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# Indianess in Nissim Ezekiel's Select Poem Select Work – Critical Analysis

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**ABSTRACT :** The paper analysis Indianess is an important element and major theme in the poetry's of Nissim Ezekiel. His indianess lies in the commitment of to this country and in his earnest and sincere endeavour to bring about some improvement in the condition of life through poetry.

**KEYWORDS:** cultural erasure, the nature of love, spiritual liberation

## I. INTRODUCTION

Ezekiel's poetry emerged during a time when Indian English literature was still in its early stages of development. He played a significant role in establishing Indian poetry in English as a legitimate and distinct voice within the larger Indian literary landscape. His poetry characterised by its wit irony and colloquial language, tackled a wide range of themes including the complexities of urban life, cultural clashes personal relationships and the struggle of identity. Yet he is accepted as main poet in the history of English poetry. He is first Indian poet to express modern Indian sensibility in a modern idiom. Indianess is an important element and a major theme in the poetry of Nissim Ezekiel. His indianess lies in the country and in his earnest and sincere endeavour to bring about the commitment to this some improvement in the conditions of life in this country through his poetry and we should appreciate this Jewish identification with this country to the extent of wanting to bring about certain improvements in the depressing, degrading and discusting conditions of life in the country as represented by the metropolitan city of Bombay. The desire to see better conditions of life in this country connotes a certain degree of patriotism and is Ezekiel's case it certainly shows his love for the country adoption.

The life of Nissim Ezekiel : Nissim Ezekiel was born on December 16, 1924 in Bombay, India led an eventful and influential life as a poet, critic, professor and playwright.

Early life and education- He was born into a Jewish Indian family in Mumbai. He completed his education at St. Xavier's college and later earned a Master's degree in English literature from the university of Mumbai.

Literary career- Ezekiel emerged as a significant figure in the Indian English literary scene during the 1950 – 1960s. He published several poetry collections, 'A time to change' (1952), 'The unfinished man' (1960), and 'Hymns in darkness' (1965). His poetry showed his wit, irony and keen observations of everyday life making him a celebrated poet.

Awards and recognitions- Ezekiel's contributions to Indian literature were widely recognised. He received Sahitya akademi award in 1983

Themes present in the poem : Nissim Ezekiel's poem "Minority" explores the theme of identity and the struggle of being a minority in a society that often marginalizes or overlooks those who do not conform to the dominant culture or majority. The poem highlights the challenges faced by individuals who find themselves outside the mainstream, particularly in terms of their culture, language, and beliefs.

One aspect of the theme of identity in

"Minority" is the tension between the individual's desire to assert their own unique identity and the pressure to assimilate or conform to the dominant culture.

Ezekiel portrays the struggle faced by minorities who are torn between preserving their distinct heritage and adopting the practices and values of the majority in order to fit in. This conflict is expressed through the imagery of "cutting off a nose" and "getting oneself whitened" as metaphorical acts of self-mutilation and cultural erasure.



The poem also explores the sense of alienation and isolation experienced by minorities. The speaker in the poem laments their marginalization and the difficulty of finding a place belonging on the society that often disregards their presence.

The poem "The Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher" by Nissim Ezekiel explores several themes, including the role of the artist, the nature of love,

**The Role of the Artist:** The poem delves into the complexities of the artistic process and the challenges faced by the poet and the lover. It highlights the artist's struggle to balance the demands of their creative pursuits with the realities of everyday life. The poet in the poem is torn between his desire for artistic expression and his responsibilities as a husband and father.

**Love and Relationships:** The theme of love is central to the poem, as the poet and the lover both seek fulfillment and meaning through their relationships. However, their experiences of love are portrayed as fragmented and unfulfilled. The poet's love for his wife is overshadowed by his artistic ambitions, while the lover's pursuit of love seems to be futile and transient.

**Nature and Transcendence:** The birdwatcher aspect of the poem introduces the theme of nature and its potential for transcendence.

The poet finds solace and inspiration in observing birds, using them as a metaphor for freedom and spiritual liberation. The act of birdwatching becomes a means of escape and a way to transcend the limitations of his mundane existence.

Overall, the poem explores the tension and contradictions that arises from the pursuit of art, love, and meaning. It reflects on the challenges faced by individuals who strive for creative expression while grappling with the complexities of human relationships and the quest for transcendence.

**Highlight from the poems :** The poem reflects on the experiences of being part of a minority group in a dominant culture. It explores the challenges of negotiating one's identity within a larger society. The poem addresses the issues of marginalization and prejudice faced by minority communities. It emphasizes the complexity of cultural identity in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. The poem highlights the difficulty of language and communication for minority groups. It touches upon the alienation from one's mother tongue and the struggle of expressing oneself fully. The poem suggests the importance of self-acceptance and empowerment for individuals belonging to minority communities. It hints at the value of embracing one's identity and recognizing the strength of one's culture. These key points capture the central themes and ideas present in "Minority" by Nissim Ezekiel.

In the poem, the speaker assumes three distinct roles: poet, lover, and birdwatcher.

Each role represents a different facet of the speaker's personality and desires. The poet represents the creative and introspective side, seeking to capture the beauty of the world through words. The lover embodies the passionate and emotional aspect, yearning for love and connection. The birdwatcher symbolizes the observer and the desire for freedom and escape. Throughout the poem, the speaker finds solace and fulfillment by immersing himself in these roles. He uses his imagination to create vivid images and experiences, blurring the boundaries between the real and the imagined. This imaginative power allows him to transcend the mundane and find a sense of meaning and purpose in his life.

The key point of "Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher" lies in the transformative and liberating nature of the creative process. Through the act of writing, the speaker is able to escape the limitations of his immediate reality and access a deeper, more fulfilling existence. The poem underscores the significance of artistic expression as a means of self-discovery, personal growth, and finding a connection to the world at large.

These key points capture the ideas and theme of poet, lover, birdwatcher by Nissim Ezekiel.

**Conclusion :** In "Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher" and "Minority," Nissim Ezekiel showcases his remarkable poetic talent and keen observation of the human condition, as well as his exploration of cultural themes and identity.

In "Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher," Ezekiel presents a multi-layered exploration of human roles and identities. The poem delves into the transformative power of imagination, as the speaker finds solace and meaning by assuming the roles of poet, lover, and birdwatcher. Through his imaginative journey, Ezekiel emphasizes the significance of artistic expression as a means of self-discovery and personal growth. The poem celebrates the liberating potential of creativity and underscores its ability to transcend the limitations of reality, connecting individuals to a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them.

On the other hand in "Minority," Ezekiel addresses the theme of cultural identity and the struggles faced by marginalized communities. The poem delves into the complex feelings of alienation and cultural displacement experienced by the speaker, who belongs to a minority group. Ezekiel artfully captures the tension between the desire



to assimilate into the dominant culture and the longing to preserve one's own heritage .Through poignant imagery and introspective narration, Ezekiel highlights the challenges faced by those who find themselves on the periphery of societal norms.

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