SYNOPSIS

In the embattled postcolonial context, poetry attains an unmistakable political character. Far from being spiritualized reflection of human experience or predicament; it tends to attain an interventionist edge. The existentalist worries, the anxieties of alienation or sense of ennui do distress the contemporary Third World poet, but what engages his prime attention is the exploitation of the people by the dominant powers.

In the Indian context, protest is an essential impulse of creativity and one can go back to antiquity to unearth the trajectory of protest literature. However the primary frames of protest those emerge from within modern Indian language-literatures can be traced back to those available in medieval Bhakti Poetry. Protest in Indian context is a negotiated space; it is not an excuse to break free or violently turn upside down the social practices.

Contemporary Indian poets from the days of pre- to post-independent India derive their poetic metaphors from the conventional romantic, folkloric and mystical registers, but they pitch them in essentially subversive contexts. Nirala, while writing within the orbit of chhayavad grows suddenly progressive thus mixing the mystical with the ideological. Faiz, while retaining the feudal romantic Urdu register; manipulates the defunct idioms for generating poetry of progressive leanings. Pash, young Punjabi poet, who was killed in the prime of his youth, employs tropes from the Punjabi folk culture to articulate his protest against the capitalist order which gained maximum from the so called ‘Green Revolution’.

Without making an attempt to place these three poets in any hierarchical frame of one better than the other, the present study is an endeavor to map their distinct topographies of protest.