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An Interview with Arbind Kumar Choudhary

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Tabish Khair, Amitav Kumar, Vikram Chandra, Sudeep Sen, Smita Agarwal and Arbind Kumar Choudhary are the super stars of the contemporary Indian English poetic schools that have been moulding the masses with their magnificent works for the saving grace on this land laden with duffers. His Shakespearean phrases, Spenserian sensuousness and Wordsworthean poetic doctrines made Choudhary the guardian angel of the creative grove amidst the masses in general and the poetic community in particular. The overwhelming Keatsean fragrance reserves for him a permanent berth of Indian Keats in Indian English poetry. His racy style that is called Arbindian by the celebrated critic Shujaat Hussain makes him a superstar amidst the literary stars. Arbindonean Racy Style and Arbindonean Sonnets have made him the darling of the literary community across the globe. Prof. NDR Chandra advocates his poetic passage in Contemporary Vibes and opines, “He has been honoured with a number of titles – Indian Keats, Phrasal King, Quatrain King, Indian sonneteer, Poets’ poet, bard, poet of the soul, editor of the editors, poet of the paupers and many others that speaks volumes about his charismatic personality.”

His thousands of poems, fifty interviews published in Malta, Romania and Poetcrit, Contemporary Vibes, VOK, Notions, Literati, All Round, Mandakini, Kafla-Intercontinental, Indian Ruminations, Research Vistas, Literary Jewels, Research Scholar, Radiance, New Academia, Bizz Buzz and a number of other literary journals and anthologies in India and abroad, more than one

hundred critical comments ,several national and foreign awards in America, China and India, inclusion in Cambridge Dictionary of English Writers, England, World Poetry Almanac, Mongolia and English Writings in India, Arbindonean Sonnets and Arbindonean Racy Style are not less fragrant than any other poetic flowers in India and abroad .

Excerpts:

Q1. LRB: Please comment on Arbindonean racy style.

AKC: Prof. NDR Chandra, Prof. SC Dwivedi, Prof. Mahendra Bhatnagar, poet B.K. Dubey, poet Mahashweta Chaturvedi and many others have appreciated this ideal model of versification with full-throated ease in a number of their critical comments and reviews and called it Arbindonean racy style.

The racy style consists of the ascending alphabetical word-order in a stanza or in a quatrain. Here lies a rhymed quatrain:

The enigma, facetiae and genre
Heal the infidel's conjecture
That enrich the oeuvre
Of the father-figure.

(The Poet, 2011:3)

One can find the sequence of the alphabet – e, f, g, h and i in a quatrain besides the rhymed quatrains.

Misery is the nunnery
Of the osculatory
For the plenary
Of the success story.

(Melody, 2009: 7)

Here lies the sequence of m (misery), n (nunnery), o (osculatory), and p (plenary) in a quatrain .This is the explored way of

versification I have propounded first of all in the history of English poetry.

Q2. LRB: Why have you been called an Indian sonneteer? What are the unique features of Arbindonean sonnets?

AKC : My sonnets consist of seven rhymed couplets quite different from Spenserian or Shakespearean or Miltonic sonnets. Secondly, it has its Indian poetic essence deeply rooted in Indian soil. Thirdly, native words are also found besides colloquial and compound words. Fourthly, its unique versification and rhyme pattern make me an Indian sonneteer in English literature. All sonnets focus only on Indian literary legends and their literary contents.

Q3. LRB: Why are you called a poet of the paupers? What are the reasons?

AKC : The paupers deserve appreciation rather than humiliation, honour rather than dishonour, and justice rather than injustice in our society because strife of life is better than ever. They sacrifice more and consume less for the sake of the society. So long the sacrifices do not get social recognition, there will never be advancement in the society. Here lies an example, in honor of the unnoticed voices of the society.

Paupers are not the time's fool
But time's best jewels.

(My Songs, 2008: 26)

Q4. LRB: What are your unique poetic features that make you Champion of the champions?

AKC: The innovative racy style, romance with the words, phrases and proverbs, exploration of new and compound words, uses of native and colloquial words, rhymed quatrains, Indianized version of sonnets, blending of Indian with the western

mythology, spiritual capital idea and, above all, cultural prosperity of India are the sublime poetic qualities that make me champion of the champions so far Indian English poetry is concerned.

Q5. LRB: Prof. Bhatnagar has called you Poet of the poets. Do you agree with this title? How can you justify it?

AKC: Prof. Bhatnagar can give you an exact answer to your question because he has used this term for my sake. However, I realize that even global poet B.M. Jackson was forced to have consultations with dictionary while reviewing my poetry books. Prof. P. V. Laxmi Prasad also opines such views in one of his reviews in C.V, Chandigarh due to abundance of proverbial, phrasal, compound and explored words, mythical and medieval characters and innovative racy style.

Q6. LRB: Since when have you been writing poems in English? Can you list all your anthologies?

AKC: My poetry collections are as follows:

1. Eternal Voices (2007),
2. University Voices (2008),
3. My Songs (2008),
4. Melody (2009),
5. Nature Poems (2010),
6. Love Poems (2010),
7. Love (2011),
8. Nature (2011),
9. The Poet (2011),
10. Leader (Press),
11. Haiku (Press), and
12. Majuli (Press)

Editor of the Journals:

1. Kohinoor (ISSN 0973-6395), and
2. Ayush (ISSN 0974-8075)

Q7. LRB: Can I classify you as one from the Aurobindonean school of poetry writings?

AKC: My poems spread essence of cultural beauty of India that is rooted in Indian soil. So you can call me a pupil of the Aurobindonean School of poetry. The burning social issues also flourish across my poetic groves.

Q8. LRB: Do you agree that Indian poetry in English is a study in minor voices?

AKC: It is a bitter truth that all native languages, including English are a study in minor voices. Being second language, English has been taught, read and discussed among the elite classes of all regions and native speakers. Hence it will be injustice to call English the language of minor voices.

Q9. LRB: What is that endows you with Indianness?

AKC: The cultural beauty of India that has been blooming from the past five thousand years captivates my heart and gives me enough mental foods to proceed on poetic line for spiritual sanctity .

Q10. LRB: Many critics call you a bard in English poetry. How do you react?

AKC: I do not think I deserve for such a great honor in English literature . However I thank those critics who assess my works in the affirmative.

Q11. LRB: B.M. Jackson and other poets and critics are forced to consult the dictionary while reviewing your works. Is it not your negative point that will discourage the common readers ?

AKC: River-flow should never be interrupted. If it is interrupted, it loses its original route, strength and fragrance. So is the case with me too. Some of the western mythical, native, historical, compound, explored words and uses of various figures of speech force the common readers for consultation with dictionary. Should I compromise with the common readers for cheap popularity? Should I kill my spirit for them? Should not my spirit flow as naturally as the leaves to a tree? Should not they upgrade themselves for spiritual bliss?

Q12. LRB: Critics call you the pride of the East. How do you feel?

AKC: First of all I thank all those critics who go through my works and comment, may be either. Secondly, I feel myself as a poet rather than a pride of the east. Thirdly, critics are at liberty to go pros and cons of any works and pass comments as per their findings.

Q13.LRB: What do you find the role of the science for the florescence of the poetic iridescence?

AKC: Science is itself a way of creation that is based on truths and logics . It quenches our earthly thrusts and meets our daily dozens .Poetry , though itself a creative approach, is the voice of the sensitive soul that bursts forth for the florescence of the humanity. Science is earthly and poetry is celestial. Science enhances mechanization of the human beings while poetry enhances celestial wisdom for the human beings. Science quenches our physical thirst while poetry quenches our spiritual thirst. Science is earthy and poetry is ariel. It is Science that increases the intensity of mechanization of a man of modern generation.

Q 14.LRB: Poet P.K. Majumder has called you a master craftsman of rhymed verses. Comment a bit.

AKC: Most of my verses are rhymed quatrains though I use another forms too. The abundance of the rhymed verses I imply across

my poetic groves overwhelms the poetry lovers due to its classical models of versification used long ago by the bards in English poetry. As a result there are a number of critics who use such words for my sake in Indian English poetry.

Q15.LRB: What is the theory of your poetry? What is its purpose?

AKC: The function of my poetic life is to explore new vistas of knowledge, to create literary sensations and, above all, to unlock nature's lock for the ecological order on this earth. To me earthly incense is worse than the divine curse. To change is the wage of the sage. To pay the debt of nature is the gravure of the golden fire. Innovation, creation, new notion and change are the poetic potion of my life.

Q16.LRB: Do you compose verses for the readers or for yourself? Do you keep in mind the role of the critics?

AKC: Versification is the need of the inner urges I feel time and again. My verse is the voice of my soul. Social hypocrisy, ecological disorder and ongoing immorality fire my poetic passion from time to time. So far as the role of the critics is concerned, I have nothing to do with these things. The critics are the mosquitoes who suck our blood for livelihood, though they are not our enemies. However Samuel Johnson's criticism is better than most of the creative works in English literature.

Q17.LRB: The critics inhale Keatsean flavor from your writings. Comment if any.

AKC: Keats' sensuousness, imagery, love for nature and beauty, mythical, melancholy, medieval elements and pictorial elements and various other forms of rhymes predominate enchantingly all through my poetic groves. As a result, the critics inhale Keatsean flavour across my writings.

Q18. LRB: Suggestion for peeping poets if any.

AKC: Poetic world is a crown of thorns rather than a bed of roses where poets have to wander in the tavern of visions time and again. Be honest, be voracious reader, ignore those earthly people who believe in carpe diem theory. Your poetic passion will open the lock of success sooner or later without fail.