INDIA WRITES

A STORY OF LINGUISTIC AND LITERARY PLURALITY

UDAYA NARAYAN SINGH

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NATIONAL BOOK TRUST, INDIA

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FOREWORD

I had an interesting e-mail from a language enthusiast from Germany a few years ago, which said – "Some of my friends have learnt "Chinese", "Japanese" and "Korean" as they are greatly interested in those countries. I wish to learn "Indian", could you or your institute please help me?" Without dissuading her from learning a new language, I informed her that there is nothing called an "Indian"; rather, there are many "Indian languages", and I could certainly help if I knew which one she would like to learn. Many who try to explore the landscape of our languages further, learn that India writes in so many languages.

While there are a number of volumes on the histories of individual literature in India, from the history of Tamil (e.g., *Thamizh Literature Through the Ages* (1959) by C.R. Krishnamurti) or Bengali (*History of Bengali Literature* (1960) by Sukumar Sen) or Assamese Literature (*History of Assamese Literature* (1964) by Birinchi Kumar Baruah), or even *History of Indian Literature in English* (2003; Columbia Univ Press), tracing a productive engagement with English by the Indian authors in English, from Ram Mohan Ray to Arundhati Roy, there has been nothing like the two-volume *A History of Indian Literature* (1927) by Maurice Winternitz. The only work that has surpassed Winternitz in both depth and range is the account of Indian literary history in two

volumes written by Sisir Kumar Das with the help of 22 language editors, entitled *A History of Indian Literature: 1800-1910 : Western Impact, Indian Response* (1991) and *A History of Indian Literature 1911-1956: Struggle for Freedom: Triumph and Tragedy* (1995). But the last two volumes are for the researchers and specialists, and there is still an unfulfilled demand for a comprehensive introduction to the major written languages of India, told in an informative and lucid manner within a slim volume – a gap which this book tries to fill up.

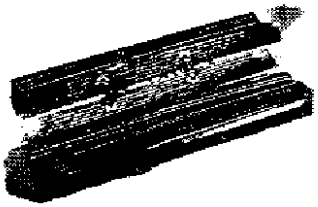
The opportunity came up as the Director, NBT approached me, perhaps as a linguist as well as a literary person to write a brief text that would be suitable for the commemorative publication for India's Guest of Honor presentation at the Frankfurt Book Fair, 2006. I was not sure if one could indeed write about 22 literary spaces within a few thousand words, but what followed in course of my reading and preparation of the narrative here became an independent book. I am thankful to Professor Bipan Chandra, Chairman, NBT & Ms. Nuzhat Hassan, Director, NBT, and to the Secretary (Education), Mr. Sudip Banerjee as well as to Dr. K. Satchidanandan, the noted Malayali poet and former Secretary, Sahitya Akademi for having contributed to the volume in many ways. If the volume serves the purpose of arousing the curiosity of those who wish to know about the writings in the "Indian" languages, I shall be happy. There are omissions and errors that have crept in as the text was prepared in a hurry – to meet an impossible deadline but I still think that this could be used as an introduction to the engagement of authors in India during the last three millennia.

Mysore
August 31, 2006

UDAYA NARAYAN SINGH

1

PLURAL VOICES



India writes in many languages and speaks in many more voices.

And yet, communication has never broken down in this sub-continent. She has been an example of picture perfect—a mixture of comprehension, compassion and conviction that she needs to be multiestic—a singular country with plural expressions.

India had been on this plurality square—on the cross-roads of language, literature, culture, and social practices, during the last few millennia, trying to negotiate its pathways by blending a number of seemingly opposite options—experimenting in speaking, celebrating, singing, dancing, living and performing —in all aspects of life. As a result, the nation-state called 'India' (or, *Bhârat* as in Hindi) has emerged as a unique cultural space that has absorbed numerous religious and philosophic ideas, different practices of life as well as countless number of speech varieties.

Writing came to India much earlier than many other civilizations – from the days of the Indus Valley Civilization, by over four thousand years ago, and the space has also witnessed the emergence of some of some great writing systems like the

Brâhmî and the *Kharosthî* – dating back to roughly 500 B.C.

Today, India is perhaps the largest base in the world of books, authors and publication houses.

India -- with about 15,000 publication houses, and a market with a $685 million annual turn over ranks very high in the publication of books—with at least 70,000 new titles published every year one-fourth of which are in English. There are approximately 600 million readers of books in India. Indian off shoring in the publishing vertical is slated to touch US $ 1.1 billion by 2010. India exports books and journals to over 80 countries.

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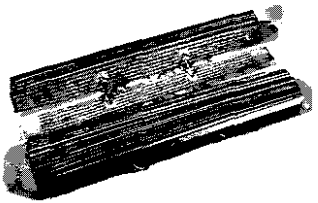
EARLY WRITING: QUEST FOR THE UNKNOWN



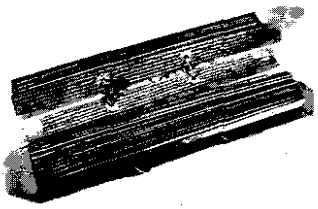
India had both sacred and profane traditions in its early literary texts, beginning from the *Veda*s dating back to two millenium B.C. The language used here is called the Vedic Sanskrit today, because it is the language used in the *Vedas* (the Hindu scriptures) – which derived from the root *vid* – "to know", and hence Veda would mean 'Knowledge'. This was a knowledge that came from the quest for the Unknown that triggered and sustained all activities around man. These texts demonstrated the earliest form of speech in India and were reflected in texts such as *Veda*s (*Rig*, *Sama*, *Yajur* and *Atharva-vedas*), the *Brahmanas*, and the *Upanishads* – the oldest preserved treatises from which the Indian "literary" traditions of verse have sprung. The earliest works were composed to be sung or recited, and were orally transmitted for many generations before being written down.

Among the earliest texts, the *Rig Veda* is considered the oldest with more than a thousand hymns, organized into ten *mandalas* or circles, of which the second through the seventh are the oldest and the tenth is the most recent.

In all ancient religious and textual traditions – the Hindu, the Buddhist as well as the Jain – it is the discovery of the relationship between the 'Self' and the 'Supreme Self' that dominated our concern. It has also been a journey to distinguish the 'Unreal' from the 'Real'. It is this quest for the 'Unknown' that also influenced our art and architecture.

3

SENTIMENTS AND SUGGESTION: *RASA* AND *DHWANI*



The Indian literary tradition demonstrated that early Indian creative writers interacted very closely with critical thinkers, and as a result a very rich interpretive tradition developed . The ancients excelled in a number of loiteary genres – beginning from lyric and epic poetry to story-telling and drama. While a lot of these early texts dabbled in the idea of the 'sacred', even the most revered texts like the *Vedas* had streaks of both in their body. The Western students of ancient Indian thought and writing, however, glorified only the sacred traditions. For instance, Mircea Eliade, the celebrated Romanian Indologist, identifies the sacred as the real, he states, "the sacred is a structure of human consciousness" (1969 i; *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion*, London: University of Chicago Press). He would argue more for a social construction of both the sacred and of reality. Yet the sacred is identified as the *source* of significance, meaning, power and being and its manifestations.

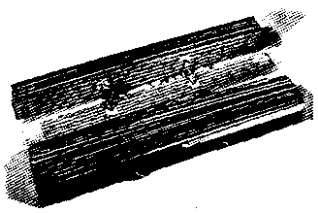
The early literary theoreticians could identify different sentiments being reflected in these writings, which have been

trend-setters in world literature in many ways.There are books and treatises for each of the nine *sentiments* of India, known as the *nava-rasa*s: from *the erotic(sringara)* to the twin sentiments of *humourous* and *pathetic*, known as *hasya* and *karuna*, touching upon the *wrathful*, the *terrifying* and the *heroic(raudra, bhayanaka, veera)* – all in the same vein, moving over to the *odious (bibhatsa)* and the *mysterious (atbhuta*), and ending in the *tranquil (shanta).*

The other major concept was that of *Dhwani (suggestion).*Bharata and Anandavardhana were the major exponents of the *rasa* and *dhwani* theories respectively. There were also others who contributed to poetics like Panini, the grammarian, Bhartruhari, the linguist and Kuntaka, Mammata and Bhamaha, the poeticians who looked at literature from the points of view of writing as well as writing. Some of their concepts are very close to the Western theories of meaning, suggestion, objective-correlatives and of reading and reception.

4

THE LINGUISTIC SPACE: *DEŚA*



The Indian space, as it exists today in truncated form in the South Asian sub-continent – after its independence in 1947, has been a new political entity. But India has, in all ages, been a concept – more true on the mental map than being a physical reality. There are references to *Bharatvarsha* even in the *Vishnupurana* and the concept is alive in poets like Shankardev of Assam, Amir *Khusro,* the Persian-Urdu poet of India and Kalidasa esp, his *Meghadootam.* India has also contributed to numerous ideas that form the basis of modern-day knowledge-based society.

India occupies about 2.4% of the world's land surface with a total land-area of 2,973,190 sq. kms, but houses 16% of the world's population (*India: A Country Study* by James Heitzman and Robert L. Worden eds. Federal Research Division; 1995).

According to one estimate, there are 1,652 "mother-tongues" in India – including 103 foreign mother tongues (Census 1961 & Nigam 1972: p. xv).

There are different theories about how many of these mother-tongues qualify to be described as independent languages. Even

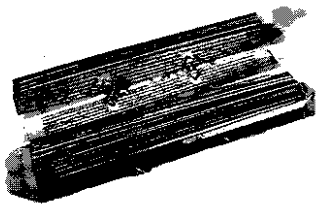
Sir George Grierson's twelve-volume *Linguistic Survey of India* (1903-1923) – material for which was collected in the last decade of the 19th century, had identified 179 languages and 544 dialects. One of the early Census reports also showed 188 languages and 49 dialects (1921 census).

Out of these mother-tongues, 184 (Census 1991) or at least, 112 (Census 1981 figure) had more than 10,000 speakers. There are other estimates that would put the number higher or lower; For instance, the encyclopaedic *People of India* series of the Anthropological Survey of India, identified 75 "major languages" out of a total of 325 languages used in Indian households. *Ethnologue,* too reports India as a home for 398 languages, including 387 living and 11 extinct languages. Most importantly, as early as in the1990s, India was reported to have 32 languages with one million or more speakers.

The *People of India* also reports that there are 25 writing systems in India that are in active use as in 1990s. The results of a 1989-survey titled '*The Written Languages of The World : A Survey of the Degree and Modes of Use (2. INDIA, Book 1, Constitutional Languages, Book 2, Non-Constitutional Languages)*' conducted by P. Padmanabha, B.P. Mahapatra, V.S. Verma, G.D. McConnell (Office of the Registrar General, India, Laval University Press) showed that there are at least 50 Indian languages in which writing and publishing are done in substantial quantity.

5

THE WRITING SYSTEMS



The Indus Valley Script

The Indus Valley Script was a product of the now well-known Indus Valley Civilization. The greater Indus region was home to the largest of the four ancient urban civilizations, others being the Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Chinese civilizations. Most of its ruins remain to be fully excavated and studied, as nothing was known about this civilization until 1920s. What is more, the ancient Indus script has not yet been deciphered – although there have been many claims and counter-claims.

Many questions about the Indus people who created this highly complex culture remain unanswered, but different archaeological studies have added to our understanding of this period. From about 2600 B.C.E. to 1700 B.C.E. a vast number of settlements were built on the banks of the Indus River and surrounding areas. They covered almost 1.25 million kms of land lying in Afghanistan, Pakistan and north-western India.

The name 'Indus Valley Civilization' could be misleading, as some sites have been found far away from the Indus river. The best-known sites of this civilization included Harappa – in the Punjab

Province, Pakistan, on an old bed of the River Ravi, and Mohanjo Daro in Sindh, Pakistan.

The cities of the Indus Valley Civilization were well-organised, solidly built out of brick and stone. Their drainage systems, wells and water storage systems were the most sophisticated in the ancient world. They also developed systems of weights and trade. They made jewellery and toys for children. The structures and objects which survive tell us a lot about the people who lived and worked in these cities long ago.

The sites with samples of Indus Valley Script are many – about 1000 settlements extending all over modern Pakistan, and parts of India and Afghanistan. But the main corpus of writing includes 2,000 inscribed brief seals and tablets of 6 to 26 symbols none of which has still been deciphered.

Asko Parpola and his team from the University of Helsinki had concluded that the Indus sign system represented an ancient Dravidian language. Their "decipherments" were added on by some Indian scholars like Iravatham Mahadevan. They were based on the fish sign and old Tamil words for heavenly bodies that seemed to fit (to the layman, again) very nicely with words designating Venus, Saturn, the Pleaides, and other astral entities. But scholars like Gregory Possehl (University of Pennsylvania) do not accept Parpola's interpretations. Something as clear as a definitive Rosetta stone for the ancient Indus language seems still to elude archaeologists.

Nonetheless the discovery in the spring of 2006 of Indus signs on a hand-axe in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu could increase the probability that the ancient Indus signs are related to the Dravidian language family. Until this apparent discovery, there was no clear physical evidence for such a link.

There are several competing theories about the language which the Indus script represents. But it appears that there was a strong multi-racial and multi-lingual community at that time, which has further contributed to the difficulties in decipherment.

The *Brâhmî* Script

There were many other systems of writing but none had as far reaching effect as the Brâhmî script. George Bühler in his 1895-98 work, entitled *Sitzungsberichte der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien, (Philologisch-historische Classe* 132, no.5, 1895. 2nd revised ed.: Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1898; Rept Varanasi, 1963) had conjectured that one of the earliest writing systems in India, the *Brâhmî* script had perhaps originated as far back as in the 8th Century B.C.E.

Although Indian writing systems number at least 25 in a recent survey, the major scripts are 14, out of which 12 originated from the *Brâhmî*. Like the Greek alphabet, it had many local variants and gave rise to many Asian scripts – Burmese, Thai, Tibetan, etc. Emperor Asoka inscribed his laws as well as Lord Buddha's teachings onto columns in Brahmi.

Some trace *Brâhmî* to Indus Script. But the Harappan ended by 1900 B.C.E & the first Brahmi and Kharoshthi inscriptions date to roughly 500 B.C.E. It is difficult to explain the gap.

Brahmi is a "syllabic alphabet", meaning that each character carries a consonant plus a neutral vowel "a", like Old Persian, but unlike it, Brâhmî uses the same consonant with extra strokes to combine with different vowels.

Bühler argued for a Phoenician script, although some other specialists like Diringer thought of an Aramaic origin of Brâhmî. There are controversies as to whether one should accept what the studies of Fussman, von Hinüber, and Falk concluded, namely that this script was only datable from the time of Ashoka, or whether – as many Indian epigraphists argued – its dates could be pushed back much further, because it is difficult to believe that the prosperous empires, notably that of the Nandas, which emerged centuries before the establishment of the Mauryan dynasty (in around 320 B.C.E) with their legendary riches, and the remarkable intellectual and cultural tradition following the time of the Buddha and Mahâvîra, were completely without literacy.

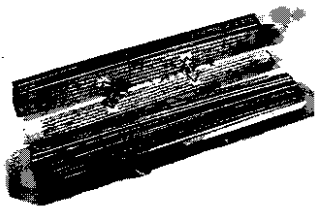
The *Kharosthî* Script

The *Kharosthi* Script was almost contemporary with the Brâhmî, and it appeared by c.3rd B.C.E. in north Pakistan and east Afghanistan. Some examples of Kharosthi are also found in India.

Kharosthi was used primarily for the Prakrit dialect of Gandhari. In structure and sequence, Kharosthi and Brâhmî are similar, except that Brâhmî had different signs for different initial vowels, but it used the same marks that change vowels in Consonant-Vowel combinations, and while Brâhmî had long and short vowel signs, Kharosthi had only one. Kharosthi Script fell out of use by the 3rd or 4th century A.D.

6

THE GEO-POLITICAL SPACE



India houses about 1.1 billion people with a population growth rate of 1.6% a year. It has the world's 12th largest economy—and the third largest in Asia behind Japan and China—with total GDP of around $691 billion. Although about two-thirds of Indians depend on agriculture, the services, industry and agriculture sectors account for 50.8%, 27.2%, and 22.0% of GDP respectively.

As per Census 2001 statistics, India is administratively organized into 35 entities, each as big as many independent nations. There are 28 States and seven Union Territories, including Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Lakshadweep, Pondicherry, and the National Capital Territory of Delhi.

After India gained independence in 1947, it was suggested that the newly independent nation should have a federal system, composed of a limited number of states. The basis of their formation was to be linguistic – a region with one major language comprises one state. Thus, Prime Minister Nehru appointed the States Reorganization Commission (SRC) in August 1953, with Justice Fazi Ali, K.M. Panikkar and Hridaynath Kunzru as members, to

examine 'objectively and dispassionately' the entire question of the reorganization of the states of the union. Finally, the States Reorganization Act was passed by the Indian parliament in November 1956, and it provided for 14 states and 6 centrally administered territories[1]. Some states were created from parts of others to unite members of a language group, as the whole approach was based on the linguistic principle. Thus in 1956, the government reduced the number of states from a total of 27 to 14. Even before the act was passed, there were already strong demands coming from those linguistic groups that believed that they should have different states. Later, the state of Bombay was segmented into two large states – one each for Gujarati and Marathi speech communities. Again, in November 1966, two states were formed of one earlier state, Punjab. One remained the state of Punjab, where the majority spoke Punjabi and the other was called Haryana, where the majority spoke a variety of Hindi. Similar reorganizations took place in the south of India too, where the Kannada speakers found a state of their own – Karnataka, the Telugu population had the state of Andhra Pradesh and the Malayalam speakers, the state of Kerala.

Thus the Indian states – initially divided on the linguistic principle – now include the following: Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.

Each Indian state or union territory has under it divisions or units at several sub-levels. At the first layer, these states and union territories are divided into 593 Districts – which are further sub-divided into 5,564 sub-districts – known under different names: *Tehsils* or *talukas*, *Mandals* (in Andhra Pradesh), *Circles, C.D.*

1 www.indiansaga.info/history/postindependence/reorganization.html

Block (in Bihar, Tripura, Meghalaya, West Bengal and Jharkhand), *R.D. Block* (in Mizoram), *Commune Panchayats* (in Pondicherry), *Sub-divisions* (in Arunachal Pradesh and Lakshadweep), and even *Police Stations* (in Orissa).

Currently, India has 51 Cities, 384 Urban Agglomerates and 5,161 Towns (2,843 in 1951) in India. Of the total urban dwellers, about 138 million people, or 16 percent, lived in only 299 urban agglomerations (Census 1991).

Nearly 26.1% of the total population of the country live in the urban areas which have shown a phenomenal population explosion – from 28.85 million in 1901 to 159.46 million in 1981 and 217 million in 1991. However, only 24 metropolitan cities account for 51 percent of India's total population, with Bombay and Calcutta leading at 12.6 million and 10.9 million, respectively.

Each Indian state also happens to be pluri-cultural, besides showing a great degree of multilingualism as the following table would show:

Set	*States*	*Major Language*	*Other Languages with Significant Population*
1	2	3	4
A.	Kerala	Malayalam (96.6%)	Tamil, Kannada
	Punjab	Punjabi (92.2%)	Hindi, Urdu
	Gujarat	Gujarati (91.5%)	Hindi, Sindhi
	Haryana	Hindi (91.0%)	Punjabi, Urdu
	U.P.	Hindi (90.1%)	Urdu, Punjabi
	Rajasthan	Hindi (89.6%)	Bhili, Urdu
	H.P.	Hindi (88.9%)	Punjabi, Kinnauri
	Tamil Nadu	Tamil (86.7%)	Telugu, Kannada
	West Bengal	Bangla (86.0%)	Hindi, Urdu
	A.P.	Telugu (84.8%)	Urdu, Hindi
B.	M.P.	Hindi (85.6%)	Bhili, Gondi
	Bihar	Hindi (80.9%)	Urdu, Santali
	Orissa	Oriya (82.8%)	Hindi, Telugu
	Mizoram	Lushai (75.1%)	Bangla, Lakher
	Maharashtra	Marathi (73.3%)	Hindi,Urdu

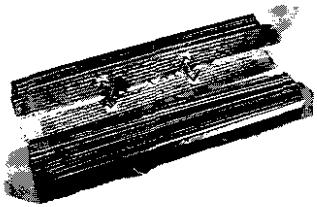
1	2	3	4
C.	Goa	Konkani (51.5%)	Marathi, Kannada
	Meghalaya	Khasi (49.5%)	Garo, Bangla
	Tripura	Bangla (68.9%)	Tripuri, Hindi
	Karnataka	Kannada (66.2%)	Urdu, Telugu
D.	Sikkim	Nepali (63.1%)	Bhotia, Lepcha
	Manipur	Manipuri (60.4%)	Thadou, Tangkhul
	Assam	Assamese (57.8%)	Bangla, Boro
E.	Arunachal	Nissi (19.9%)	Nepali,Bangla
	Nagaland	Ao (14.0%)	Sema, Konyak

As can be seen, although the states are organised according to languages, each state has speakers of minority languages. In 1951, besides the figures of 14 languages recognised in the Indian Constitution, we find 23 major tribal languages and 24 minority languages, each with over 100,000 speakers, with 722 other languages whose speakers numbered less. As we look beyond 1951, the number of speakers of minority languages varied greatly from state to state. For example, in Tripura, over 31% speak minority languages, but in Kerala the figure is only 3.4%. Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh (the biggest groups being 14.4% and 19.9%, respectively) have no majority language.

Even when it is the case that about 80 percent of all Indians – nearly 750 million (1995 estimates) – speak one or other major Indian language, and Hindi is understood by close to 60%, there are still many other languages with a long literary history, grammatical and lexicographical tradition and rich literary heritage, still in use in all modern means of communication. As a result, although the official language of India is Hindi, there is always a hidden tussle or even open confrontation between supporters and detractors of Hindi as an official language. But most people look for the different roles Hindi and English vis-à-vis the strong regional languages play today and how an alternative link between the Indian states develops conjoining all states to make it a Union.

7

THE LINGUISTIC RECOGNITION



As of today, the Indian constitution recognizes 22 major languages of India in what is known as "the 8th Schedule" of the Constitution. They also happen to be the major literary languages in India, with a considerable volume of writing in them. They include, besides Sanskrit, the following 21 modern Indian languages: Assamese, Bangla, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kashmiri, Kannada, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Santali, Sindhi, and Urdu.

Originally, only 14 languages were included in the 8th Schedule of the Indian constitution. Bodo, Dogri, Konkani, Maithili, Manipuri, Nepali, Santali and Sindhi were recognized later.

The first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had made this comment about the recognition of languages: 'The makers of our Constitution were wise in laying down that all the 13 or 14 languages were to be national languages. There is no question of anyone language being more a national language than the others...' (Kumaramangalam 1965).

The languages listed in this Schedule had acquired different

names at different stages. They were described as '*national languages*' in the proposal of the Congress party before independence. The original aim of naming some languages in the Constitution was to come up with a list of languages to be developed for administration as well as medium of science and technology in independent India. What is important is to appreciate that by 1960s, 87.13% of Indians spoke 14-odd languages already included in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution. 1961 census results published a few years later show this figure to be 91%, but by 1981 census, the coverage was 95.81%. After a number of other languages were added to the 8th Schedule through constitutional amendments to reflect the sentiments of some major literary languages, or languages of great functionality in some regions, the eighth schedule today covers even larger segments of our population.

The Minorities Commission Report and The Official Language Resolution (3) of 1968 considered languages listed in the Schedule as *major languages* of the country. The 'Programme of Action' document 1992 on National Policy on Education, 1986, considered them as *Modem Indian Languages.*

Depending on the official contexts they were identified as *Scheduled languages.* Although there were 176 Tribal (*'Adivasi'*) languages as of 1949, it was only much later that some of them like Bodo and Santhali found place in this schedule.

The Constituent Assembly on September 12, 1949 had taken up the draft of Part XIV –A of the Constitution of language for discussion. There were, however, no discussions in the Constituent Assembly on the criteria adopted for inclusion of languages in the Eighth Schedule. These drafts discussed while the Constitution was being created had no mention of English, although it was a part of the congress party draft.

Having recognized the importance of English as an instrument of knowledge-dissemination, commerce as well as the maintenance of international relations, a provision was added to the Article 343 on 'Official language of the Union' – to extend the use of English

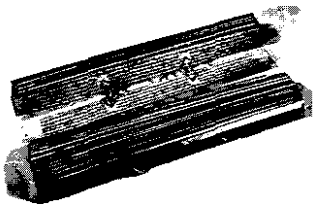
to " all the official purposes of the Union" even after "a period of fifteen years," with a proviso that "the President may, during the said period, by order authorize the use of the Hindi language in addition to the English language and of the Devanagari form of numerals for any of the official purposes of the Union".

Besides the Scheduled languages, the Indian Census did record 1,576 rationalized languages as well as 1,796 other mother-tongues.

The highest literary awards in the country are given only in 24 literary languages in India by the National Academy of Letters, called the '*Sahitya Akademi*', but newspapers and periodicals – 3,592 in number-are published in 35 Indian languages every year. There are only 69 to 72 languages that are taught in schools in India in some capacity, but again the radio network beams programmes in 146 languages and dialects.

8

THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION FOR MULTILINGUAL INDIA



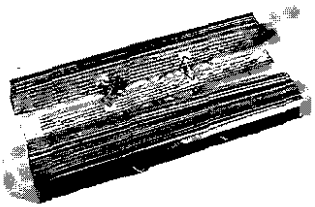
The Indian Constitution promotes linguistic diversity. There are many articles in it where provisions have been made to offer a kind of constitutional protection to the multilingual nature of India. For instance, the Article 120 is concerned with the language choice of debates in the Indian Parliament, where – besides Hindi and English, the main languages of debate – a member may be permitted to use his or her mother-tongue, and the Article 345 of the Indian Constitution states very clearly,"subject to the provisions of article 346 and 347, the Legislature of a State may be allowed to adopt *any one or more of the languages in use in the State* or Hindi as the language or languages to be used for all or any of the official purposes of that State:". Under Art. 347, the President may even direct a language to be "officially recognized throughout that State or any part thereof for such purposes as he may specify", provided a substantial population speak it. The most important support for the minor languages come from the 'Cultural and Educational Rights', and its seventh Amendment in 1956:"If any section of the citizens residing in the

territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same". Article 350 of the Constitution also allows these minority communities to express their grievances in their own languages. Besides, these smaller communities also are to be given educational opportunities in their mother tongue.

India thus allows equality of opportunity for all groups and sections of our linguistic communities, which acts as a guarantor and a levelling force. It is not at the cost of linguistic pluralism that our national languages must grow. Note that there has been a 'Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities' in India under Article 350B.

9

LANGUAGE FAMILIES IN INDIA



It is estimated that there have been great movements of people and races that made it possible for India to be the home for so many ethnic groups. The expansions of Europeoid peoples (probably Tocharians) possibly started around 3800 years ago. And, perhaps 1000 years (or more) earlier, Indo-European speakers from the oases south of the Urals, north of the Black Sea and western Kazakstan moved in western and eastern directions, and finally moved to the south, mixing with (presumably) Dravidian or the other original inhabitants of the South Asian region.

Languages spoken in the South Asian region belong to at least four major language families: Indo-European (most of which belong to its sub-branch Indo-Aryan), Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic, and Sino-Tibetan. Almost one third of our mother-tongues (574 languages) belong to the Indo-Aryan family of languages – spoken by 73.30% of Indians.

The Dravidian languages, 153 in number, form the second major linguistic group of the country (24.47 per cent).

Less than one per cent, 0.73 per cent, of the total population of the country speaks the languages belonging to the Tibeto-Burman

subfamily, including the lone language Khampti, which belongs to the Siamese-Chinese subfamily of the Sino-Tibetan/Tibeto-Chinese family. The number of Sino-Tibetan languages is 226.

The languages belonging to the Austro-Asiatic family of languages, 65 in number, account for a total number of 6.19 million speakers, and on top of it all, 530 are still recorded as unclassified languages.

In fact, South Asia has been recognized in the serious literature on historical linguistics as one entity, not only because of the movement and admixture of ethnic groups that we talked about, but also in terms of the genetic gradation of Asian people, alongside the linguistic classifications, which will make the north-south division evident (ref: *History and Geography of Human Genes, Chapt 4* by Menozzi, Piazza and Cavalli-Sforza).

It was the discovery of surprising similarities of structure and function that the South Asian languages developed because of a shared cultural space, vibrant and interactive over several millennia that prompted scholars like Murrey B. Emeneau to come up with concepts like '*India as a linguistic area*' (1958). This essential unity of divergent languages of India has made it possible to make Indian languages a very fertile ground for creative and critical minds.

The Indo-Aryan Languages

The largest chunk of languages and mother tongues belong to the Indo-Aryan sub-family of Indo-European languages. The immediate predecessor of Indo-Aryan happens to be Indo-Iranian, the oldest specimens of which are available in the *Zend-Avesta*.

Among the modern Indo-Aryan languages, Hindi and Bangla happen to be the most well-known languages internationally. Hindi of course has about 49 varieties, and is spread over a vast tract in North India.

Western Hindi is a Midland Indo-Aryan language, spoken in the Gangetic plain and in the region immediately to its north and south. Around it, on the three sides, are Panjabi, Gujarati and Rajasthani.

Eastern Hindi is spoken in Oudh and to its south. In the outer layer, we get languages such as Kashmiri, Lahnda, Sindhi, Gujarati and Marathi, in the northern and the western region, and Oriya, Maithili, Bengali and Assamese in the east.

The Dravidian Languages

The actual word *Dravidian* was first used by Robert A. Caldwell, who introduced the Sanskrit word *Dravida*. Among Dravidian languages, besides the four internationally known languages spread in many parts of the world, there are 26 Dravidian languages by the current count, of which 25 are spoken in India and one (Brahui) is spoken in Baluchistan on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Spoken by more than 300 million people in south Asia, the Dravidian languages owe their antique status and grandeur largely to the rich grammatical and linguistico-literary tradition of Classical Tamil[2].

Even other major Dravidian languages, namely, Malayalam, Kannada, and Telugu – possess independent scripts and literary histories dating from the pre-Christian or early Christian era.

The smaller Dravidian languages include Kolami-Naiki, Parji-Gadaba, Gondi, Konda, Manda-Kui, Kodagu, Toda-Kota, Tulu, etc.[3]

The 'Northern Group' is the smallest: Brahui, Malto and Kudukh. The Central Group of Dravidian languages seem to be most widespread: Gondi, Konda, Kui, Manda, Parji, Gadaba, Kolami, Pengo, Naiki, Kuvi and Telugu.

The 'Southern Group' includes Tulu, Kannada, Kodagu, Toda, Kota, Malayalam and Tamil.

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2 Annamalai, E. Review of Bh.Krishnamurti's 'The Dravidian Languages'; In *Frontline*, Volume 20, Issue 22, October 25 - November, 07, 2003

3 *The Dravidian Languages* b y Bhadriraju Krishnamurti; Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (South Asian edition), 2003

The Austric Family

The Austric family of languages is divided into two branches, Austroasiatic and Austronesian, the latter formerly called Malayo-Polynesian. They are spoken in India, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands.

The Austroasiatic branch has three sub-branches: Munda, Mon-Khmer, and Vietnamese-Muong, out of which the first one is located in India.

The Munda languages in India are spoken in the eastern and southern parts of India. The well-known Munda languages include the following: Santali, Mundri, Bhumij, Birhar, Ho, Tri, Korku, Khari, Juang, and Savara, etc. The Munda speakers are found mostly in the hills and jungles, while the plains and valleys have some pockets inhabited by people speaking these languages. There are accordingly some Aryanized tribes in northern India (like Cheros in Bihar and Chota Nagpur, and the Kherwars in the Mirzapur area) who have formerly belonged to the Munda stock.

The Tibeto-Burman Languages

The Tibeto-Burman family is a part of Sino-Tibetan languages, spread over a large area—from Tibet in the north to Burma in the south, and from the Ladakh part of the state of Jammu & Kashmir in the west to the Chinese provinces of Sze-chuen and Yunnan in the east.

Lepcha, Sikkimese, Garo, Bodo, Manipuri, and Naga are some of the better-known Tibeto-Burman languages. Besides a few that are close to Tibetan, the South Himalayan languages spoken from Lahul in the west (Himachal Pradesh) to Bhutan in the east are quite distinct.

Bodo and Tipra sub-groups are now well-known, and so are the Naga languages.

The Kuki-Chin languages as well as Lushai and Manipuri fall somewhere in between these extreme sub-families.

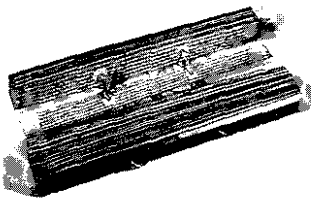
Other Languages

Several smaller languages that cannot easily fit into any of the above large families such as Burushaski in the North-West are language isolates. Then there are separate families[4] like Andamanese which would include quite a few diverse languages in the Andamans, and one could possibly also add six odd languages spoken in 22 odd Nicobar islands.

4 Mallikarjun, B. 2002. Mother tongues of India according to the 1961 census. *Languages of India*, Vol 5. August no.

10

INDIA: A KNOWLEDGE-BASED SOCIETY



India has always been a knowledge super-power, producing both knowledge that has universal relevance as well as culture-specific knowledge that makes it useful for the Indian society. This vast expanse in the domain of knowledge production did not come from the introduction of Western education in the country, as cultural contacts with other civilizations have happened here for many many centuries. However, it certainly achieved a new dimension when modern Western education as well as printing and publishing came to India during the recent centuries.

This knowledge production further exploded with the advent of mass media and literacy. A recent report on Indian Print media would make us wonder how one could gather so much of news and views to churn up 5,638 daily newspapers and 348 weeklies in 101 Indian languages (including in 82 non-scheduled tongues). India has also had the largest readership of printed materials. 275 of our daily newspapers are classified 'big', 954 'medium' and 3551 'small' newspapers. There are 2,507 newspapers and periodicals in Hindi alone – a language which is understood by more than half of India's population.

Translations and transfer of this huge pool of knowledge have not been taken up earnestly so far. It has mostly been a one-way traffic, with Western knowledge being made available in different Indian languages, because of which a wrong perception has gained ground in the recent times that India has only been a consumer of the Western world of creativity and knowledge. This is the wrong perception that is being challenged by the organizers of the Frankfurt Book Fair who are inviting the attention of the world to Indian writing and scholarship.

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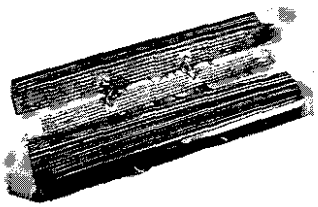
DIMENSIONS OF ANCIENT INDIAN WRITING



How it all began: The Sanskritic tradition

India has been on the move, carrying with her the baggage of plural existence and astonishing contradictions. *Time* is the only constant that has been present from the beginning of her journey, and yet *time* takes pride in defying the law of the constant. It watches a space that keeps changing its color, composition and moorings.

Most of us do not know where the journey would end – where the path would take us. We only remember the beginning. Perhaps not even that. Let me correct and say that we think we know where it all began, but the memory recalls only a point, or up to a point. Beyond that, deep into the past, it goes blank. Then parents and elders come forward to help us recall all that has gone by...

Much before the concept of literary genre came to exist in the Western literary theories, India had developed her own paradigms of literary classification and established traditions of 'long narratives', 'short tales', 'drama', 'epic' and 'lyric poetry' as well as treatises that bore evidence of discursive prose of various kinds.

The contact with the West brought in and valorized new forms such as the 'novel' and 'short story' which by the 19th century had become an established tradition in Europe. The narratives that did not fit the European paradigm were marginalized by West-educated literary analysts, although Indian authors kept on experimenting with both forms and content, with no regimentation by India's literary academies.

Even if we do not look at the sacred texts, and concentrate on the profane, for the time being, the oldest treatises are a joy for the modern authors to learn from – in terms of originality, organizational structure as well as quality of expression. One example is the 2nd century BCE Sanskrit text, the *Natya Shastra*, said to have been composed by Bharata, the sage, with 36 chapters giving minute details of different aspects of music, dance, stage setting, dramatic poetry, costumes and make-up.

As M. Winternitz in his *A History of Indian Literature* (Vol. II, revised ed., 1933) would tell us, although the origin of Sanskrit poetry could be traced to the Vedic hymns, the real precursors to Sanskrit poetry were the two epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, the inexhaustible sources for generations of poets and playwrights who drew from these 'great poems', the '*maha-kavyas*'. As a work of art, the Sanskrit *Ramayana* has been a model which inspired all later poets. In general, literary canons of Sanskrit would perhaps attach greater importance to the form than to the content of poetry. In comparison, the Sanskrit *Mahabharata* was composed in simple undecorated verse form, as it was meant to be an '*itihasa*', or history. Let me hasten to add that these epics are not just texts in India now, but two traditions that includes several ancient, medieval and modern texts, oral, written, performed, painted and sculpted.

There were later poets like Ashvaghosha, who composed the *Buddha-charita* on the model of the Ramayana. The ornate poetry of Kalidasa came many centuries later, and one often wondered if this long gap in poetic creativity could be explained. The great grammatical commentator, Patanjali in his *Mahabhashya* (2nd c.

BCE) referred to three '*Akhyayikas*' (or "romantic prose texts") and also two more poetic works, which were perhaps verse plays, none of which is available today. All we get are a few quotations in metrical forms in polished poetic diction. Of course, there are inscriptional evidence of poetry as in the Girnar inscriptions (150 A.D.) of Rudradaman-composed in a fully developed 'kavya' (poetic) style and so are the Allahabad inscriptions. There must have been a continued growth of poetic activity since the Ramayana days until the emergence of the poetry of Kalidasa, Bharavi and Magha . The strong points of these early texts were the rich metrical variety and the flexibility and felicity of language besides of course great insights into life and relationships.

The Variety in the Sanskritic tradition

Sanskrit had great variety in literary creativity. As it turns out, every conceivable genre was called '*kavya*' or 'poetry' in Sanskrit. There were '*mahakavyas*' (the epics) and '*charita-kavya*'s (depiction of lives of Gods or great men) as well as '*khanda-kavya*' or '*giti-kavya*', which were mostly sensuous portrayals of love and separation. Then, there were shorter poems on love, values, teachings, commentaries and devotion – altogether constituting a collection of one hundred poems, called the '*shatakas*' (meaning "hundreds"). In those days, the poetry also included the genre of dramas, called the '*natakas*' – most of which would be in verse, but there were also plain verses of praise or the panegyrical verses, known as '*prashastis*'. There were also the prayer hymns, called the '*stotras*' – which were also used for religious teachers. The genre of narratives was called the '*katha*' and those works that were composed partly in prose and partly in verse were also called the '*champu*'. The didactic verses were called the '*niti-kavyas*'. Finally, there were fictional 'romantic' prose, called the '*gadya-kavya*' – literally "the prose-poetry" – precursor to today's fiction. Thematically, the lyrics generally describe the beauty of women and of nature – blossoming trees and flowers, birds and animals, gushing rivers, and the lofty mountains. There were some

exceptions as the poetry of Yogeswara, for example, that showed deep social concern.

Besides Ashvaghosha's *Buddhacharita* and *Saundaranand* (depicting the love of Sundari and Nanda), dating back to the 1st century AD, Kalidasa's two works, *Raghuvamsha* and *Kumarasambhava* are highly rated epics. The poems are considered to be the specimens of Sanskrit *mahakavya*, which set a difficult standard for later poetry. Other prominent *mahakavyas* were: *Kiratarjuniya* of Bharavi based on the Mahabharata story of how Arjuna obtained the deadly weapon '*Pashupata*' from Lord Shiva, *Ravanavadha*, once again based on the Ramayana and composed as a compendium of examples of rules of Sanskrit grammar, *Janakiharana* of Kumaradasa, *Shishupalavadha* of Magha, and Sri Harsha's *Naishadhiyacharita,* portraying the fascinating story of Nala and Damayanti etc.

In the *Giti kavya* tradition, once again Kalidasa's *Meghaduta* (Cloud-messenger) is perhaps still the best. An exiled Yaksha sends a message of love through a cloud to his beloved dwelling far away in the Himalayas in this text. The popularity of it prompted hundreds of other poets to write such '*Duta-kavyas*' (messenger poems).

Other important lyrical works in Sanskrit include *Ghatakarpara* (Potshred), called after the author's name; *Chaurapanchashika* (Fifty stanzas by a thief) by the Kashmiri poet Bilhana and *Pavana-duta* (Wind-messenger) by Dhoyi. The most marvellous lyrics are, however, the *Amaru-shataka* (Hundred stanzas of Amaru), portraying lovers in different moods, and the three *shatakas* by Bhartrihari, called the *Shringara shataka* dealing with erotics, the *Niti-shataka* dealing with polity, and the *Vairagya-shataka,* or hundred poems on renunciation. The *Gita-Govinda* of Jayadeva of 13th century, depicting the Radha-Krishna love was another very popular text of high quality that marked the end of the glorious era of sanskrit literature.

In the class of 'dramatic poetry' (or '*Natakas*'), there is a flood of texts –mostly idealistic and romantic in character. Most of these are conventional.Kalidasa, Bhasa and Soodraka were

great dramatists famous respectively for *Sakuntalam*, *Urubhangam* and *Mricchakatikam* though they wrote other well known plays like *Vikramorvaseeyam* (Kalidasa) and *Karnabharam* (Bhasa).

In the prose-poetry tradition ('Gadya kavyas'), the best-known texts were: *Dashakumaracharita* by Dandin, *Vasavadatta* by Subandhu and *Harshacharita* and *Kadambari* by Banabhatta. Among them, *Kadambari* was recreated in numerous Indian languages later.

The *Champus* in Sanskrit are kavyas using a mixture of prose and verse, and the best-known ones are: *Nalachampu, Ramayanachampu* and *Bharata champu*. The historical poems like *Navasahasamkacharita, Vikramanka devacharita,* or Kalhana's *Rajatarangini;* ethical poems like *Moha Mudgara* and *Bhaminivilasa;* and stotra kavyas like Bana's *Chandishataka,* Mayura's *Surya shataka* or Adi Shankara's *Laharis* should also be mentioned here. The Sanskrit poetic tradition still continues in some parts of the country where new authors are emerging with modern Sanskrit texts in one or the other forms.

The Beginning of Fiction

It is often asked as to when and how the writing of fiction began in India. The general theory is that it originated because of the contact with the West. But Indian literature already had a highly developed story-telling tradition. From the literary point of view, the prose of the 'Akhyanas', such as the *Shunahshepakhyana* of the Aitareya-Brahmana and *Pururavorvashyupakhyana* of the *Shatapatha Brahmana* are some examples. With the commentaries, the full-fledged use of prose began, especially with Patanjali's *Mahabhashya*, which was by far the best. There are references to ancient prose works such as Vararuchi's *Charumari*, Somila's *Shudrakakatha* and Shripalitta's *Tarangavati*, etc., but most of it is unavailable now.

Another unique work of fiction was Dandin's *Dashakumaracharita* (7th c. AD) – an incomplete work with stories about only

eight princes. The life and temperament of the different strata of society are reflected in them, and like many modern-day novels, there are at times excessive sensuality there. Subandhu's *Vasavadatta* conforms to the characteristics of *Katha* (Story) described by Bhamaha, but there isvery little skill in the construction of the story.

Bana's *Kadambari* was a good specimen of *Katha*, as it was a work of fiction. The theme is fictitious. The title of the prose romance is after the name of its heroine, Kadambari. Bana occupies the highest position among the prose writers in Sanskrit and many writers tried to imitate him in both style and descriptions; For example, Dhanapalaa's *Tilaka-manjari,* which is about the love and union of Tilakamanjari, a Vidyadhara damsel, and Harivahana of Ayodhya, or Soddhala's work, *Udayasundarikatha* (1026-1050 AD), etc.

The second type of prose literature in Sanskrit is represented by popular tales, beginning with the *Brihatkatha,* a work of Gunadhya in Paishachi language, the original *Brihatkatha* (referred to in texts of 6th century onwards) not being available now. The metrical versions of *Brihatkatha* are three: *Brihatkathamanjari* of the Kashmiri, Kshemendra (11th c. AD), *Kathasarit sagara* of the Kashmiri, Somadeva (11th c. AD) and *Brihatkatha-shlokasangraha* of the Nepalese. Since the original *Brihatkatha* is lost, the first available collection of popular tales in prose is *Vetalapanchavimshati*.

Among other works worth mentioning, the following are important: First, *Simhasanadvatrimshika* or *Vikramacharita* was a collection of thirty-two stories, available in both the northern and the southern recensions, and in several versions showing its spread and popularity. Then there was the *Shukasaptati* by Chintamani Bhatta which, as the name indicates, is a collection of seventy entertaining stories narrated by a parrot. These texts had already laid the foundation of the profane tradition in India.

The Sacred and the Profane

Sanskrit literature had thus many faces, and the source materials were also varied. While there were religious and philosophical texts such as the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, and *Smritis*, and also historical or descriptive texts (called the '*puranas*', '*itihasas*'), and knowledge texts (works on administration, economics, social customs, manners, traditions, and beliefs, the best example being Kautilya's *Arthasastra*), there was also this rich and varied profane tradition; for instance, the highly developed science of erotics (Vatsyayana's'*Kamasastra*') or works on popular fields such as Astrology ('*Jyotisha*') and medicine (*Ashtangahridaya*). There were also secular and didactic lyrics.

The parallel profane tradition also included the *Prakrit* poetry, again very rich in a number of forms right from its classical stages. Anandavardhana, the master of Sanskrit poetics, referred to indigeneous genres such as *Khandakatha, Sakalakatha* and *Parikatha,* out of which the first two were found mainly in Prakrit. There were satires like *Dhurtakhyana* (by Haribhadrasuri), and also erotic poetry of the highest standard like *Gathasaptasati*, and texts such as *Vajjalagga,* again, another example of the finest love poetry. Texts such as *Gahakosha,* consisted of the popular songs, depicting an idea or a situation in very colourful and catching lines. As a secular text, the 700-odd verses in *Gahakosha* had unparalleled popularity. In Prakrit, *Setubandha* (author unknown) was an epic of excellence in technique and diction.

Although a lot of Prakrit literature was religious, there were many secular works, too. Among them, perhaps the best known was the *Panchatantra*—the didactic tales interspersed with poetic lines, still popular as idioms. The *Panchakhyana* of Purnabhadrasuri—originally a Jain text partly in Sanskrit and partly in Prakrit—has become a part of world literature.

The *Vaddhakaha* of Gunadhya is considered to be the main source of the Prakrit narrative literature. The Jain tradition enriched fiction and popular tales. But almost all traditions contributed to historical records. One of the most important stories, *Vasudevanidhi*

was composed by Sanghadasgani in about the 5th century AD. Such stories were composed in both prose and poetry, and the latter was invariably in Prakrit, full of wonderful imagery and didactic messages. Vimalasuri onwards, all Prakrit poets were fascinated by nature and its various seasons. Most Prakrit works are instances of wonderful romantic poetry, with a lot of delicate and subtle images and feelings.

The profane tradition of Prakrit poetry had a natural advantage vis-à-vis authors in Sanskrit, as the former was relatively free from the dominance of royalty and feudal lords, and also the control of the orthodox priests.

Although the word 'Pali' denotes the wide range of Middle Indian dialects which were generally used in India in an oral form as early as the middle of the first millenium BCE, yet it is the language of the Buddha's teachings and the Buddhist sacred texts. It is said that 'Pali' is a language of Tipitakas. The word Tipitaka means 'a threefold basket' consisting of the *Vinayapitaka,* the *Surfa pitaka* and the *Abhidhammapitaka.* Tipitaka is the last collection of Buddha's sermons since 300 BC.

Pali literature also had the sacred and the profane tendencies. Traditionally, there were two divisions: *Tipitaka* (Tripitaka) or the canonical, and *Anupitaka* or the non-canonical. The vast range of the Buddhist text with literary merit was the *Suttapitaka*: a great collection of five Nikayas (Digha, Majjhima, Samyutta, Anguttara and Khuddakanikaya). The *Kathavatthu* is a Buddhist book of debate on matters of theology, philosophy, cosmology and so on.

Then there were the *Jatakas* or stories of the former – birth of Buddha told in verses, included in the *Khuddakanikaya*, the commentary of which gives 550 stories in detail. *Thergatha* and *Therigatha* are the important books of *Khuddakanikaya*. Both are in verse form, *Thergatha* contains 1279 *gathas*, divided into twenty-one *nipatas*, but *Therigatha* consists of only 522 *gathas*. Winternitz thinks that descriptions of nature in *Thergatha* are the real gems of Indian lyric poetry. There is a long list of *kavyas* in Pali literature. *Jinalamkara* (1156 A.D) with 250 gathas (called

the '*chitrakavya*', or the word-picture) of *Buddharakshita* is an instance of ornate poetry.

The other varieties included the *Ekartha kavyas* and *Laghu-kavyas*. Among them *Pajjamadhu* by Buddhappiya is an elegant *shataka* (containing one hundred and four *gathas*) *kavya*, in praise of the Buddha. Other works like the *Buddhalamkara* (15th c.) by Shilavansha and *Lokadi-pasara* (14th c.) by the Burmese monk Medhankara were also important kavyas.

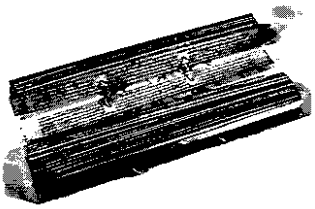
The Further Degenerate: The *Apabhramsha*

Like the stories and the dramas in Prakrit, the Apabhramsha fiction was also quite rich, but it was hardly in prose. *Suddayachariya* (Sadayavatsa kaha), which was possibly in prose like *Tarangavati* and *Kuvalayamala* in Prakrit, was perhaps an exception. Some prose passages in Apabhramsha were interspersed in Sanskrit plays, such as *Mrichchhakatika* of Shudraka (3rd-4th c. AD), where we find the language being used in the gambling den. Apabhramsha prose, which mostly occurred in such dialogues, was fairly simple. Similarly, in *Karpuramanjari* and other Sanskrit plays some Apabhramsha words were readily used, indicating the popularity of such varieties.

The popularity of the profane literature can be gauged from the fact that such writings in ancient India continued even as the modern Indian languages had begun making their presence felt, and the era of Sanskrit-Pali-Prakrit was generally over. The best instance of this is *Purushapariksha*, which was a collection of forty-four popular stories written by the Maithili poet Vidyapati in the 14th century, describing the qualities of men in a charming style. We also get *Katharatnakara* (17th century) by Hemavijaya Gani which was a collection of 258 short stories about fools, rogues and tricksters The work contains stanzas in Sanskrit, Prakrit and regional languages.

12

EMERGENCE OF MODERN INDIAN LITERARY CANONS



India has always been at the forefront of receiving new knowledge, novel ideas, and even newer media of expression. Persian enriched Indian languages as much as English did. India has always kept its windows wide open.

A time comes in the history of the literature of any productive language when a lot of what is "new" in the indigene is already "given" elsewhere. That is where the impact of the global comes. A lot of what is called new to any literary tradition may have come from outside – outside our known and familiar space, and out of our times. This could be global to us in both space and time dimensions, just as local is 'synchronic' to the locus at a particular moment. When Tagore 'reflected' Vidyapati as 'Bhanusingha' and wrote like him, or when Bana could not complete a text and his son continued to give it fruition, or when we had many poets (like Chandidasa) taking the same pen-name to compose immortal lyrics, it required them to make many adjustments, but each such move only enriched writing in India. But then, it does not always conform to the age-old canon in India; there were many voices of dissent in

all our languages, and they brought out equally great works. For instance, when Michael Madhusudan Dutt first broke fetters of all kinds in Bangla, giving up end-rhyming, conventional metrics, regular thematic treatment, status-quoist lexical coinage etc and then synthesized European and Indian trends to evolve his own inimitable diction which demanded (but failed to find in his life-time) a new yardstick for evaluation, it became a great literary movement initiated by a single author. That was how our authors could erase the line of demarcation between synchrony and diachrony, between the local and the global.

There are a number of trends that are easily ascribed to a direct impact of the Global and could be easily traceable as parallel developments in our locus, i.e. South Asia. This debate of how much of our literary expression should depend on the indigenous and how much should be global have always bothered us. Even before Madhusudan, we find critics like Ishwar Gupta (cf. his autobiographical treatise '*Kavijiivanii*') arguing that in the context of Bangla or Bengali poetry, he would rate spontaneity and employment of '*deshiiya*' or colloquial collocations and expressions much higher in poetic value than poetizing with pedantry – a poetic talent which could be acquired by making compromises with what was 'natural' and 'unmarked'. This position was further supported by other perceptive poet-critics[5] like Rangalal, who denied that one must severe one's umbilical chord to achieve modernity.

These are not isolated events. This was also the time Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was negotiating with himself to create a language of fiction with a high note – moving away from what he called '*Apara bhasha*' (the other tongue) and moving closer to the '*Sadhu Bhasha*' (the elite variety), but in the process blending the two significantly – so much so that the elites those days accused him of forcing the '*guru*' and the '*chandala*' (the master and the outcaste) sit on the same mat. He may have been on a wrong

5 such as Rangalal Bandyopadhyay who, on 13th May 1852, put forth his 'Proposal on Bengali poetry' (*Baangaalaa kabitaa biSayak prastaab*)

track by today's standards of analysis of how one must go about constructing a 'standard', but he was perhaps trying to respond to the global as he was bringing in the genre of popular fiction into the indigene. Once again, the impact was not limited to the borrowing of genres, patterns, themes, concerns and formats, but it went deeper into the psyche of the poet-author.

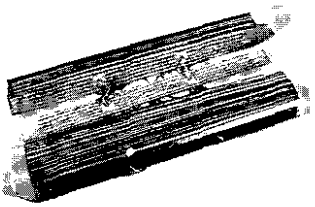
When we turn back on the trail of literary journey of our creative geniuses, we find Michael Madhusudan engaged in what could be called 'double articulation'. At the first level, he was seen bringing in new patterns, introducing new ways of constructing poetic texts (sonnet), and a rare concision. These are formal properties of poetry that existed elsewhere – in English or Sanskrit. But at the second and inner layer of patterning, Madhusudan brought in a whole new perspective that was 'foreign' to the Indian literary mind. This was when he re-interpreted the characters from our epics and legends, and glorified the anti-heroes, or the lesser-known women characters. In both form and function, here was an element of another culture intruding into and even subverting our construction of texts. It was a different matter that Michael was mistaken to have thought this to be a revolt against the paradigm of Sanskrit as he wrote in 1853 (to a friend) that "*it is my intention to throw off the fetters forged for us by a servile admiration of everything Sanskrit*". Regrettably, he begins these lines by saying, "*... Remember that I am writing for that portion of my countrymen who think as I think, whose minds have been more or less imbued with Western ideas and modes of thinking*".

In general, independent thinking seems to be the first casualty of moving a step towards globalization. It was the same Madhusudan but much mellowed down, who wrote in 1881 to Rajnarayan Bose: "*Some of my friends as soon as they see a drama of mine, begin to apply the canons of criticism that have been given forth by the masterpieces of William Shakespeare. They perhaps forget that I write under very different circumstances. Our social and moral developments are of a different character*".

Returning to Bankim, one notices that when he writes in English, his identity is not hidden. But when he writes in the kind of Bangla he devised to employ in his fiction (which is strictly absent in his texts of sarcasm like '*Kamalakanter Daphtar*' and is suitably modified in his essays), he is able to hide his identity, or create a multiple identity, as it were. It is this attitude of 'othering' that Michael or Bankim or Pearichand Mitra or Kaliprasanna Simha of Bengali like those pioneers in other languages like Masti of Kannada, C.V.Raman Pillai or Chantumenon of Malayalam or Fakir Mohan Senapati of Oriya or Premchand of Hindi adopted that many would say, defines the impact of the global on our indigenous tradition. This stand implies that we give the credit of the discovery of the other to the West.

13

ENGLISH IN INDIA



Emergence of Literary Cultivation in English

The beginning of the attempt to cultivate English in India among the educated elites perhaps began with the publication of Hicky's *Bengal Gazette,* India's earliest newspaper, which came out in 1780, and Cavaally Venkata Boriah's dissertation on the Jains which also appeared in 1801. There were, however, independent master prose writers in English earlier, such as was Raja Rammohun Roy (1774-1833), whose critical prose on the evil social practices laid the foundation of Indian English prose.

Indian Poetry in English slowly emerged as a distinct entity vis-à-vis the mainstream English poetry. The Indian English writers did have intimate associations with the 'English', but through their writing they often demonstrated that like any other native speakers of a language, they could do what they felt like with their linguistic variety. The first generation Indian English poets, Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu were aware of their constraints and they therefore dwelt on themes and expressive patterns they knew they would excel in. They knew that they could experiment with idioms and phrases, without offending the English, and their creativity would

be restricted mainly to the vocabulary and usage of Indian English, but never to its morpho-syntax. Aurobindo was more experimental and he had the courage to bend and mend the English language to make it the medium for his kind of substance.

The next best thing that happened to Indian English was the emergence of the young Henry Vivian Derozio (1807-31), who taught English literature, and initiated many interesting debates. A teacher of English at the Hindu College, Calcutta – himself half-Indian and half-Portuguese, Derozio was the father of Indian English poetry. Beginning from 1828, he inspired many to know more about the literary movements in Europe. His *Fakeer of Jungheera,* a metrical verse narrative (1828) heralded the beginning of Indian English poetry, although he did not live very long. His themes like social reform and free thinking were picked up by his followers. Kashiprasad Ghose *(The Shair and Other Poems)* and Guru Charan Dutt *(School Hours*, 1839) were his disciples. Rajnarain Dutt *(O Singer,* 1841) and Michael Madhusudan Dutt (*Captive Ladie*, 1849) came later. By the second half of the 19th century, with the emergence of the four Dutts (Govin Chunder Dutt, father of Toru Dutt; Hur Chunder Dutt (*Fugitive Pieces*, 1851); Greece (*Girish*) Chunder Dutt *(Cherry stones,* 1881) and Omesh Chunder Dutt), Indian English poetry flourished.

The inevitable backlash of this east-west contact could be seen in English prose. That was when we got 'The Study of History' (K.M. Bandhyopadhya), 'Condition of Hindu Women' (Mahesh Chandra Dev) and 'On Knowledge' (Gourmohan Das). The Bethune Society, founded in 1851, became a stage to present new ideas, and papers in English. Rajendra Lal Mitra and Nobin Kristo Bose and many others came forward. The prose caught on also in other cities like Poona, Bombay and Madras among the Indian thinkers with western education. But it was with the creative writers such as Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-1873) that this 'The Anglo-Saxon and the Hindu' (1854) combination produced interesting results. He and his friend, Rajnarain Bose exchanged numerous letters in English. A shift towards science, engineering

and medicine studies further opened the vast field of English prose to the Indian scholars. Madhusudan Gupta published his *London Pharmacopoeia* in 1849. The steady growth of Anglicisation and Westernisation also gave rise to spiritual experiments of Keshub Chunder Sen (1838-1884) and others who established the Brahmo Samaj. Keshub was a fine prose-writer as is evident from his speeches in England and India.

Indian Poetry in English

With Aru and Toru Dutt's *A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields* (1878), a different kind of journey began for the Indian authors who wanted to write serious literature in English. Toru Dutt's *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan* (1885) was yet another addition – so were D.L. Roy's *The Lyrics of India* (London, 1886), R.C. Dutt's *Lays of Ancient India* (London, 1894), Aurobindo's *Songs to Myrtilla* (1895), Sarojini Naidu's *The Golden Threshold* (1905), and *The Quest Eternal* (London, 1936) by Brajendranath Seal.

The beginning of the 20th century saw some poets who continued to write in the Romantic and Victorian styles: N.W. Pai, Menezes, N.V. Thadani, Nizamat Jung and a few others, although there were others like Meherjee, Vaswani, and Ananda Acharya who went ahead in the mystic tradition, under the influence of the medieval Bhakti poetry in Indian languages. There were some such as Harindranath Chattopadyaya (with his 20-odd collections of poems) who wrote within the Marxist n thematic framework. However, there were a few Indian English poets of this period who initiated a new trend, Georgianism, which included Robi Dutt, Joseph Furtado, P. Sheshadri, O.K. Chettur and S.K. Chettur.

But it was the second quarter of the twentieth century that yielded a richer harvest than the first with T.P. Kailasam, S.R. Dongerkery, A. K. Sett, V.N. Bhushan, R.R. Shreshta, M. Krishnamurti, Nolini Kanta Gupta, Dilip Kumar Roy, J. Krishnamurthi, Nirodbaran, Purohit Swamy and others. The

'Progressive' poetry of Saklatvala, Appal Swamy and Humayun Kabir is also worth mentioning.

1930s saw the further strengthening of modernists and symbolists. In this instance, P. Lal's publishing outfit – the *Writers Workshop* made a very major contribution in introducing some of the best poets. His own first book of poems, *Love's the First* (1962) apart, a number of major poets were published from here, including Monica Verma, Leslie de Noronha, Deb Kumar Das, Pradip Sen, etc. Meanwhile, Indian English found some new and strong voices in Nissim Ezekiel (*Sixty Poems*, 1953), Kamala Das (*Summer in Calcutta,* 1965), A.K. Ramanujan (*The Striders*, 1966). Pritish Nandy (*Of Gods and Olives*, 1967) They went on to publish many more collections of poems. But at this time, we also got strong poets such as Arun Kolatkar who bagged the Commonwealth Poetry Prize for his *Jejuri* (1976). There were others like Hemant Kulkarni who were also bilingual poets.

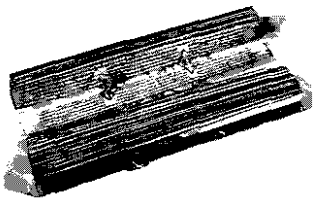
Today, there are numerous poets in the Indian English tradition who have had national and international recognition. To name only a few: Jayanta Mahapatra, Keki N. Daruwalla, Sujata Bhatt, Gieve Patel, Arun Kolatkar, Dilip Chitre, Arvind Mehrotra, Mukund R. Dave, Meena Alexander and Gauri Deshpande. There is a whole generation of younger voices too including Ranjit Hoskote, Rukmini Bhaya Nair, Vijay Nambisan, Jeet Tayil, Tabish Khair, C.P. Surendran and scores of others. Indian English poetry has established itself as a genre which has made significant contributions to literature read in the English-speaking world. During the last fifty years, Indian English fiction too has taken impressive strides beginning with the trio of R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, and Raja Rao, who were to create a special brand of English. Then there were the experimentalists like G.V. Desani as well as traditional story-tellers like Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, Khushwant Singh, Chaman Nahal and Arun Joshi.

The women fiction writers such as Kamala Markandaya, Prawer Jhabvala, Attia Hosain, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Rama Mehta, Anita Nair and Jhumpa Lahiri have

already become known to the readers of English in India and other commonwealth countries – as much as the specialized prose-writers such as Ruskin Bond, Ramchandra Guha, Sudhir Kaka and Ashis Nandy . The two hundred year old Indian English prose, which got authentic voices from the great masters—Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Gandhi—have now many master craftsmen.Fiction writrs like Alan Sealy, Amitav Ghosh, Shashi Deshpande, Vikram Seth, Upamanyu Chatterji, Vikram Chandra, Rohinton Mistry, Shashi Taroor and Amit Choudhury and many others who have already made their presence felt all over the English reading world.

14

THE SOUTHERN SAGA



Of all the modern Indian languages that are also scheduled languages, the four major languages in the southern part of India have had a continuous history of literary creativity dating back to a period that is much earlier than all other languages, excepting Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali. For example, Tamil poetry had had a continuous tradition of about 2,500 years, a rich literary heritage initially preserved on palmleaves and inscriptions. The evidences suggest that the Pandiya rulers had set up two academies in ancient times at South Madurai and Kapatapuram (mentioned by Valmiki), which were perhaps submerged making all initial poetry and grammatical-philosophical treatises unavailable until a third academy was set up in Madurai during the period 300 BC to about 250 A.D, known as the '*Sangam*' era. Only *Tolkappiyam,* a treatise on grammar, belonging to the second academy survived.

About 2,380 verses and poems (long and short) were written by the 470 poets of this period in the third *sangam,* out of which we get 1,854 '*akam*' or romantic verse poetry, 486 to '*puram*' or heroic poetry, and twenty-four musical pieces, the remaining being only small fragments. The verses were put in nine anthologies, and

only one of them, *Patittuppattu,* had ten long poems all others being short verses. Of these eight anthologies two are of heroic poetry, and five on romantic themes and the remaining one is a collection of songs.

The earlier grammar of the Dravidian family of languages, conventionalises poetry. This convention is quite unorthodox in the sense that it offers a parallel critical approach to literature. To take an example, love poetry was categorized into five physio-graphical areas called *thinais*: the hills, the forests, plains,the coast and the desert, each symbolizing a state of the lovers: '*kurinji*'– hills signifying the lovers' rendezvous; '*mullai*'– the forests symbolizing the lovers' sexual dalliance; '*marudam*'– the plains which stand for separation; '*neidal*'– the coast; the self-control of the lovers; and '*palai*'– desert: the lamentations. There are similar classifications of the heroic poetry as well symbolized by flowers.

Among the *puram* anthologies, *Purananuru* and *Padittippattu*, contain a vast volume of historically important materials, including information on the ruling dynasties as well as description of commoners' lives. The anothology, *Paripadal* shows that there was a classification of poetry, music and dance. The *akam* poems are all fine lyrical poetry. *Kalittokai* with 150 verses in the *kalippa* metre, has a fine short drama, and *Ainguru nuru* has 500 short verses, each verse in just three to six lines expressing a simple thought. The other three poems, *Kuruntokai, Nattinai* and *Akananuru* have asiriyam verses running up to eight, thirteen and thirty-two lines respectively.

Soon after the Christian era began, by about 250 AD, an alien clan took over the Pandiya kingdom driving out the Pandiyas, and ruled Madurai till about 575 AD when the Pandiya rule was restored again. This period was a dark period in the history during which the cultural values were systematically undermined by the rulers, and the thinkers then wrote, much in the pattern of the short *kurals* in *Tirukkural* – very short didactic poems. *Naladi* and *Palamoli,* each in 400 verses, the first one by about 400 Jain monks, had poetry of a high order. There were some other books, shorter in

size, among which *Nanmanikkadigai* and *Tirikadukam*, each with hundred verses, were of high poetic value. A fragment of *Muttollayiram* – originally with about 900 verses (on the three crowned monarchs) is now available, and is rated very highly.

The main examples of early Kannada prose prior to the 9th century come from the inscriptions. Among them, the Badami, Shravanabelagula, and Mavali (AD 800) inscriptions reveal not only literary features but also great strength and flexibility,

The earliest period of Telugu literature was spread over a millennium before the great poet Nannaya came into existence in 1000 A.D. This was mainly the period of inscriptional Telugu, during the Eastern Chalukya period, dating back to 575 A.D. Pandaranga's Addanki inscription (in 848 A.D.) contains a verse in a particular metre. In the Kandukuru and Dharmavaram inscriptions which came later, we get verses composed in the 'sisa' metre, but the ones in the 9th–10th centuries belonged to the 'deshi' or folk-based tradition, which the traditional scholars did not like. As a consequence, the scholar-poets began writing in the 'marga' type; for example, in Palkuriki Somanatha's *Panditaradhya charitra*. *Kavirajamarga*, a Kannada text that follows Dandin, dating back to the ninth century, mentions a literary form called '*gadyakatha*' (a narrative in prose) which was a precursor to Kannada prose.

Telugu

Between 1000 and 1350 A.D., we find a sudden spurt in translation activity from Sanskrit. Telugu literature is generally divided into six periods, viz., the pre-Nannaya period, the age of the puranas, the age of Srinatha, the age of prabandhas, the southern period and the modern period. Narayanabhatta Nannaya was known as the *Adikavi* in Telugu as he was indeed the first poet to write a standard text in a chaste style, conforming to the rules of grammar. He only made thematic alterations here and there from the Sanskrit epiceven though he maintained the original story-line. His method was followed by Tikkana and Yerrapragada.

The first Shaiva poet in Telugu is Nannechoda (dates not

known) who wrote *Kumarasambhava* in 12 cantos. Mallikarjuna Panditaradhya (1100-1180) and Palkuriki Somanatha (13th c.) were the other great Virashava poets, but they wrote several works in Kannada and Sanskrit as well. Panditaradhya's best-known Telugu work was *Sivatatvasaramu*, a philosophical text. Somanatha wrote a *shataka* on Basaveshvara, called *Vrashadhipa shatakam.* He wrote seven kavyas in Telugu, seven in Kannada and a few in Sanskrit also.

In the 12th century, the Shaivites and the Vaishnavites clashed, and that was when Tikkana (1210-1290) wrote his *Nirvachanottara Ramayana*, which was a free translation of Valmiki's *Uttarakanda*. Tikkana's translation of the fifteen parvas of the *Mahabharata* was an excellent example of one who followed the Nannaya model, although he showed great originality. His friend, and a felliow poet, Mulaghatika Ketana, called 'Abhinava Dandi' translated Dandi's *Dashakumara charita,* and dedicated it to Tikkana. Marana also rendered *Manucharitra*, *Harishchandropakhyana* and *Kuvalayashvacharitra* which in Telugu. Adharvanacharya and Badde Bhupala also belong to this age. Yerrapragda was the third poet who completed the *Mahabharata* by translating the latter portion of 'Aranya Parva' which Tikkana did not touch. His style was a compromise between Tikkana and Nannaya. Yerrana makes use of Sanskrit and Telugu words equally in all his major texts in a simple, but idiomatic style. During this period emerged *Bhaskara Ramayana* written by four authors viz., Hulakki Bhaskara, his son Mallikarjuna Bhattu, disciple Kumara Rudra Deva, and friend Ayyalarya, a unique text that showed a composite style as four different poets were involved. Nachana Somanatha's *Uttara Harivamsha* is another significant work, containing six cantos, written in the *prabandha* style. Manchana, the author of *Keyurabahucharitra;* and Ravipati Tripurantaka, the author of *Tripurantakodaharana,* and many other poets lived in this period.

The next period (1350-1500) belongs to the great poet Srinatha (1385-1475), who began with translations and adaptations, but also

left great pieces of original writings, giving birth to a new and popular style of Telugu. His works *Maruttaratcharitra, Salvivahana saptashati* and *Panditar adhyacharitra* are lost, but *Shrinagara naishadhamu* (a translation of the Sanskrit *Naishadha of* Sriharsha) was a model to the later poets.

Potana (1420-1480), the great devotee poet, is younger to Srinatha. He wrote *Bhoginidandakamu* and *Virabhadra-vijayamu,* and translated *Bhagavata*, which is still very popular. He added many devotional verses of his own and enriched the text. Many others followed Potana and made significant contribution in the 15th and 16th centuries: Anantamatya was one, but theer were many others: Pillalamarri Pinavirabhadra (known for *Shringarashakuntaiam* and *Jaimini Bharatamu*), the twin poets, Nandi Mallaya and Ghanta Singana (who composed *Prabodha-chandrodayamu* and *Varahapuranamu*), Madiki Singana, the author of the 'Uttarakanda' of *Padmapuranamu,* Daggupali Duggana (credited with the authorship of Nachiketopakhyanamu), Koravi Goparaju (the author of *Simhasanadvatrimsika*) and Narayana Kavi who translated the famous *Panchatantra* in champu form.

During the next phase of Prabandha period (1500-1600), which is also known as the Golden Age of Telugu literature, we get many great poets: Krishnadevaraya (1485-1530), the emperor of Vijayanagara, was the best known poet and patron then. He patronised the famous *Ashtadiggaja* poets (or the eight scholarly ones): Allasani Peddana being the foremost among them, known for his *Swarochisamanusambharamu* (briefly called *Manu-charitra),* one of the best *prabandhas* in Telugu, based on a *Markandeyapurana* story.

Nandi Timmana was another, who wrote *Parijata-paharanamu.* In the same manner, Madayagari Mallana wrote a *prabandha*, Dhurjati wrote *Sri Kalahasti mahatmyamu* and *Sri Kalahastishwara shataka,* Ayyalaraju Ramabhadra wrote *Ramabhyudayamu* and Pingali Surana wrote *Raghava-pandaviya, Kalapumodayamu* and *Prabhavati Pradyumnamu.*

Some of these prabandha-kavyas had high dramatic appeal.

The foremost among Telugu women poets of this era was Atukuri Molla, famous for her *Molla Ramayanamu*. Others who emerged in Telangana at this time but must be mentioned include: Charigonda Dharmanna, the author of *Chitrabharata;* Haribhattu who wrote *Varahapuranamu, Matsyapuranamu, Narsimha-purana* and *Skandhas* of the *Bhagavata*, Pooneganti Telaganna (*Yayati charitra*), Addanki Gangadhara Kavi (*Tapati Samvaranopakhyanamu*), Sarangu Tammaya (*Vaijayanti-vilasamu*); and Mallareddy, the author of *Shatchakravarti charitra, Shivadharmottara* and *Padmapurana.* Telangana's *Yayaticharitra* was the first Achcha Telugu poem.

The next comes the 'Southern age' (1600-1875), when the centre of Telugu poetry was in the southern region, especially in Madurai, Tanjore, Pudukkottai, Chenji and Mysore. After the fall of the Vijayanagara empire many of them declared independence and established their own kingdoms, and patronized poets. Nayaka Raghunatha was the most prominent patron who had himself written poetry. Chemakura Venkatakavi was one of the major poets in his court who composed *Sarangadhara charitra* and *Vijayavilasamu.* Krishnadhvari was another and Kalaya Kavi was the third. Rangajamma, who could write poetry in eight languages, adorned the court of Vijayaraghava, the son of Raghunatha. The first prose work appeared towards the end of the sixteenth century, with some historical works. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, popularly called the period of Southern School in Telugu, may be called the golden age of prose. The seat of power now shifted from the mainland of Telugu to Tanjore, Madurai and Chenji. Mysore and Pudukkota too, became strongholds of Telugu literature. Colloquial prose, even the vulgar one, found admission into the *'yakshagana'*, a typical literary form of the age and a forerunner of modern drama. The reason for the sudden flowering of prose may be the urgent need to communicate.

Among the late 18th century poets, we get: Sistu Krishnamuri Sastri, Mandapaka Parvateeshwara Sastri, Gopinatham

Venkatakavi and others. Among the women poets, Tarigonda Venkamamba (19th c.) deserves special mention for her works written in a simple style – *Venkatachalamahatmyamu, Jnana-vasishthamu* and *Rajayogasaramu.* The Telangana poetesses, Surabhi Madhavarayalu wrote good *prabandhas*. During 1775-1875, Telugu poetry became more and more pedantic, *Saraswati Narada samvadamu* by Pantulu (1848-1919) was the best example of it.

The beginning of modern Telugu poetry could be located in the mid-19th century, thanks to the spread of Western education. Kandukuri Viresalingam was the pioneer of the modern movement in poetry, and was one who experimented with new expressions and styles. His translation of Kalidasa's *Shakuntalam* was the best example. C.R. Reddi (1880-1950) was another important poet. But the most significant figures were Gurajada Appa Rao (1861-1915) and Rayaprolu Subba Rao (1892-1984). Gurajada was inspired by folk melodies and he demonstrated keen social awareness in his poems. Rayaprolu Subba Rao began as a traditional poet, but soon he changed, especially in his *Lalita, Snehalata,* and *Kasta Kamala.* Swami Siva Sankara Sastri (1892-1967) is another major writer of the period who wrote lyrics. The impetus given by Nayaka kings to Telugu prose continued in the 19th century, when the emphasis was on telling and retelling stories from Sanskritic, Arabic and English origin. The native stories of wit and wisdom like the tales of Tenali Rama and Tatachari were published at this time. Critical commentaries on classics, Travel literature and several other forms could be seen at this time. Kandukuri Viresalingam Pantulu (1840-1919) cultivated a modified variety of the neo-classical style for his purposes, and tried to enrich many new literary genres like the essay, autobiography, biography, farce and above all the novel. His *Rajashekhara charitra* is considered the first noteworthy Telugu novel.

The romantic movement in Telugu poetry was called the '*bhavakavitwam*', and Devulapalli Krishna Sastry (1897-1980), who wrote *Krishna paksham, Urvashi* and *Pravasam* was one

of the best exponents of this trend. Vedula Satyanarayana Sastry (1900-1965), Nanduri Subba Rao (1895-1958), and Basavaraju Apparao (1894-1933) were very popular. As against the romantic trend, which was viewed by the committed Marxist poets only as an escape from the harsh realities of everyday life, poets such as 'Sri Sri' (1910-1983) became the founders of the Progressive Movement in Telugu. They concentrated on the deplorable conditions of the underprivileged sections of our society. If we leave out the traditional poets that came at this time, some Telangana poets like Dasarathi (1927-1987) were of outstanding merit. Then, there also had been C. Narayana Reddi (b. 1932) and Puttaparthi Narayanacharya (b.1915) with their lyrical poetry, and poets like Pathabhi, Arudra, Duvvuri Rami Reddi (1895-1947), and Gunturu Seshendra Sarma (b.1927). But Viswanatha Satyanarayana (1895-1976) with his epic *Ramayana kalpavriksham* was perhaps the most well-known in his generation.

In the twentieth century with the phenomenal growth of newspapers, literary journals and academic bodies, and with the influence of the cinema, radio and television, Telugu prose has assumed myriad shapes and styles. The short story and the novel dominate all other forms of prose. The rise of women as a class of writers is a special feature of modern times. They have dominated the literary scene for the past two decades. A new sensibility is evident in the writings of Tenneti Hemalata, Muppalla Ranganayakamma, Bina Devi, Yeddanapudi Sulochana Rani, Koduri Kausalya Devi, Vasireddy Sitadevi, Abburi Chhayadevi, Utukuru Lakshmikantamma, P. Yasoda Reddi and Malati Chendur and others.

Contemporary Telugu poetry has many more strong voices – both male and female poets, including: Ajanta (1929-98) – known for his *Swarnalipi* and *Resonant Roadways*, Nikhileswar (b.1938) – a well-known 'Digambara' poet, associated with the revolutionary movement in Telugu literature, K. Siva Reddy, with fifteen volumes of poetry, A. Jayaprabha – the feminist voice with anthologies such as *Sooryudu Koodaa Udayistaadu* (1980),

Yuddhonmukhamgaa (1986), *Vaamanudi Moodo Paadam* (1988), *Ikkada Kurisina Varsham Ekkadi Meghanidi* (1991) and *Yasodharaa Yee Vagapemduke* (1993), Kondepudi Nirmala, Mandarapu Hymavathy and MaheJabeen, with *Akuralu Kalam* (1997).

Kannada

Old Kannada poetry was elitist and the ordinary people had no share in it. But the medieval Kannada poetry, beginning from the *bhakti* poetry 12th Century, was for the masses. Although this poetry was also charged with religious fervour, the emphasis was on right conduct, purity of thought, word and deed, etc. They used the *champu* form borrowed from Sanskrit, but more than this, folk forms like the *vachana*, *satpadi*, and *sangatya* made much greater impact. The era of the *vachanas* had begun with 11th century, but they became a full-fledged form by the 12th century. The leader of *vaishnavism*, Basaveshvara, was the most prominent *vachana* composer, but there were many great poets of this era – Allama Prabhu, Akka-mahadevi and Siddharama being the most well-known. The period of *vachana* literature is followed by that of the '*ragale*' of the Prakrit tradition, and Harihara was the best known name here. Harihara has written more than a hundred *ragale* works for Shiva's devotees. There were also conflicts between sects in Kannada.Raghavanka (b. 13th c.), a contemporary of Harihara, was the first to have composed in the 'shatpadi' metre in his works.

The period extending from the 12th to 15th Century is called the Basava age and the literature of this period is sometimes referred to as Virashava literature. The most important writer of the fifteenth century is Naranappa or Kumaravyasa (b.1400). Many others tried following his style and diction. Like the *vachana* literature, *dasa* literature which begins in this period is one of the precious treasures of Kannada. The important poets of this trend were: Narahari Tirtha (13th and 14th centuries); several *haridasas* have composed musical kirtanas in large numbers. Purandaradasa (c. 1484) and Kanakadasa (b. 1488) were noteworthy from the literary point of

view. Literature favouring Vaishanava religion was produced during the time of the Mysore kings by Chikkadevaraja (17th c), Singaraya, Hannamma and Giriyamma (b.1750).

A number of other poets enriched Kannada poetry in the three centuries beginning with the fifteenth: Deeparaja (b. 1400), Nijaguna Shivayogi (b. 1500) with his seven works, Muppina Sadakshari, Sarpabhushana Shivayogi, and Lakkanna Dandesha (c. 1425). *Soundara purana* by Bommarasa (b. 1450), *Trisasti puratana charitre* by Suranga (b. 1500), *Bhavachintaratna* by Gubbi Mallanarya, and *Cheramakavya* by Cheramanka are other notable works. One of the most noteworthy works of this period was *Prabhulingalile*, which was an excellent poem depicting the life of Allamaprabhu in a symbolic manner. *Ramanatha charitra* by Nanjunda (b.1525), containing the story of Kumara Rama, is a purely historical poem and occupies a special place in Kannada literature. An unforgettable name in the Kannada of this period is that of Sarvajna (17th c), famous for his tripadis. The one hundred and fifty years after this was a comparatively barren period.

Modern Kannada poetry was ushered in by B.M. Srikantaiah's *English gitagalu.* This was a collection of poems translated from English and was published in 1921. Even before 'Sri' published his work, there were scholars like H. Narayana Rao and S.G. Narasimhachar who translated English poetry into Kannada. These collections had great novelty in subject matter, language and metre. Initially, we get the *Navodaya* or romantic poetry, while that of the second stage is called *Navya* (new) poetry. Panje Mangesha Rao, Govinda Pai, D.V. Gundappa as well as Srinivasa or Masti Venkatesa Iyengar, whose *Navaratri* was like Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* were the known romantics. Kuvempu (K.V. Puttappa), Ambikatanayadatta (D.R.Bendre) and P.T.Narasimhachar were the three leading names in Kannada *Navodaya* poetry. While Kuvempu is a poet known for his extreme romanticism, he is best-known for his epic – *Sri Ramayana darshanam*. Bendre had drawn more from the folk poetry.

V.K. Gokak was both a *Navodaya* poet and a pioneer of the

Navya poetry. Other *Navya* poets, V.S. Sitaramaiah, K.S. Narasimha Swamy and G.P. Rajaratnam were interesting in their own way. Channavira Kanavi and G. S. Shivarudrappa blended the two traditions. The *Navya* School was influenced by western poets like Eliot, Pound, Auden and Dylan Thomas. M. Gopalakrishna Adiga may be called the chief exponent of *Navya* poetry, along with B.C. Ramachandra Sharma and A.K. Ramanujan.

The poetry of Chandrashekhara Kambar and Channana Watikara has the gusto of folk speech, whereas satire dominates Chandrashekhara Patil. U.R. Ananthamurthy, K.V. Thirumalesh, P. Lankesh, K.V. Rajagopal, Sumatindra Nadig, Chandrakantha Kusanur, Lakhsmi Narayana Bhatta, B.R. Lakshamana Rao, Srikrishna Alanahalli, H.M. Channaiah, Subraya Chokkadi, Giraddi Govindaraj, Bhagyalakshmi, H.S. Ventakeshwara Murthy, H.S. Shivaprakash, Pratibha Nandakumar and many others have added new dimensions to *Navya* poetry. The latest trend seems to be the Dalita (down trodden) poetry, which emerged as a protest against both the *Navodaya* and *Navya* schools. Siddalingaiah is an exponent of the poetry of the downtrodden (*Bandaya*).

Modern Kannada prose began only in the 19th century, which was also the period of a great transition. But Kannada Prose was established as an important literary medium only in the early 20th century with Puttanna, C. Vasudevayya, Kerur Vasudevachar and Alur Venkatarao. New demands were made on Kannada prose after the 1920s. Some of it was captured in very good prose by R. Narasimhachar and R.S. Mugali as well as P.G. Halakatti who could write critical accounts of Kannada and edit Kannada texts with commentaries. These writings, together with Adya Rangacharya's *Gitagambhirya* and *Gitadarpana* enriched our sense of the practical. In the same line, D.V. Gundappa's (1884-1975) work on the *Gita*, called the *Jivanadharmayoga* (1966), R.L. Narasimhiah's *Jagattuga Jahuttu savu* (1954) contained clear and elegant prose. Until recently, the genre of critical studies was not developed much. A.N. Krishna Rao's monograph on the painter king, Ravi Varma, or Shivaram Karanth's *Bharateeya*

shilpa, Karnatakadalli chitrakale, and other writings on the Indian art, or Rallapalli Ananthakrishnasharma's *Ganakale* (1952) and Mysore Vasudevachar's reminiscences of his contemporary musicians were refreshing for readers. D.R. Nagaraj was a thinker of rare calibre. A lot of young critics have also come up in recent years.

Travelogue and biography have not developed much in Kannada, with a few exceptions, but the finest achievement of Kannada prose is in the field of the personal essay by Karanth, Gorur Ramaswami Iyengar, V.Sitaramiah, T.N.Srikantaiah, P.T. Narasimhachar, K.V. Puttappa, and a host of others. Journalism has played a significant part in popularizing Kannada prose. The best prose-writers here were D.V. Gundappa, Masti Venkatesha Iyengar, T.T. Sharma, Siddavanahalli Krishna Sharma and Niranjana. As for the creative and fictional prose during the last eight decades, the old masters like D.V. Gundappa, A.R. Krishna Sastri, Masti, V. Sitaramiah, A.N. Moorthy Rao apart, there is a generation of versatile writers as Tarasu, Inamdar, S.L. Bhyrappa, U.R. Anantamurthy, Poorna Chandra Tejaswi and P. Lankesh. There is a whole new generation of fiction writers now on the scene that include talented writers like Vivek Shanbhag, Vaidehi, Abdul Rasheed, S. Diwakar, Jayant Kakikini and others.

Tamil

The 9th century *Ramayanam* of Kamban with 10,368 verses (leaving out another 1,300 that were interpolation) is undoubtedly the supreme achievement of the Early Tamil poetry, which took the skeleton of the original Valmiki story but narrated it in its own style very lucidly and lyrically. Kamban's epic is thus a great work that inspired generations of Tamil poets. The earliest philosophical texts in poetic forms included *Manimekalai* (the Buddhist epic). *Nilakasi* (10th c.), *Arumgalaseppu* in 'kural' metre (12th c.) and *Jiva sambodhanai* (14th c.). Vaishnava philosophical writing was in a Sanskrit-Tamil prose form, called *manipravala*, and Vedanta Desikar (1269-1369), Bhattanar's *Bhagavadgita* in Tamil

(13th c), Tattuvarayar's *Isvara gita* and *Brahma gita* (10th c), Alavandar's *Jnanavasishtam,* and Tiruvenkata Nathar's *Probodha chandrodayam* deserve mention.

After this came the court poetry patronized by the Chola dynasty. The heroic poem named *Kalingattubharani* describing the victory of Kulottunga Chola I over the Kalingas in about 1105 is an example of this type. Similarly, other *kovai* and *ula* poems were also written in this period on the Chola monarchs.

From about the eighth century AD, and more particularly after the tenth century AD, Tamil prose assumed notable prominence when several commentaries were written on the early classics. The first one is Nakkirar's commentary, followed by other outstanding commentaries of Ilampuranar, Chenavaraiyar, Nachchinarkkiniyar, Atiyarkkunallat and Parimelalakar Nachchinarkkiniyar (14th century). But these commentaries were highly ornate and pedantic. Later philosophical texts came only in 17th and 18th century. An important classic was *Kaivalya Navanitam* (The essence of Absolute Oneness) by Tandavarayar (18th c) which was translated into many other languages. At this time, the Virashaiva writings were also many: *Prabulinga Lilai* and *Siddhanta Shikhamani* by Sivaprakasa Swami, and *Kumaradevar Sastra* (all 17th c) and *Basava purana* (18th c) by an unknown author.

There were many *'Prabandha-kavyas'*, more than 400 verses on *akam* and *puram* themes, among which *Arruppadai*, a long poem, or *Pillait-Tamil* consisting of 100-long 'viruttam' verses are worth mentioning. There were interesting innovations here: For instance, '*Dutu*' and '*ula*' were two types of love poems each in a long drawn *Kalivenba* metre. *Dutu* is the Sanskritic message-epic containing a love message sent by the ladylove to her lover who is the hero of the poem. *Ula* is the poem describing the pangs of love experienced by woman in the conventional seven stages on seeing the hero go in procession along the streets.

Rendering of Puranic writing in Tamil as in the texts *Periyapuranam* of Sekkilar (a Shaiva hagiology), or the retelling

of *Matsyapurana, Kurmapurana, Lingapurana* and *Skanda-purana* in Tamil had also been important Tamil literary activities in the second millennium after Christ. Sthala puranas, or puranas collecting together local legends glorifying the village temple were also written in hundreds, between the 13th and 19th centuries. Among the ones with fine poetic value, mention may be made of *Tiruvilayadal, Kanchi, Tanihai* and *Kurrala* puranas.

Simple narrative writing on secular subjects, which were witnessed in other Indian languages after the medieval times, has been generally missing in the Tamil language, except for a poem of fifty-one verses by Tiruttakkadevar, author of the large epic *Chintamani* (9th c), called '*Nari-viruttam* (The story of the jackal) written by him to satisfy his master that he could write poetry without introducing the love theme. Another poem worth mentioning is *Nalavenba* by Punhalendi (13th c), narrating the story of Nala and Damayanti in 424 delightful verses. Three 16th century poets wrote episodes on Nala, Harischandra and Pururava which are ranked high in the texts like *Kuchelopakhyanam* (the episode of Kuchela from the *Bhagavata)* and *Nalavenba.* The texts, *Bharata venba* of Perumdevanar (9th c) and *Bharatam* by Villiputhurar (14th c) – are still popular.

The greatest of Tamil epic poems, *Silappadikaram,* was composed at the beginning of the epic-period. The story revolved around Kannaki's anklet, which her husband Kovalan was trying to sell. Having thought Kovalan a thief, the Pandya prince ordered him to be killed. Coming to know how Kovalan died, Kannaki first proved her husband's innocence to the king in a furious temper, and then burnt his city of Madurai. Later, she transformed into a celestial figure. This was a rich and imaginative romantic tragedy by Ilango, a great poet with a keen sense of music and drama. A sequel to *Silppadikaram* was *Manimekalai,* which was about a young woman, who declined to fall into the trap of love because she knew how her mother had fallen in love and how it all ended in a tragedy.

The richest legacy of Tamil literature is its devotional poetry,

which began in the Sangam period but continued even upto the 5th century as in Tiru Mular's *Tirumantram*. Karraikkal Ammai of the same period composed a few devotional songs. The three '*devaram*' hymnists directed people to be free from the bindings of Jainism and Buddhism, to follow the path of devotion to Shiva: Thirujnana Sambandhar (633-651), Appar (590-671), and Sundarar (685-703). Manikkavachakar (end of the 9th c) composed *Tiruvachakam*, the 'Holy Utterance' in 656 verses within the tradition of *Shaiva* philosophy, while *Vaishnavism* had been a parallel cult in Tamil Nadu and its 12 hymnists were known as the Alvars, who wrote about 4,000 verses, known by the name *Nalayira divya prabandham*. The first three Alvars were Poyahai, Bhutan and Pey about whom there are many stories. Periyalvar thought of himself as the mother of Krishna and composed the devotional poems accordingly. Nammalvar is the singer of the *Tamil Veda*.

The Siddhars evolved a devotional philosophy of their own around the 14th-15th century. They condemned caste systems and ritualistic worship and emphasised inner devotion.

The *Yakshaganas* of the Kannada and Telugu areas were introduced to Tamil poets and they began this kind of composition, too. Tamil poets under the Nayak patronage adopted the theme of worshipping the Supreme, in addition to their favourite deities. They brought in dramatic characters (ranging from one to four) in their verse plays, *Kuram, Kuravanji, Pallu* and *Nondinatakam*. This was also the period (17th-18th centuries) when they introduced the *kirtana* form (so popular in medieval and pre-modern Bengal) into Tamil literary compositions. Muthuttandavar (1600-1650) was responsible for starting the *kirtana* form, and the great Tiruvarur trio, Shyama Sastri, Thyagaraja Swami and Mutuswami Dikshitar, took their inspiration from these pioneers and composed their songs in Telugu and Sanskrit.

The modern Tamil poetry began in the late-19th and early-20th centuries with new literary trends in the writings of Gopalakrishna Bharati (19th c), Vedanayagam Pillai (1824-89) and Sundaram Pillai (1855-97). Most importantly, the poems of

Subramania Bharati (1882-1921) made a new beginning. Under the influence of the Western mode of thought and expression, Bharati moulded his poetry to suit the spirit of the times, and ushered in modernism "with new taste, new content, new beauty and new diction, which will never die", as he said. Patriotism dominated Bharati's poetry as could be seen in *Panchali sapatham* (The Vow of Draupadi, 1912). This trend was then enriched by Bharatidasan, a self-professed admirer of Bharati. Bharatidasan espoused the cause of the Tamil ethnicity, and urged them to wake up from slumber. Desika Vinayakam Pillai (1876-1952), Mutiarasan (b.1920) and Suradha (1921-2006) as well as Suddhananda Bharati and S. D.S. Yogi followed their trend.

Prose came to be established as a specific branch of literature with the European missionaries. Beschi was the first man to use Tamil prose for creative purposes. T.P. Minakshisundaram, considered him to be the 'Father of Modern Prose'. Arumuka Navalar (1822-1889) of Ceylon was one of the early prose writers who turned to secular subjects.

Subramaniya Bharati, the distinguished poet, was an innovator in the field of prose as well. U.V. Swaminatha Aiyar (1885-1942) began to write in prose, as it were, accidentally by way of prefaces to his scholarly editions of ancient classics. During the last ten years of his life he regularly contributed memorable essays to the leading Tamil journals, published under the title *Nan Kantatum Kettatum* (What I heard and saw). V. Kalyanasundaranar (Thiru.Vi.Ka.) expressed all modern thoughts of history, science, philosophy and politics in Tamil.

The development of journalism in Tamil is one of the most important factors for the development of Tamil essays. In 1906, C. Subramania Bharati the great Tamil poet, started a paper of his own, called *India*. Thiru.Vi.Ka. founded *Deshabhaktan* (The patriot) in 1917. Soon, besides newspapers, magazines also became popular.

The Modernist movement in Tamil was mainly inspired by the western model when N. Pichamoorthy and others made

experiments with form. *Ezhuttu* (Writing, 1959), a literary periodical gave an impetus to the new poetry movement. A collection of poems entitled *Putukkuralkal* (New voices, 1962) included the prominent modern poets of the period like Vallikkannan, K.N, Subramanyam, Venugopalan, Sundara Ramaswamy and Darumu Sivaram among others. T.K. Doraiswamy and C. Mani (b.1936) were other poets. Mani's 'Narakam' (Hell, 1962) is reminiscent of T.S. Eliot's poems. Gnanakoothan (b.1938) and others introduced the satirical mode in poetry in the '60s. Other important poets who made their mark were Kalapriya Somasundaram, Sachidanandam, R. Meenakshi, Neela Padmanabhan, Dakshinamoorthy, Rajaram, Balakumaran, and Hari Srinivasan.

Another dominant trend was that of progressivism, which began in 1948 when the Progressive Writers' Association was formed in Tamilnadu. Jeeva (P. Jivanandam, 1907-1963), K.C.S. Arunachalam (b. 1921) and C. Raghunathan (b. 1923) were the founding figures, but later poets like N. Kamarajan (b.1942), Meera, Sirpi Balasubramaniam, Puviarasu, Navabharati, Agniputran, Tamizhnadan, Saktikkanal and K. Rajaram contributed to the progressive movement in Tamil. There are also women poets like Kanimozhi and Salma asserting their feminine identity. Dalit poetry is another emerging trend. The new poets seem to be reasserting a strong sense of values and moral commitment .

Maraimalai Atikal (1876-1950), one of the greatest masters of Tamil prose, was the protagonist of a new movement which was oriented in favour of pure and chaste Tamil.

When Tamil literature liberated itself from the rigidity of formal classicism and moved away in new directions, it became inevitable that new standards of criticism should also be laid down. This was the time when many critics emerged. The writing of biographies was taken up as a major literary endeavour only recently. One of the earlist writers of travelogue, in its modern connotation, was A.K. Chettiyar who wrote *Ulakam Chutriya Tamilan* (The globe-trotter Tamilian). Another notable writer is Maniyan: *Itayam Pesukiratu* (The heart speaks).

Malayalam

The earliest written Malayalam poetry is the 12th century text, *Ramacharitam* (The story of Rama) by Cheerama, which belonged to the class of Malayalam poetry known as 'pattu' (song). This tradition continued, and we get *Ramakathappattu* (A song on the story of Rama) by Ayyippilla Asan in the 15th century. Other compositions in this style were made by a gifted family of poets: The brothers, Madhava Panikkar and Shankara Panikkar, and their nephew Rama Panikkar.

In the 16th century the saint-poet, Ramanujan Ezhuttacchan, one gets the greatest poetry of Medieval Malayalam in the Vaishnavite tradition, especially in his *Adhyatma Ramayana* (not based on the Valmiki's text), *Mahabharata* and perhaps also a part of the *Bhagavata*. For the first time, we get a style that is in pure Malayalam without the mixture of Tamil.He is the real founder of modern Malayalam style and is revered as the father of the language. *Krishnagatha* by Cherusseri Nambudiri (1560-1660) tells the story of Krishna for the common reader in a simple, everyday language.

A parallel poetic tradition flourished at this time, which mainly used the Sanskrit metres, and like in Tamil, it was called the *Manipravalam* style of which we get an example in the 14th century text, *Unnunilisandesham*.

Attakatha was another form of poetry which originated roughly around the middle of the 17th century. It was intended as a script for the theatric form of *Kathakali*, but it eventually developed as a full-fledged branch of poetry. The success of this form led to the phenomenal popularity of this form of literary composition. The best example of this kind of poetry is *Nalacharitam* by Unnayi Variyar. Kottayam Thampuran was a more gifted poet and scholar than Kottarakara Thampuran, another exponent of the genre and in his hands *Attakkatha* attained a position of respectability.

Another major branch of literature called *tullalkkatha* is also the contribution of the visual art form of *tullal*, the pioneer of which was Kunchan Nambiar (18th c.) who rebelled against the classical

tradition of ornate, high-brow poetry. By now,the intrusion of European influence was beginning to be felt in the national life at large. This may be termed as the neo-classical age in Malayalam literature. At this time, Kerala Varma Valiakoil Tampuran made his contribution primarily to the field of prose, but he also tried his hand at several forms of poetry. His *Mayura sandesham* (Message through a peacock) is his most significant contribution to Malayalam poetry. The establishment of periodicals was directly responsible for the development of literary criticism. The year 1890 saw the starting of two important periodicals, Kandathil Varghese Mappila's *Malayala Manorama* and C.P.Achutha Menon's *Vidyavinodini*. Apan Tampuran started his *Rasikaranjini* in 1903. A close associate of both Kerala Varma and Rajaraja Varma, K.C. Kesava Pillai was a man of remarkable talent. His major works are *Kesaviyam* (a *mahakavya*), *Sadarama* (a musical play in the Tamil mode, extremely popular at the time), *Asannamaranachintasatakam* (Reflections of a Dying Man, in a century of quatrains) and a number of *attakkathas*.

An inevitable consequence of the development of prose was a creative use of this medium for imaginative literary communication. The last quarter of the 19th century saw the birth of the novel in Malayalam. There were several factors as to why this genre became immensely popular: there already existed an old printing tradition, contributing to the growth of a literate reading public, who also had the habit of buying books. High literacy and the rise in the status of women were also important factors. *Ghataka Vadham* (the Slayer Slain) by Mrs. Collins, *Pullelikunchu* by Archdeacon Koshy, his translation of Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Ayilyam Tirunal's translation of *Meenaketanacharitam*, Kerala Varma's transalation of *Akbar* – all these were of historical importance. But Appu Nedungadi's *Kundalata* (1887) marks an important stage in the development of prose fiction in Malayalam. O. Chandu Menon (1847-1900) who wrote the path-breaking *Indulekha*, and C.V. Raman Pillai (1852-1922) of Travancore with his historical romances like *Martanda Varma* and *Ramaraja*

Bahadoor both had benefited from English education.

The poet who most clearly symbolizes the poetic revolution in the first quarter of the 20th century is Kumaran Asan (1823-1974). His early discipleship of Sri Narayana Guru and his Sanskrit education provided him with a kind of broad outlook and new sensibility, which helped him produce an elegy unprecedented in the language: *Oru Veena Poovu* (A fallen flower, 1907) that was followed by narrative poems like *Leela*, *Nalini*, *Karuna* and *Duravastha*. Ulloor (1877-1949), the second of the grand poetic trio of the 20th century renaissance in Malayalam who wrote the epic *Umakeralam* and also the first History of Malyalam Literature started his career as a poet under the tutelage of Kerala Varma Valiya Koyitampuran. Vallathol Narayana Menon's (1878-1958) training was in classicism but his native genius was romantic. Among them, Vallathol the youngest had attracted the largest following. Stylistically, Nalappat Narayana Menon, G. Sankara Kurup, P. Kunjiraman Nair, M.P.Appan and Balamani Amma were his important followers. Among them, G.Sankara Kurup (1900-1978), brought up in the classicist tradition of Ulloor and Vallathol, was influenced by Rabindranath Tagore and emerged as one of the major voices in the 1930s. Balamani Amma is the greatest woman-poet Kerala has produced so far. Two other poets, Edappally Raghavan Pillai and Changapuzha Krishana Pillai, brought in fresh air into the Malayalam poetry of the 1930s.Krishna Pillai's *Ramanan*, a pastoral elegy, is one of the most popular poems in Malayalam even today.

Among the forms of non-fiction prose that received a tremendous onward push in the modern period, was literary criticism. In the 1930s and 40s three names became most influential: A.Balakrishana Pillai (1889-1960), Joseph Mundasseri (1901-1977) and Kuttikrishna Marar (1900-1973). But then, there were a number of essayists who had contributed to the growth of prose and literary criticism in the forties and fifties. K.R. Krishan Pillai, R. Narayana Panikkar, P.Sankaran Nambiar, Sooranad Kunjan Pillai, Govindankutty Nair, Kainikkara Kumara Pillai and A.D. Harisarma

were only a few of them. Among the writers of biographical and critical studies may be mentioned P.K.Paremeswaran Nair, K.M. George, K. Bhaskaran Nair, P.K. Balakrishanan, K.P. Appan, K. Satchidanandan, B. Rajeevan, V.C. Sreejan nad others. Among the travelogues are K.P.Kesava Menon's *Bilathivisesham* and numerous volumes by S.K. Pottekkat. E.V. Krishna Pillai, M.R. Nair (Sanjayan) and V.K.N. were great humorists. There are plenty of biographies while autobiography has become a vibrant genre with a lot of ordinary people now writing, or dictating if illiterate, their exciting life stories. They include Nambudiri women, prostitutes, tribal leaders, actors, musicians and others. N. Krishna Pillai, C.N. Sreekantan Nair, G. Sankara Pillai and Kavalam Narayana Paniker are well known as playwrights.

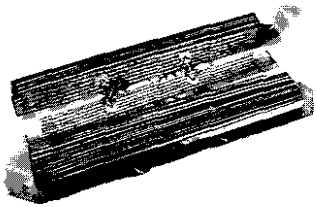
Among the earliest practioners of the short story in Malayalam are Vengayil Kinhiraman Nayanar (1861-1915), Ambadi Narayana Poduval (1871-1936), Murkot Kumaran (1874-1941), K. Sukumaran (1876-1956) and M.R.K.C. or Chenkulath Kunhiraman Menon (1882-1940). In the place of a native tradition of story-telling, they developed a new mode by incorporating the western narrative tradition. Karur Neelakanta Pillai (1898-1974), P. Kesava Dev (1904-1983), Ponkunnam Varkey (b.1908), Vaikom Muhammed Basheer (1912-1994), S.K. Pottakkat (1913-1982), Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai (1914 -1999), P.C. Kutikrishnan (1915-1979), Lalithambika Antharjanam (1909-1987) and K.Saraswathi Amma (1919-1974) were among the masters of the later short story writing. O.V. Vijayan's *Khasakkinte Itihasam* (Legends of Khasak) pioneered the modernist revolution in fiction. He wrote several other novels, followed by M. Mukundan, Kakkanandan, M. P. Narayana Pillai, Paul Zacharia, and others who championed the Modernist movement. Writers like M. Sukumaran, U.P. Jayaraj and Pattathuvila Karunakaran brought radical politics into fiction.There is a whole new generation now on the scene who include powerful women writers like Sara Joseph, Gracy, Chandramati, A. S. Priya,Ashita,Sitara and Indu Menon.N. S. Madhavan has made a mark in the post-Vijayan fiction with his

committed stories and the novel, *LundenBatheriyile Luthiniakal* (The Litanies of the Dutch Battery). Others include T.V. Kochubava, N. Prabhakaran, P. Surendran, C.V. Balakrishnan, B. Murali, K.P. Raman Unni, George Joseph, Thomas Joseph, Akbar Kakkattil, Hafiz Mohammed, Shihabudeen,Santosh Echikanam and scores of others.

The fifties also saw an attempt to free poetry from decadent romanticism in the works of Vailoppilly Sreedhara Menon, Edasseri Govindan Nair, N.V. Krishna Warrior and M. Govindan. The change into Modernism is best reflected in Ayyappa Paniker's *Kurukshetram,* written in 1952-57 (published in 1961), and in his later works. Attoor Ravi Varma, a master with an independent style and N.N. Kakkad who mixed the classical and the modernist modes are important poets.Sughathakumari is easily the best of the women poets in Malayalam since Balamani Amma. She has a rare mastery of verbal melody and visionary imagery. O.N.V. Kurup also has contributed to the popularisation of poetry in recent times.Vishnu Narayanan Nambudiri, G. Kumara Pillai, P.Narayana Kurup, O.M. Anujan, S. Ramesan Nair and Desamangalam Ramakrishnan are some other poets of note. Kadammanitta Ramakrishnan uses folk rhythms and archetypal images very well to offer a terse commentary on modern life. Among the other best-known poets are K.Satchidanandan, author of twenty volumes of poetry, is another major ever-innovative poet with a strong sense of time and space. D. Vinayachandran, K.G.Sankara Pillai, A. Ayyappan and Balachandran Chullikad have also contributed to this transition of style .There is also a new generation of talented poets on the scene like Anwar Ali, U. Jayachandran, Anita Tampy, P.P. Ramachandran, Rafeek Ahmed, T.P. Rajeevan, Savitri Rajeevan, Vijayalakshmi,V.M. Girija, Gita Hiranyan and others.

15

MAJOR LITERARY LANGUAGES IN THE EAST



Assamese

In ancient times Assam was known as Pragjyotisa and Kamaraupa. The present name Assam derives from the name of a Sino-Tibetan tribe, the Ahoms, who came from North Burma and conquered eastern Assam in 1228 a.d. Assamese language too traces its origin to the Charya texts (9th to 11th century) just as Bangla, Maithili and Oriya do. The oldest Assamese writer was perhaps Hema Sarasvati of the late 13th century. His *Prahlada-charita* was based on the Sanskrit Vishnu Purana, and he naturally showed a Sanskritized style for Assamese. Other major poets in the court of Kamatapur like Harihara Vipra and Kaviratna Sarasvati recreated *Mahabharata* into Assamese in verse form in the early 14th century.

Kaviraja Madhava Kandali of the 14th century is the first truly great poet in the language. He wrote a version of the *Ramayana* and a narrative poem *Devajit* on Krishna as the supreme divinity. His language was simple and yet effective. Another great poet was Durgavara who retold the story of the *Ramayana* in songs. But most of this period until 1500, one gets

the Mantras or the magical formulae against various diseases and calamities, with very little literary creativity in them.

The greatest period of Assamese literature began with the emergence of Sankaradeva (1449-1568) and with the influence of a pan-Indian *Bhakti* movement that had also swept Assam. The Shakta worship came from the non-Aryan sources, but with the advent of Sankaradeva, it was mostly a Vaishnava influence that reigned supreme. His hyms and other works formed the basis of evening prayers and evening service in all the villages of Assam. Out of his 27 works, the most important were the last canto of the *Ramayana*, some portions of the *Bhagvata Purana*, *Kirttana-ghosha*, *Rukmini-harana* a narrative poem depicting an episode of the life of Krishna, the Bhakti-pradipa and the Nimi-nava-siddha-samvada. He also wrote a number of dramas that show the Maithili influence. Yet another kind of poetry introduced by him was *Bar-git*, or devotional poems, still very popular. Madhavadasa (1489-1596), a disciple of Sankaradeva, was the other great poet of this period. He composed *Bhakti-ratnavali*, *Namaghosha* (or *Hazari-ghosha*) – a devotional handbook or prayer book, Nine *Ankiya Nats* and also *Bar-gits*.

Like Shankaradeva in poetry, Bhattadeva (1558-1638) was actually the father of Assamese prose. He translated the entire *Srimadbhagavadgita* and *Shmadbhagavata* into Assamese, and he was concise as well as faithful to the originals. He also wrote *Katha Ratnavali.* The three of them, monumental in kind, bear the stamp of originality and the genius of early Assamese prose style.Assamese poetry was modernised by navkant barua, Neelamoni Phookan nad others who are followed by a whole new generation of poets like Sameer Tanti, Sanat tanti, Neelim Kumar, Anupama Basumatary and several others.

Between 1707 and 1818, most literary works were translations, adaptations or compilations of religious texts. Then on, the missionaries did some pioneering work by writing a grammar (W. Robinson 1839) and dictionary of Assamese and by publishing a monthly magazine, the *Arunodaya Samvad Patra* (1846 onwards).

They also brought out textbooks for schools in history, elementary science, and grammar, besides general readers.

During 1840s and 1850s, a new literary style based on the spoken language of Central Assam came into being. Anandaram Dhekial Phukan (1829-59) was the first great writer of this age, besides Hemchandra Barua (1835-96) who contributed to the standardization of modern Assamese through his grammar, *Asamiya Vyakarana* (1895) and dictionary, *Hema-kosa* (1900) as well as wrote short novels and satirical plays with the objective of removing social evils. Another Assamese magazine, *Assam Bandhu*, came out during this period. Lakhsminath Bezbarua (1868-1938) is regarded as the greatest figure in modern Assamese literature. He was a multi-faceted personality, writing plays, poetry, essays, short stories and humorous prose. *Surabhi* (1909), *Sadhu-kathar Kuki* (1912) and *Jonabiri* (1913) are some of his better known books of fiction. He also started a new monthly, the *Jonaki*, since 1889, which played a vital role in providing encouragement to Assamese poetry.

Among the notable writers of this period, we could mention: Hemchandra Gosvami (1879-1928) – mainly an essayist and an editor of classics, Chandrakumar Agarwalla (1858-1938), Rajanikanta Bardaloi (1867-1939), an outstanding novelist, Kamalakanta Bhattacharya, and the nationalist poet, Amibikagiri Ray Chaudhari. Other important writers include Saratchandra Goswami (1886-1944), Dandinath Kalinatha, Nalinibala Devi, Atulchandra Hajarika and Jyotiprasad Agarwala. Among the novelists, it goes to the credit of Padmanath Gohain Barua whose powerful historical novels, *Lahari* (1890) and *Bhanumati* (1893) were written in the background of the Ahom history. In the field of social novels, the important names are Dadinath Kalita, Daiba chandra Talukdar and Bina Barua. In the post-independence period the more important fiction writers are Syed Abdul Malik (b.1919), Jogesh Das (b.1927), Briendra Kumar Bhattacharya (b.1924), and Indira Goswami (b. 1942). Among the other writers who have used prose with a kind of literary flavour the prominent are Bhabananda

Datta, Trailokya Goswami, Nabakanta Barua, Homen Burgohain, Hiren Gohain, Bhaben Barua, etc. By and large modern Assamese prose is now capable of dealing with even abstruse ideas and concepts in an effective manner.

Manipuri

Manipuri is the state language of Manipur with about 1.6 million speakers, had gone under the British domination after the King, Maharaja Gambhir Singh had agreed to the British proposal for a trade and military co-operation to gain an access to Mynamar, the then Burma. In two years, they appointed a political agent whose power and jurisdiction were extended by 1852. By 1891, they had put forward conditions before Shree Kulachandra to get himself recognized as the ruler of Manipur, which amounted to root out all opposition. Manipur began to slide down then onwards as the rebels were surrendered by the rulers to the British. It was at that time that there was a royal attempt to declare the Vaishnava faith as the new religion of the state, and the language and the script of Bengal as the official vehicle of communication. That forced the people to hide their old manuscripts and even give up many of the traditional cultural practices to make them look and sound more like the Bengalees. While this allowed a lot of traffic in translation, it also left a lot of resentment at the ground level. The biggest casualty was the Meitei Meyek script and the huge traditional knowledge as well as literary texts with which many went underground. In the villages of Manipur one could still come across people who possess some of those ancient books but would rather hide them. In fact, it is difficult to write an appropriate historical account of this rich literary and cultural tradition because of such a situation. The royal libraries are said to have been burnt several times to destroy all books and knowledge-based texts written in Meitei Meyek and also the later ones written and printed in Bangla-based script. This sad situation created myths about the preservation of books so that people could conceal and save them. There is no historical proof of any attempt to burn these books, but it is possible that since the

Vaishnava faith was imposed as the state religion, there must have been a popular feeling that their old religion and scriptures were in danger.

There were also attempts to propagate Christianity, and bring Western education somehow to make a cultural dent.With the spread of English language and the English system of education, certain important reforms like initiating female literacy also began. This was also the time when newspapers and periodicals were also started. The first attempt was made by Hijam Erawat whose handwritten magazine *Meitei Chanu* initiated a literary movement. In 1930, *Lalit Manjari* was published from Imphal. By the Second World War, the number of such periodicals went up. *Manipur Sahitya Parishad Patrika, Manupuri's Taruna Manipur Matam, Naharol* etc could be mentioned here. They created the right atmosphere, and also the possibility of brining out books in print. Printing had come in 1910, when a press was set up by three people.

This period was also a time of transition. One of the creative writers, Hijam Erawat, had attended a meeting at Kokata which Gandhiji had addressed after he was released from the British jail. He was greatly impressed by the speech. So, when he was appointed a magistrate by the Maharaja of Manipur, he made up his mind to oppose the feudal system, even though he was married to the King's niece. That was how the Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha began in 1934, and he made the best out of Manipuri's contact with languages like Bengali, Sanskrit, Maithili and Assamese in deciding the course of events. Translations of Jaidev, Vidyapati, Bankim, Sharatchandra and Tagore began ; we get great author-translators in Manipuri then in Hawaibam Navdweepchandra (who translated Michael Madhusudanand also Tagore's *Geetanjali* into Manipuri), Shyam Sunder Singh (one who translated Bankimchandra's *Kapal Kundala*), or Vasudev Sharma (who translated Kalidas). From Assamese, the contemporary authors began entering into Manipuri, and Lakshmi Nath Bezbarua, Hemchandra Goswami, and Chandra Kumar Agarwala became known names. This was the manner in which the new awakening

started in Manipuri. That also gave Manipuri the poets and essayists such as Chaoba, Lamabam Kamal, Anganghal, Mayoordhwaj and Navdweep Chandra. Among the poets of the period, the poetry of Meenaketan, Darendrajeet Singh and Sheetaljeet also share these features in a new form. This was a late renaissance, but surely an awakening in Manipuri literature that happened in the'30s to '40s. Maharaja Chooda Chand was forced to restore the rightful place to Manipuri language once again. On April 30, 1925, he arranged for a play to be staged in the palace. Many writers advocated the propagation of the old script too. Between 1709 and the middle of the 20th century, the Manipuri language was written with the Bangla alphabet. During the 1940s and 50s, Manipuri scholars began campaigning to bring back the old Manipuri alphabet. In 1976 at a writers conference all the scholars finally agreed on a new version of the alphabet containing a number of additional letters to represent sounds not present in the language when the script was first developed.

Manipuri also had to struggle to get itself recognized as a scheduled language and once it got the recognition of the Sahitya Akademi and the Government of India, it gave a great boost to writing and publishing. Some of the better-known writers in the contemporary period include Binodini Devi, Saratchandra Teyyam, Ibopishak Singh, Ibomcha Singh and several others.

Bodo

The Bodos are said to belong to a larger classification of ethnicity called the Bodo-Kachari. The nerve center of the Bodos is the city of Kokrajhar. The Bodo people speak a language that is part of the Tibeto-Burmese family of languages.

The literary activities of Bodo speakers are centrally regulated by a body called the Bodo Sahitya Sabha, set up by the native speakers on November 16, 1952, at Basugaon, in the district of Kokrajhar, Assam consisting of representatives of Assam, West Bengal, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura and Nepal.

It has adopted the Devanagari writing system, although

traditionally Bodo Sahitya Sabha had promoted both Roman and Assamese/Bangla-based writing systems for over half a century.

After a prolonged struggle to promote and develop Bodo culture and identity, the Bodos have today been granted the Bodo Territorial Council, and autonomous administrative body that will have within its jursidiction the present district of Kokrajhar and adjoining areas of Assam. The movement for autonomy was headed by the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) and an armed militant group called Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT). The Bodo language was introduced as a medium of instruction at primary level in 1963 and then at secondary level in 1968. Moreover, the Bodo has been recognized as one of the Modern Indian Languages in several universities like Gauhati, Dibrugarh and other North-Eastern Universities. And in 1985, it was recognized as an associate state official language of Assam and was included in rthe Eighth schedule in 2004.

Broadly speaking, Bodo is spoken also outside Assam in Manipur (Tengnoupal district), Orissa (Koraput district), and also in Nepal (where it is also known as Parja). It is related to Dhimasa, Tipra and Lalunga. Dialects of Bodo include Mech, Boro-Kachari, Plains Kachari, etc. Bodo speakers are bilingual with 40% literacy in the second language. The Sahitya Sabha has to its credit a large number of books on prose, poetry, drama, short story, novel, biography, travelogue, children's literature and criticism. After the inclusion of Bodo language into the 8th Schedule of the Constitution, the Sahitya Akademi and the Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT) have been working for the uplift of the Bodo language and literature. As a part of this, the CSTT, under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India has published seven books in Bodo language this year. The books cover Education, Economics, Archeology, Political Science, Sociology, Geography and Zoology.

Nepali

The written form of the Nepali language can be traced back to AD 981 to the stone inscriptions of King Damupal at Dullu in western Nepal. But the first ever book in this language is a prose translation of *Bhasvati,* a book on astrology written originally in Sanskrit. It was translated in AD 1400 by an anonymous author. And the first travelogue was *Raja Gaganiraj ko Yatra* written by Karabir Rawal in 1493. Nepali prose was at first confined to the royal decrees in gold and copper-plate inscriptions, stone inscriptions and other administrative records.

Initially, Nepali had mainly the heroic poetry (1742-1815), but soon devotional poetry (1816-1882) became popular, under the influence of similar trends across the north India . Like in the Hindi poetic tradition, Nepali poetry also had a 'Ritikal' or an erotic period (1883-1917). The new poetry began with the 'New age' (1918-1950), followed by the Contemporary Nepali poetry (1951 onwards). Bhanubhakta Acharya (1814-1869) – also known as the '*Adi-kavi*' (equivalent to Valmiki in Sanskrit), was the most famous poet of early Nepali. He translated the *Adhyatma Ramayana* and *Prashnottari* into simple and lucid Nepali.

Subananda Das in the mid-18th century was the first Nepali poet, although other poets like Udaya Nanda Aryal also emerged soon to compose some heroic poetry. The devotional poetry or the Bhakti poetry of Gumani Panta to Patanjali Gajurel (both Vaishnava poets of the the Krishnabhakti cult), and Raghunath and Bhanubhakta, who followed the Ramabhakti cult, were the most important poets of this period. Vidyaranya Keshari (b.1806), who rendered into Nepali – *Draupadi-stuti, Yugal-git* and *Benu-git* – Basanta Sharma (b.1825) and Indiras (b.1827) who were also translators of the *Gita* and the *Gopika-stuti* in Nepali were other contemporary poets. Basanta Sharma's *Krishna-charitra* is regarded as the first Nepali epic. There was a third *bhakti* cult of the Jasamani saints, and Shashidar (b. 1747) was the founder of that sect with his *Sachidananda lahari.* The other famous poets of this tradition were Premdil Das and Gyandil Das (b.1821).

From 1883 the Erotic period began with the poetry of Motiram Bhatta who knew the Persian, Sanskrit and English traditions very well, and was under the influence of the Hindi poet-playwright, Bharatendu Harishchandra. During this period Rajivalochan Joshi, Laxmidatta Panta, Gopinath Lohani, Tejbahadur Rana, Nardev Pand, Sambhuprasad Dhungel, Dadhiram Marasini, Ratna Narayan Pradhan, Chandradhuj Rai, Taraman Gurung and Prasad Singh Rai were the major poets.

The first ever work of fiction in Nepali was a translation, *Mahabharat Viratparva* by Shaktiballav Aryal in 1771. Next in the series of fictional writing is Bhanudatta's *Hitopadesh* (1776) translated from Sanskrit. If these two works of fiction mark the take off point of narrative prose, Prithvinarayan Shah's *Divyopadesh* (1774) marks the same with regard to didactic prose. In fact, the language of *Divyapadesh* is more literary than that of the two other works mentioned earlier. The initial phase of Nepali prose was enriched by translations. The *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas* were the prime sources of translated prose. *Ramaswamedh,* Sundarananda Bara's *Adhyatma Ramayana* (c. 1833), Padam Sharma's *Ramayana Lankakanda* and Ramdas's *Bhaktikanda Ramayana* were translations from the *Ramayana.* Most of these were based on the *Adhyatma Ramayana* and not the *Ramayana* of Valmiki. Bhawanidatta Pandey's *Viratparva, Vdyogparva, Adiparva,* etc. were based on the *Mahabharata;* and *Markandeya purana, Gitagovinda, Swasthani Vratakatha,* etc. were based on the *Puranas.*

Literary prose in Nepali completes its first phase with the coming of Motiram Bhatta. The prose of this phase is basically descriptive and narrative. The use of long, repetitive and conjugated sentences appear as a common feature in the writings of this period and the lavish use of adjectives and adjectival phrases gives it an elevated and emotive form.

The second phase of Nepali prose literature begins with the publication of *Birsikka* (1889) and Motirarn Bhatta's *Kavi Bhanubhakta Acharya ka jivan-charitra* (1891). These also

mark the dawn of the age of printing and publication. Banaras became a centre for Nepali publication which it has remained even today. This place has contributed to the development of Nepali literature in yet another way—by providing a congenial atmosphere for general education as well as literary development so utterly lacking in Nepal under the Ranas. Some of those who grew up in this atmosphere and acquired literary eminence later were Motiram Bhatta (1866-1896), Chiranjivi Sharma (1861-1934), Naradev Pandey (1871-1944) and Kulachandra Gautam (1875-1958).

The developmental form of Nepali prose enters its third phase with the emergence of authors like Chakrapani Chalise, Pahalmansingh Swar, Suryavikram Jnawali, Parasmani Pradhan, Shambhuprasad Dhungel and Somnath Sigdel. This phase is generally known as the modern phase of Nepali literature. Modernity in this phase is found in styles as well as themes. Parasmani Pradhan is one of the architects of modern Nepali prose. He did pioneering work in the fields of grammar, linguistic studies, lexicography and text-book writing. Somnath Sigdel is well-known for his style of condensed writing and his books on Sanskrit poetics and Nepali grammar.

One can say that the Modern Nepali poetry began by 1913 with the poetry of Lekhnath Paudyal, one could say that the modern Nepali poetry began. Writing mainly from Banaras and Darjeeling, he published longer poems include *Satyakali sambad, Mero Ram, Buddbi vinod, Ritu-bichar, Satya-smriti* and *Lalitya* (in two parts) *Tarun tapasi* and an incomplete epic *Ganga gauri.* Pandit Dharni Dhar Sharma, another talented poet, also emerged at this time. His collection of poems, *Naibedya,* was published in 1920. The third major poet of this period was Mahananda Sapkota, who composed very popular lyrics.

The period between 1908 and 1934 may be regarded as transitional. On the one hand, there were scholars trained in the tradition of Sanskrit grammar, literature and ethics, on the other, the writers of younger generation had come in contact with western thought and system of education. The works of authors like

Dharanidhar, Jnawali, Mahananda and Lekhnath combine these two traditions. While writers like Lakshmiprasad Devkota, Hridayachandra Singh Pradhan, Premraj Sharma, Narendramani Acharya Dixit and Silwal Pandit introduced modern styles and structure in persuasive prose, others like Guruprasad Mainali, Puskar Shamsher, Bal Krishna Sama, Bishweshwarprasad Koirala and Bhawani Bhikshu established a new tradition by introducing the modern form of short fiction.

From 1935 a new generation of poets emerged, who included Laxmi Prasad Devkota, Siddhi Charan Shrestha, Yuddha Prasad Misra, Bai Krishna Sama, Gopal Prasad Rimal, and Bhavani Bikshu. They all began to write in *Sarda.* The best-known among them, Laxmi Prasad Devkota introduced romanticism in Nepali poetry but he himself moved towards satirical poetry later. Devkota created epics, long and short poems, critical essays, short stories and longer fictional work, and also drama.Gopal Prasad Rimal emerged as a revolutionary poet who was also responsible for introduction of free verse in Nepali. Dhruba and Kedar Man 'Vyathith' continued with this trend. Bal Krishna Sama, who was well-known for play *Mutuko vyatha* (1929), also made his mark in poetry then. Later, he wrote many plays in blank verse.

During the 1940s, a group of young and sensitive poets emerged and they included Narendraprasad Kumai, Birendra, Daniel Khaling, Bhaichand Pradhan, Dhruba, Okiwuyama Gwyn, Agam Singh Giri, and Tulsi Apatan, and Narbahadur Dahal. The women poets like Prem Rajeswari Thapa, Lakhi Devi Sundas, Sanumati Rai Sabitri Singh (Sundas) and Benita Singh were also famous.

In the early 1960s, new literary movements began with little magazines as mouth-pieces. The threesome, Indra Bahadur Rai, Iswar Ballav and Bairagl Kanhila were at the forefront of the movement. The year 1963 saw the Three Dimensional Movement in literature. The 'dimensional' writers discarded sentimentalism and romantic ideals, and advocated a realistic approach to life – something that happened in other Indian languages much earlier.

Later, Iswar Ballav's own journal of poetry, *Phul, pal patkar*, continued with these ideas. His own collections, *Aga ka phul haru hun, Aga ka phul ham hoinana* and *Euta shahar ko kinarama* became instances of this kind of new writing.

Two more literary movements launched in this period must be mentioned here: *Pragativadi Andolan* (1959) and *Ayameli Andolan*. The first was launched by Krishnachandra Singh Pradhan, Govindaprasad Lohani, Bhawani Ghimiray, Shyamprasad Sharma, D.P. Adhikari, Taranath Sharma, Basudev Luitel, Santa Dhaka!, Dharmaraj Thapa and Anandadev Bhatta. *Ayameli Andolan* (1962) started at Darjeeling and was launched by Indrabahadur Rai, Bairagi Kaila and Ishwar Ballabh.

The poets like Agam Singh Giri, who began with lyrics, also changed and began writing progressive poetry. From 1970s, the Marxist influence became apparent on the young poets of Assam and West Bengal, and the best-known voices within this tradition included Asit Rai (*Octopus*, 1971), Sarad Chhetri *(Choitiyeko aakash macchiyeko chetna,* 1978), Lakshaman Srimal *(Srimal ka kavita haru,* 1982), Bikas Gotame *(Aanastha pahad ka git haru),* Jas Yonzen 'Pyasi' *(Euta sahar ko khoj ma)* and Man Prasad Subba *(Bukhya* die *haru ko desh Ma).* Contemporary Nepali poetry has often been perceived as a continuous attempt to dialogue with oneself, creating a new kind of format. But the changes that began from the 1950s under the influence of T.S. Eliot, Pablo Neruda and Sartrean thought had already heralded a change – a poetic trend that also continues to this day.

The developmental form of Nepali prose enters its third phase with the emergence of authors like Chakrapani Chalise, Pahalmansingh Swar, Suryavikram Jnawali, Parasmani Pradhan, Shambhuprasad Dhungel and Somnath Sigdel. This phase is generally known as the modern phase of Nepali literature. Modernity in this phase s found in styles as well as themes. Parasmani Pradhan is one of the architects of modern Nepali prose. He did pioneering work in tl e fields of grammar, linguistic studies, lexicography and text-book writing. Somnath Sigdel is well-known

for his style of condensed writing and his books on Sanskrit poetics and Nepali grammar. He falls in the tradition of the highly Sanskritized Nepali prose-style of Kulachandra Gautam. Shambhuprasad Dhungel is regarded as the first essayist in Nepali.

With the end of the anarchy in Nepal and the imperialist rule in India, several new vistas opened up for an all-round development of the people and their literatures in these two countries. The people could write and publish more freely now. As a result, literary realism dominated prose-writings after 1950. Among the writers the most prominent were Poshan Pandey, Ramesh Vikal, Vijaya Malla, Indrabahadur Rai, Sanu Lama, Parijat, Matsyendra Pradhan, Shankar Lamichhaney, Mahananda Poudyal, Ramlal Adhikari, Kishore Nepal, Balkrishna Pokhrel, Diiliram Timsina, Basudev Tripathi, Churamani Bandhu, Lakhidevi Sundas, Kamala Sanskrityayan and Kamalmani Dixit. Of these again, the first seven were trend-setters in the realm of Nepali fiction, while others were essayists and literary critics. Vijaya Malla was a trend-setter in fiction as well as in drama.

Bangla

The beginning of serious Bangla poetry could be traced back to the 13th century, not because there are recorded texts dated that period but we get popular legends and tales of that time from other narratives. Besides, many texts were written down by scribes only subsequently. Ananta Badu Chandidas (14th c.) and his popular Krishna legend titled '*Srikrishna-kirtana*' written in the form of dialogues in verse or folk-drama was one of the earliest texts, which was perhaps performed. This manuscript also contains some couplets of the celebrated Sanskrit poet Jayadeva's *Gita-Govinda* translated into early middle Bengali. The trend in translating earlier great works continued throughout the remaining period as Sanskrit classics like the *Ramayana,* the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavata-purana* were made available in Bangla from early 15th century onwards. We get Maladhar Basu's translation of the two cantos of the *Bhagavata-purana,* known as *Srikrishna-bijay*

(1480) which was valued highly by all, including Chaitanya, the founder of *Vaishnavism* in Bengal. The other notable work was the verse rendering of Valmiki's *Ramayana* into Bengali by Krittibas in the mid-15th century, the popularity of which continues even to this day. But Krittibas was not the only one to translate the *Ramayana,* but other renderings did not get the same recognition. Shankar Chakravarti Kavichandra's *Vishnupuri Ramayana* or the *Ramayana* of Chandravati, one of the earliest women poets was popular in certain parts of Bengal. The earliest translator of the *Mahabharata* was Sanjay, perhaps of the fifteenth century; soon after we get Kavindra Parameshwara's *Mahabharata* (16th C.), under the patronage of Paragal Khan, a Muslim general in the army of Nawab Hussain Shah, the Sultan of Bengal. This translation is known as *Paragali Mahabharat.* But like *Krittibasi Ramayana*, the most popular Bangla *Mahabharata* was by Kashiram Das (17th c.).

With the emergence of Lord Chaitanya's (1486-1533) school of Vaishnavism that left a tremendous impact on the eastern part of India, the age of the translation of the classics ended. Chaitanya was born during the rule of Hussain Shah was the Sultan of Bengal. The life of Chaitanya inspired his disciples, scholars and poets, and then onwards begins a new page in the literary history in Bengal, with Chaitanya's biographies in the verse form to start with. Two of these were of very high quality: *Chaitanya-bhagavata* of Brindaban Das (16th C.) and *Chaitanya-charitamrita* of Krishnadas Kabiraj (17th C.). The message of love, faith and devotion of Chaitanya gave rise to what is known as the '*Padavali*' literature or the Vasishnava lyric poetry. Of course, influence of the Bengali poet Jayadeva who wrote in Sanskrit or that of the Maithili poet Vidyapati and his *padavali* was undeniable. Since Chaitanya patronized them and had them sung during his daily prayer, these texts caught on among his followers. Soon after Chaitanya, we get a number of very talented Vaishnava poets: Murari Gupta, Narahari Das, Dvija Chandidas, Ramananda Basu, Balaram Das, Basudev Ghosh and so many others. Among them,

Govindadas Kaviraj came closest to the style of Vidyapati, whereas Jnanadas (17th C.) followed Dvija Chandidas. Their mixed language that craftily blended Bangla and Maithili was called *Brajabuli*.

During the entire medieval period of Bengal, there was a parallel tradition of a narrative form of poetry called the '*mangal-kavya*', which continued until the 18th C. It is conjectured to have sprung from the common people's practices of worship of the non-Aryan gods and goddesses prevalent at that time. The earliest of these was the *Manasa-mangal* which glorifies the serpent-goddess Manasa and there were many poets between 15th and 18th century who wrote *Manasamangal* in different parts of Bengal. The other famous text was called the *Chandimangal* by Mukundaram Chakravarti (16th c.), one of the greatest poets of this period. The third major *mangal-kavya* is the *Dharmamangal*, which deals with an episode connected with the primitive sun-god. *Annada-mangal* of Bharatchandra Ray, the most popular poet of the medieval times, was completed in 1752, only five years before the Battle of Plassey between the Nawab of Bengal and the British. Noticeably, the shift from *Vaishnavism* to the *Shakta* tradition got initiated through these texts, the Shakti cult took over in the *Shakta padavali* of Ramprasad Sen and others.

Bengali prose practically began with the *Brahman-Roman Catholic sambad* (1743) by Dom Antonio, and *Crepar Xaxtrer Orthbhcd* (1743) by Manoel da Assumpsam which were unique examples of this type of prose. The foreign rulers had to learn and cultivate Bengali language for the purpose of administration and therefore, a grammar of it must be written in the Western model. That was how Nathaniel Brassey Halhed began compiling a Bengali grammar (published in 1778). It was around this time that the printing press was introduced in Bengal, and the Fort William College (1800) was established. Between 1801 and 1825, a number of prose text-books were written by William Carey (1761-1834), Mrityunjay Vidyalamkar, Rajiblochan Mukherjee, Tarinicharan Mitra, Chandicharan Munshi, Ramram Basu and other teachers. Their quality of prose might not have been of the highest standard,

but their efforts were commendable as they gave the language a shape.

The advent of the pre-modern and the end of the medieval period happened because of the introduction of the Western education by the British by the mid-19th century, when we see some attempting to write new poetry in English. This included Kashiprasad Ghosh and Shashichandra Dutta, for example, and even Michael Madhusudan Dutt. Bankim, the prose writer par excellence, and the one responsible for bringing in Bangla the genre of novels, also wrote his first fictional prose in English. It was a different matter that both Michael and Bankim became the best exponents of their literary art in Bangla, the first ones introducing new metrics as well as lexical styles and unconventional positions on our own epics and legends. Bankim created a new prose-style and foregrounded social concerns that were much ahead of his time through his novels. Madhusudan drew upon the rich tradition of Sanskrit and and made good use of his knowledge of Greek, Latin, French and Italian poetry. He broke the rigid nature of the native '*payar*' metre and also invented the blank verse in Bangla, and all his poetic works are considered milestones in modern Bangla poetry: epics like the *Tilottama-sambhav* (I860) and the *Meghanad badh* (1861), and the lyrics in the *Birangana* (1862) and *Brajangana* (1861), besides his book of sonnets – *Chaturdash-padi kabitabali* (1866). But he made an equally important contribution to Bangla drama.

During this period the most prominent among those who experimented with prose was Rammohun Roy (1774-1833) who himself knew so many languages, and wrote many books.

Bangla prose was fortunate to have got someone like Iswarchandra Vidyasagar in the mid-19th century. It was Vidyasagar who polished the language by bringing the rich classical texts in Bangla as well as created many adaptations of great texts. Rammohun and Vidyasagar had begun social reforms but it was furthered by the protagonists of the Brahmo movement. With the activities of the School Books Society (1817) and the Vernacular

Literature Society (1851), the two official institutions, towards the popularization of Bengali prose, many magazines and journals began appearing. Initially, in the last half of the 19th century, Bengali prose was essentially based on the classical Sanskrit style, but with the publication of prose-texts based on the language of the common folk of Calcutta by Pyarichand Mitra and Kaliprasanna Sinha, and their two works *Alaler gharer dulal* (1857) and *Hutom pyanchar naksha*, (1862), prose acquired a new colloquial style. That was when Bankimchandra Chatterjee, whose novels, dissertations and unique personal essays marked a glorious phase in Bengali prose came on the scene.

The younger poets like Hemchandra Banerjee (1838-1903) followed his model in his *Britrasanghar* (1875-1877), and other talented poets such as Navinchandra Sen (1846-1909) did not lag far behind. Sen's trilogy on the theme of Krishna as in the Mahabharata, namely, *Raibataka* (1886), *Kumkshetra* (1893) and *Prabhash* (1896) were important works. But at the same time, there were others like Dwijendranath Tagore (1840-1926) and Beharilal Chakravarti (1835-1894), who wrote in the tradition of romantic lyricism then. Dwijendranath Tagore's verse translation of Kalidasa's *Meghadutam* (1860) or his *Swapna-prayan* (1875), an allegorical poem were instances of this kind of tradition of high conception and noble execution. Like most of the contemporary poets, Beharilal Chakravarti followed the path of Iswarchandra Gupta, but under the influence of his friends like Dwijendranath Tagore and Krishnakamal Bhattacharya he stopped copying Iswarchandra and soon developed a metre with a rhythm of its own, reflected in his works *Bangasundari* (1875) and *Saradamangal* (1880). Devendranath Sen (1855-1920) who authored *Ashoka-guchchha* (1901), *Golapa-guchchha* (1911), *Parijata-guchchha* (1911), etc. was the best known poet afrter Beharilal and Dwijendranath. Dwijendranath was also the leader of a literary and cultural group whose mouthpiece became a monthly magazine called *Bharati* (founded in 1877), which brought out some of the best authors for the first time. This group produced two

remarkable women poets – Swarnakumari Devi (1854-1924), and Girindramohini Dasi (1855-1932).

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) the great modern Indian poet and an icon of modern Indian literature, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913, emerged soon after, and right from his initial work, *Kari o komal* (1886), he showed great maturity. His contemporaries – Akshaykumar Baral (1830-1919), Kamini Roy (1864-1933) and Govindachandra Das (1855-1918) require special mention. In the first two decades of the 20th century, Satyendranath Datta, a skilful metrician, was the only other significant poet to emerge, besides Kazi Nazrul Islam who became famous for his poetry of valor and vigour as well as for his by now immortal love poems and patriotic songs. After Bankimchandra and Vidyasagar, Rabindranath Tagore appeared on the scene with his versatile genius. He gave Bengali prose a dimension which transcended the national boundaries.

Soon after the First World War a group of young poets and writers, well-read in Western literature and with international outlook, were greatly inspired by the new trends in European literature. Known as the *Kallol-era* poets (so named after their monthly magazine, *Kallol* (1923), founded by Gokulchandra Nag and Dineshranjan Das), they emphasised realism, and started writing in a tone different from one current in Bengali poetry still dominated by Tagore. They included Premendra Mitra, Achintyakumar Sengupta, Buddhadev Basu, Ajitkumar Datta and Bishnu Dey – all legendary figures in Bangla poetry today. Another poet, Mohitlal Majumdar, who had a dislike for Rabindranath's poems, is also worth mentioning. *Kallol* disappeared soon after but a new magazine – *Parichay* – appeared thanks to another very powerful (and resourceful) poet – Sudhindranath Datta (1901-1960), and the onward march of Bangla new poetry continued unabated. The same magazine also brought to light a rather shy but extremely talented poet, Jibanananda Das (1899-1954), considered to be the best that happened to Bangla poetry after Tagore.

After the Tagore era, when the Second World War ended

with the destruction, death and dismemberment of many nations, and the rise of the Communist Movement in this part of the globe, Bangla poetry became politically conscious. Sukanta Bhattacharya (1925-1947), sworn to Communism, was a very promising poet of this period, and another poet who made his mark then was Amiya Chakravarti. The partition of India and Bengal and the changing socio-economic condition provided the post-Independence Bengali poets with their own themes for poetry, and many dabbled in both poetry and fiction-writing. Contemporary Bengali poetry is, by and large, lyrical in expression and experimental in nature, and the generation that made significant contribution after independence included poets such as Niren Chakravarti, Arun Mitra, Shakti Chatterjee, Shankho Ghose and Alokeranjan Dasgupta.

Another important master of prose was Saratchandra Chatterjee (1876-1938) whose novels earned him admiration of all sections of readers. Most novelists after him followed his style and not Tagore's. Pramatha Chaudhury (1868-1946), who wrote under the pseudonym of Birbal, invented his own style which is the basis of today's Bangla prose. His journal, *Sabuj patra* (1915), became the mouthpiece of a new generation of prose writers, viz., Atulchandra Gupta, Annadasankar Ray, Dhurjatiprasad Mukherjee, Sureshchandra Chakravarti and others. Abanindranath Tagore (1871-1951) also distinguished himself by writing in his individual style. After *Sabuj patra*, the other journals like *Kallol, Kali kalam* and *Parichay* became the organs of a new generation of bright young writers who made experiments with prose in so many ways: Buddhadeb Basu, Premendra Mitra, Achintyakumar Sengupta and Sudhindranath Datta. Among the contemporary prose writers, mention must be made of Manik Bandyopadhyay, Tarasankar Banerjee (1898-1971) and Bibhutibhushan of the 'Pather panchali' fame. Those who made their mark in Bangla prose later included Satinath Bhaduri, Kamal Kumar Majumdar, Amiyabhushan Majumdar, Ashapurna Devi,Mahasweta Devi and Sunil Gangopadhyay.

Maithili

If one accepts the 9th–11th Century *Charya* songs as texts created by 33 Sahajiya Tantric Buddist saints in a variety that represented the early forms of several Eastern Aryan languages such as Bangla, Assam,ese, Oriya and Maithili, the earliest genius to make his mark on Maithili as well as literary stage all over the sub-continent was surely Vidyapati.

In the first decade of the 15th century we find *Kirtilata* and *Kirti-pataka* of Vidyapati, interspersed with prose-passages which, notwithstanding the structural influence of Avahattha, are specimens of early Maithil. Such prose passages often show resemblance to the prose of *Varnaratnakara*. The earliest specimens of Maithili prose are to be found in *Kuvalaya-mala-katha* and *Ukti-vyakti-prakarana* by Damodar Sharma, written around the twelfth century. The full-fledged literary form of Maithili prose is manifest in *Varnaratnakara* of Jyotirishvara Thakur (1280-1340), who was a court pandit of Harisimhadeva (1296-1324), the last Karnata ruler of Mithila.

Vidyapati (1374-1460 A.D.) was born in a scholarly Shaivite Brahmin family in the village of Bisfi in the Sitamari subdivision of Mithila. Their family was employed in high positions at the court of the rulers of Mithila and had made many important contributions in both administrative as well as cultural matters. Vidyapati himself was a member of the court of the kings Dev Singh and Shivsingh. Vidyapati wrote in Maithili, Avahattha, and Sanskrit. He was a rare author who wrote many *Shaivite* songs as well as verses on Radha-Krishna in the best of *Vaisnava* tradition. These songs in Maithili are a great achievement in metrical feet and they had also become popular all over Bengal, and influenced a generation of poets there, including Tagore. He followed Jyotirishvara and Umapati, but overshadowed all Maithili poets with the brilliance of his metaphors and similes and in the grace of expression and higher flights of poetic fancy. One simply marvels at the sweep of his imagination. Vidyapati's contemporaries and successors include Amritakara, Kanshanarayana, Govindadas and Vishnupuri.

Govindadas, a master of poetry that is erotically devotional, focuses more on content than on the form or nuances.

The development of Maithili prose shows roughly three stages: early, medieval and modern. The earliest specimens of Maithili prose are to be found in *Kuvalaya-mala-katha* and *Ukti-vyakti-prakarana* by Damodar Sharma, written around the twelfth century. In spite of being produced outside Mithila and under the influence of Apabhramsha and Avahattha, they contain sentences and verbal forms which may safely be called Maithili. Damodar Sharma, a protege of Raja Govindachandra of Vamasi, wrote them in Sanskrit as readers for students, and by way of examples put in a number of vernacular words, idioms and sentences which undoubtedly represent the Maithili of that time. Whatever prose in the medieval period is found, it is not for literary use but only for business transactions. It may be called 'documentary prose'.

In Nepal, during the period from the 16th to the 18th century, a large number of Maithili plays were produced under the patronage of the Malla rulers of Nepal. Many of them contain dialogues cast in simple Maithili prose, though some of them are elaborate prose passages of exquisite literary merit. From this point of view *Hara-Gaurivivaha* and *Maditakuvalayashva* of Jagajyotimatla are the best. *Nalacharita* and *Ushaharana* of Jagatprakashtnalla, *Gaurivivaha, Madhavanala* and *Rukmini-harana* of Bhupatindramalla, and *Ushaharana, Mandhatru-pakhyana, Kolasuravadha* and *Andhakasumvadha* of Ranjitmalla have enough prose dialogues which present the pure form of contemporary Maithili.

Among the most popular and common type of poetry is 'Tirhuti'. Other popular forms are *'Samadouni', 'Lagni', 'Chaitavara', 'Malara', 'Yoga', 'Uchiti', 'Sohara', 'Chaumasa'* and *'Barahmasa'. 'Nachari', 'Maheshvani', 'Gosaunika Gita' and 'Vishnupada'* which were enriched by Umapati, Vidyapati, Nandipati, Chanda Jha, Saheb Ramadasa, Gananath Jha, Vindhyanatha Jha, Kalikumar Das and others. Parmananda Datta tried a new technique in *'Maheshavanis'*.

The lyrical tradition had its culmination in Harsanatha. From the 18th century onwards a new style made its appearance in the writings of Nandipati and Manabodha. The popular taste was aptly met by Manabodha. The lyrical tradition was carried forward by Bhuvana *(Asadha* and *Smriti-kana),* Ishanatha Jha *(Mala),* Arsi Prasad Singh, Surendra Jha 'Suman', Upendra Thakur 'Mohan' and Kashinatha Misra 'Madhup' in the modern period. Bhuvana – in the beginning of the 20th century, was the harbinger of new poetry, greatly influenced by the best of the Western poets of his time.

In the epic tradition, one gets a great variety. Manabodha's *Krishna-janma,* Chanda Jha's *Ramayana,* and Lal Das's *Ramesh-varacharita Ramayana* may be compared with the *maha-kavya*s of any other language. Raghunandan Das (*Subhadraharan),* Badrinatha Jha *(Ekavah'parinya)* and Tantranatha Jha *(Kichakavadha)* follow the conventions of Sanskrit epics. Chanda Jha was the first to compose a fully developed epic, and this had a great impact on the later poets. As a narrative poet, Raghunandan Das rose to great heights. Badrinatha Jha achieved a rare rhetorical excellence. Tantranatha Jha was another distinguished poet. Sitarama Jha *(Ambacharita)* distinguished himself as yet another master of epic poetry. Kashinath Misra 'Madhup' *(Radhaviraha)* and Lakshmana Jha *(Ganga),* Dinanath Pathak (*Chanakya*), and Baidyanatha Mallick 'Vidhu' (*Sitayana*) also deserve mention. Kedaranatha Labh *(Lakhimarani* and *Bharati)* portrayed great Maithili women, much as Michael did in his *'Birangana Kavya'* in Bangla, and both the works of Labh were rich in rhythm and diction, and could be called the short epics (*khanda kavya*).

The modern Maithili prose is first found in Jivan Jha in his drama *Bandar sanyog* (1904) and then in his other dramas. But it attained satisfactory refinement only with the publication of *Maithila-hita-sadhana* (1905), *Mithila Moda* (1906) and *Mithila Mihir* (1908). In developing the Maithili prose style the names of M.M. Muralidhar Jha, Parameshvar Jha. Laldas, Janar-dan Jha

'Janasidan', Rasbehari Das, Taracharan Jha, etc. deserve specific mention.

Under the impact of English and other contemporary Indian literatures, Maithili poets began to try their hands at sonnets, odes, lyrics and literary ballads. The influence of Marx, Freud, Sartre and Camus and other thinkers became progressively marked in their poetry. Blank verse and 'muktaka' acquired a great prominence at the hands of Sitarama Jha. Maithili poetry also served a patriotic purpose in our century. Surendra Jha 'Suman' *(Payasvini)* was surely a poet of superior sensibilities, and was unique in his lexical choice, descriptive abilities and metrical style. Arsi Prasad Singh was another excellent poet, and his songs are popular even today. Vaidyanath Misra 'Yatri' *(Patrahina nagna gacha)* was a Marxist poet with a keen sense of bitter humor and satire. He wrote in both Hindi (as 'Nagarjun') and Maithili, and was perhaps the best known modern Maithili poet, along with Rajkamal Choudhary *(Vichitra, and Swaragandha),* who was highly influecned by the philosophy of existentialism. Upendranatha Jha 'Vyasa' was another major poet of this era. Raghavacharya was well-known for his patriotic songs.

Among the new and powerful voices in the post-independence period, Ramakrishna Jha 'Kishun' *(Atmanepada)* influenced many, while Mayananda Misra *(Dishantar)* was better known for his fiction. Somadeva *(Kaladhvani),* Kirtinarayana Misra *(Simanta),* Gangesha Gunjan *(Ham, ek mithya parichaya),* Jivakanta *(Nachu he prithivi),* Ramanand 'Renu' *(Antatah)* and Chandranatha Misra 'Amar' are very important poets of Modern Maithili. However, by far the best-known Maithili poet of the post-Yatri era is 'Nachiketa' (b. 1951-) with four collections of poems to his credit – '*Kavayo Vadanti*', '*Amritasya Putrah*', '*Anuttaran*', and '*Madhyam-purush Ekvachan*'. Among the modern women poets, Ilarani Singh *(Vindanti)*, Shephalika Varma, Nirja Renu, Susmita Pathak and Shanti Suman are important voices.

Oriya

Scholars think that the Mahalingeshwar inscription dated AD 900 refers to the growth of Oriya prose. In many other inscriptions, the texts were in Sanskrit but were occasionally written in Oriya. Then there was Oriya prose in the bilingual inscription (Tamil and Oriya) of the Ganga King, Narasingh Dev II, of AD 1295. Perhaps, the Urrazam inscription (AD 1050) of Chikakol district in the copper-plate grants of the Ganga and Suryavanshi kings is one of the oldest inscriptions in Oriya. Oriya prose found equal place beside the Sanskrit and Telugu languages in the Balangalani copper-plate grant of Kapilendra Deva. D.C. Sarkar says that the *puranik*letters were written in the form of prose in Oriya; for example, '*Balaramanka agnya patrika*' (Letter written by Balaram), '*Bhimanka agnya patrika*' (Letter written by Bhima), etc. In the sixteenth century texts on the Chronicle of the Puri Jagannath temple, we get mostly verse but some prose too. This chronicle, written as a record over a long period, is an important record of the different religious ceremonies, festivals and administration of the temple as well as of the prevailing social and political events of the country. From the 12th century onwards, the development of the language is traceable.. Another important prose text, a *gadya-kavya*, of the 16th century Oriya is *Rudrasudhanidhi*, with a rich vocabulary and elegant diction. *Chacherilita,* discovered and edited by Ashutosh Patnaik, is another excellent prose work of the same time. The *Brahmagita* of Balaram Das and *Tulavina* of Jagannath Das also contain specimens of prose.

All said and done, the full-fledged writing of Oriya prose began after 1803 with the British occupation of Orissa. William Carey, Amos Sutton and others translated the *Bible* into Oriya prose and wrote many other religious tracts.

Oriya poetry on the other hand is classifiable into the Early, pre-Sarala period was between 13th and 15th c.), Sarala (15th c.), Panchasakha (16th c.) and Riti (16th to 19th c.) periods. Sarala Das is generally assumed to be the first important poet, though the poetic tradition goes back to the Charya pada, The two centuries

prior to Sarala Das saw many social and religious changes. The works worth mentioning during this period are *Sisuveda, Amarakosa, Kalasa chautisa* and *Kesava koili.* Besides, there were numerous short compositions by Siddhas and Nathas. Both *Kalasa chautisa* and *Kesava koili* mark the beginning of two important forms of medieval Oriya poetry, the *chautisa* and the *koili.*

The next phase of Oriya poetry is generally identified as the Sarala age. The Sarala age covers the second half of the 15th century. Three of Sarala's epics, the *Vichitra Ramayana, Mahabharata* and *Chandipurana* are so far known, out of which the *Mahabharata* is his best creation. *The Vichitra Ramayana* gives the story of Sita's punishment, the *Mahabharata* is modelled on the Sanskrit *Mahabharata* and *Chandipuraaa* is the story of goddess Durga killing Mahishasura. While the themes of all his works were borrowed from the classics, their treatment was always his own.

In terms of form, too, they were written in a new metre called *dandak* or *dandi,* in which each line in a couplet has eighteen letters, usually. Sarala Das's poetry is simple and forceful, and his diction is free from Sanskritization.

The Panchasakha period in Oriya literature produced different types of poets and philosophers, such as Balaram Das and Jagannath Das (both 15th-16th c), Sisu Ananta Das, Jasobanta Das and Achyutananda Das. The great work of Jagannath Das has not only influenced Oriya culture but played a dynamic role in the development of the *puranic* tradition. Other works of Balaram Das are *Brahmanda bhugole, Udhaba gita, Bata abakasa, Bhaba samudra, Laxmi purana, Mruguni stuti* and *Bedanta sara gita.* Besides his *Bhagabata,* Jagannath Das wrote *Tula bhina, Artha koili,* and *Daru bramha gita.* A large variety of verse forms were also attempted by these two poets. Different forms evolved in poetry in this age and influenced contemporary poets as well as those of the 17th century.

The Riti or stylistic age came after the Panchasakha period

and continued up to the second decade of 19th century. The prominent figures were Arjun Das (15th-16th c.) and Narasimha Sena Mahapatra (16th c.), and their works were *Ramabibha, Parimala* and *Rahasyamanjari.* The characteristics of the age were their dealing with the Rama and Krishna stories, and use of figures of speech and typical prosody of Oriya.There were many who followed. Imaginary characters like Parimala, Sarbanga Sundari, Leelabati, Anangarekha and Chitrakala also appeared with Rama and Sita in their writings. This period has great significance in Oriya,as it was at this time that Dinakrushna's poetic fame became so much that he was imprisoned. The Oriya poetry of this period was written more for the purpose of singing than reading. *Rasakallola* is an example of this. These experiments achieved their perfection in the writings of Upendra Bhanja (16704740), the 'Kabi samrat', of the age, often compared with the great Sanskrit poets. To all major groups of verses he gave a new turn. His works were neat in form and sweet in versification. The most popular among his works are *Baidehisha bilasa, Labanya* bati, *Koti brahmanda sundari, Subhadra parinaya, Kalakautuka, Rasa panchaka* and a number of lyrics.

The famous works of the post-Riti period were *Padmabati abhiJasa* by Rani Nisanka Ray, *Sashirekha* by Padmanabh Srichandan, *Mathura mangala* by Bhakta Charan Das, *Chataichhabati* by Banamali Das, Brajabihari by Dasharathi Das, *Rasa Jahari* by Raghunath Bhanja, *Bidagdha chintamani* by Abhimanyu Samanta Simhara, *Chandrakala* by Baladev Rath and *Raghaba bilasa* by Jadumani Mahapatra.

Among the Riti poets of the 18th and 19th centuries Brajanath Badajena, Abhimanyu Samanta Simhara and Baladev Rath were the prominent figures. Brajanath Badajena (1730-95) emphasized the naturalness of style. Another dominant literary figure of this period was Abhimanyu Samanta Simhara (1757-1807): *Bidagdha chintamani, Prema chintamani, Rasabati Rasalekha* and *Sulakshana.* He was an exponent of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, and his poetry is rich in melody and use of words. Like Upendra Bhanja,

Abhimanyu also paid particular attention to the use of words.

Baladev Rath (1789-1845) is generally remembered for his *Kishore* chandrananda champu in the Riti tradition. He was honoured with the title 'Kabisurya', the sun among the poets. He also experimented with a *champu* kavya and also a number of metres or *chhandas* which express his feelings of poverty and frustration.

Bhakti literature has had a strong and rich tradition in Oriya, led by Salabeg (17th c.) and Banamali Das. The important puranas are *Han bansa* by Achyutananda Das, *Jaimini Bharata* by Nilambar Das, *Vishnukeshari purana* and *Markandeya purana* by M'ahadev Das and *Nrisingha purana* by Pitambar Das. *Chautisa* has its origin in Bachha Das's *Kalasa chautisa* which became very popular in medieval Oriya poetry. *Bhajana* and *Janana* are two distinct literary forms in *Bhakti* poetry which had their origin in the writings of Panchasakha. Bhima Bhoi (1855-1895), a tribal Kondh poet and an exponent of Mahima or Alekh cult, is known for his *bhajans* and *Stuti chintamani,* a collection of 100 cantos.

Other forms of poetry written in this period are *'sodasa'*, a form like *chuatisa* where sixteen vowels are used at the beginning of the lines; *'chitau'* or letter form to send a message; *'padia'*, a very short poem, and named according to the number of stanzas in it; *'poi'* another short poem; *mangala geeta,* generally sung at marriage, etc. Thus, Early and medieval periods had a long history and has influenced modern poets in various ways.

Coming to the modern period, Radhanath Ray (1848-1908) is generally accepted as the first modern poet in Oriya. Madhusudan Rao (1853-1912) added another quality to Oriya poetry. His language had a lyrical charm and was loaded with a high degree of intense personal emotion. Madhusudhan's work has been collected in six volumes: *Kabita ball* (Poems, 1875), *Basanta gatha* (Ballads of spring, 1901) and *Bibidha kabita* (Miscellaneous poems, 1915), etc. His prayer songs are recited even today by the school students. Yet another important voice was Gangadhar Meher (1862-1924),

who wrote longer poems, such as *Tapaswini* (The nun, 1914). It is the story of the banishment of Sita and her life in the forest in exile.

By the late 19th century, press and journal publication began in Oriya with *Utkal dipika* (1866), *Balasore sambad bahika* (1868), *Utkal darpana* (1873), *Utkalputra* (1874), *Bideshi* (1874), *Utkal madhupa* (1878), *Naba sambada* (1887), *Odia o nabasambad* (1888), *Utkal prabha* (1891), *Bijuli* (1893), *Indradhanu* (1893), *Utkal sahitya* (1897), *Alochana* (1900) etc. They laid the foundations of Oriya prose. Then came the seven decades of text-book writing. However, during the last three decades of the nineteenth century, Ramasankar, Gourisankar, Nilmoni Vidyaratna, Pyari-mohan Acharya, Fakirmohan Senapati, Vishwanath Kar, Madhusudan Rao and Radhanath Ray enriched the Oriya prose literature. In the early 20th century, the Satyabadi School of writers set the standard appropriately. Gopabandhu Das, Nilakantha Das, Godavaris Mishra, Kripasindhu Mishra, Basudeb Mohapatra etc. of this School contributed to the richness of Oriya prose.

Oriya prose began to make great progress from the third decade of the twentieth century because of the literary movements, *Sabuja* and *Nabajuga*. Now, the prose became more reflective and analytical, refined and elegant. Chintamoni Mohanty, Upendrakishore Mohanty, Upendrakishore Das, Baishnabacharan Das, Brajabihari Mohanty, Girijasankar Ray, Govindachandra Tripathy, and many others made this possible. The most famous among the contemporary essayists and critics who have left their distinctive mark on Oriya prose are Chittaranjan Das, Surendra Mohanty, Chandrasekhar Rath, Gourikumar Brahma, Natabar Samantaray, Krishnachandra Panigrahi, Kedarnath Mohapatra, Nabinkumar Sahu, Bhubaneswar Behera, Pathani Patnaik, Debi Prasanna Pattanayak, Banshidhar Mohanty, Khageswar Mohapatra, Debendra Mohanty, and Dasarathi Das.

The renowned travelogue writers include Mayadhar Mansingh, Umesh Panigrahi, Sriharsha Mishra, Monoj Das,

Surendra Mohanty, Golakbihari Dhall, Govinda Das, Akhilamohan Patnaik, etc. also contributed their mite. Among the writers of autobiography are Nitakantha Das, Godavarish Mishra, Harekrishna Mahatab, Lakshminarayan Sahu, etc. Oriya prose has got the present shape because of the tireless efforts of so many writers and scholars.

In poetry, the first two decades of this century saw the growth patriotic spirit which brought in new voices: Pandit Gopabandhu Das (1877-1982), Nilakantha Das (1894-1967), Godabarish Mishra, etc. The poets who called themselves *Sabuja*, formed a distinct group and their poetry was heavily influenced by Tagore and his romantic metaphysical verse. From Annadasankar Ray and Kalindi Charan Panigrahi to Mayadhar Mansinha and Radhamohan Garnaik, this tradition continued. Mayadhar Mansinha wrote a number of long poems and Kalindi Panigrahi, many lyrical poems. As against this continuing romantic trend Godabarish Mahapatra wrote satirical poems, and Sachi Routray the revolutionary ones. But when Sachi Routray published his *Pandulipi* in 1947 it was in a refreshingly new kind of language despite its political rhetoric. In 1955 a slim volume of poems entitled Nutan *kavita* – a combined anthology of Guruprasad Mohanty and Bhanuji Rao was published. They were completely free from rhetoric and posturing. Ramakanta Rath, another important poet also experimented with various techniques and themes.Sitakant Mahapatra is another poet of note. Soubhagya Mishra's five collections of poems show him as a sensitive poet writing on despair and desolation. Dipak Mishra, another powerful poet, has published ten anthologies of poems and is considered an important voice in the modern Oriya poetry. Rajendra Panda is an innovative poet and his language is exceptionally rich and lyrical – quite close to the spoken idiom.

Contemporary Oriya has many more major poets, including Jagannath Prasad Das, Pratibha Satpathy, Kamalakanta Lenka, Sarat Pradhan, Bansidhar Sarangi, Chitamoni Behera, Debadas Chhotray, Amaresh Patnaik and so many others.

Santali

Santali is the only Austro-Asiatic language which is in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution now. Santali is spoken by about 5.95 million speakers in India by a 1997-estimate. It is spread over Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Tripura, and West Bengal, and is also spoken in Nepal and Bhutan. Bangladesh has over 150,000 speakers of Santali. It is often known or referred to by its alternate names: Hor, Har, Satar, Santhali, Satar, Santhali, Sandal, Sangthal, Santhiali, and Sonthal. The language has several dialects: Karmali, Kamari-Santhali, Lohari-Santhali, Mahali, Manjhi, and Pahariya. A numer of linguistic studies have appeared in print already. Bodding's (1922) '*Materials for a Santali Grammar*' (1922), '*A Santali Grammar for the Beginners*' (1929), Macphail's '*An Introduction to Santali*' (1964), and a five-volume Santali Dictionary (1936) are major publications. Cecil Bompas has studied the '*Folklore of the Santal Parganas*' (1905), '*Barka Kisku*' (2000), '*The Santals and their Ancestors*' (2000), M. Oran's (1965) '*The Santal: A Tribe in Search of a Great Tradition*', Tribeand Campbell & Macphail have also published a Santali-English bilingual dictionary (1933). There are sociological and anthropological studies too, for example,

Wesley Culshaw's '*Tribal Heritage: A Study of the Santals*' (1949), or Hembrom (1996) '*The Santals: anthropological-theological reflections on Santali*', besides a few grammars (Jeremiah Philips, 1852), dictionaries (Prasad (1988), Doman Sahu 'Samir' (Introductory text books).

Initially, all Santali writings were in Bengali, Devanagari, or Roman script. Although there have been an impressive number of works by foreigner and non-Santal writers on dictionary, grammar, collection of folklore etc., these works are mostly intended for research purposes. Roman script was in extensive use for writing Santali and several books in Santali have been published using Roman script. But most of the creative literatures were written by the native speakers in Bengali or Devanagari scripts. The use of different scripts for writing Santali has hindered the

development and utilization of Santali language. This, in turn, has effectively marred the progress of Santali language in several fields such as philosophy, history, religion, science, novel, prose, poetry etc. The problem of using different scripts for the same language necessitated the invention of a new script for Santali, and it finally led to the invention of Ol Chiki by Pandit Raghunath Murmu. After the invention of Ol Chiki, a large number of books have been written by various authors in Santali using Ol Chiki script. Types of books include (i) novels and short stories, (ii) poetries, songs, and religious sermons, (iii) books on Santal society, (iv) primary books for learning Ol Chiki, (v) books for learning primary mathematics, (vi) books on Santali grammars and related topics, and (vii) books on great tribal persons. Santali magazines in Ol Chiki are also being published regularly. There are problems, however is no mechanism to represent the Glottal stop of Santali sounds which Santals use very frequently.

Although the Roman script can nicely represent checked consonants, it is not without deficiencies. The Roman script cannot distinguish between the short and long vowels. It is worth mentioning that the Santali long vowels are pronounced much longer than those of English, and other Indic languages. Another problem with Roman script is that it does not have any explicit mechanism to represent the Glottal stop. Therefore to retain the beauty, specialty, peculiarity and sweetness of Santali language, there is a need to use a script that can represent all sounds of the Santali language accurately and is naturally appealing to all Santals, and it is definitely the Ol Chiki script that fulfils these requirements.

Pandit Raghunath Murmu is the inventor of Ol Chiki script. He was born in a village, called (Dahardih) Dandbose, on 5th May 1905 on the day of full moon in the district of Mayurbhanj, Orissa. After a brief stint in technical profession, he took up the job of teaching in Badomtolia high school. During this time, his interest was drawn into Santali literatures. Santali is a language with its own special characteristics, and has a literature which dates back to the beginning of the 15th century. Naturally, he felt that Santals

with their rich cultural heritage and tradition also need a separate script to preserve and promote their language, and therefore, he took up the work of inventing Ol Chiki script for writing Santali. The epoch making work of invention of Ol Chiki script was published in 1925. In the novel *Bidu Chandan*, he has vividly described how god Bidu and godess Chandan who appears on Earth as human beings would have naturally invented the Ol Chiki script in order to communicate with each other using written Santali. He wrote over 150 books covering a wide spectrum of subjects such as grammar, novels, drama, poetry, and story in Santali uisng Ol Chiki as a part of his extensive programme for culturally upgrading the Santal community.

The following Santali writers have made their mark in different genres of writing. Among the poets, the prominent ones include Doman Sahu, Sharada Prasad Kisku, Ramdhan Murmu, Bhojrai Hembram, Kajoli Soren, Babulal Murmu, Aditya Mitra, and Kanailal Tudu. Among the playwrights, mention could be made of Shyam Murmu, T.K. Rajpaj, Kaliram Soren, Badal Hembram, and Marshal Hembram. Santali fiction writing is relatively new, but here the well-known novelists include Chandra Mohan Hansda and Badal Hembram. There are many who have concentrated mainly on short fiction or stories are Sarada Prasad Kisku, Durbin Soren, Digambar Hansda and a few others.

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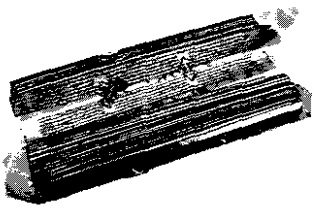
THE WESTERN INDIA



Gujarati

The initial versification in Gujarati can be seen in the quotations of Hemchandra Suri (1088-1172) where he uses them as instances of grammatical rules. The Apabhramsha of this region (including Rajasthan) was also called the '*Gurjar*' or '*Prachin*' Apabhramsha, which was the common language of Gujarat and Rajasthan. During 1150-1450 A.D., the old Gujarati poetry was mostly verse poetry preserved and created for different occasions and by many anonymous poets. Many of them were Jain saint-poets. The main forms were 'Rasa' and 'Fagu', but we also find other forms, such as 'Barmasi', 'Chhappaya',. 'Vivahalu', 'Chhhanda' and Trabandha.' Works of Jain poets were preserved in the temples but the works of the non-Jain poets are more secular and of high standard. The most well-known was the '*Vasant-vilas*' (early 14th c), by an unknown poet, the theme of which was love and desire. The manuscript of this poem contained the paintings in Ajanta-style, which reflect inter-relation of arts and rich tradition of pure art forms in the cultural life of Gujarat. Other poems of this time – such as *Hamsauli* (1371), *Sadayavatsa charita* (1410) by Bhim,

Ranamallachhanda (1390) by Shridhara, *Sandeshkarasa* (12th c.) by Abdurrehman, *Hansaraj Vachharaj chaupai* (1355) by Vijayabhadrasuri and *Vidyavilas pavadu* (1429) by Hiranand – were fiction-oriented. The period between 1450 and 1850 is also known as the Bhakti period – just as in Bengal or elsewhere. Most of these lyrics were influenced by Vaishnavism, and the forms of 'Pada', 'Chhappa', 'Garbo', 'Garbi', 'Akhyana', 'Katha', and 'Padyavarta' emerged at this time, the last three of these being fictional – once again. The most prominet poets are Narsimha Mehta, Mirabai, Akho, Premanand, Samal and Dayaram.

In medieval Gujarati literature, we have some fine specimens of prose. *Prithvichandracharit* (15th c.) by Manikyachandra Suri was one such specimen. Discourses of Swami Sahajananda, founder of the Swaminarayan sect, which were published in the first quarter of the nineteenth century under the title *Vachana-miruto,* are a flawless piece of prose. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, thanks to the English educational institutions, many prose writers emerged: Narmad (1833-1886) was one of them. He tried to translate or create in Gujarati everything that fascinated him in English literature. He also started a journal, *Dandiy,*. His contemporary, Dalpatram (1828-1898) was a fine essayist. Navalram (1836-1888) laid the foundation of literary criticism by his essays and reviews.

Narsimha Mehta (1414-1480) was a poet-philosopher who drew heavily from the Vedanta, and he is often compared with Surdas and Vidyapati. The other notable philosophical poet was Akho (1591-1656), who expounded Advaita philosphy in his works like *Akhe-gita, Panchikaran, Anubhuvbindu* and hundreds of *'chhappas'*. Premanand (1636-1734) was also a popular and successful poet of the time, known for his *'akhyana'* poetry. But it was undoubtedly Mirabai (1498-1547), who emerged as the greatest poetess of western India, and had an appeal all over the sub-continent. Other noted poets of this time were Samal Bhatt (1690-1769) – mainly a story-teller known for his didactic poems and Dayaram (1777-1852), known for his devotional love lyrics,

called *Garbi*. Bhalan (1485-1550) was the founder of 'Akhyana' form of literature, and he wrote lyrical poems in devotion to Lord Rama. There were some Jain poets and some saint poets of the Swaminarayan sect made very important contribution.

The poets like Dalpatram (1820-1898), and Narmadashankar (1833-1886) heralded a new era in modern Gujarati poetry, bringing in new themes and imagery. Between the two, Narmad was a reformist, who wrote numerous poems on reforms but also many nature-poems like Wordsworth. This was the period of the influence of the English education in Gujarat. But it was the publication of Narasimharao Divetia's *Kusum-mala*, that set a new trend in lyrical poetry. It came around the same time as the grand novel *Sarasvatichandra* (1887) by Govardhanram Tripathi (1855-1907), and they had a rare impact. Manilal Nabhubhai (1858-1898), a profound scholar-poet, 'Kant' or Manishankar Ratnaji Bhatt (1867-1923) were responsible for many experimentations. With 'Purvalap', Kant introduced a new poetic form in Gujarati, known as the '*khandkavya*' which, though story-oriented, was a perfect medium to express internal conflicts and tensions.

Sursinhji Takhtasinhji Gohel 'Kalapi', (1874-1900), a prince-poet, is known for his romantic ghazals in the Sufi tone especially in his epic-poem *Hamirji Gohel*. Around the same time, we see Namalal Kavi (1877-1946) a lyrical dramatist who had written *Vasantotsava, Jaya-Jayant,* and *Indukumar,* etc. Balvantrai Thakore (1869-1952) with his thought-oriented poems impacted Gujarati poetry to the core in both diction and content at this time. Other noteworthy poets of this age were Khabardar, Botadkar, Lalitji Hari Harshad Dhruv, Balashanker Kantharia, Mastkavi, Sanchit, Jatil, Sagar, Gajendra Buch, Manikant, Dolatram Pandya and Bhimrao Devetia.

In the last quarter of the 19th century, the best essayist was Manual Dwivedi (1858-1898). His work *Sudarshan gadyavali* (1909) had essays on so many subjects, showing his versatile genius. Anandshanker Dhruv's (1869-1942) essays on miscellaneous subjects, such as religion, philosophy, poetry, applied criticism,

education and history were also fine specimens of reflective essays. Balvantrai Thakore, Uttamlal Trivedi and other writers have enriched Gujarati prose in their own way. Gandhi (1869-1948) returned to India in 1915 and started his weeklies, *Navjivan* and *Harijan bandhu*, and through his articles on various subjects he revolutionised the Indian society. His essays are a model of simple, lucid, and concise prose style in Gujarati. He inspired a host of essayists like Kaka Kalelkar (1888-1981), Kishorlal Mashruwala (1890-1952), Swami Anand (1887-1982), Narhari Parikh, Ramnarayan Pathak (1887-1955), Ravishanker Maharaj (1882-1982). Umashankar Joshi (1911-1988) and K.M. Munshi (1867-1971).

The master of light essays were Narsinhrao Divetia (1859-1937) and Ramnarayan Pathak (1887-1955), and Ramanbhai Nilkanth's contribution to the humorous essay is noteworthy. Jyotindra Dave's (1901-1975) contribution to the humorous essay is also extremely rich both in quality and in quantity. Gujarati prose has, thus, in the last century and a half taken many strides.

The emergence of Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) on the national scene had a great impact on Gujarati as his articles and addresses and his insistence on simplicity of expression greatly influenced thinkers and authors in Gujarat – just as they influenced the rest of the country. At around the same time came the influence of socialism. At the same time, due to the influence of Rabindranath Tagore, some continued to write linking the concerns of Gujarat with national and international concerns. The leading poets of the 20th century Gujarati literature included Sundaram (1908-?), Umashankar Joshi (1911-1988) and Snehrashmi (b.1903), all of whom showed concern for the downtrodden. But

Jhaverchand Meghani (1896-1947) was described by Gandhiji as a national bard because of his intense patriotism. His poetry in *Yugvandana* bears the mark of socialist ideas. Other noteworthy poets of this era were Ramnarayan V. Pathak, Krishnalal Shridharani, Sundarji Betai, Mansukhlal Jhaveri, Deshalji Parmar, Karsandas Madek, Govindswami, Mukund Parasharya, Jyotsana

Shukla, Jayaman Bahen Pathakji, Premshanker Bhatt, Tansukh Bhatt, Kusumakar, Ramnik Aralwala, Nathalal Dave, Svapnastha, Sudhanshu, Harihar Bhatt and Devji Modha.

The post-Independence literature runs in two directions – one being an extension of the Gandhian era, but also influenced by many events like the Atom bomb attack on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the damning Second World War, Quit India movement, and the second trend that showed up after 1950s – which did not care for tradition – was highly realistic, and sometimes even surrealistic. The latter group was influenced by Sartre, Freud, Baudelaire, Camus and Ezra Pound. For the first time, imagism, symbolism, structuralism and formalism came into Gujarati poetry. Umashankar Joshi and Niranjan Bhagat are the prime poets of the first stream. Others are Rajendra Shah (b. 1913), Priyakant Maniyar (1927-1976), Hasmukh Pathak (b. 1930), Nalin Raval (b.1933), Jayant Pathak (b.1920) and Ushanas (b. 1920) .

Among them, Rajendra Shah and Niranjan 'Bhagat' excelled but some of them later began writing like the poets in the second group. Many modeled their poems after the *Waste Land* of Eliot on the one hand and of Baudelaire's *Tableaux Parisiens* on the other. Priyakant Maniyar, reminds one of the lyrics of Dayaram of the medieval period and of Nanalal of the modern times. The poetry of Hasmukh Pathak and of Nalin Raval was more inclined towards modernism than to traditional poetry. Love of nature, nostalgia and faith in the human values are subjects dear to Jayant Pathak, whereas nature, love, and family-life are the subjects of Ushanas's poetry. The poetry of Makrand Dave (b. 1922) has a mystic tone. The lyrics of Harindra Dave (b.1930) and Suresh Dalal (b. 1932) were also very popular. Other notable poets of this stream are Prahlad Parekh, Harishchandra Bhatt, Balmukund Dave, and Hemant Desai. The traditional ghazal form also acquired a new vitality at this time.

The second group was led by Suresh Joshi (1921-1988), more by his criticism than by his creative writing. His interpretation of Sartre, Freud, Baudelaire and Camus had a tremendous impact.

Having been committed to this trend, he rejected his own first collection of poems *Vpajati* because its diction was traditional. In his subsequent poetry in *Pratyancha* and *Itara,* he concentrated on dehumanisation, crisis of identity and the evils of modern civilization. The poetry of Gulam Mohammad Sheikh,Labhshankar Thakar (b. 1935) and Sitanshu Yashashchandra (b. 1941) gave a decisive turn to Gujarati poetry. Chandrakant Sheth (b.1938) and others rejected the flat and traditional language in their works. Ravaji Patel (1939-1968) and Manilal Desai (1939-1966) have left marks of their identity. Other experimental poets in this group included Harshad Trivedi, Aniruddha Brahmabhatt, Dinesh Kothari, Chandrakant Topiwala, Mahesh Dave, Indu Puvar, Manhar Modi, Abdul Karim Sheikh, Prabodh Parikh, Madhu Kothari, Manjo Khanderia, Yashvant Trivedi, Sudhir Desai, Rajnesh Parekh, Anil Joshi, Joytish Jani, Yosef Macvan, Pavankumar Radheshyam Sharma, Panna Nayak, Vipin Parikh, Mafat Oza, Harikrishna Pathak, Shrikant Shah, Vinod Joshi, Jayendra Shekhadiwala and Manilal Patel.

Sindhi

There are no records in Sindhi until the 16th century although the language finds mention in erudite tradition even earlier. The history of Sindhi poetry begins only in 1520 and this period lasts until the British occupation, i.e. until 1850. The second age was during the British rule, between 1850 and 1947, followed by the contemporary writing. Since the Sindhi speaking areas in undivided India were located in the western region, they had to bear the brunt of the foreign aggressors. There was repeated destruction of its literature and cultural institutions.

After the invasion of the Arabs in the eighth century AD, the land saw about 150 years of rule of the Arabs and Ghaznavis. Many Muslim priests, saints and missionaries created the mystic Sufi cult, and argued that there indeed was only one God, and man always attempted to merge with Him. For this, one must practice abnegation of welfare of all. Since sufi mysticism was accepted

and assimilated by people in their life and writing, throughout the 500-year period of two Sindhi dynasties, when the Sumras and the Sammas, ruled over Sindh, the court singers composed verses in praise of their protectors.

Meanhile, the 'Bhakti Movement' of the medieval India also influenced the Sindhi poets. The sixteenth century saw the following types of composition:

(a) Religious scriptures including those in the Persian mystic style, or like the Sufis;
(b) Legends, historical and pseudo-historical romances, heroic wars and folk-tales;
(c) Variations observed by them in changing moods of nature and songs that enabled them to establish oneness with God; and
(d) Emphasis on Indian heritage, i.e. the only knowledge worth knowing, the '*Jnan*', which is of immense value.

Between 1520 and 1700, the Sindhi poets composed their verses in two oldest forms of Sindhi poetry, viz. *duho* and *soratho*. Except that they also experimented on these forms by introducing more than two lines, and in Sindhi these are called '*Bayts*'. The best poets of this time were a trio: Qazi Qadan, Shah Abdul Karim of Bulri and Shah Miyon Inat of Jhonk. Qazi Qadan used his language to remain away from the religious propaganda of all kinds. Shah Abdul Karim's language had sweetness and music, but the readers were used to the mysticism of the type of Rumi's in the Persian tradition. Shah Inat, who is the last of this trio, used classical Sindhi and employed the classical form of Sindhi bayt. Unlike Qazi Qadan and Shah Karim, he brought in a synthesis of the two. He also treated spiritual themes of love and hope and sang the praise of the saints and selfless devotees in search of God in his compositions.

When the Sanskritised Sindhi language reached a definite stage of development around 1000, it had already been under some influence of the alien Arabic language, for Sindh was an Arabian colony from 712 to 1058. Thereafter, from 1520 to 1737. Sindh

remained wholly or partly under the sway of the Arghans, Tarkhans, and also Mughal subedars, and the Persian way of life and letters had its impact on the Sindhi society and literature.

Sindh was annexed to the British India in 1843 and the English language threw open the flood-gates of modern knowledge to the modern Indian languages, including Sindhi. With the attainment of Independence in 1947, India and Pakistan shared between themselves Sindhi, Punjabi, Urdu and Bengali. Thus, Sindh saw two periods of the native rule during the medieval times, one from 1058 to 1520 when the Sumras and Sammas ruled, and the other from 1737 to 1843 when the Kalhoras and the Talpurs held the throne.

In spite of the earlier two native periods and the present Independence era, the Arabic, Persian and English influences (in that order) have also been parts of the Sindhi psyche.

The first stirrings of Sindhi prose were evident in the first Sindhi translation of the *Quran* by Qazi Azizullah Muta'alawi (1747-1824), the Sindhi translations of 50 odd Persian works on the Islamic theology and ritual practices, e.g., *Bina al-Islam* by Mukhdum Muhammad Hashim (1692-1761) and the Sindhi translations of parts of the *Bible,* viz., St. Matthew and St. John, done by the two Christian missionaries of Bengal in 1825.

The latter half of the pre-British era, i.e. the period from 1700 to 1850, is considered the classical period of Sindhi poetry with the emergence of a trio of Sindhi poets, Shah, Sachal and Sami. Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit, the greatest poet of this era, followed Shah Inat stylistically but had greater insight. He used all trends prevalent in Sindhi poetry then by combining them, but also emphasised patriotism. Sachal extended Shah Latif's famous verse on 'Wai' to write a *'Kafi'*, and the result was the most touching of all Sindhi verses till this day. Sachal's *kafis* were perhaps the best lyrical poetry in Sindhi. He revolted, like Kabir, against lie and deceit as well as against the silly dogmas of those days, and exposed those who "used" religion for their benefit. He argued for a classless society. The third poet, Bhai Chainrai Lund 'Sami', wanted common

people to remove the veil of 'Maya' (Illusion) which hid the 'Reality'. Since the court language was Persian then, many tried writing poetry based on Persian prosody, which gave rise to forms like '*Maddah*' (praise), '*Maulud*' (Prophet's praise), '*Marsia*' (elegy), and '*Masnavi*' (connected narrative), besides the traditional Sindhi forms of *bayt*, wai and *kafi*. This style of measured verses in the Persian poetic tradition was much practised in later periods, but such Sindhi poets showed a mere craftsmanship rather than artistry.

During the British period, and especially after the new script was created for Sindhi by the British, Sindhi poetry continued to follow the rigid Persian prosodic forms, initially encouraged by the Muslim rulers. However, three new forms were introduced then: *ghazal*, *masnavi* and *rubai* (Quat-rain). Ghazal, which initially began as allegorical descriptions of the beauty of the Beloved or God, became more and more a form of love poetry and the poets indulged in description of the beauty of the woman they loved to address to or describe. It reached new heights in the ghazals of Khalifo Gul Muhammad 'Gul', Sangi and Lekhraj Aziz. Along with ghazals, the form of rubai was also perfected. But at this time, the age of erotics in Sindhi poetry began and it lasted until 1930s.

After the Russian revolution and as the Indian freedom struggle became stronger, the Sindhi poets turned towards realism. The poets such as Kishinchand Khatri 'Bevas' – were much influenced by the Marxist Social realism and by the then Bengali poets and writers. He and others fought against taboos, and also introduced new subjects. His disciples such as Hundraj Dukhayal, Han Dilgir, Prabhu 'Wafa' and Ram Panjwani carried this on further. Narayan Shyam and Sheikh Ayaz were two such important poets.

In the Post-independence period, the partition of India was a big blow for the uprooted Sindhi Hindus, who had to build everything from the scratch. This untold human suffering added to the callousness of their own leaders found place in the poetry of the new generation. Further, their exposure to the other literatures in

India and abroad made it possible for them to shed inhibitions. That was when they tried out all new forms such as the '*lalit pada*', sonnet, triolet, haiku, *tanha*, *panjakira*, *kundalini*, ballad, blank verse, free verse, etc. However, they also composed sensitive ghazals, bayt, duho, sorathos, geet, ghazal, qila, and nazm, by all prominent poets, who included Narayan 'Shyam', Krishin 'Rahi', H.I. Sadarangani 'Khadim', Hari 'Dilgir', Moti Prakash, Prabhu 'Wafa', Gov-erdhan 'Bharati', Arjan 'Hasid', M. Kamal and others. The '*Nai kavita*' (New Poetry) and '*Akavita*' (Anti-poetry) movement of Hindi finally reached the shores of Sindhi poetry as well.

The contemporary Sindhi poets began experimenting with and even questioning all things poetic, beginning from the style, technique, rhyme, rhythm, and even poetic canons. Among the new generation of poets, M. Kamal, Arjan Hasid, Vasdev 'Mohi', Harish Vaswani, Shyam Jaisinghani, etc. have succeeded in giving Sindhi poetry a modern outlook.

The translations in Sindhi respectively show the Arabic, Persian and English influences. And, while the translations of Arabic and Persian works are in Abul Hasan's 28 letter alphabet, the translation of the English *Bible* is in Devanagari. All these works constituting the first attempts at writing Sindhi prose are done in a poetical style; the accent on emotive element (and not on the factual one) in meaning and the use of rhyme and of alliteration make them the works of poetic prose. These works offer instances of the semi-grammatical language.

The first regular, non-religious work of Sindhi prose, therefore, was *Akhani Rai D'yach am Sorath ji* (The story of Rai D'yach and Sorath) by Udharam Thanwardas Mirchandani (1833-1883). Appended to George Stack's *A Grammar of Sindhi Language,* published with the Sindhi text in Devanagari, it recounts the Sindhi folk-tale in a simple, lucid style.

With the abolition of Persian as the official language in the Indian sub-continent in 1837 and introduction of the Perso-Arabic script for Sindhi in 1853, "the two renovations in the modernisation

of Sindhi language and literature", according to Annemarie Schimmel in her *Sindhi Literature* (Wiesbaden, 1974), both Hindu and Muslim writers joined their hands to translate ethical and educational works from Hindi and English into Sindhi for the Sindhi schools run by the Government. Though personally in favour of Devanagari for Sindhi, George Stack helped the government in bringing out text-books in the Perso-Arabic script after the 1853 decision.

As in other modern Indian languages, in Sindhi too the prose made a great progress in all fields of literature in the twentieth century. Hundreds of original Sindhi writers came forward to cater to the needs of resurgent Sindhi, which had earlier been under the alien influence of the Arabic. Persian and English languages. For the writers like Bherumal Maherchand (1875-1950), H.M. Gurbaxani (1884-1947), Lalchand Amardinomal (1885-1954) and Jethmal Parsram (1886-1948), another quartet of Sindhi prose writers, the English education which had been responsible for modern knowledge, became a means to know their own life and literature better. A writer of travelogues and erudite essays, Bherumal Maherchand wrote *Sindh jo sailani* (A traveller through Sindh) in 1923 and Sindhi *B'olia ji tarikh* (History of Sindhi language) in 1941. While Dayaram Gidumal had been the first literary critic for his essay Samia *je slokani jo tatparju* (The quintessence of Sami's *slokas,* 1885), H.M. Gurbaxani was easily the first modern literary critic—"modern" in the strict sense of the term. Adopting the new critical methods, he wrote a scholarly introduction to his *Shah jo risalo* (1923), dealing with the Sufi poet's life as also various aspects of his poetry, viz., religious and philosophic thought, language, grammatical forms and imagery. Lalchand Amardmomal's *Shahano Shah* (1914), *Sunharo Sachal* (1916) and *Berangi* bagh *jo gul Sindhi* (1920) were also important.

Marathi

The first poem in Marathi was a song by Someshwar in 1129, and the first full-length poetic work was by Mukundraj of the 12th

century: *Viveksindhu* (Ocean of wisdom). The early Marathi poetry was influenced by both the Mahanubhav and the Varakari sects, and this phase produced some important works: *Rukmini swayamvai* (1229) by Narendra, *Shishupal vadh* (1308) by Bhaskar-bhatta Borikar and some poems by Sahayadri and Riddhiyur. But it was the Bhakti or the devotional poetry that dominated the scene. Namdev (1227-1350), Jnaneshwar of Jnandev (1275-1296), Eknath (1532-1599), Mukteshwar (1574-1645), Tukaram (1608-1649) and Ramdas (1608-1681). Dasopant (16th c.) and Shridhar (1658-1729) – all devotional poets became household names. They preached the philosophy of Vaishnavism to the masses in a musical language. Namdev's poetry in Marathi, Hindi and Punjabi, the translations of the *Ramayan* and the *Bhagavata* by Eknath, the translation of the *Mahabharata* by Mukteshwara were all much like what Krittibas and Kashiram Das did in Bangla. In the *Abhangas*, Tukaram exposed the hypocrisies of some so-called religious figures.This indeed was the first wave of awakening amongst Marathi authors. Muslim saints like Sheikh Muhammad (17th c.) and Husain Ambari (17th c.) and Christian poets wrote in the same manner at this time.

By the 17th century, Marathi poetry was divided into two schools, of the Pandit poets and the *Shahirs* (minstrels). The elitist poetry was dominated by Sanskrit verses and the poetry for the masses used a different racy, down-to-earth manner. The prominent Pandit poets included: Vaman Pandit *(Yathariha-dipika,* Venu-sudha), Hari Pandit (Bhavabodhini), Raghunath Pandit (*Nala-Damayanti swayamvarakhyana,* translated by Abul Faizi into Persian in 1594-1995), Uddhara Chidghana (*Shuka-Rambha samvad*), Krishna Dayarnava (*Harivarada*) and Moropant (*Mahabharata, Ramayana, Bhagavata*).

By the 18th century, spiritualism was no more important for the Marathi poets, as the secular subjects or even love and eroticism became more relevant. Many of the *Shahir* poets came from the lower echeleons of the society. It began with Admyanadas (b. 1659) or Agnidas who composed the heroic singing text – *Afzalkhan*

vadh at the instance of Shivaji's mother. He was followed by Ramjoshi (b. 1762), Anantaphandi, Honaji Bala, Sagan Bhau, Prabhakar, and Parashram as well as Rao Barve.Marathi poetry was no more an instrument of amusement of the upper classes. Furthermore, as it happened in other Indian languages, Marathi poetry was also influenced by the Western literary movements and in particular by English romantic poetry. There was also a decline in Marathi poetry after the fall of Maratha empire in 1818.

In Godbole's anthology of Marathi poetry (1854), we find a number of emerging voices in the Marathi poetry of that time. The most popular poets then were B.R. Pradhan (1838-1886), K.R. Kirtikar (1849-1917), H.M. Mahajani, M.M. Kunte (1835-88) etc. But modernity in Marathi poetry was pioneered by Krishnaji Keshav Damle, better known by his pen-name 'Keshavsut' (1866-1905). He was the first to pen poems in Marathi on the plight of untouchables and on the issue of starvation. The romantic poetry in Marathi saw the introduction of many Western forms like the sonnet, the ode and the dramatic monologue.

The popular themes were natural beauty, social reform, the issue of equality, pride in the heritage, problems with the city-life etc. Narayan Vaman Thak (1865-1919) was a Christian and wrote poems of nature and tender affection; Narayan Murlidhar Gupte alias 'Bee' (1872-1947) was a poet with mystic overtones, with a passion for beauty; 'Govindagraj' (Ram Ganesh Gadkari, 1885-1919) was a playwright and a passionate 'Bard of Love'; 'Balakavi' (Tryambak Bapuji Thombre, 1890-1918) was a nature-intoxicated poet who also wrote a historical narrative.

This romantic trend was continued and sustained by Bhaskar Ramchandra Tambe (1874-1941) who was deeply influenced by Tagore in his lyrics. 'Madhav Julian' (or, Madhav Patwardhan, 1894-1939), a scholar in Persian, was influenced by Persian poetry. He compiled a Persian-Marathi dictionary. Balkrishna Bhagavant Borkar (1910-1985) who wrote in Konkani and Marathi wrote a long unfinished epic on Mahatma Gandhi. The nationalistic trends were advocated by many poets who were patriotic activists like

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883-1966) and Pandurang Vaman Sane alias 'Sane Guruji' (1899-1950). Savarkar was a political prisoner in Andaman for many decades where he composed impassioned long poems like *Kamala* and *Gomantak*. Socialist Sane Guruji's *Patre* was not allowed to be published. Shankar Keshav Kanetkar 'Girish' (1893-1973), Yashwant Dinkar Pendharkar (1899-1985) and Prahlad Keshav Atre (1893-1969), who wrote poems under the pen-name 'Keshavakumar', were other socially committed poets.

Some of the great living socialist and communist poets include Vasant Bapat, Narayan Surve and Vinda Karandikar. Vishnu Vaman Shirwadkar alias 'Kusumagraj' (b. 1912) with works like *Vishakha* had been an icon for the younger generation of poets. Amar Shekh, who died young, and V.R. Kant, N.G. Joshi as well as A.R. Deshpande 'Anil' were others who wrote poems with social content. Some began as traditional poets, as Bal Sitaram Mardhekar (1909-1956) did, with his *Shishiragam* (Advent of autumn, 1939), but soon became socially committed poets. Mardhekar's *Kahi kavita* (1947) and *Anakhi kahi kavita* (1952), or 'some poems' and 'some more poems', are examples. But then, there were also poets who liked to be seen as experimentalists – such as Pumshottam Shivaram Rege (1910-1978) who liked to play with his poetic language. He believed in a kind of neo-classical poetic idiom. The luminaries in Marathi writing during the contemporary period – Vinda Karandikar (Govinda Vinayaka Karandikar, b. 1918), G.D. Madgulkar (1919-1978), Sharatchandra Muktibodh (1921-1984), Sadanand Rege (1923-1982), Dilip Chitre (b. 1928), Mangesh Padgaonkar (b. 1929), C.T. Khanolkar alias 'Arati Prabhu' (1930-1976) and Arun Kolatkar showed remarkable sensitivity and often used new kind of imagery . They also displayed their dissatisfaction with 'modernity'. But the breakthrough in Marathi poetry today came with the advent of the 'Dalit' poetry – written by the oppressed and the exploited, hitherto ignored by the society in general. The names of important Dalit poets such as Daya Pawar, Namdev Dhasal, Keshav Meshram and Yashwant

Mahanor are known to all now. Their focus is the issue of deprivation and inequality and they point to the social injustice that the underprivileged classes had suffered. The poetry of protest and revolt became more important in their writing. Thus, Marathi poetry has traveled a long distance – beginning from the Sant Jnaneshwar to the Dalits. With their themes and concerns, the form also changed as time went by.

The history of Marathi prose dates back to the 11th century as is evident from stone inscriptions and copper plate carvings, but proper writing in prose came only in the last quarter of the 12th century with the Mahanubhava sect. The better known prose works of the sect are *Lila charitra* and *Drishtanta patha,* By the 14th century the influence of the Mahanubava started waning and 'Varkari' or 'Bhagavata Dharma' gained popularity. Eknath (1533-99) wrote a few allegories in the persianized language of the Muslim court.

During the Maratha rule a vast body of historical prose accounts, called 'Bakhar', came into being. Bakhar consisted of correspondence and documents and served as a chronicle.

In the 19th century, with the advent of printing introduced by Christian missionaries, prose writing gathered a new momentum. *Dnyanodaya* (1841), a periodical started by the missionaries, proved an encouraging medium for prose-writing. This served as a source of inspiration to nationalists like Tilak, Chiplunkar, Agarkar, Gokhale and others in their journalistic writings. Around 1931 N.S. Phadke brought in the personal essay in Marathi literature. He added a new dimension of literary sensitivity to the form of the essay. Iravati Karve *(Paripurti),* Durga Bhagwat *(Pais),* Kusamavati Deshpande and Vinda Karandikar gave it a poetic touch.

Humour found its way to Marathi prose by the end of the 19th century. Though the essays written earlier on political subjects did not lack sarcasm and ridicule, humour became more wholesome in S.K. Kolhatkar's essays. *Sudamyache pohe* (1938) is a collection of his essays on topics ranging from the profession of a

barber to protests against reformers. C.V. Joshi enriched humour in Marathi with his books *Chimanravanche charhat* and *Anakhi Chimanrao.* He gives delightful pictures of middle class life in a colloquial language. S.M. JParanjape and A.B. Kolhatkar made an ingenuous use of irony exposing the incongruities and absurdities of contemporary society. P.K. Atre and Dattu Bandekar too seasoned their journalistic writings with broad and genial humour.

Marathi prose is also rich in travelogues. *Mazapravas* was written in 1883 by Vishnubhat Godse. P.L. Deshpande's *Apurvai* and *Vangachitre,* Gangadhar Gadgil's *Gopuranchya pradeshat* and *Sata samudra palikade,* Prabhakar Padhye's *Tokonama,* P.K. Atre's *Kelyane deshatan* and D.B. Mokashi's *Athara laksha panic* are important landmarks in this genre of writing.

Lilacharitra, a compilation by the disciples of Swami Chakradhar, was perhaps the first biographical account of the Swami. Later biographical writing came from such saint poets as Namdev, Changdev and Jnaneshwar. Among the earlier biographies the renowned ones are *Socrates* by Krishnashastri Chipiunkar, *Dr. Johnson* by Vishnushastri Chiplunkar, *Raja Chhatrapati* by B.M. Purandare and *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar* by Dhananjay Keer. Among the better known autobiographies are S.K. Kolhatkar's *Atmavntta,* S.M. Mate's *Chitrapat,* P.K. Atre's *Karheche pani* and *Mi kasa zah.* Among modern Marathi autobiographies the one by Laxmibai Tilak was a landmark. The recent development in Marathi prose is 'Dalit sahitya' which is mostly autobiographical. This trend has emerged as a result of the assertion of identity by the dalits. These writers come from a class of people subjected to social oppression and injustice for centuries. The Dalit literature comes thus as a forceful protest in such books as *Batute* by Daya Pawar and *Uchalya* by Lakshman Gaikwad.Lakshman Mane, Saran Kumar Limbale etc have also strenghtened the genre.

Konkani

With a printing press installed in Goa in 1556, the first books to be printed in any Indian language were in Konkani. Konkani prose in

its refurbished Christian garb began soon after. Many translations and adaptations of religious classics from Europe followed. Friar Amador de Sant'Anna turned Ribadaneyra's Flos Sanctorum into Konkani prose (1612). Thomas Stephen's Doutrina Christa (1622) is an elaborate prose version of Marcos Jorge's catechism. Diogo Ribeiro wrote in well-chiselled prose *An Exposition of Christian Doctrine* (1632) based on Cardinal BeUarmine's and other authors' dissertations on it. So did Francisco Joao de San Mathias who wrote on the life of Christ. Joao de Pendrosa authored a superb rendition of Bernarino de Villegas' *Soliloquios Divinos* as *Devachim yecangra boflnnim* (1660). Ignazio Arcamone's *Sagglea varussache vangel* (1667), the Konkani *Gospels for the Whole Year* is the first prose version in an Indian tongue of any. portion of the *Bible.* These and other similar works aimed at disseminating knowledge of Christianity among the new converts in Goa. The greatest creation of the age, however, is Almeida's *Onvalleancho mollo* in five volumes.

With the waning of religious fervour after this golden period of its literature, Konkani suffered neglect. Portuguese conversion policy making non-conformist Hindus flee southward (16th c.), followed by Christians (18th c.) owing to famines, epidemics, Maratha incursions, civil and religious orders for Konkani's suppression (1684-1857) gradually broke up its literary unity. Nevertheless, it continued to be written and published in its regional variants, mainly in Roman, Kannada and Devanagari scripts.

Under persecution and in exile Konkani prose continued to be a vehicle of expression for the disintegrated Konkani communities scattered in the regions along the west coast of India, providing solace and hope for them. In Kerala, the earliest extant text is in a highly developed Konkani notarial prose, a testimonial dated 24 April 1675 given by three Cochin Konkani physicians authenticating the Dutchman Van Rheeds' masterpiece on Indian plants prepared with their assistance. Leyden's findings came at a time of a great ferment in Indian prose, fomented by William Carey's programme of translations of the *Bible* into Indian languages. Carey finalised

the Konkani prose version of the New Testament in 1805.

The collected Diwali addresses of Pandurangashrama (1847-1915) and Anandashrama (1902-66) to their congregations are specimens of Konkani metaphysical prose.

Later, inspired by Fr. Angelo Maffoi's grammatical and lexicographic work, Konkani Christians were drawn into a vigorous literary movement with outstanding writer, Luis Mascarenhas, launching his *Konkani dirvom* (1912) from Mangalore. Around it flourished eminent prose-writers like Alex Pais, P.J.D'Souza, S.S.Talmaki, F.Sylvester Menezes.

Prose in the realm of the profane also developed to a high degree spurred on by the above two leading journals, with short story, novel and drama being assiduously cultivated and largely circulated. The novelists, short-story writers and dramatists gave a sense of style and maturity to Konkani prose. Damodar Mauzo's name deserves special mention among the fiction writers.

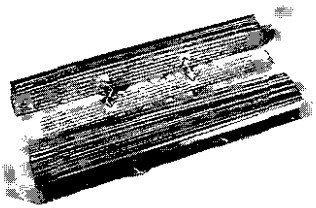
Konkani poetic tradition is comparatively young. There were some Konkani songs written by Namdev (14th c.) and Krishnadas Sharma. One does find mention of some other texts and poets, such as 'Passion' by Gaspar de S. Miguel (16th c.). By the 19th century, the Christian Missionaries came up with many Konkani hymns, the best known of them being 'Riglo Jesu Molyanto' (Jesus entered the field) by Joaquim de Miranda. Besides, there was this semi-literary folk-song 'Mando' which flourished during the 19th century. In Kerala, some Hindu devotional poetry flourished at the end of the 17th century with Sant Appayya, Raghavdas, Jogawa and Avadi. The tradition was kept up to this day by Kamalammal, Narahari Prabhu and Suhas Dalai. Manjeshwar Govind Pai (1882-1963), an important Kannada poet wrote occasionally in Konkani. But it was only in the post-independence period that Bayabhav (real name Kashinath Sridhar Nayakj revived its poetic tradition, with his *Sadyavelim Fulam* (Flowers in the desert, 1946). His book of lyrics, *Painjanam* (Anklets, 1960), or his later anthology, *Sasaya* (1981) were also well-received. Manohar Rai Sardessai with his *Gomya Tujya Mogakhatir* (For your sake, O Goa, 1961) brought

picturesqueness and simplicity to Konkani poetry. R.V. Pandit (in his *Dorya Gazota*) experimented boldly and successfully with free verse, and Pandurang Bhangi (*Distavo* 'Vision' 1974) created well-chiselled and highly introspective verse.

Other important voices included Madhav Borkar who wrote abstract poetry, Ramesh Veluskar, the non-conformist Shivanand Tendulkar, and Prakash Padgaonkar, giving us a lyrical but didactic set of poems. C.F.D. Costa, Maridas (Anthony D' Souza) and J.B. Morais are also notable. Among the younger generation, one should mention Yashvant Kelekar, Uday Bhembre, Gajanan Rajkar, Sankar Bhandari, Haradatta Khandeparkar. Jess Fernandes, Pundalik Nayak, Olivinho Gomes as well as the well-known feminine voice,Vijayabai Sarmalkar. A.N. Mhambro and Manohar Rai Sardessai have made a mark as satirical poets and have also written poems for children.

17

LITERARY LANGUAGES IN THE NORTH



Kashmiri

Kashmiri poetry could be divided into into four periods, coinciding with certain historical divisions. During the early period ending 1555 or 1500 A.D., we get texts such as *Mahanay prakash* by Pandit Shitikanth and *Banasura katha* by Bhattavatara. *Mahanay prakash*, a composition of 94 verses, drawing from the *Harivamsha purana.* There are also references to *Sukha-dukha charitam* by Ganaka Prashasta, *Jsin prakash,* a play on king Zain-ul-Abidin by Yodha Bhatta and *Jain charit,* a biography of the king by Nathasoma, all written between 1400 and 1475. Their styles were closer to Apabhramsha, but the great saint-poets, Lai Ded (1335-1376), and Nund Rishi (1377-1438) wrote in a highly developed Kashmiri. Lal Ded was the greatest poet of Kashmiri, who wrote as a practising *yogini* of the Shaiva tradition. Nund Rishi wrote mainly in the *'shrukh'* form, a quatrain metrically different from Lal Ded's *vakh*, although he was influenced by Lal Ded.

Persian became the court language during the next period (1501-1800, or between 1556 and 1752, as some would put it). Maulana Yakub Sarfi Ganai (1529-1594), Khwaja Habi-bullah

Naushehri (1555-1617) and Mirza Akmal-ud-Din Kami (1642-1717) wrote songs in Kashmiri but their main contributions were in Persian. The chief contribution of the middle period was the secular 'lol' lyric – mostly by unknown authors, expressing love and longing. It is a short poem, organically a unit, with a refrain. But one must mention two celebrated woman poets, Habba Khatoon (c. 1550), the consort of King Yusuf Shah Chak and Arnimal (d. 1800), the deserted wife of a Persian author, both of whom wrote memorable poetry. The *vakh* tradition was continued Rupa Bhawani (1625-1721). But Shah Gafoor (c. 1750), a Sufi poet, chose not to write in the *vakh* form.

It was only after the poetic tradition had been very well-established in Kashmiri that the tradition of prose writing began. The earliest available prose texts in Kashmiri are in the form of translations of Biblical texts by Christian missionaries. It was around 1821 when a translation of the *New Testament* appeared in Kashmiri. This translation was followed by two different versions of Pentateuch in 1827 and 1832. All these translations were made available in the Sharada script. The Bible Society published a Kashmiri version of the New Testament in the Perso-Arabic script in 1884. There are also some Kashmiri texts based on Islamic traditions, e.g. Maulvi Yahya Khan's *Tafsir-i-Quran* and Nur-ud-Din Qazi's *Misal*. The Kashmiri prose in these works is loaded with Persian diction.

Ishwar Kaul made use of formal prose in his Kashmiri *Shabda-mrita* (A grammar of Kashmiri written in Sanskrit) in 1879. It was edited by George Abraham Grierson and published in 1898. It is believed that Pandit Mahadevji Gigoo printed the first book in Kashmiri. It was the translation of the first part of Euclid on hand-made Kashmiri paper. Serious attempts towards its fuller development were made only in the early '30s. In order to popularise Kashmiri, S.K. Toshakhani prepared several text-books in Kashmiri for the use of women welfare schools in Srinagar. He used the Devanagari script with diacritical marks for Kashmiri. A Kashmiri section in Perso-Arabic script with slight changes was also introduced.

The early modern period (1801-1930) saw the assimilation ot Persian poetic forms like *masnavi* and *ghazal*, the development of the *Lila* lyric and the continuation of the Sufi tradition. Mahmud Garni (d. 1855) brought to Kashmiri poetry the *ghazal* form. He wrote traditional *vatsun* as well as original compositions in the *roph* folk song style, and eight *masnavis*, adaptations from Persian originals. Maqbul Shah Kraiwari (1820-187S) also wrote some other *masnavis*. Among the *masnavi* poets, we should mention Prakash Ram *(Ramavtarcharit)*, Lachhman Raina 'Bulbul' *(Samnama, Nal-o-Damari),* Waliullah Matoo, Abdul Ahad Nazim, Amiruddin Kreeri and others. But Rasul Mir (d. 1870) was undoubdetly the best lyricist of Kashmiri, writing in a sensuous and romantic manner. There were also a few Sufi poets in this period: Karim Buland, Momin Sahab, Shah Oalandar, Shukur Rishi, Rahim Sahab, Niama Sahab, Rahman Dar, Wahab Khar, Ahmad Batwari, Waza Mahmud, etc. Shamas Fakir (1843-1904) was the most original of the Sufi poets.

Parmanand (1791-1874) and his school represent the *'Lila'* group of poets, who wrote hymns in praise of the Lord – a personified God, usually Krishna. They remind us of the *Saguna* poets of Hindi. Others in this group include Prakash Ram (d. 1885) who wrote the *Ramayana* in Kashmiri in the masnavi style, Lachhman Raina 'Bulbul' (d. 1898) who wrote a *masnavi* on the sacred syllable 'Om', and Sri Ram *Gita* in the *vatsun* form, and Krishna Razdan (d. 1925) who wrote the long narrative poem *Shiva parinay*.

Two poets are outstanding in the entire stretch: Ghulam Ahmed Mahjoor (1885-1952) during the period 1930-1947 and Dinanath Nadim (1916-1988), who excelled after 1947. Mahjoor first wrote in Urdu and Persian, and began writing in Kashmiri after 1918. Other great contemporaries of his were Abdul Ahad Azad (1903-1948), Zinda Kaul (1884-1965), popularly known as Masterji. Dinanath Nadim revolutionised Kashmiri poetry, by experimenting with so many styles – in blank verse, free verse, dramatic and interior monologue, sonnet, haiku etc. Even in content,

he made a radical departure from classicism and initiated modern Kashmiri poetry. Nadim naturally influenced all his contemporaries, including: Mir Ghulam Rasul Nazki (b.1909), Mirza Arif (b.1910), Ghulam Nabi Firaq(b.1922), and Abdul Rehman Rahi (b.1925), a major poet himself. The next generation of poets is represented by G.R.Santosh (b.1929), Muzaffar Azim (b. 1934), Motilal Saqi (b.1936), Ghulam Nabl Khayal (b.1936), Chamanlal Chaman (b.1937), Motilal Naz (b.1937), Ghulam Ahmed Gash (b.1942), etc., while the younger contemporaries include Ghulam Ahmed Aajir (b.1945), Rafiq Raaz (b.1952) M.H. Zafar (b.1953), etc. The current period has many talented voices, and it is difficult to name only a few.

The genre of literary criticism and essays started developing in the early fifties of the present century. These works have appeared in the form of independent essays and books, iniroductions to some creative works and independent critical studies. Among the earlier works are Mohi-ud-Din Hajini's *Kashiri nasrich drab* (a book of Kashmiri prose) published in 1961 and *Maqaiat* (Essays) published in 1967. Autar Krishna Rahbar and Ghuiam Nabi Khayal edited an anthology entitled *Kashur nasr* (Kashmiri prose) in 1967.

Punjabi

Sheikh Farid, whose three poems are included as hymns in *Guru Granth,* the holy scripture of the Sikhs (compiled by the fifth Sikh Guru Aijan in 1604) is regarded as the first authentic poet of Punjabi. Sheikh Farid came before Guru Nanak (1469-1539). The compilation contained these hymns and 112 shlokas. By the beginning of the 16th century, the religio-social verse of Guru Nanak came to the fore, and the poetry that followed could be divided into two trends: philosophical and lyrical. His philosophical compositions, including his *Japa, Siddha goshti* and *Onkar* question the common assumptions of the various religious sects, whereas his lyrical poetry highlights the human distress in his day when the common people were subjected to much oppression. In his compositions in *Asa di var,* he condemns the social injustice and

superstitions introduced by the decadant Brahminical dispensation. In this tradition, Guru Ram Das and Guru Amar Das, who composed hymns of lyrical intensity, followed the style of Guru Nanak. Nearly half of Guru *Granth* contains the hymn compositions by Guru Arjan Dev. The tone of his hymns is subdued but courageous, and this might have been due to tensions prevailing in his times between the Sikh leadership and the Mughal Administration. Bhai Gurudas was yet another important poet of these times, and he wrote in both Brajbhasha and Punjabi. In Punjabi, he composed 40 long poems, each one called a '*Vars*' made up of 20-to-30 stanzas.

Parchi Bhai Ghaniyaji and Parchi patshahi *daswin* (Sewa Das) were composed somewhat later than the sakhis. 'Goshti' is the other prose form of that time. Goshtis are spiritual discourses or dialogues between the saints and their disciples or opponents. Some of the goshtis are Makke *digoshti,* and goshtis with Ajitta Randhawa, Guru Nanak Dev, Budda, Baba Lai and the holy Quran. Guru Nanak is invariably on one side in these goshtis. The formative influence on goshtis and Janamsakhis is that of the *Jatakas,* the Sanskrit Vaishnavite texts, the Quran and the Persian ethical works. *Sikhan di bhagatmal,* which is associated with the name of Bhai Mani Singh, is a combination of goshti and sakhi. *'Paramarth'* or commentary on the Guru Vani is yet another prose form along with *'Parchi'* (introduction). While *parchi* was meant to present the philosophy of its hero as against life-events in the *sakhi*, the *paramarth* aimed at introducing the meaning of the Vani.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are considered the golden period in the history of Punjabi 'Vartik' (prose). During this period, many important Hindu religious texts, legends, myths, etc. were translated into Punjabi from both Sanskrit and Persian tradition. In the nineteenth century the social concerns gained prominence over the religious themes. Literature became an institution of social reform. The Arya Samaj, the Singh Sabha and the Dev Samaj movements played an important role in the development of Punjabi prose.

During Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rule, Punjabi prose borrowed

freely from Persian, which was the official language. Subjects of Muslim and Hindu culture, history and mythology dominated the prose. The publication of the first Punjabi grammar and dictionary and the translation of the *Bible* and other scriptures paved the way for standardization of Punjabi diction. While the mainstay of prose in the first half of the nineteenth century was spirituality, the second half showed a tendency towards historical accounts and social themes. These were the first steps towards modern literary prose.

The setting up of printing presses with Gurmukhi typeface at Ludhiana and Lahore helped the launching of many newspapers. *Sri Darbar Sahib* was started in 1867. It was soon followed by *Gurmat prakash*. The others were *Khalsa akhbar* (1886), *Singh Sabha Gazette* (1890) and *Khalsa samachar* (1899).

Shah Hussain was the firstPunjabi Sufi poet. But there were a number of others during the 17th-18th centuries – like Bulleh Shah and Sultan Bahu, who became almost household names. Hadayat Ullah came later with his lyrical poetry. Bulleh Shah was outspoken in his opposition to rigorous Muslim conventions and bigotry, which was a courageous stand. He used the folk idiom in his poems. This Sufi trend of lyricism gave rise to the poetry of love and romance, started by Damodar Gulati, a contemporary of Shah Hussain. The love story of Hir and Ranjha was versified by him in his native dialect of Jhang, became immortal. There were other love stories like Yusuf Zulaikha, Laila Majnu, Shirin Farhad, Sohini Mahival and Sassi Punnu – all of which found expression later. Another contemporary of Damodar, Pilu – wrote the verse romance of Mirza and Sahiban in the heroic verse form, and half a century later, Hafiz Barkhurdar penned some other romances. More authors wrote their own versions of the love story of Hir and Ranjha; of them Waris Shah (1735-1781) was the best-known, preceded by Hamid, Muqbal and some other poets of lesser merit. After Waris Shah, the compositions of poets such as Hashim Shah and Ahmad Yar of the period of Ranjit Singh, and Joga Singh, Kishan Singh Arif, Bhagwan Singh and Fazal Shah of the later 19th century achieved distinction.

The modern Punjabi poetry began with the work of Bhai Vir Singh (1872-1957) towards the end of the 19th century. His first work of poetry, *Rana Surat Singh,* was published in 1901, describing lamentations of Rani Raj Kaur and her reminiscences of her heroic husband, Rana Surat Singh, who laid down his life in a patriotic war. His other poems came out in four collections: *Bijlian da har* (Garlands of lightning, 1927). *Lahir hulare* (Waves and swings, 1928), *Matak hulare* (Swings of dignity, 1948), and *Mere sainya jio* (My lord, live long, 1953). Charan Singh (1887-1935), Shahid and Dhani Ram Chatrik (1876-1954) are other younger contemporaries of Vir Singh, were other important poets of this period. Charan Singh was secular in his choice of themes whereas Chatrik has been a classicist in his outlook, influenced by the contemporary Urdu poetry. Puran Singh (1881-1931) composed his poems on the patterns of Walt Whitman, the American poet.

The freedom struggle and the struggle for Sikh Gurdwara Reform had their impact on Punjabi literature. The movements brought to the fore many poets who had modern consciousness: Hira Singh Dard (1889-1964), Gurumukh Singh Musafir (1899-1976), Ferozdin Sharf (19014955) and Vidhata Singh Tir (b. 1901). However, the best of the lot was Mohan Singh (1905-1978) who deviated from the traditional poetry in the mid-30s. In *Save pattar* (Green leaves, 1936), he had some romantic poems, but in the later anthologies – *Kasvmbhara* (Red oleander, 1937), and *Adhvate* (Half-way, 1938), he is visibly influenced by the Freudian mode of thought. He was more pessimistic in his tone at the end in *Jandare* (Locks, 1975) and *Buhe* (Doors, 1977). The epic poem on the life of Guru Nanak, *Nanakayana* (The epic of Nanak, 1974), shows an interesting mixture of tradition and modernity.

Amrita Pritam (1919-2005) began publishing (as Amrit Kaur) under the title *Amrit lahran* (The ambrosial waves) in 1936. As a sensitive and modern poet who handled both romantic and progressive modes, her collections – *Jiondajiwan* (The life exultant, 1939), *Trel dhote phul* (Dew-washed flowers, 1941), O *Gitan valia* (O, master of songs, 1942), *Badalan de palle vich* (In the

lap of the clouds, 1943), *Sanjh di lali* (The twilight, 1943) and *Lok peer* (The people's anguish, 1944) speak for themselves. She took a feminist position soon and began highlighting the plight of women to speak up in a strident tone against man's treatment of woman, as in *Patthergite* (Gravel stones, 1946). The division of Punjab and the riots that followed soon after, and the mass migration of both Hindu and Muslim population became her concerns in her works: *Lammian vatan* (Long journeys, 1948) and *Saighi vela* (The hour of dawn, 1952). Later, she returned to the romantic poetry in her *Sunehure* (Messages, 1952), *Ashoka cheti* (1957), and *Kaghaz te kanvas* (Paper and canvas, 1973).

Harbhajan Singh (b. 1920) started as a progressive author in *Lasan* (Weals, 1954) and *Adharaini* (The midnight, 1962), and one could see the influence of Marxism in his poetic play *Tar tupka* (The hanging drop, 1955). In his later poetry, he raised many existentialist questions and pointed out surrealist paradoxes, as is seen in his *Na dhupe na chhaven* (Neither sunshine nor shade, 1967), *Sarak di safe te* (On the page of the road), and *Main jo bit gaya* (I, who is a past).

Prabhjot Kaur (b. 1924) started much like Amrita Pritam, in a romantic mode in her initial collections like *Supane sadharan* (Dreams and desires, 1949), *Van kapasi* (1958), *Pankheru* (Birds), but her concerns changed from there to give shape to word-pictures that would describe her listlessness with youth passing by into a state of a sophisticated ennui, in her works – *Pabbi* (The plateau, 1962), *Khari* (Gulf, 1967), *Vaddarshi shisha* (The magnifying glass, 1973) and *Chander yug* (The moon age, 1977).

Sohan Singh Misha (b. 1934) has broken new ground in the collections of his poems, *Chaurasta* (Crossroads, 1961), *Dastak* (Knock on the door, 1966) and Kach de *vastar* (Attire of falsehood, 1974), which are suffused with an ironical and sophisticated realism and which question all human relations, the common intellectual's political and class awareness marred by timidity.

After Mohan Singh's era, the most powerful poets who came to the fore included Shiv Kumar (1936-1973), as he began with his

lyrical poems in *Piran de paraga* (A fare of aches) and continued to add in his collections like *Lajwanti* (1962), *Mainu vida karo* (Bid me farewell, 1963), *Ate dian chirian* (The sparrows made of flour, 1964), and *Birha tun Sultan* (Yearning, you are the sovereign, 1965). His best was his verse play, *Luna* (1966). Other notable poets included Takht Singh (b. 1914), Jaswant Singh Neki (b. 1925), Sukhpal Vir Singh Hasrat (b. 1936), Jagtar Singh, and Randhir Singh Chand (b. 1943). Neki and Pritam Singh Safeer had won many laurels for their works. Among the youngest generation of poets, Avtar Singh-Pash has been a trend-setter, who focused on the peasants and the rural working class, and the oppression of the state. By far the most sensitive among the current poets is Surjit Singh Patar, who uses the same paradoxical style, is less militant but more lyrical. Manjit Kaur Tiwana is existentialist, and very vocal in her criticism of the older generation.

Puran Singh (1881-1931) was essentially a poet, but he also wrote prose. He translated the works of Carlyle and Emerson. His *Khulley Sekh* proved to be a trendsetter. He influenced a whole generation of writers. His prose is uninhibited and open-ended, and with him the Punjabi prose came of age.

Gurbax Singh 'Preetlari' (1985-1978), founder of the monthly, *Preetlari,* gave a new dimension to prose. He coined new words after English usage and introduced English literary works through translations in his magazine. A progressive writer, he encouraged social realism in

Punjabi has a very rich tradition of biographical writing, but autobiography is quite a late development in Punjabi prose. Arsee (Teja Singh), *Adhi mitti adha sona* (Wanjara Bedi), *Kis pai kholon ganthri* (Kartar Singh Duggal), Meri *fihni atamkatha* (Balraj Sahni), *Nangi dhup* (Balwant Gargi), *Raseedi ticket* (Amrita Pritam), *Khanabadosh* (Ajit Cour), *Nange pairan da safar* (Dalip Kaur Tiwana), *Maleh jharian* (Ram Samp Ankhi) are some of the significa ıt autobiographical works. Safarnama sahitya (Travelogue) is a fa st growing new prose form. Lai Singh was the first writer to write a travelogue in Punjabi. Charan Singh

Shaheed, the creator of humorous character, 'Baba Variama', was the pioneer of satire and humour in Punjabi literature. Many others have joined later.

Rehka chitter (Pen portraits) is yet another new prose form popularised by newspapers and magazines. Balwant Gargi is the most prolific writer in this genre. Gagan Pakistani, Harbhajan Singh, Kulbir Singh Kang and Bhushan Dhian-puri are practitioners of Malit nibandh' (creative essay). Punjabi journalism has also made rapid strides. A/eef, Punjabi *Tribune* and *Nawan zaniana* are the daily new-papers which have contributed a lot to this genre. Magazines like Arsee, *Nagmani, Lo, Lakir, Kaumi ekta, Sirjana, Akas* have also enriched the literary taste of the readers.

Dogri

Like many other lesser-known poetic traditions, Dogri poetry rose from the rich tradition of folk-songs, but the early attempts in writing could be seen in the 16th to 18th centuries, thanks to the royal patronage. The significant poets of this period included Manakchand (16th c.), Gambhir Rai (17th c.), and Devi Ditta (18th c.), who were people's poets, just as the traditional singer-poets such as Mayadas and Raghubirdas in the late 18th century. Coming to the early 19th century, we get poets like Gangaram and Lakkhu, whose traditions were carried forward by the early twentieth century, by Ramdhan, Ramprapanna Shastri, Santram Shastri, Mehta Mathradas, Hakam Jatt, Mulraj Mehta, Baba Kanshiram and Hardutt. Their work not only showed the finer sentiments of love and devotion, but also demonstrated great social awareness. However, all these could still be considered to be pre-modern trends. Modern Dogri poetry practically began with Dinubhai Pant's *Guttuiun* in 1944. It demonstrated the awareness of and response to the inner contradictions of the Dogra society divided in terms of caste and class, and came down heavily on those engaged in creating social tensions, and adding to people's sufferings by exploitation.

In general, patriotism has been the dominant theme in Dogri in the early decades after India's independence. The anthology of

twelve poets – *Jago Duggar,* was an example. Gradually the realistic voice took over in the writings of Yash Sharma, Vedpal 'Deep', Ramnath Shastri, Kehari Singh 'Madhukar', Krishna Smailpuri, Parmanand 'Almast' and Shambhunath Sharma. Employment of new imagery and cultivation of verbal melody were the hallmarks of the new poetry. In the '50s, we find Raghunath Singh Samyal who exploited fully the resources of Dogri in his poems on conventional themes. Swami Brahmanand Tirth enriched Dogri poetry with five volumes of mystical and vedantic verses. At this time, Ramnath Shastri, Dinubhai 'Pant', Shambhunath, Tara Smailpuri, Krishna Smailpuri, Kehari Singh 'Madhukar', Vedpal 'Deep', Mohanlal Sapolia, Yash Sharma and Onkar Singh 'Awara' wrote some of their best poems on a wide range of subjects. Two most talented poets of the later years, Padma Sachdev and Charan Singh, began writing during this period. Dogri *ghazal* modelled on Urdu *ghazal* tradition, and a Dogri *Ramayana* in verse by Shambhunath Sharma also appeared during this period.

Madhukar (with his 1976-anthology *Mein mele ra janun*) and Padma Sachdev (with her two new collections around the same time – *Tawi te chananh* and *Nheriyan galiyan*) practically changed the face of modern Dogri poetry and influenced several new poets such as Ramlal Sharma (who also wrote *ghazals*), Narsingh Dev Jamwal, Ashwini Mangotra (short poems, *ghazals* as well as a long poem), Shivram 'Deep' (famous for his *Gamlen de cactus),* Jitendra Udhampuri (many anthologies, including an epic *Bawa Jitto),* Gautam 'Vyathit', and Kunwar' Viyogi' (known for his long poem *Ghar).* The epics like Prakash Premi's *Sedan dharati di,* Jitendra Udhampuri's *Bawa Jitto* and Gyan Singh Pagoch's *Nyan* and *Mattangashram* deserve special mention here. Dogri poetry has not been translated much so far.

The history of Dogri prose began a century ago when Maharaja Ranbir Singh tried to lay its foundation in printed form. He got translations of Sanskrit books done to develop Dogri prose for the common use. In 1793, with the publication of the Dogri Bible by the Serampore missionaries in a lucid style, the journey of

Dogri prose began. The *Rajavalc,* or *Rajauli,* was another milestone, although the style was based on the Kangri Dogri. The discovery of this historically important book from the royal collection of Guler, which was basically a translation of the Persian work of Dara Shikoh, suggests that the language was in use among the authors of this region. Frederic Drew, a scholar-traveller, who lived in the State from 1862 to 1872, gives an account in his work of the Maharaja's royal durbar in which all documents were in Dogri. Drew also prepared a description of Dogri and its grammar. Since the local law books were available in Dogri, it could function as a court language. The style of Dogri prose in the letters among the members of royalty and officials was conventional, but they had the mark of local vocabulary. The court stamps, petitions and judgements were in Dogri or Persian. After the death of Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1885, Dogri was replaced by Urdu as court language, but in rural areas its use continued up to 1935. Writers in the forties were inclined towards Hindi, but in several parts of the country there was a new wave developing local stylistic varieties. The new wave writers of Jammu switched over to Dogri in 1950s, by when the Dogri Samstha became active to develop the Dogri language.

Triveni of Shakti Sharma and Shyam Lai Sharma, in the form of essays, was an outstanding prose work. The essayists like Vishwanath Khajuria, Jagdish Sathe, Champa Sharma, N.D. Sharma, R.N Shastri, Ved Rahi, Veena, Pandhotra and Shivanath must be mentioned as they contributed to the development of Dogri prose. Dogri prose was confined to a few translations and essays till early 1960s. Biographies and autobiographies also enriched the Dogri prose, until fictional writing began.

Hindi

Looking back to the beginning of prose writings in 'Adikal', we find very few prose works such as *Raulvel* (10th century A.D.) with both prose and poetry, and *Ukti-vyakti-prakaran* by Damodar Sharma (12th Century). Words and phrases were taken from the

various dialects of Hindi. In the medieval age we see a definite and varied tradition of prose writings which may be classified in four categories: (1) Original writings, (2) Annotations and commentaries on various works, (3) Translations, and (4) Notes and explanations in the body of the poetic works. Among the original works, we have the literature of the Vallabha School—Vachanamrita, Varta granth, theoretical and philosophical writings, books on astrology, tales and letters, etc. Among annotations and commentaries we have the Hindi versions of Sanskrit commentaries on Sanskrit works such as Priyadasa's *Sulochana-tika on Srimadbhagavat.* In the same way translations and shadow translations have some neat prose. Prose notes on the poetic writings are found under such titles as *'Charcha', 'Varta', 'Tilak', 'Vachanika'*, etc. The works on religion, philosophy, astrology, medicine are also in prose. Thus prose was used for theoretical discussions, philosophical and religious dialogues and biographical writings.

In the Brajbhasha prose tradition, first we see the works of Gorakhapanthis, such as Gorakhasar, Shish-*ta purana, Gorakshopanishad, Mahadev Gorakh gushti.* Some of them are Hindi translations of Gorkhnath's Sanskrit works or Hindi versions of Sanskrit commentaries. Besides them, we have the works of Vaishnava *bhaktas*. The language of both these have a colloquial touch. During the later medieval age (Ritikal) we have *Vaital-pachisi* (1714) by Surati Mishra and *Ain-e-Akbari ki bhasha vachanika* (1799) by Lala Hiralal. The latter shows conversational ease along with the influence of the Arabic and the Persian. However, prose did not make any appreciable development since poetry was the main mode of literary expression.

Early Hindi poetry had a tradition of bards, saint-poets – both of Natha and Jain traditions. The royal bards under the liberal patronage wrote panegyrics on the love and chivalry of their masters, but their style was a mixture of words from Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramsha and local dialects. The earliest in this tradition was *Kumarpal Chant* by an anonymous poet, after which we get the *Bisaldeva raso*, and *Prithviraj raso* by Chand Bardai, and

Hamir raso by Sharang Dhar, etc. With the growth of the Bhakti movement, which was a revolt against the dogmatic Brahminism as well as born out of contacts with the Islam, we begin to see the advent of Sufi poetry. As a consequence of religious revivalism, some poets began composing in the vernacular languages.

The *Nirguna* poets such as Kabir (1398-1518) were pained to see the injustice perpetrated on the weaker sections of the society, and distressed by the hostility between the Hindus and Muslims. Guru Nanak was another saint-poet who had a band of devoted disciples, and was responsible for the initiation of Sikhism. There were other great poets in this period, including Raidas, Dadu, Maluk and Sundardas, a few of them belonging to the lower castes. The *Nirguna* poets used the terminology of metaphysical symbolism in their poetry. As most of these poets travelled far and wide, their language reflected the coinages they made from the local dialects. Their poetry influenced not only the Hindus and the Muslims of their times, but even such great men as Tagore and Gandhi.

There were also the Muslim Sufi poets living in eastern Uttar Pradesh around the same time – especially Jayasi, Kutban and Manjhan, who believed that God could be attained through love. They were well-versed with the tradition of Hindu love poems and also knew the Persian *masnavis*. They wrote long love poems (*Premakhyan*) in the *masnavi* style and their subject was usually a royal hero travelling in search of his beloved, across many countries, and fighting the adversary, his rival in love. The object of these texts – *Padmavat, Mrigavati* and *Madhumati* was to entertain the readers as well as to communicate a deep philosophical meaning.

The *Saguna* school of poetry is divided into two sub-groups – those who wrote *Rama-bhakti kavya* and others who created the *Krishna-bhakti kavya*. The cult of Krishna-worship got a phillip because of Vallabhacharya – a brahmin from South India who was born in Banaras, and his son Vitthalnath (1515-1585), both of whom inspired many to write Krishna-bhakti poems in Brajbhasha. This is how the '*Ashtachhap*', a group of eight poets, emerged among

whom Surdas and Nandadas were the best-known ones. The Brajbhasha created exquisite verse descriptions of Krishna as a child, a playmate and a lover – trying to capture a rare joy springing from devotion to the Lord. They attempted a synthesis of the sublime and the sensuous in this manner. However, this poetry would be remembered not merely for its philosophical content. Their ability to create word pictures was unquestionable. They also created many '*ragas*' and innovations, and introduced folk metres and tunes. But their excessive sensuousness led the poets of the *Ritikal* to the erotic expresses in vulgar language.

The Rama Cult began with the re-inventing of the *Ramayana* of Valmiki – initially used for moral teaching. Most Hindi poets of the Rama cult owe their inspiration to two *Acharya*s or Great Religious Teachers – Raghvacharya and Ramananda. The poets – Vishnudas, Agradas and Ishwardas were worth-mentioning, but the best-known among them was Tulsidas (1532-1624) whose *Ramacharittnanas* is the *magnum opus* of the cult. There were poets like Surdas of the Krishna cult who were perhaps superior to Tulsi in poetic excellence and lyrical charm, but the veneration in which Tulsi is still held both as poet and as religious teacher is unsurpassed. Other literary works of Tulsidas are *Gitavali, Kavitavali, Dohavali* and *Vinaypatrika.*

Ritikal (1650-1850) is the next period of Hindi poetry, and the poets of this period experimented a lot on art and craft of poetry, and the poets and scholars of this age also determined the canons of poetic composition in Hindi. Since most of them were love verses based on the erotic sentiment, the bulk of it was written in what is called the *muktak*, or the detatched stanzas. The works of Darya Sahib, Shivnarayan and Sahjo Bai, and the allegorical love tales by Sufi poets like Kasim Shah, Nur Muhammad and Sheikh Nazir are in this tradition. But the the historical poetry of Bhushan, Sudan, Jodhraj, Bankidas, etc were more like the 12th century bardic poetry. Those who wrote didactic poetry (Niti-kavya) included Rahim, Vrinda, Girdhar Kaviraya and Dindayal Giri. The most prominent names were however that of Keshav (*Kavipriya* and

Rasik-priya), Matiram, Dev, Bhushan, Bihari, Beni, Rasanidhi and Ghananand.

By the end of the third quarter of the nineteenth century, one could see the change in Hindi literature which was slowly trying to resolve its encounter with modernity and western ideas of life. With the Bharatendu (1867-1900) era began this change. Bharatendu Harishchandra tried his hands in all genres – poetry, drama, essay, etc., and also became a centre-point around which a galaxy of major writers emerged, including Premghan, Pratapnarain Mishra, Jagmohan Singh, Radhakrishna Das, and Ambika Datt Vyas. They were all aware of the new wind, and thus we see new themes like nationalism and pragmatism as well as disillusionment with the ruling dispensation. The writers of this age were drawn from various strata of society, which is why they could write about the problems of the people with personal knowledge. Most of them supported the movements for widow-marriage, intercaste marriage, and gender equality. Their contribution in the field of poetic language is also commendable. They refined its texture, using words and idioms from local dialects and sister languages.

These experimentations were accelerated during the Dwivedi era, especially through his monthly journal – *Saraswati*. Acharya Mahavirprasad Dwivedi was able to persuade the people to look around and liberate themselves both from the foreign yoke and from social evils. Dwivedi and his colleagues, Nathuram Shankar, Gayaprasad Shukla 'Sanehi', Ramnaresh Tripathi, Rai Deviprasad Purna, Gopalsharan Singh, Hariaudh, Maithilisharan Gupta and Shridhar Pathak reminded the people of their rich heritage as well as our weaknesses. They denounced ritualism, hypocrisy, animal sacrifice, caste system and other social evils. These poets also looked at nature's beauty from close quarters and recognized its soothing effects. They also took a more rationalistic view of God and religion. The bulk of Hindi poetry written in this period is in the form of long narratives on episodes of Indian history and mythology.

The next era was that of the Chhayavad (1920-1930), when the writers were exposed to events of far reaching importance

both in the national and in the international spheres. The First World War, the growth of technology, and the Russian Revolution — all had influenced them a lot. The failure of the freedom struggle and the resulting despair in personal life forced the poets to turn introvert. Jayashankar 'Prasad' in his *Ansu* and *Lahar,* Sumitranandan Pant in *Pallav* and *Granthi,* and Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala' in his *Anamika* gave expression to their feelings and aesthetic experience in a language hitherto unknown to Hindi readers. These poets made innovations in their style and technique also. For the first time, the poets gave up measured metres and rhymes, and introduced a new kind of blank verse based on articulated word arrangement. The other cross currents included the Romantic poetry – full of passion by Makhanlal Chaturvedi, Balkrishna Sharrrfa 'Navin' and Ramdhari Singh 'Dinkar'. Though their poetry captured passion and romantic temper, they were a kind of rebels in their time. There was another stream led by Harivansh Rai 'Bachchan', and Narendra Sharma and 'Anchal', who are at times called the secular lyricists at times.

As a literary movement, '*Pragativad*' (1936-1942) in the mid-'30s brought our attention to harsh realities of life, including natural calamities, human atrocities like the world wars, and the success of the Russian Revolution. These poets were followed by Kedarnath-Agarwal, Nagarjun, Ramvilas Sharma, Rangeya Raghav and Shivamangal Singh 'Suman' who were the chief exponents of progressivismt. Many poets were common to both the trends. The name 'Prayogvad' was given derisively to this movement by some progressive critics, and it is a misnomer because the trend is not merely confined to experimentation in form and technique of poetry, The movement started with the publication of *Tar saptak* (1943), a collection of poems written between 1938 and 1943 by seven poets—Muktibodh, Girijakujmar-Mathur, Nemichand Jain, Bharat Bnushan Agrawal, Ramvilas Sharma, Prabhakar Machwe, and Sachidanand Vatsyayan 'Agyeya'. These poems were a break from the past—a landmark in modern Indian poetry. The poets of this trend were seen to be in search of identity,

and they wanted to portray man in his entirety, for which they had to evolve a diction close to the spoken word.

The experimental phase of Hindi poetry – especially those written after 1947 came to be called '*Nai kavita*'. Their protagonists believed hat each moment in one's life was significant and every emotional experience was true. To them man was important because he was an ordinary man with pains and pleasures. They paid special importance to the environment in which man is born because it shapes his mind and temperament. The chief exponents of *Nai kavita* included Agyeya, Shamsher Bahadur Singh, Girijakumar Mathur, Dharamvir Bharati, Kunwar Narayan, Kedar Nath Singh, Kedar Nath Agarwal, Ashok Vajpai, Chandrakant Deotale, Kailash Vajpai, Thakurprasad Singh, etc. although among them – Gajanan Madhav 'Muktibodh' is in a class of his own. Dehumanization, violence, permissiveness, societal degradation, and anti-establishment protest dominated their poetry. Rajkamal Choudhary, Nagarjun and Dhumil were important committed voices, followed by, among others, Sarveshwar Dayal Saxena, Vinod Kumar Shukla, Liladhar Jagudi and Vijaydev Narain Sahi. The poetry written after the sixties went by various names – *'Kavita'*, *'Atikavita'* and *'Aswikrit kavita'*, most of them were using poetry as slogan. Newer writers like Manglesh Dabral, Gagan Gill, Anamika and several others have given new directions to Hindi poetry in the recent times.

While discussing the development of Khariboli, Acharya Ramchandra Shukla rightly said that with the spread of Muslims in various parts of the country and the vogue of the Delhi court etiquette, the Khariboli of Delhi became the medium of communication among the educated classes of society. As early as in the 14th century Amir Khusrau composed some poems and riddles in Khariboli. During Aurangazeb's time *shayari* (poetry) began to be written in 'Rekhtan' (Khariboli blended with Persian). Interestingly, the traders coming from outside practised the colloquial form of Khariboli prevalent amongst the common people of Delhi and Agra. With the decline of the Mughal empire Khariboli got the opportunity

of spreading beyond its locale. As business centres and wholesale markets declined in this region, the business classes shifted to Lucknow, Banaras, Patna and Murshidabad. Thus it developed fast, replaced Brajbhasha and became the main language of literary expression. What is important to note is that the prose of this period was receptive to the influence of Arabic and Persian languages which in a way led them nearer to Khariboli. After the Fort William College was established in Calcutta in 1800, Lalluji Lai wrote *Prem-sagar* and Sadal Mishra *Nasiketopakhyan* in Khariboli. Lalluji Lai (1763-1825) was a Gujarati Brahmin and belonged to Agra and Sadal Mishra belonged to Bihar. A little earlier Munshi Sadasukhlal 'Niyaz' and Insha Alia Khan had already written Jnaupadesh and *Rani Ketaki ki kahani* respectively. Thus these four writers emerged as the makers of modern Khariboli prose..

The man who really made a significant contribution to Hindi prose was Raja Lakshman Singh. In 1861 he published *Praja-hitaishi* from Agra and translated Kalidasa's *Raghuvansha* in simple and readable prose. About this time Hindi prose was given a lead by such divergent men as Fredrick Pincott and Navin Chandra Rai. Rai started a magazine, *Janan-pradayani,* in 1867 to propogate the principles of Brahmo Samaj. In addition, he wrote a number of books. Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of Arya Samaj published his *Satyartha-prakash* in Hindi and stressed that Hindi was necessary for the emotional integration of the country. But the greatest of them was Bharatendu Harishchandra, who gave a new dimension to Hindi prose. While bringing literature closer to contemporary society, he introduced new contents suitable to the needs of time. Thus Khariboli became the medium of expression for all forms of literature. The tradition of a mature and creative prose started by Bharatendu continued after him, and with the coming of Mahavirprasad Dwivedi and his magazine *Saraswat.*

Siyaramsharan Gupta, a poet by temperament, took his readers by surpise as a master of simple and lucid prose on social themes, while Makhanlal Chaturvedi, editor of *Karmavir,* wrote impassioned prose. Banarasidas Chaturvedi also contributed richly

to prose writing in the form of essays, sketches and memoirs. Chhayavad poets brought new ideas and style to prose. Jaishankar Prasad's *Kavya aur kala tatha anya nibandha* and Sumitranandan Pant's *Paryalochana* and preface to *Pallav* added to the reflective power of Hindi prose, and Suryakant Tripathi Nirala enriched it with the originality of ideas and creativity of expression.

The critics of the Chhayavad age—Nand Dulare Vajapeyi, Hazariprasad Dwivedi, Shantipriya Dwivedi and Nagendra—have contributed to Hindi prose in different ways, and made the language a rich medium of expression.

Finally, Premchand contributed to Hindi prose through his short stories and journalism. His *Hansa* played a major role in the development of Hindi prose, freeing it from theoretical dogmatism and linking it to progressive thought. He became a model for many a writer, including Rahul Sankrityayan, Rangeya Raghav, Prakashchandra, Shivadansingh Chauhan, Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh and Ramvilas Sharma. Kaka Saheb Kalelkar's travelogues, Sampurnanand's socio-political essays, and the articles and diaries of Ram Manohar Lohia, Acharya Narendra Dev and Jayaprakash Narayan contributed in no less manner. In the post-Independence era two great masters, Jainendra and Agyeya also took Hindi prose to new heights.

Among the creative writers, playwrights and novelists like Mohan Rakesh, Bhagawati Charan Verma, Yashpal, Upendranath 'Ashk', Amritlal Nagar, Nirmal Verma, Phaneeshvarnath 'Renu', Shrilal Shukla, Rahi Masoom Raza, Nirmal Verma, Krishna Sobti, Manohar Shyam Joshi, K.B. Vaid, Mridula Garg and many others have made important contributions while there is a new generation of writers ready to take over that includes Alka Saraogi and others.Dalit writing is also coming up in a big way in Hindi with writers like Om Prakash Valmiki using everyday language for fiction.

Urdu

The Urdu language – because of its origin, has always been torn between different regions, styles and ethno-cultural influences. Beginning from the early form of Urdu, such as Rekhta (11-12th century), until now, it gets drwn towards the local speech varieties as well as Arabo-Persian influence. In the initial phase, great authors and poets like Amir Khusrau, Kabir and Mirabai enriched the language, although even then one could see the Persian influence on lexical coinages and use. By the 16th century, the southern style got established, which was delicate and elegant, Known as the Dakhani (Language of Deccan), this lyrical tradition continued up to the age of Vali Dakhani. Vali travelled to Delhi during the last years of the 17th century. But later, efforts went on to remove the Dakhani words, especially at the times of Mir, Sauda and Nasikh. As a result, during the 18th century, we see a lot of Persian influence. By then, three poetic forms, considered to be Urdu's contribution to modern Indian poetry – the *geet*, the *ghazal* and the *nazm* became popular throughout the country. Vali, Mir, Sauda and Insha were the initial poets who made their mark. The Persian narrative or *Masnavi* tradition of verse tales, such as *Gulzare-e-nasim* and *Sihr-ul-bayan,* began then. Agha Hashr and Azmatullah made the beginning of *geet*, but the process continued with Akhtar Shirani, Hafiz Jallandhri and Saghar Nizami. More recently, Qatil Shafai, Nasir Shahzad, Nida Fazli and Kumar Pashi have written *geet* lyrics.

Ghazal was most probably brought from the Arabic tradition, and it had a structural limitation. But for long, this has been the most popular form of poetic expression in Urdu, and has also entered into the poetry of other languages like Hindi and Gujarati.

In *ghazal*, the protagonist is generally masculine, but it is a feminine protagonist in *geet*. In many *ghazals*, the poet is seen making a statement that has wider, if not universal, applicability, representing an era. They are very evocative and go down very easily among the listeners. It is often possible to group them into different types: mystical, erotic and dream-like *ghazals*. But the

Dakhani *ghazal* is closer to the *geet*, which is why Ghawwasi's 'song' and Abdullah Qutb Shah's *ghazal* are quite close to one another. But Vali has characteristics of the Dakhani tradition as well as writing in the true ghazal tradition.

In the north, Urdu *ghazals* were enriched by both Delhi School and Lucknow School traditions. Lucknow school had focused more on the decadence, with the exception of Mushafi and Atish. The poets from the Delhi school included Sauda, Mir, Ghalib and several others, who wrote world-class poetry on a wide range of topics, some handling mysticism in their own way. Ghalib and Mir are often seen negotiating between conflicting forces, whereas Zauk writes on themes of a much different type. Urdu poetry has since been enriched by Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Sajjad Saheer, Sahir Ludhianvi, Ali sardar Jaffri, Firaq Gorakhpuri, Majroo Sultanpuri,Kaifi Azmi, Nida Fazli,Javed Akhtar,Shamsur Rahman Faruqi Gulzar and others.

Urdu prose is much younger than poetry. The origin of Urdu poetry can be traced back to the beginning of the 16th century, while Urdu prose had its beginning three centuries later, in the first decade of the 19th century. The leading name among the early writers of Urdu prose is that of Mir Amman. He wrote *Bagh-o-bahar,* a collection of five autobiographical stories told by four mendicants and a king. The notable colleagues of Mir Amman at the Fort William College were Sher Ali 'Afsos', Haider Bakhsh 'Haideri', Kazim Ali 'Jawan', Beni Narain, Mirza Ali 'Lutf', etc. The prose style of the writers of the Fort William College was marked by simplicity and fluency. All these works were written with a social purpose; so they were written in a way comprehensible and interesting to the average reader.

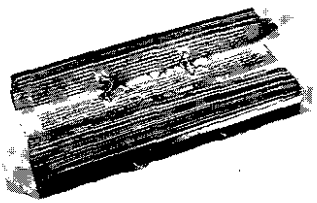
But the Persian prose of the medieval period found in model letters (*insha*) and history books, showed an extremely heavy and pedantic style, the main object heing the display of the writer's knowledge. It contained quite a number of synonyms with many rhyming words and phrases. Highly educated persons appreciated this style. The most notable work of this kind was *Fasana-e-ajaib* by Rajab Ali Beg 'Saroor'. Faqir Mohammad 'Goya', a commander

of the Avadh army, wrote *Bustan-e-Hikmat.* It is a translation of a Persian classic, and though its style is not ornamental, it is extremely heavy. It was yet very popular in the middle of the 19th century.

But in Delhi no attempt was made to revive the old style of prose. Ghalib's collections of letters are universally recognised as the harbinger of a natural style of writing. The origin of modem Urdu prose is found in the writings of Syed Ahmad Khan. The supporters of Syed were mainly intellectuals who, besides being rooted in Islamic tradition, were exposed to modern social realities, and like him presented Islam in the modern light. Notable among them were Hali and Shibli. Hali translated the new upsurge mainly in the field of literary criticism, Shibli did the same in the re-interpretation of the history of Islam. The main works of this period are Syed's interpretation of the Quran, besides some historical writings. Other supporters of Syed, who made their mark as prose writers, were Mohammad Husain 'Azad', Nazeer Ahmad, Zaka Ullah, Muhsin-ul-Mulk, Vagar-ul-Mulk and Chiragh Ali. Despite its short period of development, Urdu prose has made great strides .Sadat Hasan Manto,Rajinder Singh Bedi, Kishan Chander, Ismat Chughtai, Qurratul-ain –Hyder and others have made Urdu prose a fit vehicle for excellenr fiction. Insightful critics like Shamsur Rahman Faruqi have also enriched Urdu prose.

18

CONCLUDING REMARKS: The Overall Picture



In order that the readers may appreciate the inter-lingual scenario-competition among our languages, and possible decay and endangerment of our languages let us present a dozen points to give an overall picture of India as a linguistic area:

***1. Languages in School*:** Although we get varying accounts, India's schools teach 58 to 69 different languages either as subjects or as media of instruction.

***2. Languages of Mass Media*:** The nation has newspapers and/ or periodicals in 87 languages with varying degrees of regularity and readership. Radio programmes are still mostly under the government domination (with the exception of a few recent FM stations) and they beam programs in 24 languages and 146 "dialects" (so called – not on the basis of any sound historical linguistic principles, but only because of the fact they are mostly oral modes of expression), whereas films are made in 15 languages.

***3. Written Languages*:** In a recent survey conducted by Padmanabha, Mahapatra, Verma and McConnel (1989), we are told that out of the 96 languages surveyed of the 114 languages listed in Census 1981, 50 were found to have written modes of expression. Although by the end of the 19th century many major Indian languages were put to some kind of writing, the writing systems did not spread across the whole society. In the initial period, these included writings by both scholars and non-native missionaries, but without native participation, every such written language lapsed back into an unwritten state.

***4. Link Languages and Speech Variation*:** Every language area consists of at least three inter-languages. Widely accepted and understood languages have variants. Hindi alone has 48, which has resulted in a functional hierarchy of Indian languages, with Hindi and English occupying the top spot, followed by the 16 other official languages of the states and territories plus four others (that include Dogri, Maithili, and Rajasthani), which are recognised as vehicles of significant literature.

***5. Numerous 'Other tongues'*:** There are 23 "other" languages with a million plus speakers (including Awadhi, Bagri, Bhili, Bhojpuri, Chattisgarhi, Deccani, Kangri, Garhwali, Haryanvi, Ho, Kanauji, Khandeshi, Kumaoni, Kurux, Lamani, Magahi, Malvi, Marwari, Meitei, Mundari, Nimadi, Sadari and Tulu), followed by hundreds of still other speech varieties at the bottom of the ladder.

***6. Speech Variation in early surveys*:** The picture of changing space of Indian languages becomes clearer if one looks into older demographic records, like the census returns of Bombay (1864), Madras Presidency (1871) and Bengal (1872), and then systematically compares information on linguistic composition of the country as collected through the succeeding decennial censuses of the country from 1891 to 2001. Grierson's LSI (*The Linguistic Survey of India*), conducted between 1886 and 1927, is another source of

information of the linguistic composition of the region. It had a total number of 179 languages and 544 dialects (Grierson 1927) although these figures are of limited consequence today because he had to include many regions that are no longer part of the country and many other parts of the country did not receive adequate coverage at the time.

7. Picture after Independence: Attempts of 1961 and 1971: After Independence, an attempt was made in the 1961 census to present the mother tongue data in the same classification scheme as that of Grierson. A list of 193 classified languages (excluding foreign and unclassified tongues) was identified out of a total of 1,652 mother tongue labels enumerated. The 1971 census, which defined 'language' in terms of broad demo- and geolinguistic units, showed a list of 105 languages each with a speaker strength of 10,000 and above on the all India level.

8. Rationalisation of Mother Tongue Figures: Until the census of India 1881 came out, because innumerable mother tongue labels were floated during each census taken at ten year intervals, there was great difficulty in arriving at a rationalised figure. For example, the 1961 and 1971 census figures of raw labels numbered around 3,000, which jumped in 1981 to around 7,000 and touched an all-time high in 1991, when more than 10,000 were returned. The task of presenting a meaningful linguistic picture of the entire country required that the census produce a list of rationalised mother tongues. This was how the 1961 figure as 1,652 was announced, whereas in 1991 it was 1,576. Finally, in the Census of India, 1991, the total number of languages arrived at was 114.

9. Defining the 'mother tongue': The concept of 'mother tongue' is now defined by the census as "the language spoken in childhood by the person's mother to the person. If the mother died in infancy, the language mainly spoken in the person's home in childhood will be the mother tongue. In the case of infants and deaf mutes, the

language usually spoken by the mother should be recorded. In case of doubt, the language mainly spoken in the household may be recorded". There have been great variations in the figures across different decennial figures, because of different criteria used in different periods. In the 1881 and 1891 census operations, the emphasis was on the language 'ordinarily spoken in the household by each person's parents', whereas in 1901, the enumerators were instructed to record names of languages 'ordinarily used' by each subject, which was slightly extended as 'ordinarily used in his own home' during the census of 1911 and 1921. There was an altogether different instruction in three subsequent operations in 1931, 1941 and 1951, when it was stipulated as the language first spoken 'from the cradle'. The 1961 census figures have a lot of respectability, as here for the first time the enumeration used a more elaborate criterion, namely the language 'spoken in childhood by the person's mother to the person or mainly spoken in the household', whereas in 1971 it was the language spoken in childhood by the person's mother to the person. The census authorities, however, felt that the concept of 'language ordinarily used' was perhaps best understood by the subjects for the vernacular word *Matru-Bhasha* (Mother Tongue, of Sanskritic origin).

***10. Bilingualism Figures*:** During the 1931 census, one more question was added, as each individual was asked to name any other language (other than one's mother tongue), commonly used. In 1991 there was a conscious decision to make the task a little more complicated by adding a question on two subsidiary languages rather than one, to get the trilingualism figures. India's national average of bilingualism according to Census 1991 (19.44%) is significantly higher compared to the national averages of 1961 (9.7%), 1971 (13.04%), and 1981 (13.44%), and to add to that, the 1991 figures of average rate of trilingualism is 7.26%.

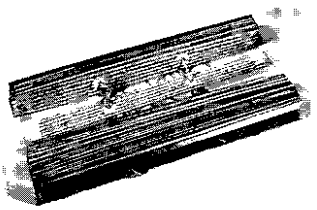
***11. Speech Repertoire*:** Part of the reason for such linguistic diversity lies in the complex social realities of South Asia. Indian

languages reflect the intricate levels of social hierarchy and caste. Individuals have in their speech repertoire a variety of styles and dialects appropriate to various social situations. In general, the higher the speaker's status, the more speech forms there are at his or her disposal. Speech is adapted in countless ways to reflect the specific social context and the relative standing of the speakers.

12. Language-Dialect Division: Determining what should be called a language or a dialect is more a political than a linguistic question. Sometimes the word *language* is applied to a standardised and prestigious form, recognised as such over a large geographic area, whereas the word *dialect* is used for the various forms of speech that lack prestige or that are restricted to certain regions or communities but are still regarded as forms of the same language. Sometimes mutual intelligibility is the criterion: if the speakers can understand each other, even though with some difficulty, they are speaking the same language, although they may speak different dialects. However, speakers of Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi or of Bengali and Oriya or of Tamil and Malayalam can often understand each other, yet they are regarded as speakers of different languages.

19

POST-SCRIPT: CRISES BEFORE THE AUTHORS OF THE PRESENT TIMES



We believe that the crises that have been bothering the authors world over are relevant for us. If Indian literature is indeed one expressed in many voices and many languages, we could not stay aloof from the concerns that bother the entire country.

We have crises at different levels, some that are more universal and generalizable – true to our time and space, and hence we can call them crises of the elementary order. At the second level, there are some other kind of crises that have to do with the choice of themes and treatments by our litterateurs. Thirdly, 'crises' can also be seen as a positive force in our literary productivity, which is what has been called the tertiary level here.

The biggest crisis for our authors today – perhaps anywhere in the world – is that they do not know for whom they are writing, and who and how many are actually reading their work. According to National Endowment for the Arts Survey in the USA (2004), which happens to be one of the highest writing and publishing countries in the world, there has been a dramatic decline in literary reading so much so that less than half of American adults now

read literature. One could see this drop in statistics in all age-groups but the steepest rate of decline was 28% in the youngest generation. It is a common observation, as we travel by public transport today, whether in Asia or in Europe, that very few travelers would be reading books .The study also documents an overall decline of 10 percentage points in literary readers during a 20 year period, from 1982 to 2002, representing a loss of 20 million potential readers. The rate of decline is increasing and, according to the survey, has nearly tripled in the last decade.

Although there is no reason to believe that there has been an equally catastrophic decline in readership figures in Indian languages, such decreases could become a national crisis as this shows a general collapse in advanced literacy raising doubts about a knowledge-society. Fortunately for India, the Indian Readership Survey's 2005 figures show that the top ten positions have gone to non-English publications, belying fears that the growing urbanisation of the country's population and increased English education would gradually affect the readership of non-English publications. Hindi dailies *Dainik Jagran* and *Dainik Bhaskar* retained the first and the second positions, with all-India figures of 17.47 million and 13.42 million readers respectively, which was possible as reading markets in new and smaller towns are growing very fast with books and newspapers and magazines beginning to reach them. Obviously, both aggressive publishing and selling as well as the organization and popularity of book fairs in small towns have contributed to this growth . Where many of our languages lag behind is in the setting up of systematic programmes for translating knowledge texts within short periods. Further, we also need to promote our authors outside India. This is one of our major challenges.

Let us now look at 'crisis' from inside out. 'Crisis' *per se* is not necessarily a negative phenomenon. It could also act positively as far as great writing is concerned. Each critical moment elicits a set of responses from a given society, and there could be many contradictory responses and analyses. Such responses are often the authorial reaction to the event, unless it is the case where the

author himself or herself is at the centre of the event, and there is always a scope for an individual point of view there. Secondly, reinterpretation of past events could become the source of tension of a special kind, and such writing has not been uncommon in Indian literature. They always gave rise to a new kind of canon formation. Thirdly, difficult interpretations of otherwise seemingly easy texts and commentaries on seemingly difficult texts are both things that generate as well as respond to crises. Attempts at the apparent recovery of what is supposed to have been suppressed or lost in translation, abridgement, and critical reviews is another source of crises.

A typical problem for authors today – particularly for the fiction writers – is that they are often tempted by an unholy nexus of lures and rewards and the social forces demand that they speak the truth.

The other crisis has to do with political debasement of writing societies, or even debasement of languages, which tend to become more and more unipolar, going against the basic characteristics of man's plural existence. While the economics of literary publication and the book promotional policy can play a negative role for the books, it is equally certain that easy money and cheap success might double-bind our authors emerging in the wake of each major socio-historical crisis. This happens to all literatures. Also there are interesting comparisons with all-American figures. Brody reported a survey (by Gereben) of adult literary tastes in Budapest and around in 1991, which showed that 54% read entertainment fiction – mainly crime thrillers and adventure, 26% read important nonfictional prose (science, history), and only 14% wanted to read realistic novels, with classical literature readership falling to 4%, and only 2% being interested in modern aesthetics. Finally, the abrupt change, the rapid pace of events, the uncertainties of the transitions, and the social and intellectual bickerings of political parties could trigger a literature of reportage, editorials, letters to the editor, etc that could look more important than serious literary texts.

But as we know, Tagore changed, just as Madhusudan did. As time went by, Tagore became more and more vocal about his own reading of his time and space and in the critique of his environs. He vigorously differed from the proponents of the borrowed glitter of Eurocentric modernity and charted out his own course, digging out his own style from his roots. Whereas the modernists argue that the past must look stilted and stunted at some point so that one could grow beyond it, those in favour of the global try to make us believe that we always live in a tense that is at best a *Past Imperfect*. Here is what Tagore had to say about looking back at one's own roots:

> *Jakhan baahire raudrer kharatara taap,aakaash haite brSTi pare naa,takhan shikaRer prabhaabe aamraa atiiter andhakaarer nimnatana desh haite ras aakarSan karite paari.*
>
> (When sun shines mercilessly, raising mercury in the world outside, when there is not a drop of rain from the sky, at that time, thanks to our roots, we can draw upon 'rasa' from the dark innermost chamber of our past.)

Many would argue that the impact of the Global in each of these cases is indeed deeper. One might point out that these harbingers of 'change' were trying out the strategy of 'othering' – of hiding their own identity – linguistic, cultural, philosophical, and in the process, they were all innovating. It is argued that this othering of an author is a concept that has come to South Asia from outside.

But this was a strategy that many South Asian authors had tried out – even in the past – unconsciously. They tried and erased all clues that would link the text with a given person. It is not surprising that there were 13 Chandidasas and many Vidyapatis. Bhartriharis were several, and Panini was not a person but a whole school or tradition. Choice of pseudonyms and added names should not be surprising, therefore. in many South Asian languages. We have all seen and known writers pretending to be someone or something else, and each one of us here has some story to tell

about authors whose game it has been to 'other' the self. The strategies are numerous – we need not dwell on them in detail here.

As writers then, it was often the case that our initial response was to push our '*self*' to the background. It was like changing one's *personal terminations* from the *first* to the *third person*, singular . The impersonality with which our own Keertana tradition works, and the clear lack of willingness of our Sahajiya poets (of the Charya texts) to reveal their individual identity point out that we have always had this trend of othering ourselves; the contact with the West in 18th and 19th Century had only helped us to revive it.

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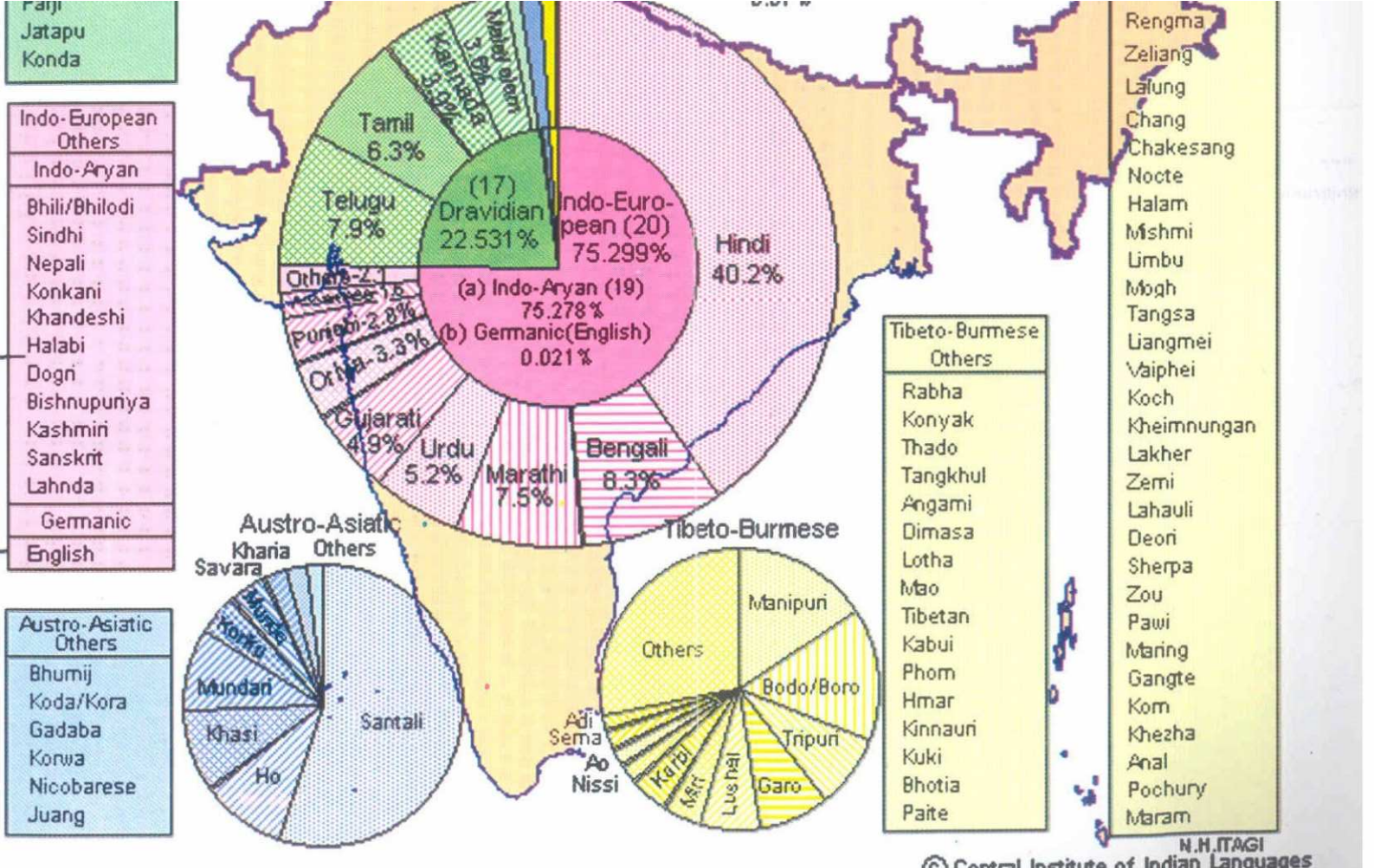
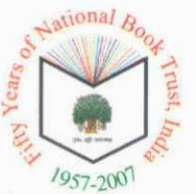


Note: Figures in brackets refer to the number of languages (inclusive of mothertongues grouped under them) in each language-family

Professor Udaya Narayana Singh (born 1951) writes poems and plays in Maithili, poems and literary essays in Bangla, and translates between several pairs of languages with equal ease. His academic training has been in Linguistics mainly from the universities of Calcutta and Delhi, and partly at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and he has taught linguistics, translation studies, comparative literature, anthropology and English at the universities of Delhi, Hyderabad, Baroda and Surat between 1978 and 2000. He is currently the Director of the Central Institute of Indian languages, Mysore, India.



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