through. It looks as if the poet is in urgency to blabber out all the grudges he holds with people in a very limited time and space, thus he pays no heed to punctuating, he just lets the flow out. May be stream of consciousness which lets him wander all from 'cauvery' to 'chamundi hills' extending to 'brindavan fountains' and 'shakespeare n keats' etc.

2.4 Elision:

Elision is a linguistic stylistic device of omitting letters from a word or a phrase e.g. 'gotta-go' instead of 'got to go'. Syed, with implication of this device, leaves the American traces in his works and language. He omits the letters which are silent or unpronounced in a word e.g. letters 'A' and 'D' are omitted in the word 'And' and he writes it as 'n'.

It's true i write in English

Dream in the language of Shakespeare n Keats

The employment of this device again presents the hurried flow of poet's emotions where he tries to signal out the unwanted or extra.

With these marked linguistic features Amanuddin succeeds in explaining the literal meaning he wants to communicate. He presents a clear picture of what he feels about his hybridized identity. The sense of loss of belongingness haunts his identity which finds no satiation. The poem begins with



Research Inspiration

An International Multidisciplinary e-Journal

(Peer Reviewed & Opened Access Indexed)

www.researchinspiration.com

Email: researchinspiration.com@gmail.com, publish1257@gmail.com

ISSN: 2455-443X

Vol. 1, Issue-II

March 2016

Impact Factor: 2.07 (IJIF)

the utter dissatisfaction and disappointment but ends in a victorious chant when Amanuddin finds his identity as a 'POET'. His Diasporic identity vanishes with this declaration which makes him universal and of everywhere, when he says:

I am a POET

I have lived forty centuries under various names

I am now amanuddin (Kurian 11-12)

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