

Fakir Mohan Senapati

Fakir Mohan Senapati (13 January 1843 – 14 June 1918), often referred to as **Utkala Byasa Kabi** (*Odisha's Vyasa*), was an Indian writer, poet, philosopher and social reformer. He played a leading role in establishing the distinct identity of Odia, a language mainly spoken in the Indian state of Odisha. Senapati is regarded as the father of Odia nationalism and modern Odia literature.

Early life and background

Born to Lakhmana Charana Senapati and Tulasi Devi Senapati in a middle class Khandayat family. When he was one and half year old his father died. After fourteen months his mother also died. Since childhood he was taken care of by his grand mother.

Senapati's uncle was jealous of young Fakir Mohan and did not allow his education. His weak health also contributed to him being a late learner. He paid towards his educational expenses by working as a child labourer.

Senapati dedicated his life to the progress of Odia language in the later 19th and early 20th century. He is called the father of Odia fiction. At his native place, school, colleges and universities are constructed in his memory like Fakir Mohan College and Fakir Mohan University.

Novels

Mayadhar Mansingh had described Senapati as the Thomas Hardy of Odisha. Though he translated from Sanskrit, wrote poetry, and attempted many forms of literature, he is now known primarily as the father of modern Odia prose fiction. His four novels, written between 1897 and 1915, reflect the socio-cultural conditions of Odisha during the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. While the three novels, *Chha maana Atha Guntha*, *Mamu* and *Prayaschita* explore the realities of social life in its multiple dimensions, '*Lachhama*' is a historical romance dealing with the anarchical conditions of Odisha in the wake of Maratha invasions during the eighteenth century. *Chha Maana Atha Guntha* is the first Indian novel to deal with the exploitations of landless peasants by the feudal Lord. It was written much before the October revolution of Russia or much before the emerging of Marxist ideas in India. Fakir Mohan is also the writer of the first autobiography in Odia, "*Atma Jeebana Charita*".

Short stories

His "*Rebati*" (1898) is widely recognized as the first Odia short story. It is the story of a young innocent girl whose desire for education is placed in the context of a conservative society in a backward Odisha village, which is hit by the killer epidemic cholera. His other stories are "*Patent Medicine*", "*Daka Munshi*", "*Adharma Bitta*" etc. His short stories are compiled in books "*galpa swalpa-1 and 2*".

Poem

He wrote a long poem, *Utkala Bhramanam*, that first appeared in 1892. Literally meaning Tour of Odisha, this poem, in reality, is not a travelogue but a commentary on the state of affairs in the Odisha of that time, written in a satirical manner.

Munshi Premchand

Dhanpat Rai Srivastava (31 July 1880 – 8 October 1936), better known as **Munshi Premchand** based on his pen name Premchand, was an Indian writer famous for his modern Hindustani literature.

Premchand was a pioneer of Hindi and Urdu social fiction. He was one of the first authors to write about caste hierarchies and the plights of women and labourers prevalent in the society of the late 1880s. He is one of the most celebrated writers of the Indian subcontinent, and is regarded as one of the foremost Hindi writers of the early twentieth century. His works include *Godaan*, *Karmabhoomi*, *Gaban*, *Mansarovar*, and *Idgah*. He published his first collection of five short stories in 1907 in a book called *Soz-e-Watan* (Sorrow of the Nation).

His works include more than a dozen novels, around 300 short stories, several essays and translations of a number of foreign literary works into Hindi.

In 21 Century, he was the top featured poet of the Dainik sahitya, Sahitya Akademi, Hindwi and many others.

Early life

Munshi Premchand was born on 31 July 1880 in Lamhi, a village located near Banaras, and was named Dhanpat Rai ("master of wealth"). His ancestors came from a large Chitraguptavanshi Kayastha family, which owned eight to nine bighas of land. His grandfather, Guru Sahai Rai, was a patwari (village land record-keeper), and his father, Ajaib Lal, was a post office clerk. His mother was Anandi Devi of Karauni village, who probably was also his inspiration for the character Anandi in his "Bade Ghar Ki Beti". Dhanpat Rai was the fourth child of Ajaib Lal and Anandi; the first two were girls who died as infants, and the third one was a girl named sama. His uncle, Mahabir, a rich landowner, nicknamed him "Nawab", meaning baron. "Nawab Rai" was the first pen name chosen by Dhanpat Rai.

When he was seven years old, Dhanpat Rai began his education at a madrasa in Lalpur, Varanasi, located near Lamhi. He learned Urdu and Persian from a maulvi in the madrasa. When he was 8, his mother died after a long illness. His grandmother, who was responsible for raising him, died soon after. Munshi Premchand felt isolated, as his elder sister Suggi had already been married, and his father was always busy with work. His father, who was now posted at Gorakhpur, remarried, but Premchand received little affection from his stepmother. The stepmother later became a recurring theme in Premchand's works.

As a child, Dhanpat Rai sought solace in fiction and developed a fascination for books. He heard the stories of the Persian-language fantasy epic *Tilism-e-Hoshrub* at a tobacconist's shop. He took the job of selling books for a book wholesaler, thus getting the opportunity to read a lot of books. He learnt English at a missionary school and studied several works of fiction, including George W. M. Reynolds's eight-volume *The Mysteries of the Court of London*. He composed his first literary work at Gorakhpur, which was never published and is now lost. It was a farce on a bachelor who falls in love with a low caste woman. The character was based on Premchand's uncle, who used to scold him for being obsessed with reading fiction; the farce was probably written as revenge for this.

After his father was posted to Zamania in the mid-1890s, Dhanpat Rai enrolled at the Queen's College at Banaras as a day scholar. In 1895, he was married at the age of 15, while still studying in the ninth grade. The match was arranged by his maternal step-grandfather. The girl was from a rich landlord family and was older than Premchand, who found her quarrelsome and not good-looking.

His father died in 1897 after a long illness. He managed to pass the matriculation exam with second division (below 60% marks). However, only the students with the first division were given fee concessions at the Queen's College. He then sought admission at the Central Hindu School but was unsuccessful because of his poor arithmetic skills. Thus, he had to discontinue his studies. He then obtained an assignment to coach an advocate's son in Banaras at a monthly salary of five rupees. He used to reside in a mud cell over the advocate's stables and used to send 60% of his salary back home. Premchand read a lot during these days. After racking up several debts, in 1899, he went to a bookshop to sell one of his collected books. There, he met the headmaster of a missionary school at Chunar, who offered him a job as a teacher at a monthly salary of ₹18. He also took up the job of tutoring a student at a monthly fee of ₹5

Gorakhpur

A plaque commemorating Munshi Premchand at the hut where he resided in [Gorakhpur](#) from 1916 to 1921.

In August 1916, Premchand was transferred to Gorakhpur on a promotion. He became the Assistant Master at the Normal High School, Gorakhpur.

At Gorakhpur, he developed a friendship with the bookseller Buddhi Lal, who allowed him to borrow novels for reading in exchange for selling exam cram books at the school. Premchand was an enthusiastic reader of classics in other languages and translated several of these works into Hindi.

By 1919, Premchand had published four novels of about a hundred pages each. In 1919, Premchand's first major novel *Seva Sadan* was published in Hindi. The novel was originally written in Urdu under the title *Bazaar-e-Husn* but was published in Hindi first by a Calcutta-based publisher, who offered Premchand ₹450 for his work. The Urdu Publisher of Lahore published the novel later in 1924, paying Premchand ₹250. The novel tells the story of an unhappy housewife, who first becomes a courtesan, and then manages an orphanage for the young daughters of the courtesans. It was well received by the critics and helped Premchand gain wider recognition.

In 1919, Premchand obtained a BA degree from Allahabad University.[34] By 1921, he had been promoted to Deputy Inspectors of Schools. On 8 February 1921, he attended a meeting in Gorakhpur, where Mahatma Gandhi asked people to resign from government jobs as part of the non-cooperation movement. Premchand, although physically unwell and with two kids and a pregnant wife to support, thought about it for five days and decided, with the consent of his wife, to resign from his government job.

Back to Banaras

After quitting his job, Premchand left Gorakhpur for Banaras on 18 March 1921 and decided to focus on his literary career. Till his death in 1936, he faced severe financial difficulties and chronic ill health.

In 1923, he established a printing press and publishing house in Banaras, christened "Saraswati Press". The year 1924 saw the publication of Premchand's *Rangbhoomi*, which has a blind beggar called Surdas as its tragic hero. Schulz mentions that in *Rangbhoomi*, Premchand comes across as a "superb social chronicler", and although the novel contains some "structural flaws" and "too many authorial explanations", it shows a "marked progress" in Premchand's writing style. According to Schulz, it was in *Nirmala* (1925) and *Pratigya* (1927) that Premchand found his way to "a balanced, realistic level" that surpasses his earlier works and manages to "hold his readers in tutelage". *Nirmala*, a novel dealing with the dowry system in India, was first serialised in the magazine *Chand* between November 1925 and November 1926, before being published as a novel. *Pratigya* ("The Vow") dealt with the subject of widow remarriage.

In 1928, Premchand's novel **Gaban** ("Embezzlement"), focusing on the middle class' greed, was published. In March 1930, Premchand launched a literary-political weekly magazine titled *Hans*, aimed at inspiring the Indians to mobilise against the British rule. The magazine, noted for its politically provocative views, failed to make a profit. Premchand then took over and edited another magazine called *Jagaran*, which, too, ran at a loss.

In 1931, Premchand moved to Kanpur as a teacher at the Marwari College but had to leave because of differences with the college administration. He then returned to Banaras and became the editor of the *Maryada* magazine. In 1932, he published another novel titled **Karmabhoomi**. He briefly served as the headmaster of the Kashi Vidyapeeth, a local school. After the school's closure, he became the editor of the Madhuri magazine in Lucknow.

Bombay:

Premchand arrived in Bombay on 31 May 1934 to try his luck in the Hindi film industry. He had accepted a script writing job for the production house Ajanta Cinetone, hoping that the yearly salary of ₹8,000 would help him overcome his financial troubles. He stayed in Dadar, and wrote the script for the film *Mazdoor* ("The Labourer"). The film, directed by Mohan Bhawnani, depicted the poor conditions of the labour class. Premchand himself did a cameo as the leader of **labourers** in the film. Some influential businessmen managed to get a stay on its release in Bombay. The film was released in Lahore and Delhi but was banned again after it inspired the mill workers to stand up against the owners.

Ironically, the film inspired the workers of his own loss-making press in Banaras to launch a strike after they were not paid their salaries. By 1934–35, Premchand's Saraswati Press was under a heavy debt of ₹400, and Premchand was forced to discontinue the publication of *Jagaran*. Meanwhile, Premchand was beginning to dislike the non-literary commercial environment of the Bombay film industry, and wanted to return to Banaras. However, he had signed a one-year contract with the production house. He ultimately left Bombay on 4 April 1935, before the completion of one year. Himanshu Roy, the founder of Bombay Talkies, tried to convince Premchand to stay back but failed.

Last days

After leaving Bombay, Premchand wanted to settle in **Allahabad**, where his sons Sripat Rai and Amrit Kumar Rai were studying. He also planned to publish *Hans* from there. However, owing to his financial situation and ill health, he had to hand over *Hans* to the Indian Literary Counsel and move to Banaras.[42]

Premchand was elected as the first President of the Progressive Writers' Association in Lucknow in 1936. He died on 8 October 1936, after several days of sickness and while still in office.

Godaan (The Gift of a Cow, 1936), Premchand's last completed work, is generally accepted as his best novel and is considered one of the finest Hindi novels. The protagonist, Hori, a poor peasant, desperately longs for a cow, a symbol of wealth and prestige in rural India. According to Siegfried Schulz, "Godān is a well-structured and well-balanced novel which amply fulfils the literary requirements postulated by Western literary standards." Unlike other contemporary renowned authors such as Rabindranath Tagore, Premchand was not appreciated much outside India. Schulz believes that the reason for this was the absence of good translations of his work. Also, unlike Tagore and Iqbal, Premchand never travelled outside India, studied abroad or mingled with renowned foreign literary figures.

In 1936, Premchand also published "Kafan" ("[Shroud](#)"), in which a poor man collects money for the funeral rites of his dead wife but spends it on food and drink. Premchand's last published story was "Cricket Match", which appeared in *Zamana* in 1938, after his death.

Subramania Bharati

C. Subramania Bharati (born **C. Subramaniyan** 11 December 1882 – 11 September 1921) was an Indian writer, poet, journalist, teacher, Indian independence activist, social reformer and polyglot. He was bestowed the title Bharati for his poetry and was a pioneer of modern Tamil poetry. He is popularly known by his title Bharati or Bharathiyaar and also by the other title "Mahakavi Bharati" ("the great poet Bharati"). His works included patriotic songs composed during the Indian Independence movement. He fought for the emancipation of women, against child marriage, opposed the caste system, and advocated reforms of the society and religion.

Born in Ettayapuram of Tirunelveli district (present-day Thoothukudi) in 1882, Bharati had his early education in Tirunelveli. He later lived in Varanasi for sometime where he was exposed to Hindu theology and new languages. He worked as a journalist with many newspapers, including Swadesamitran, The Hindu, Bala Bharata, Vijaya, Chakravarthini and India. He considered Sister Nivedita, a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, as his guru.

In 1908, the British Government issued an arrest warrant for Bharathi which pushed him to live in exile in the French-controlled Pondicherry for about ten years until 1918. He was attacked by an Indian elephant at Thiruvallikeni Parthasarathy Temple whom he fed daily and died a few months later on 11 September 1921.

Bharthi was well-versed in several languages and had a passion for Tamil. His works covered political, social and spiritual themes. Songs and poems composed by Bharthi are used in Tamil literature, music and daily life. His works include Panjali Sabatham, Kannan Paatu, Kuyil Paatu, Paapa Paatu, Chinnanchriu Kiliye, Vinayagar Nanmanimalai and Tamil translations of Patanjali's Yoga Sutra and Bhagavat Gita. Bharathi was the first poet whose literature was nationalized in 1949.

Early life

Subramaniyan was born on 11 December 1882 in a Tamil Brahmin family in the town of Ettayapuram in Tirunelveli district, Madras Presidency (present day Thoothukudi district, Tamil Nadu) to Chinnaswami Iyer and Lakshmi Ammal. He was called as Subbair by his parents. His mother died in 1887 when he was five years old and he was brought up by his father and his grandmother.

Subramaniyan's father wanted him to learn English and Maths and become an engineer. From a young age, Subramaniyan was inclined towards music and poetry. At the age of 11, he was given the title of "Bharathi" (meaning blessed by the goddess of learning Saraswati) for his excellence in poetry. In 1897, at the age of 15, he married Chellamma, who was then seven years old. His father died when he was sixteen. After the death of his father, he wrote a letter to the Raja of Ettayapuram, requesting for financial assistance. He was granted a job in the court of Ettayapuram, which he left after a while and went to Varanasi. During his stay in Varanasi, he was exposed to Hindu spirituality and nationalism and learned new languages such as Sanskrit, Hindi and English. He also changed his outward appearance, growing a beard and started wearing a turban.

Literary life and independence activism

Bharathi returned to Ettayapuram during 1901 and served as the chief court poet of the Raja of Ettayapuram. He served as a Tamil teacher from August to November 1904 in Sethupathy High School in Madurai.[4] During this period, Bharathi understood the need to be well-informed of the world outside and took interest in the world of journalism and the print media. In the same year, Bharathi joined as an assistant editor at Swadesamitran, a Tamil daily.[1] In December 1905, he attended a session of Indian National Congress in Varanasi. On his journey back home, he met Sister Nivedita, who was Swami Vivekananda's spiritual heir. She inspired Bharathi to recognize the rights and privilege of women.[1] Bharathi considered her as an embodiment of Hindu goddess Shakti and considered Nivedita as his Guru. He later attended the Indian National Congress session in Calcutta held under Dadabhai Naoroji, which demanded Swaraj and boycott of British goods.

By April 1907, he started editing the Tamil weekly India and the English newspaper Bala Bharatham along with M.P.T. Acharya.[1] These newspapers served as a means of expressing Bharathi's creativity and he continued to write poems in these editions. His writings included diverse topics ranging from nationalism to contemplations on the relationship between God and Man. He also wrote on the Russian and French Revolutions.

Bharathi participated in the Indian National Congress meeting held in Surat in 1907 along with V.O. Chidambaram Pillai and Mandayam Srinivachariar.[1] The meeting deepened the divisions within the Congress with a section preferring armed resistance. This section was primarily led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, which was supported by Bharathi, Chidambaram Pillai and Varathachariyar.[4] In 1908, the British instituted a case against Chidambaram Pillai. In the same year, the proprietor of the journal India in which Bharathi was writing, was arrested in Madras.[1] Faced with the prospect of an imminent arrest, Bharathi escaped to Pondicherry, which was under the French rule.

The house in which Bharathi lived in Pondicherry

In Pondicherry, Bharathi edited and published the weekly journal India, a Tamil daily Vijaya, an English monthly Bala Bharatham and a local weekly Suryodayam. The British tried to ban Bharathi's publications and the newspapers India and Vijaya were banned in British India in 1909.[4] During his exile, Bharathi had the opportunity to meet other revolutionary leaders of the Indian Independence movement like Aurobindo, Lajpat Rai and V. V. Subrahmanya Iyer, who had also sought asylum under the French. Bharathi assisted Aurobindo in publishing the journals Arya and Karma Yogi.[5] He also started learning Vedic literature. Three of his greatest works namely, Kuyil Pattu, Panjali Sabatham and Kannan Pattu were composed during 1912. He also translated Vedic hymns, Patanjali's Yoga Sutra and Bhagavat Gita to Tamil language.

When Bharathi entered the British India near Cuddalore in November 1918, he was arrested. He was imprisoned in the Central prison in Cuddalore for three weeks from 20 November to 14 December. He was released after the intervention of Annie Besant and C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar. He was stricken by poverty and ill health during this period. In the following year, Bharathi met Gandhi for the first time. He resumed editing Swadesamitran in 1920 from Madras.

Death

Bharathi was badly affected by the imprisonments and struggled from ill health. In 1920, a general amnesty was issued which finally removed restrictions on his movements. He delivered his last speech at Karungalpalayam Library in Erode on the topic Man is Immortal. He was struck by an Indian

elephant named Lavanya at the **Thiruvallikeni Parthasarathy** Temple whom he used to feed often. When he fed a coconut to the elephant, the elephant attacked him and although he survived the incident, his health deteriorated. A few months later, he died in the early morning on 11 September 1921. Though Bharathi was considered a great poet and nationalist, it was recorded that only 14 people attended his funeral.[1]

Ismat Chughtai

Ismat Chughtai (21 August 1911 – 24 October 1991) was an Indian Urdu novelist, short story writer, liberal humanist and filmmaker. Beginning in the 1930s, she wrote extensively on themes including female sexuality and femininity, middle-class gentility, and class conflict, often from a Marxist perspective. With a style characterised by literary realism, Chughtai established herself as a significant voice in the Urdu literature of the twentieth century, and in 1976 was awarded the Padma Shri by the Government of India.

Biography

Early life and career beginnings (1911–41)

Ismat Chughtai was born on 21 August 1911 in Badayun, Uttar Pradesh to Nusrat Khanam and Mirza Qaseem Baig Chughtai; she was the ninth of ten children—six brothers and four sisters.[1] The family moved frequently as Chughtai's father was a civil servant; she spent her childhood in cities including Jodhpur, Agra, and Aligarh—mostly in the company of her brothers as her sisters had all got married while she was still very young. Chughtai described the influence of her brothers as an important factor which influenced her personality in her formative years. She thought of her second-eldest brother, Mirza Azim Beg Chughtai (also a novelist), as a mentor. The family eventually settled in Agra, after Chughtai's father retired from the Indian Civil Services.

Chughtai received her primary education at the Women's College at the Aligarh Muslim University and graduated from Isabella Thoburn College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1940.[3] Despite strong resistance from her family, she completed her Bachelor of Education degree from the Aligarh Muslim University the following year. It was during this period that Chughtai became associated with the Progressive Writers' Association, having attended her first meeting in 1936 where she met Rashid Jahan, one of the leading female writers involved with the movement, who was later credited for inspiring Chughtai to write "realistic, challenging female characters". Chughtai began writing in private around the same time, but did not seek publication of her work until much later.

Chughtai wrote a drama entitled *Fasādi* (*The Troublemaker*) for the Urdu magazine *Saqi* in 1939, which was her first published work. Upon publication, readers mistook it as a play by Chughtai's brother Azeem Beg, written using a pseudonym.[7] Following that, she started writing for other publications and newspapers. Some of her early works included *Bachpan* (Childhood), an autobiographical piece, *Kafir* (Infidel), her first short-story, and *Dheet* (Stubborn), her only soliloquy, among others. In response to a story that she wrote for a magazine, Chughtai was told that her work was blasphemous and insulted the Quran. She, nonetheless, continued writing about "things she would hear of".

Chughtai's continued association with the Progressive Writers' Movement had significant bearings on her writing style; she was particularly intrigued by *Angarey*, a compilation of short-stories written in Urdu by members of the group including Jahan, Sajjad Zaheer, Sahibzada Mahmuduzaffar and Ahmed Ali.

Other early influences included such writers as William Sydney Porter, George Bernard Shaw, and Anton Chekhov. *Kalyān* (*Buds*) and *Cōtēn* (*Wounds*), two of Chughtai's earliest collections of short stories, were published in 1941 and 1942, respectively.

Chughtai's first novella *Ziddi*, which she had written in her early twenties was first published in 1941. The book chronicles the love affair between a woman, who works as domestic help in an affluent household and her employer's son. Chughtai later discussed the similarity in themes and style of the novel with the works of the romantic novelist Hijab Imtiaz Ali, citing her as another early influence. Commentators have praised the novella, both for its "compelling prose"[10] and for providing "[glimpses] into a world where women try to break out of the shackles created by other women, rather than men".[11] Critic and short story writer Aamer Hussein, in a 2015 retrospective review, likened Chughtai's "oracular voice, which didn't comment or explain, but studded the narrative with poetic observations" to that of American author Toni Morrison.[10] *Ziddi* was later translated into English as *Wild at Heart* and adapted into a 1948 feature film of the same name.[1]

Niche appreciation and transition to film (1942–60)

After completing her Bachelor's of Education degree, Chughtai successfully applied for the post of headmistress of an Aligarh-based Girls school. There, she met and developed a close friendship with Shaheed Latif, who was pursuing a master's degree at the Aligarh Muslim University at the time.[7] Chughtai continued to write for various publications during her stay at Aligarh. She found success with such short-stories as *Gainda* and *Khidmatgaar* and the play *Intikhab*, all of which were published during the period.[12] She then moved to Bombay in 1942 and began working as an Inspectress of schools.[7] Later that year, she married Latif, who was now working as a dialogue writer in Bollywood, in a private ceremony. Khwaja Ahmad Abbas was the legal witness to the ceremony.

Chughtai garnered widespread attention for her short-story *Lihaaf* (*The Quilt*), which appeared in a 1942 issue of *Adab-i-Latif*, a Lahore-based literary journal.[2] Inspired by the rumoured affair of a begum and her masseuse in Aligarh, the story chronicles the sexual awakening of Begum Jan following her unhappy marriage with a nawab.[4] Upon release, *Lihaaf* attracted criticism for its suggestion of female homosexuality and a subsequent trial, with Chughtai being summoned by the Lahore High Court to defend herself against the charges of "obscenity".[14] Fellow writer and member of the Progressive Writers' Movement Sadat Hassan Manto was also charged with similar allegations for his short-story *Bu* (*Odour*) and accompanied Chughtai to Lahore.[15] Both Chughtai and Manto were exonerated.

The trial, which took place in 1945, itself drew much media and public attention and brought notoriety to the duo. Chughtai fared better in the public eye, having garnered support from such fellow members of the Progressive Writers' Movement as Majnun Gorakhpuri and Krishan Chander. Regardless, she detested the media coverage of the whole incident, which in her view weighted heavily upon her subsequent work; "[*Lihaaf*] brought me so much notoriety that I got sick of life. It became the proverbial stick to beat me with and whatever I wrote afterwards got crushed under its weight." [15]

Chughtai, however, is known to have made her peace with the whole fiasco, having met the woman who had inspired Begum Jan a few years after the publication of *Lihaaf*. The woman told Chughtai that she had since divorced her husband, remarried and was raising a child with her second husband. Chughtai's biographers recall the meeting between the two women in *Ismat: Her life, Her times*: "[Chughtai] felt greatly rewarded when the begum told [her that *Lihaaf*] had changed her life and it is because of her story now she was blessed with a child".[17] Chughtai, who had been apprehensive about the meeting at first, later expressed her delight in a memoir, writing, "flowers can be made to bloom among rocks. The only condition is that one has to water the plant with one's heart's blood".

Chughtai's quasi-autobiographical novel *Tedhi Lakeer* (*The Crooked Line*) was released in 1943.^[8] She was pregnant with her daughter during the time. She recalled the difficult circumstances facing her during her work on the novel, in a 1972 interview with *Mahfil: Journal of South Asian Literature*: "[It was] during the war that I wrote my novel *Terhi Lakeer*, a big, thick novel. I was sick then, pregnant with my daughter. But I was always writing that novel".^[6] The book chronicles the lives of the Muslim community, women in particular, in the backdrop of the waning British Raj.^[18] Chughtai's exploration of the "inner realms of women's lives" was well received by critics who variously described her work in *Tedhi Lakeer* as "probing and pertinent"^[19] and "empowering".^[20] She herself recalled her creative process in the 1972 interview, saying she found inspiration from the small incidents that she would witness around her and even the personal conversations that took place amongst the women in her family, "I write about people I know or have known. What should a writer write about anyway"

In the years following their wedding, Latif also introduced Chughtai to the Hindi film industry.^[12] She began writing scripts in the late 1940s and made her debut as a screenwriter for Latif's drama film *Ziddi*.

Starring Kamini Kaushal, Pran, and Dev Anand in his first major film role, *Ziddi* became one of the biggest commercial successes of 1948. It was based on the 1941 eponymous short story; Chughtai had rewritten the narrative in form of a screenplay for the production.^{[13][21]} She then wrote the dialogue and screenplay for the 1950 romance drama film *Arzoo*, starring Kaushal and Dilip Kumar. Chughtai expanded her career into directing with the 1953 film *Fareb*, which featured an ensemble cast of Amar, Maya Daas, Kishore Kumar, Lalita Pawar, and Zohra Sehgal. Having again written the screenplay based on one of her short stories, Chughtai co-directed the film with Latif.^[21] Upon release, both *Arzoo* and *Fareb* garnered positive response from the audience and performed well at the box-office.

Chughtai's association with film solidified when she and Latif co-founded the production company Filmina. Her first project as a filmmaker was the 1958 drama film *Sone Ki Chidiya*, which she wrote and co-produced. Starring Nutan and Talat Mahmood in lead roles, it told the story of a child actor, who was abused and exploited over the course of her career. The film was well received by audiences and the success translated directly into a rise in Chughtai's popularity, as noted by writer and critic Shams Kanwal. *Sone Ki Chidiya* has been described as a significant production for "[chronicling] a heady time in Indian cinema" and showcasing the "grime behind the glamour" of the film industry. Nutan, who garnered a good response for her performance in the film, herself described it as one of her favorite projects. Also in 1958, Chughtai produced the Mahmood-Shyama starrer romance drama *Lala Rukh*.

Chughtai continued writing short-stories during the time despite her commitment to film projects. Her fourth collection of short-stories *Chui Mui* (*Touch-me-not*) was released in 1952 to an enthusiastic response. The eponymous short-story has been noted for its "pertinent dissection of our society" and contesting the venerated tradition of motherhood, especially its equation of womanhood. Rafay Mahmood highlighted, in a 2014 editorial, the relevance of the story in the twenty-first century. *Chui Mui* was adapted for stage by Naseeruddin Shah as a part of a commemorative series *Ismat Apa Kay Naam*, with his daughter Heeba Shah playing the central character in the production.

Success with writing novels (1961–90)

Beginning in the 1960s, Chughtai wrote a total of eight novels, the first of which was *Masooma* (*The Innocent Girl*), published in 1962. The film follows the life of a young actress, Nilofar, who is forced to work as call girl to sustain her family once her father abandons them. Set in the Bombay of 1950s, the novel delves into the themes of sexual exploitation and social and economic injustice. Her next work, the 1966 novella *Saudai* (*Obsession*) was based on the screenplay of 1951 film *Buzdil*, which she co-wrote with Latif. Commentators have noted that *Saudai* could never shed its structure and still read like a screenplay despite Chughtai's efforts.

Following a lukewarm reception for both *Masooma* and *Saudai*, Chughtai received significant praise for her fifth novel *Dil ki Duniya* (*The Heart Breaks Free*). Reviewing the novel, observers have placed it

second only to *Tedhi Lakeer* in the canon of her work. The novel follows the lives of a varied group of women living in a conservative Muslim household in Uttar Pradesh. *Dil Ki Duniya*, much like *Tedhi Lakeer*, is autobiographical in nature as Chughtai drew heavily from her own childhood in Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh. Comparing the two, Hussein says, "if *Tedhi Lakeer* impressed me with its boldness, range and its credentials as a major novel, *Dil ki Duniya*'s influence would linger with me forever, and I'd find its thematic and stylistic echoes in my own stories".

In the early 1970s, Chughtai wrote two novels, *Ajeeb Aadmi* (A Very Strange Man) and *Jangli Kabootar* (Wild Pigeons) that made use of her knowledge of the Hindi film industry, which she had been a part of for the last couple of decades. *Jangli Kabootar*, which was first published in 1970, follows the life of an actress and was partially inspired from a real-life incident that had occurred at the time. Chughtai's grandson, filmmaker Aijaz Khan had expressed his interest in making a feature film based on story in a 2015 interview with the *Mumbai Mirror*: "would like to make one of her stories, *Jangli Kabootar* [as the story has] always fascinated me."

Ajeeb Aadmi similarly narrates the life of Dharam Dev, a popular leading man in Bollywood and the impact that his extra-marital affair with Zareen Jamal, a fellow actress has on the lives of the people involved. The novel was said to have been based on the affair between frequent co-stars Guru Dutt and Waheeda Rehman; Dutt was married to playback singer Geeta Dutt and the couple had three children at the time. While there are several allusions to real-life figures including Meena Kumari, Lata Mangeshkar, and Mohammed Rafi, members of the Dutt family and Rehman are never explicitly named. Chughtai said of *Ajeeb Aadmi*: "[In the novel], I go into [...] why girls run after him and producers like him, and the hell they make for these men and for their wives. The novel, which was released in the early 1970s, was praised for its bold nature and candour."

Mumbai-based writer and journalist, Jerry Pinto noted the impact of *Ajeeb Aadmi*'s initial release saying, "There hadn't been a more dramatic and candid account of the tangled emotional lives of Bollywood before this." Writing for the *Khaleej Times* in 2019, Khalid Mohamed echoed the sentiment. He called the book a first of a kind tell-all book about the Hindi film industry, one that was "an eye-opener even for the know-alls of Bollywood". Mohamed also made a detailed note of Chughtai's candid style of writing, saying that she had an "instinctive gift for relating stories frankly and fearlessly".

Later years, critical reappraisals and subsequent acclaim (1990s and beyond)

Chughtai was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in the late 1980s, which limited her work thereafter. She died at her house in Mumbai on 24 October 1991, following the prolonged illness. Chughtai was known to have been averse of getting a burial, the common funeral practice in Islam. Rakhshanda Jalil quotes one of Chughtai's conversations with Qurratulain Hyder, a friend and contemporary writer in *An Uncivil Woman: Writings on Ismat Chughtai*, "I am very scared of the grave. They bury you beneath a pile of mud. One would suffocate I'd rather be cremated." As per most accounts, Chughtai was cremated at the Chandanwadi crematorium, in accordance with her last wishes.

Following the translation of numerous of her works into English, a renewed interest in the Urdu literature of the twentieth century, and subsequent critical reappraisals, Chughtai's status as a writer rose.[a] Critical reappraisals for her works began with rereadings of *Lihaaf*, which in the intervening years has attached a greater significance; it was noted for its portrayal of the insulated life of a neglected wife in the feudal society and became a landmark for its early depiction of sex, still a taboo in modern Indian literature. *Lihaaf* has since been widely anthologised and has become one of Chughtai's most appreciated works.

With more of her work being made available for reading to a wider audience over the years, criticism centered around the limited scope of Chughtai's writing has also subsided. In a 1993 retrospective piece, Naqvi also countered the perceived scope of Chughtai's writings, saying that her work was "neither confined to nor exhausted" by the themes central to *Lihaaf*: "she had much, much more to offer". She separately cited the example of *Jangli Kabootar*, which was one of the first novels in Chughtai's cannon to explore the theme of Naqvi highlighted how despite having established herself as a significant voice in Urdu literature by this time, Chughtai still remained keen on probing new themes and expand the scope of her work.

Tedhi Lakeer, which has come to be regarded as Chughtai's magnum opus is now considered to be one of the most significant works of Urdu literature by commentators and various media outlets. Critic and dramatist Shamim Hanfi gives it highest praise, saying that the novel, its first half in particular, matches up to the highest standards of world literature. Hussein comparably calls it one of the best novels of Urdu language and notes that Chughtai combines all her literary influences and her own lived experiences to create a radical text. He likened the novel's framework to that of a bildungsroman and praised its examination of the nationalist and feminist issues of the period. Commentators have also compared Chughtai's writing style in the novel to that of French writer and intellectual Simone de Beauvoir, based on the duo's existentialist and humanist affiliations

Influences and writing style

Chughtai was a liberal Muslim whose daughter, nephew, and niece were married to Hindus. In her own words, Chughtai came from a family of "Hindus, Muslims and Christians who all live peacefully". She said she read not only the Qur'an, but also the Gita and the Bible with openness.

Chughtai's short stories reflected the cultural legacy of the region in which she lived. This was well demonstrated in her story "Sacred Duty", where she dealt with social pressures in India, alluding to specific national, religious and cultural traditions.

In Chughtai's formative years, Nazar Sajjad Hyder had established herself an independent feminist voice, and the short stories of two very different women, Hijab Imtiaz Ali and Rashid Jehan, were also a significant early influence.

Many of her writings, including Angarey and Lihaaf, were banned in South Asia because their reformist and feminist content offended conservatives (for example, her view that the Niqab, the veil worn by women in Muslim societies, should be discouraged for Muslim women because it is oppressive and feudal).

Amrita Pritam

Amrita Pritam (31 August 1919 – 31 October 2005) was an Indian novelist, essayist and poet, who wrote in Punjabi and Hindi. A prominent figure in Punjabi literature, she is the recipient of the 1956 Sahitya Akademi Award. Her body of work comprised over 100 books of poetry, fiction, biographies, essays, a collection of Punjabi folk songs and an autobiography that were all translated into several Indian and foreign languages.

Pritam is best remembered for her poignant poem, Ajj aakhaan Waris Shah nu (Today I invoke Waris Shah – "Ode to Waris Shah"), an elegy to the 18th-century Punjabi poet, and an expression of her anguish over massacres during the partition of British India. As a novelist, her most noted work

was Pinjar ("The Skeleton", 1950), in which she created her memorable character, Puro, an epitome of violence against women, loss of humanity and ultimate surrender to existential fate; the novel was made into an award-winning film, Pinjar (2003).

When British India was partitioned into the independent states of India and Pakistan in 1947, she migrated from Lahore to India, though she remained equally popular in Pakistan throughout her life, as compared to her contemporaries like Mohan Singh and Shiv Kumar Batalvi.

Pritam's magnum opus, the long poem Sunehade, won her the 1956 Sahitya Akademi Award, making her the first and the only woman to have been given the award for a work in Punjabi. She received the Jnanpith Award, one of India's highest literary awards, in 1982 for Kagaz Te Canvas ("The Paper and the Canvas"). She was awarded the Padma Shri in 1969, and the Padma Vibhushan, India's second highest civilian award, in 2004. In that same year she was honoured with India's highest literary award given by the Sahitya Akademi (India's Academy of Letters), the Sahitya Akademi Fellowship, awarded to the "immortals of literature" for lifetime achievement.

Background

Amrita Pritam was born as Amrit Kaur in 1919 in modern-day district of Mandi Bahauddin, Punjab, in British India into a Khatri Sikh family the only child of Raj Bibi, who was a school teacher, and Kartar Singh Hitkari, who was a poet, a scholar of the Braj Bhasha language, and the editor of a literary journal. Besides this, he was a pracharak – a preacher of the Sikh faith. Amrita's mother died when she was eleven. Soon after, she and her father moved to Lahore, where she lived till her migration to India in 1947. Confronting adult responsibilities and besieged by loneliness following her mother's death, she began to write at an early age. Her first anthology of poems, Amrit Leharan ("Immortal Waves") was published in 1936, at age sixteen, the year she married Pritam Singh, an editor to whom she was engaged in early childhood, and changed her name from Amrit Kaur to Amrita Pritam. Half a dozen collections of poems followed between 1936 and 1943.[citation needed]

Though she began her journey as a romantic poet, she soon shifted gears,[6] and became part of the Progressive Writers' Movement. The effect was seen in her collection, Lok Peed ("People's Anguish", 1944), which openly criticised the war-torn economy after the Bengal famine of 1943. She was also involved in social work to a certain extent, and participated in such activities wholeheartedly after Independence, when social activist Guru Radha Kishan took the initiative to bring the first Janta Library in Delhi. This was inaugurated by Balraj Sahni and Aruna Asaf Ali, and she contributed to the occasion. This study centre cum library is still running at Clock Tower, Delhi. She also worked at a radio station in Lahore for a while, before the partition of India.[13]

M. S. Sathyu, the director of the partition movie Garam Hava (1973), paid a theatrical tribute to her through his performance 'Ek Thee Amrita'. [citation needed]

Partition of India

One million people, Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims died from communal violence that followed the partition of India in 1947, and left Amrita Pritam a Punjabi refugee at age 28, when she left Lahore and moved to New Delhi. Subsequently, in 1947, while she was pregnant with her son, and traveling from Dehradun to Delhi, she expressed anguish on a piece of paper[14] like the poem, "Ajj Aakhaan Waris Shah Nu" (I ask Waris Shah Today); this poem was to later immortalize her and become the most poignant reminder of the horrors of Partition. The poem addressed to the Sufi poet Waris Shah, author of the tragic saga of Heer and Ranjnah and with whom she shares her birthplace.[15]

Amrita Pritam worked until 1961 in the Punjabi service of All India Radio, Delhi. After her divorce in 1960, her work became more feminist. Many of her stories and poems drew on the unhappy experience of her marriage. A number of her works have been translated into English, French, Danish, Japanese, Mandarin, and other languages from Punjabi and Urdu, including her autobiographical works *Black Rose* and *Rasidi Ticket (Revenue Stamp)*. [citation needed]

The first of Amrita Pritam's books to be filmed was *Dharti Sagar te Sippiyan*, as *Kadambari* (1975), followed by *Unah Di Kahani*, as *Daaku (Dacoit)*, (1976), directed by Basu Bhattacharya. Her novel *Pinjar (The Skeleton)*, (1950) narrates the story of partition riots along with the crisis of women who suffered during the times. It was made into an award-winning Hindi movie by Chandra Prakash Dwivedi, because of its humanism: "Amritaji has portrayed the suffering of people of both the countries." *Pinjar* was shot in a border region of Rajasthan and Punjab. [citation needed]

She edited *Nagmani*, a monthly literary magazine in Punjabi for several years, which she ran together with Imroz, for 33 years; though after Partition she wrote prolifically in Hindi as well. Later in life, she turned to Osho and wrote introductions for several books of Osho, including *Ek Onkar Satnam*, [18] and also started writing on spiritual themes and dreams, producing works like *Kaal Chetna ("Time Consciousness")* and *Agyat Ka Nimantran ("Call of the Unknown")*. She had also published autobiographies, titled, *Kala Gulab ("Black Rose")*, (1968), *Rasidi Ticket ("The Revenue Stamp")*, (1976), and *Aksharon kay Saayee ("Shadows of Words")*.

Awards and honors

Amrita was the first recipient of Punjab Rattan Award conferred upon her by Punjab Chief Minister Capt. Amarinder Singh. She was the first female recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1956 for *Sunehadey* (poetic diminutive of the Punjabi word *(Sunehe)*, Messages), Amrita Pritam received the Bhartiya Jnanpith Award, India's highest literary award, in 1982 for *Kagaj te Canvas (Paper and Canvas)*. [21] She received the Padma Shri (1969) and Padma Vibhushan (2004), India's second highest civilian award, and Sahitya Akademi Fellowship, India's highest literary award, also in 2004. She received D.Litt. honorary degrees, from many universities including, Delhi University (1973), Jabalpur University (1973) and Vishwa Bharati (1987).

She also received the international Vaptsarov Award from the Republic of Bulgaria (1979) and Degree of Officer des Arts et des Lettres (Officier) by the French Government (1987). She was nominated as a member of Rajya Sabha 1986–92. Towards the end of her life, she was awarded by Pakistan's Punjabi Academy, to which she had remarked, *Bade dino baad mere Maikhe ko meri Yaad aayi..* (My motherland has remembered me after a long time); and also Punjabi poets of Pakistan, sent her a chaddar, from the tombs of Waris Shah, and fellow Sufi mystic poets Bulle Shah and Sultan Bahu.

Personal life

In 1935, Amrita married Pritam Singh, son of a hosiery merchant of Lahore's Anarkali bazaar. They had two children together, a son and a daughter. She had an unrequited affection for poet Sahir Ludhianvi. The story of this love is depicted in her autobiography, *Rasidi Ticket (Revenue Stamp)*. When another woman, singer Sudha Malhotra came into Sahir's life, Amrita found solace in the companionship of the artist and writer Inderjeet Imroz. She spent the last forty years of her life with Imroz, who also designed most of her book covers and made her the subject of his several paintings. Their life together is also the subject of a book, *Amrita Imroz: A Love Story*.

She died in her sleep on 31 October 2005 at the age of 86 in New Delhi, after a long illness. She was survived by her partner Imroz, daughter Kandlla, son Navraj Kwatra, daughter-in-law Alka, and her grandchildren, Kartik, Noor, Aman and Shilpi. Navraj Kwatra was found murdered in his Borivali apartment in 2012. Three men were accused of the murder but were acquitted due to lack of evidence.



Jayanta Mahapatra

Jayanta Mahapatra (22 October 1928 – 27 August 2023) was an Indian poet.[1] He is the first Indian poet to win a Sahitya Akademi award for English poetry. He was the author of poems such as "Indian Summer" and "Hunger", which are regarded as classics in modern Indian English literature. He was awarded a Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian honour in India in 2009,[2][3] but he returned the award in 2015 to protest against rising intolerance in India.

Early life and education

Jayanta Mahapatra was born on 22 October 1928 into a prominent Odia Christian family.[5][6] He attended Stewart School in Cuttack, Odisha. He completed his M. Sc. in Physics from Patna University, Bihar. He began his teaching career as a lecturer in physics in 1949 and taught at various government colleges in Odisha including Gangadhar Meher University, B.J.B College, Fakir Mohan University and Ravenshaw University. He superannuated at Ravenshaw University (then Ravenshaw College) and retired from his government job as the Reader in Physics in 1986.[7]

Mahapatra began his writing career in the late sixties. His short stories and poems were initially rejected by several publishers, until his poems were published in international literary journals. He was invited to participate in the International Writing Program at Iowa, which brought him international exposure

Writing

Mahapatra was part of a trio of poets who laid the foundations of Indian English Poetry, which included A. K. Ramanujan and R. Parthasarathy.[8] He differed from the others in not being a product of Bombay school of poets. Over time, he managed to carve a quiet, tranquil poetic voice of his own, different from those of his contemporaries.

"Hunger"

This one of Mahapatra's best-known, most-quoted early poems, widely anthologised in Indian poetry collections. It explores the informal child sex trade. In the poet's own words, "In 'Hunger' I was writing from experience." The poem is an expression of the poet's loneliness as a youth, as Mahapatra had a disturbed childhood.

Structure and criticism

The poem is notable for its direct approach to the taboo topic of a father prostituting his daughter. In the second line, the fisherman asks casually "will you have her?" A wide range of poetic devices are employed to bring out the entrapment of the mind in the flesh.

This poem was originally a part of the poet's collection, *A Rain of Rites*.

Other writings

Mahapatra authored 27 books of poems, of which seven are in Odia and the rest in English. His poetry volumes include *Relationship*, *Bare Face*, and *Shadow Space*. Besides poetry, he has experimented widely with myriad forms of prose. His published books of prose include *Green Gardener*, an anthology of short stories, and *Door of Paper: Essay and Memoirs*. Mahapatra was also a distinguished editor and was involved in the production of the literary magazine *Chandrabhaga*. His poems have appeared in prestigious poetry anthologies like *The Dance of the Peacock: An Anthology of English Poetry from India*, published by Hidden Brook Press, Canada.

Mahapatra also translated from Odia into English, and some of his translations were published in the bi-monthly literary magazine *Indian Literature*. Some anthologies of his translations have also been published.

Themes and style

Mahapatra frequently explores themes of cultural struggle, identity exploration, and displacement in his poetry. His writing captures the intricacies of current Indian society as well as the difficulties in balancing traditional ideals with changing circumstances. His utilization of imagery from ordinary life and Indian landscapes, coupled with a thoughtful and introspective voice, define his approach.

Death

Jayanta Mahapatra died of pneumonia on 27 August 2023, at the age of 94.

Nirmal Verma

Nirmal Verma (3 April 1929 – 25 October 2005) was a Hindi writer, novelist, activist and translator. He is credited as being one of the pioneers of the *Nai Kahani* (New Story) literary movement of Hindi literature, wherein his first collection of stories, *Parinde* (Birds) is considered its first signature.

In his career spanning five decades and various forms of literature, writing story, travelogues and essays, he penned five novels, eight short-story collections and nine books of non-fiction, including essays and travelogues.

Biography

Nirmal Verma was born on 3 April 1929 in Shimla, where his father worked as an officer in the Civil and Services Department of the British Indian Government. He was the seventh child among his eight siblings. One of his brothers is one of India's greatest artists *Ram Kumar*. He is survived by his wife, *Gagan Gill* who is a writer.

He wrote his first story for a students' magazine in the early 1950s. He completed Masters of Arts in History from *St. Stephen's College*, *Delhi University*. Thereafter he started teaching in Delhi and writing for various literary magazines.

"For a writer to desire spiritual security is as fatal as an aspiration to material pleasure. For a writer, every place of refuge is a pitfall; you fall once, and the clear sky of creativity is lost forever."

- *Dhund se Uthati Dhun*

His activism streak was visible even during his student days; in 1947–48, he regularly attended Mahatma Gandhi's morning prayer meetings in Delhi, even though he was a card holding member of Communist Party of India, which he resigned in 1956, after Soviet invasion of Hungary. The very activism was soon to be reflected in his stories, which added a whole new dimension to the Indian literary scene.

He stayed in Prague for 10 years, where he was invited by Oriental Institute to initiate a program of translation of modern Czech writers like Karel Čapek, Milan Kundera or Bohumil Hrabal to Hindi; he also learnt Czech language, and translated nine world classics to Hindi, before returning home in 1968, as the result of Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia.[4]

During his stay in Prague he travelled widely across Europe, and the result was seven travelogues, including *Cheeron Par Chandni* (1962), *Har Barish Mein* (1970) and *Dhund Se Uthti Dhun* and his first novel, based on his student days in Prague, titled, *Ve Din* (Those Days) (1964). On his return from Prague, he was disillusioned by communism and later became highly vocal against Indian Emergency, and an advocate for the Tibetan independence movement. His subsequent writing reflected his concerted relooking of Indian traditions, which he found to be innately modern, compared with external modernity reflected in the western viewpoints and cultural milieu, which were being imposed on Indian ethos, all around, so much so that later his views were confused as pro-Hindutva as well. A critical analysis of Verma's work was presented by Ram Prakash Dwivedi

***Nai Kahani* movement**

Nirmal Verma, together with Mohan Rakesh, Bhisham Sahni, Kamleshwar, Amarkant, Rajendra Yadav and others, is the founder of the *Nai Kahani* (new short story) in Hindi literature.

Nirmal Verma is best known for his short stories and his best known story, 'Parinde' (Birds) (1959) is supposed to be the pioneer of the *Nai Kahani* Movement in Hindi literature.[4] Nirmal Verma's other notable stories are *Andhere Mein*, *Dedh Inch Upar*, and *Kavve Aur Kala Pani*. Nirmal Verma's last story was published in "Naya Gyanodaya" August 2005 issue, titled "Ab Kuchh Nahin".

Nirmal Verma experimented vividly with theme as well as technique of the Hindi short story in the 60s and 70s.

A collection of his letters written to Ramkumar (well known artist and his brother) has been published by Bhartiya Jnanpith, titled "Priya Ram" (Dear Ram). His books have been translated into several European languages such as English, Russian, German, Icelandic, Polish, Italian and French.

From 1980–83, Verma served as chairman of Nirala creative writing chair in Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal. In 1988–90 he was director of Yashpal Creative Writing Chair in Shimla. A film based on his story, *Maya Darpan* (1972), directed by Kumar Shahani, won the Filmfare Critics Award for Best Film.

In his popular novel *A Torn Happiness*, August Strindberg looms large over the heads of many characters.

He died on 25 October 2005 in New Delhi.

O. V. Vijayan

Ottupulackal Velukkuty Vijayan (2 July 1930 – 30 March 2005), commonly known as **O. V. Vijayan**, was an Indian author and cartoonist, who was an important figure in modern Malayalam language literature. Best known for his first novel *Khasakkinte Itihasam* (1969), Vijayan was the author of six novels, nine short-story collections, and nine collections of essays, memoirs and reflections.

Born in Palakkad in 1930, Vijayan graduated from Victoria College in Palakkad and obtained a master's degree in English literature from Presidency College, Madras. He wrote his first short story, "Tell Father Gonsalves", in 1953. *Khasakkinte Itihasam* (The Legends of Khasak), Vijayan's first novel, appeared in 1969.[1] It set off a great literary revolution and cleaved the history of Malayalam fiction into pre-Khasak and post-Khasak. While *Khasakkinte Itihasam* continues to be his best-known work as an angry young man, his later works, *Gurusagaram* (The Infinity of Grace), *Pravachakante Vazhi* (The Path of the Prophet) and *Thalamurakal* (Generations) bespeak a mature transcendentalist.

Vijayan authored many volumes of short stories, which range from the comic to the philosophical and show a diversity of situations, tones and styles. Vijayan translated most of his own works from Malayalam to English. He was also an editorial cartoonist and political observer and worked for news publications including *The Statesman* and *The Hindu*.

Early life

O. V. Vijayan was born on 2 July 1930 at Vilayanchaathanoor village in Palakkad district in Kerala.[2] Born premature in the seventh month, Vijayan was sickly from childhood and spent most of his time confined to his room. His father O. Velukkuty was an officer in Malabar Special Police of the erstwhile Madras Province in British India. His youngest sister O. V. Usha is a Malayalam poet. As a child, Vijayan was largely homeschooled. Formal schooling began at the age of twelve, when he joined Raja's High School, Kottakkal in Malabar, directly into sixth grade. The informal education arranged by his father during his absentee years was sufficient to keep him at par with his peers. The following year, Velukkuty was transferred and Vijayan joined the school at Koduvayur in Palakkad. He graduated from Victoria College in Palakkad and obtained a master's degree in English literature from Presidency College. Vijayan taught for some time at Malabar Christian College, Kozhikode, and Victoria College before opting for journalism.

Khasakkinte Itihasam

Khasakkinte Itihasam (The Legends of Khasak), Vijayan's first novel, which took twelve years' writing and rewriting to reach its final form, was published in 1969. A year before, it was serialized in *Mathrubhumi* weekly for 28 weeks starting from January 28, 1968 and set off a great literary revolution and cleaved the history of Malayalam fiction into pre-Khasak and post-Khasak eras. The former era was romantic and formal; the latter is modernist, post-modernist and post-post-modernist, with tremendous experimentation in style and content. The novel, which has drawn comparisons with *One Hundred Years of Solitude* of Gabriel García Márquez is about Ravi, a teacher in an informal education centre in Khasak, and his existential crises. The central character is shown as a visionary who completed his post graduate programme in Physics from a college at Tambaram. The novel ends when Ravi begins his journey to some other realms of existence. The existential puzzle of man as to why he should exist is explored in this novel. The novel introduced a new poetic style of prose,

combining Tamil and Palakkad dialect of Malayalam. It also introduced a narrative style that moved forth from reality to myths and back. The work was later adapted as a play by Deepan Sivaraman.

Dharmapuranam

Dharmapuranam (The Saga of Dharmapuri, 1985) is outwardly a great political satire where the author knows no restraint in lampooning political establishments. The work attempts to lampoon modes of governance through its characters and the setting. The central character is Sidhartha, modelled after Gautama Buddha, whose personality is shown to lead people to enlightenment. Though satirical in its tone, the novel has a spiritual level, too. Malayalanadu weekly announced that the novel would be serialised from July 1975, but the plan was dropped when the Emergency was proclaimed on June 25, 1975. The novel was finally serialised only in 1977, after the Emergency was lifted and it proved to be prophetic. There were hindrances for its publication as well due to its sexual-scatological language and imagery and as the atrocities perpetrated during Emergency were still haunting the public. Finally, it was published in 1985. Two years later, Penguin Books published the English translation and the book drew critical reviews dangerous stuff and cut close to the bone were the words of David Selbourne, in The Times Literary Supplement and Khushwant Singh rated the novel as not the kind of novel you forget in a hurry. Vijayan himself described it as a cleansing act that he had no desire to repeat.

Later novels

The third novel, Gurusagaram (The Infinity of Grace, 1987) differs in language, vision and characterisation from the earlier works. It is on the immanence of Guru in the life of the seeker. Guru is everywhere and is manifested in everybody. The seeker partakes of the grace of the Guru as he happens for him unawares and unconditional. The central character is a journalist from Kerala, working in Delhi, going on an assignment to report the Indo-Pak war of 1971. He undergoes an excruciating experience both spiritually and physically to learn how to annihilate all forms of ego. Gurusagaram fetched him the Vayalar Award, the central Sahitya Akademi Award and the Kerala Sahithya Academy Award in 1991.

Madhuram Gayathi (1990) has been termed as "a fantastic allegory fusing mythology, spirituality and ecology". It is an allegorical fable of the post-Holocaust world with its lovelessness and disharmony. *Pravachakante Vazhi* (The Path of the Prophet; 1992) emphasises the vision that intuition is perennial and it is one and the same always. This oneness of the revelation makes the ways of all prophets the same. This great education in spirituality is got in those barbarous days of Delhi when the Sikhs were maniacally hunted after and mercilessly butchered following the murder of Indira Gandhi. Vijayan's last novel *Thalamurakal* (Generations; 1997) is autobiographical to a great extent. It is historical to a still greater extent. Beyond autobiography and history, the novel is a journey down the collective experiences of a family in search of an awareness about oneself and his clan. This search is of great importance when the collective experiences of the subculture are very bitter and the individual sense of the clan identity is much superior. The novel is a narration of four generations in Ponmudi family in Palakkad, Kerala.

Other literary works

He wrote his first short story, "Tell Father Gonsalves", in 1953. He wrote many volumes of short stories, the first volume of which was published in 1957 – *Three Wars*. The stories, which range from the comic to the philosophical, show an astonishing diversity of situations, tones and styles. O. V. Vijayan's best known collection in English is *After the Hanging and Other Stories* which contains several jewel-like masterpieces, in particular the title story about a poor, semi-literate peasant going to the jail to receive the body of his son who has been hanged; *The Wart* and *The Foetus* about the trauma of the fascist Emergency; the transcendental *The Airport*, *The Little Ones*, and several others. He also wrote many essays, and also published one book of cartoons- *Ithiri Neramboke*, *Ithiri Darshanam* (A Little Pastime, A

little Vision) – 1990. *Itihasathinte Itihasam*, a historical treatise written by him is considered by many as masterpiece.

Later life and death

Vijayan was married to Theresa Gabriel, an academic and the couple had a son, Madhu. He was afflicted with Parkinson's disease for 20 years and in March 2005, he was admitted to Care Hospital, Hyderabad where he succumbed to organ failure on 30 March 2005 aged 74, survived by his wife and son. His body was taken to Kerala by special flight and was cremated with full state honours at Ivor Madom crematorium in Pambadi, Thrissur near Thiruvilwamala on the banks of the Bharathapuzha where his nephew, Ravi Shankar, a known cartoonist, lit the pyre. Teresa Vijayan died a year after his death, and his son lives in the US.

U. R. Ananthamurthy

Udupi Rajagopalacharya Ananthamurthy (21 December 1932 – 22 August 2014) was an Indian contemporary writer and critic in the Kannada language. He was born in Thirthahalli Taluk and is considered one of the pioneers of the Navya movement. In 1994, he became the sixth Kannada writer to be honored with the Jnanpith Award, the highest literary honour conferred in India. In 1998, he received the Padma Bhushan award from the Government of India. He was the vice-chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi University in Kerala during the late 1980s. He was one of the finalists of Man Booker International Prize for the year 2013. He remained a fervent critic of nationalistic political parties until his death from kidney failure and cardiac arrest on 22 August 2014.

Early life

U. R. Ananthamurthy at Manasa Gangotri, University of Mysore in the early 1970s before embarking to England. (*seated on chairs: 9th from left*)

Ananthamurthy was born into Kannada-speaking Brahmin family^[7] in Melige, in Tirthahalli taluk in the Shimoga District.^[8] His education started in a traditional Sanskrit school in Doorvasapura and continued in Tirthahalli and Mysore. After receiving a Master of Arts degree from the University of Mysore, U. R. Ananthamurthy taught in the English department at University of Mysore (pictured) for a while before embarking to England for further studies on a Commonwealth Scholarship. He earned his doctorate from the University of Birmingham in 1966 for his dissertation thesis entitled "Politics and Fiction in the 1930s".

Career

Ananthamurthy started his career as a professor and instructor in 1970 in English department of University of Mysore. He was the Vice-Chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi University in Kottayam, Kerala from 1987 to 1991. He served as the Chairman of National Book Trust India for the year 1992. In 1993 he was elected as the president of Sahitya Academy. He served as a visiting professor in many Indian and foreign universities including Jawaharlal Nehru University, University of Tübingen, University of Iowa, Tufts University and Shivaji University. Ananthamurthy served twice as the Chairman of the Film and Television Institute of India. In 2012 he was appointed the first Chancellor of Central University of Karnataka. He was also a reason for the establishment of Humanities department of Manipal University. Later in 2012 he served as a visiting faculty at Manipal Centre for Philosophy and Humanities, Manipal University for four months.

Ananthamurthy has participated and delivered lectures in numerous seminars as writer and orator both in and outside the country. He was the member of the committee of Indian writers and visited countries like the Soviet Union, Hungary, France and West Germany in 1990. He visited Moscow in 1989 as board member for a Soviet newspaper. Ananthamurthy was the leader for the committee of writers who visited China in 1993.

Literary works

Ananthamurthy's works have been translated into several Indian and European languages and have been awarded with important literary prizes.^[1] His main works include "Prashne", "Aakash Mattu Bekku", *Samskara*, *Bhava*, *Bharathipura*, and *Avasthe*. He has written numerous Short story as well. Several of his novels and short fictions have been made into movies.

Most of Ananthamurthy's literary works deal with psychological aspects of people in different situations, times and circumstances. His writings supposedly analyse aspects ranging from challenges and changes faced by Brahmin families of Karnataka to bureaucrats dealing with politics influencing their work.

Most of his novels are on reaction of individuals to situations that are unusual and artificial. Results of influences of sociopolitical and economic changes on traditional Hindu societies of India and clashes due to such influences – between a father and a son, husband and wife, father and daughter and finally, the fine love that flows beneath all such clashes are portrayed by Ananthamurthy in his works. This is evident in his stories like Sooryana Kudure (The Sun's Horse)", Mouni (Silent Man)", "Karthika, "Ghatashraddha" etc. It does not mean that Ananthamurthy is just clinging to portraying only such somewhat standard subjects of Indian literature of his period. His novelette Bara (Drought) portrays the dynamics of a drought-stricken district of Karnataka and the challenges and dilemmas a bureaucrat may face in such situations.

The central figure of the novel Sooryana Kudure – Venkata is shunned by his son and wife for his easy-going attitude that does not take him anywhere. Venkata is a non-achiever who could not achieve any material or monetary success in his life. However, he is a simpleton who does not take life's suffering to his heart too much. He likes to see life as living in the love of Amma (or mother-goddess). In all sufferings of life, he has the child-like curiosity about the smallest things in life like a grasshopper (Sooryana Kudure). The evening after his son revolts and leaves the house, he would be engrossed in a sight in his yard a grasshopper shining in the sun's light.

His several novels were made into films like *Samskara*, *Bara*, *Avaste*, *Mouni*, *Sookha*, *Ghatashraddha* and *Diksha*.

Personal life

U. R. Ananthamurthy met his wife Esther in 1954 and they were married in 1956. They had two children, Sharath and Anuradha. He resided in Bangalore for most of his later life. His son in law Vivek Shanbhag also is a famous writer in Kannada.

Death

Ananthamurthy died of cardiac arrest on 22 August 2014 at Manipal Hospital, in Bangalore, India, aged 81.[31] He had been suffering from kidney related disease for some years, and was undergoing dialysis treatment with diabetes and heart problem. He was admitted to Manipal Hospital on 13 August with an infection and fever, and underwent treatment on a multi-support system.

Habib Tanvir

Habib Tanvir (1 September 1923 – 8 June 2009[2]) was one of the most popular Indian Urdu playwrights, a theatre director, poet and actor. He was the writer of plays such as, Agra Bazar (1954) and Charandas Chor (1975). A pioneer in Urdu and Hindi theatre, he was most known for his work with Chhattisgarhi tribals, at the Naya Theatre, a theatre company he founded in 1959 in Bhopal. He went on to include indigenous performance forms such as nacha, to create not only a new theatrical language, but also milestones such as Charandas Chor, Gaon ka Naam Sasural, Mor Naam Damad and Kamdeo ka Apna Basant Ritu ka Sapna.

For him, true "theatre of the people" existed in the villages, which he strived to bring to the urban "educated", employing folk performers as actors alongside urban actors. He died on 8 June 2009 at Bhopal after a three-week illness. Upon his death, he was the last of pioneering actor-managers in Indian theatre, which included Sisir Bhaduri, Utpal Dutt and Prithviraj Kapoor, and often he managed plays with a mammoth cast, such as Charandas Chor (Charandas the thief), which included an orchestra of 72 people on stage and Agra Bazaar, with 52 people.

During his lifetime he won several national and international awards, including the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1969, Jawarharlal Nehru Fellowship in 1979, Padma Shri in 1983, Kalidas Samman 1990, Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship in 1996, and the Padma Bhushan in 2002.[11] He had also been nominated to become a member of the Upper House of Indian Parliament, the Rajya Sabha (1972–1978). His play Charandas Chor won him the Fringe Firsts Award at Edinburgh International Drama Festival in 1982, and in 2007, it was included in the Hindustan Times' list of 'India's 60 Best works since Independence which said : "an innovative dramaturgy equally impelled by Brecht and folk idioms, Habib Tanvir seduces across language barriers in this his all-time biggest hit about a Robin Hood-style thief."

Biography

Early life

He was born in Raipur, Chhattisgarh (erstwhile Madhya Pradesh) to Hafiz Ahmed Khan, who hailed from Peshawar. He passed his matriculation from Laurie Municipal High School, Raipur, and later

completed his B.A. from Morris College, Nagpur in 1944. Thereafter he studied M.A. for a year at Aligarh Muslim University. Early in life, he started writing poetry using his pen name *Takhallus*. Soon after, he assumed his name, Habib Tanvir.

Career

In 1945, he moved to Bombay, and joined All India Radio (AIR) Bombay as a producer. While in Bombay, he wrote songs for Urdu and Hindi films and even acted in a few of them. He also joined the Progressive Writers' Association (PWA) and became an integral part of Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) as an actor. Later, when most of the prominent IPTA members were imprisoned for opposing the British rule, he was asked to take over the organisation.

In 1954, he moved to New Delhi, and worked with Qudsiya Zaidi's Hindustani Theatre, and also worked with Children's theatre, where he authored many plays. Later in the same year, he produced his first significant play *Agra Bazar* based on the works and times of the plebeian 18th-century Urdu poet, Nazir Akbarabadi, an older poet in the generation of Mirza Ghalib. For this play he brought together local residents and folk artistes from Okhla village in Delhi and students of Jamia Millia Islamia creating a palette never seen before in Indian theatre. Additionally, the play was not staged in a confined space, rather a bazaar, a marketplace. After this, he continued to work with non-trained actors and folk artistes like the folk artists of Chhattisgarh.

Stay in Europe

In 1955, when he was in his 30s, Habib moved to England. There, he trained in Acting at Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA) (1955) and in Direction at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School (1956). For the next two years, he travelled through Europe, watching various theatre activities. One of the highlights of this period, was his eight-month stay in Berlin in 1956, during which he got to see several plays of Bertolt Brecht, produced by Berliner Ensemble, just a few months after Brecht's death. This proved to have a lasting influence on him, as in the coming years, he started using local idioms in his plays, to express trans-cultural tales and ideologies. This, over the years, gave rise to a "theatre of roots", which was marked by an utter simplicity in style, presentation and technique, yet remaining eloquent and powerfully experiential.

Return to India

A deeply inspired Habib returned to India in 1958 and took to directing full-time. He produced *Mitti ki Gaadi* a post-London play, based on Shudraka's Sanskrit work, *Mrichakatika*. It became his first important production in Chhattisgarhi. This was the result of the work he had been doing since his return – working with six folk actors from Chhattisgarh. He went on to found "Naya Theatre", a theatre company in 1959.

In his exploratory phase, i.e. 1970–73, he broke free from one more theatre restriction – he no longer made the folk artistes, who had been performing in all his plays, speak Hindi. Instead, the artistes switched to Chhattisgarhi, a local language they were more accustomed to. Later, he even started experimenting with "Pandavani", a folk singing style from the region and temple rituals. This made his plays stand out amidst the gamut of plays which still employed traditional theatre techniques like blocking movements or fixing lights on paper. Spontaneity and improvisation became the hallmark of his new theatre style, where the folk artistes were allowed greater freedom of expression.

His next venture with Chhattisgarhi Nach style, saw another breakthrough in 1972, with a staging of the play titled *Gaon Ka Naam Sasural, Mor Naam Damaad*. This was based on a comic folk tale, where an old man falls in love with a young woman, who eventually elopes with another young man.

By the time he produced his seminal play, *Charandas Chor* in 1975, the technique became popular. This play immediately established a whole new idiom in modern India theatre; whose highlight was *Nach* – a chorus that provided commentary through song. He also brought in Govind Ram Nirmalkar, a noted Nacha artist who would later go on to win Padma Shri and Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards, to play the lead role.[17] Later, he collaborated with Shyam Benegal, when he adapted the play to a feature-length film, by the same name, starring Smita Patil and Lalu Ram. He was awarded the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship in 1979 for research on Relevance of Tribal Performing Arts and their Adaptability to A changing Environment.[18] In 1980, he directed the play *Moti Ram ka Satyagraha* for Janam (Jan Natya Manch) on the request of Safdar Hashmi.

During his career, Habib has acted in over nine feature films, including Richard Attenborough's film, *Gandhi* (1982), *Black and White* and in a yet-to-be-released film on the Bhopal gas tragedy.

His first brush with controversy came about in the 1990s, with his production of a traditional Chhattisgarhi play about religious hypocrisy, *Ponga Pandit*. The play was based on a folk tale and had been created by Chhattisgarhi theatre artists in the 1930s. Though he had been producing it since the sixties, in the changed social climate after the Babri Masjid demolition, the play caused quite an uproar amongst Hindu fundamentalists, especially the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), whose supporters disrupted many of its shows, and even emptied the auditoriums, yet he continued to show it all over.[19]

His Chhattisgarhi folk troupe, surprised again, with his rendition of Asghar Wajahat's *Jisne Lahore Nahin Dekhya* in 1992. Then in 1993 came *Kamdeo Ka Apna Basant Ritu Ka Sapna*, Tanvir's Hindi adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. [20] In 1995, he was invited to the United States by the Chicago Actors Ensemble, where he wrote his only English language play, *The Broken Bridge*. In 2002, he directed *Zahareeli Hawa*, a translation of *Bhopal* by the Canadian-Indian playwright Rahul Varma, based on the Bhopal Gas Tragedy. During his illustrious career he brought works from all genres to stage, from ancient Sanskrit works by Shudraka, Bhasa, Vishakhadatta and Bhavabhuti; to European classics by Shakespeare, Molière and Goldoni; modern masters Brecht, Garcia, Lorca, Gorky, and Oscar Wilde; Tagore, Asghar Wajahat, Shankar Shesh, Safdar Hashmi, Rahul Varma, stories by Premchand, Stefan Zweig and Vijaydan Detha, apart from an array of Chhattisgarhi folk tales.

Badal Sircar

Sudhindra Sircar (15 July 1925 – 13 May 2011), also known as **Badal Sarkar**, was an influential Indian dramatist and theatre director, most known for his anti-establishment plays during the Naxalite movement in the 1970s and taking theatre out of the proscenium and into public arena, when he transformed his own theatre company, Shatabdi (established in 1967 for proscenium theatre) as a third theatre group . He wrote more than fifty plays of which *Ebong Indrajit*, *Basi Khabar*, and *Saari Raat* are well known literary pieces. A pioneering figure in street theatre as well as in experimental and contemporary Bengali theatre with his egalitarian "Third Theatre", he prolifically wrote scripts for his Aanganmanch (courtyard stage) performances, and remains one of the most translated Indian playwrights.[2][3] Though his early comedies were popular, it was his angst-ridden *Evam Indrajit* (And Indrajit) that became a landmark play in Indian theatre.[4] Today, his rise as a prominent playwright in

1960s is seen as the coming of age of Modern Indian playwriting in Bengali, just as Vijay Tendulkar did it in Marathi, Mohan Rakesh in Hindi, and Girish Karnad in Kannada.[5]

He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1972, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1968 and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship, the highest honour in the performing arts by Govt. of India, in 1997.

Early life and education

Badal Sircar, whose real name was 'Sudhindra Sarkar', was born in Calcutta, India to a Bengali Christian family.[7][8] He was initially schooled at the Scottish Church Collegiate School. After transferring from the Scottish Church College, where his father was a history professor,[9] he studied civil engineering at the Bengal Engineering College (now IIST), Shibpur, Howrah then affiliated with the University of Calcutta.[10] In 1992, he finished his Master of Arts degree in comparative literature from Jadavpur University in Calcutta.

Career

While working as a town planner in India (at Damodar Valley Corporation), England and Nigeria, he entered theatre as an actor, moved to direction, but soon started writing plays, starting with comedies. Badal Sircar did experiments with theatrical environments such as stage, costumes and presentation and established a new genre of theatre called "Third Theatre". In Third Theatre approach, he created a direct communication with audience and emphasised on expressionist acting along with realism. He started his acting career in 1951, when he acted in his own play, *Bara Trishna*, performed by *Chakra*, a theatre group.

Eventually still employed in Nigeria, he wrote his landmark play *Ebong Indrajit* (And Indrajit) in 1963, which was first published and performed in 1965 and catapulted him into instant fame, as it captured "the loneliness of post-Independence urban youth with dismaying accuracy". He followed them with plays like *Baaki Itihaash* (Remaining History) (1965), *Pralap* (Delirium) (1966), *Tringsha Shatabdi* (Thirtieth Century) (1966), *Pagla Ghoda* (Mad Horse) (1967), *Shesh Naai* (There's No End) (1969), all performed by Sombhu Mitra's Bohurupee group.[1][2]

In 1967, he formed the "Shatabdi" theatre group, and the first production he directed was *Ebang Indrajit* in 1967, a play about three people – Amal, Bimal, Kamal and a loner Indrajit. In the next five years of its existence the troupe performed several of his plays and had a profound impact on contemporary theatre, especially after 1969 when it started performing plays both indoors and outside amidst people, and evolved the *angan manch* (courtyard stage) and inspired by the direct communication techniques of Jatra rural theatre form, to eventually become his "Third Theatre", a protest against prevalent commercial theatre establishment. Often performed in "found" spaces rather than rented theatre halls, without elaborate lighting, costumes or make-up, where audience was no longer a passive, rather became participatory, it added a new realism to contemporary dramaturgy, retaining thematic sophistication of social committed theatre all the while, and thus started a new wave of experimental theatre in Indian theatre. In 1976, his group "Satabdi", started performing at Surendranath Park (then Curzon Park) Kolkata on weekends. These open-air and free performances led to his troupe travelling to nearby villages on other weekends, where it employed minimal props and improvised dialogues to involve audience further into the performance.

Though he continued to hold his job till 1975, as a playwright he rose to prominence in the 1970s and was one of the leading figures in the revival of street theatre in Bengal. He revolutionised Bengali theatre with his wrath-ridden, anti-establishment plays during the Naxalite movement.

His plays reflected the atrocities that prevailed in the society, the decayed hierarchical system and were socially enlightening. He is a proponent of the "Third theatre" movement that stood ideologically against the state. Third theatre involved street plays, with actors being attired no differently than the audience. Also the formal bindings of the proscenium theatre was given up. Sarkar's "Bhoma" is an example of a third theatre play, set as always, in an urban background. Starting with Sagina Mahato, which marked his advent into arena stage, his subsequent plays, Michhil (Juloos), Bhoma, Basi Khobor, Spartacus based on Howard Fast's historical novel by the same name, were performed in parks, street corners and remote villages with the audience sitting all around.

Sircar directed his last play in 2003, and after that his movements were restricted after a road accident, but even many years later till 2011 he continued performing at play readings and writing new works like adapting William Shakespeare's Macbeth, two stories by Graham Greene and a novel, History of Love.

Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi awarded the prestigious 'Ammannur Puraskaram' in 2010 for his lifetime achievements in Indian Theatre. The award was presented to him by Girish Karnad during the inaugural function of 3rd edition of International Theatre Festival of Kerala (ITFoK)

Death

Sarkar was diagnosed with colon cancer in April 2011.[citation needed] He died on 13 May at Kolkata at the age of 85.

Vijay Tendulkar

Vijay Dhondopant Tendulkar (6 January 1928 – 19 May 2008) was an Indian playwright, movie and television writer, literary essayist, political journalist, and social commentator primarily in [Marathi](#). His Marathi plays established him as a writer of plays with contemporary, unconventional themes.[1] He is best known for his plays Shantata! Court Chalu Aahe (1967), Ghashiram Kotwal (1972), and Sakharam Binder (1972). Many of Tendulkar's plays derived inspiration from real-life incidents or social upheavals, which provide clear light on harsh realities. He has provided guidance to students studying "play writing" in US universities. Tendulkar was a dramatist and theatre personality in Maharashtra for over five decades.

He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1984, and Sangeet Nātak Akademi Fellowship, the highest award of Sangeet Natak Akademi in 1998. He also won National Film Award for Best Screenplay for Hindi film, Manthan, 1977.

Early life

Vijay Dhondopant Tendulkar was born in a Gaud Saraswat Brahmin family on 6 January 1928 in Girgaon, Mumbai, Maharashtra, where his father held a clerical job and ran a small publishing business. The literary environment at home prompted young Vijay to take up writing. He wrote his first story at age six.

He grew up watching western plays and felt inspired to write plays himself. At age eleven, he wrote, directed, and acted in his first play.

At age 14, he participated in the 1942 Indian freedom movement, leaving his studies. The latter alienated him from his family and friends. Writing then became his outlet, though most of his early writings were of a personal nature, and not intended for publication. During this period, he participated in the activities of Nabajiban Sanghatana, a splinter communist group. He said that he liked the sense of sacrifice and discipline of the communists.

Career

Early career

Tendulkar began his career writing for newspapers. He had already written a play, *Amchyavar Kon Prem Karnar?* (transl. Who is going to love me?), and he wrote the play, *Grihastha* (transl. The Householder), in his early 20s. The latter did not receive much recognition from the audience, and he vowed never to write again.

Breaking the vow, in 1956 he wrote *Shrimant*, which established him as a good writer. *Shrimant* jolted the conservative audience of the times with its radical storyline, wherein an unmarried young woman decides to keep her unborn child while her rich father tries to "buy" her a husband in an attempt to save his social prestige.

Tendulkar's early struggle for survival and living for some time in tenements (Chawl) in Mumbai provided him first-hand experience about the life of the urban lower middle class. He thus brought new authenticity to their depiction in Marathi theatre.[8] Tendulkar's writings rapidly changed the storyline of modern Marathi theatre in the 1950s and the 60s, with experimental presentations by theatre groups like Rangayan. Actors in these theatre groups like Shriram Lagoo, Mohan Agashe, and Sulabha Deshpande brought new authenticity and power to Tendulkar's stories while introducing new sensibilities in Marathi theatre.

Tendulkar wrote the play *Gidhade* (transl. The Vultures) in 1961, but it was not produced until 1970. The play was set in a morally collapsed family structure and explored the theme of violence. In his following creations, Tendulkar explored violence in its various forms: domestic, sexual, communal, and political. Thus, *Gidhade* proved to be a turning point in Tendulkar's writings about the establishment of his own unique writing style.

Based on a 1956 short story, *Die Panne* (transl. The Traps) by Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Tendulkar wrote the play, *Shantata! Court Chalu Aahe* (transl. Silence! The Court is in Session). It was presented on the stage for the first time in 1967 and proved to be one of his finest works. Satyadev Dubey presented it in movie form in 1971 with Tendulkar's collaboration as the screenplay writer.

1970s and 1980s

In his 1972 play, *Sakharam Binder*, Tendulkar dealt with the topic of domination of the male gender over the female. The main character, Sakharam, is a man devoid of ethics and morality, and professes not to believe in "outdated" social codes and conventional marriage. He accordingly uses the society for his pleasure. He regularly gives "shelter" to abandoned wives and uses them for his sexual gratification while remaining oblivious to the emotional and moral implications of his exploits. He justifies all his acts through claims of modern, unconventional thinking, and comes up with hollow arguments meant in fact to enslave women. Paradoxically, some of the women whom Sakharam had enslaved buy into his arguments and simultaneously badly want freedom from their enslavement.

In 1972, Tendulkar wrote another, even much more acclaimed play, *Ghashiram Kotwal* (transl. Officer Ghashiram), which dealt with political violence. The play is a political satire created as a musical drama set in 18th century Pune. It combined traditional Marathi folk music and drama with contemporary theatre techniques, creating a new paradigm for Marathi theatre. The play demonstrates Tendulkar's deep study

of group psychology,[13] and it brought him a Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship (1974–75) for a project titled, "An Enquiry into the Pattern of Growing Violence in Society and Its Relevance to Contemporary Theatre". With over 6,000 performances thus far in its original and translated versions, *Ghashiram Kotwal* remains one of the longest-running plays in the history of Indian theatre.

Tendulkar wrote screenplays for the movies *Nishant* (1974), *Akrosh* (transl. The Outrage; 1980), and *Ardh Satya* (transl. The Half-Truth; 1984) which established him as an important "Chronicler of Violence" of the present.[14] He has written eleven movies in Hindi and eight movies in Marathi. The latter include *Samana* (transl. The Confrontation; 1975), *Simhaasan* (transl. The Throne; 1979), and *Umbartha* (transl. The Threshold; 1981). The last one is a groundbreaking feature film on women's activism in India. It was directed by Jabbar Patel and stars Smita Patil and Girish Karnad.

1990s to 2008

In 1991, Tendulkar wrote a metaphorical play, *Safar*, and in 2001 he wrote the play, *The Masseur*. He next wrote two novels – *Kadambari: Ek* and *Kadambari: Don* – about sexual fantasies of an ageing man. In 2004, he wrote a single-act play, *His Fifth Woman* – his first play in the English language – as a sequel to his earlier exploration of the plight of women in *Sakharam Binder*. This play was first performed at the Vijay Tendulkar Festival in New York in October 2004.

In the 1990s, Tendulkar wrote an acclaimed TV series, *Swayamsiddha*, in which his daughter Priya Tendulkar, noted Television actress of 'Rajani' fame, performed in the lead role. His last screenplay was for *Eashwar Mime Co.* (2005), an adaptation of Dibyendu Palit's story, *Mukhabhinoy*, and directed by theatre director, Shyamanand Jalan and with Ashish Vidyarthi and Pawan Malhotra as leads.

Family

He was the brother of acclaimed cartoonist and humourist Mangesh Tendulkar.

Death

Tendulkar died in Pune on 19 May 2008,[19] battling the effects of the rare autoimmune disease myasthenia gravis.

Tendulkar's son Raja and wife Nirmala had died in 2001; his daughter Priya Tendulkar died the next year (2002) of a heart attack following a long battle with breast cancer.

Bhisham Sahni

Bhisham Sahni (8 August 1915 – 11 July 2003) was an Indian writer, playwright in Hindi and an actor, most famous for his novel *Tamas* ("Darkness"/"Ignorance") and the television screenplay adaptation of the same name, a powerful and passionate account of the partition of India. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan for literature in 1998, and Sahitya Akademi Fellowship in 2002. He was the younger brother of the noted Hindi film actor, Balraj Sahni.

Biography

Bhisham Sahni was born on 8 August 1915 in Rawalpindi, in undivided Punjab. He earned a master's degree in English literature from Government College in Lahore, and a Ph.D. from Punjab University, Chandigarh in 1958.

He joined the struggle for Indian independence. At the time of partition, he was an active member of the Indian National Congress and organized relief work for the refugees when riots broke out in Rawalpindi in March 1947. In 1948 Bhisham Sahni started working with the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA), an organization with which his brother, Balraj Sahni was already closely associated. He worked both as an actor and a director. At a later stage, he directed a drama Bhoot Gari.[2] This was adapted for the stage by film director, screenwriter, novelist, and journalist Khwaja Ahmed Abbas. As an actor, he appeared in several films, including Saeed Mirza's Mohan Joshi Hazir Ho! (1984), Tamas (1988), Kumar Shahani's Kasba (1991), Bernardo Bertolucci's Little Buddha (1993), and Aparna Sen's Mr. and Mrs. Iyer (2002).

As a result of his association with IPTA, he left the Congress and joined the Communist Party of India. Thereafter, he left Bombay for Punjab where he worked briefly as a lecturer, first in a college at Ambala and then at Khalsa College, Amritsar. At this time he was involved in organizing the Punjab College Teachers' Union and also continued with IPTA work. In 1952 he moved to Delhi and was appointed Lecturer in English at Delhi College (now Zakir Husain College), University of Delhi.

From 1956 to 1963 he worked as a translator at the Foreign Languages Publishing House in Moscow, and translated some important works into Hindi, including Lev Tolstoy's short stories and his novel Resurrection. On his return to India, Bhisham Sahni resumed teaching at Delhi College, and also edited the reputed literary magazine Nai Kahaniyan from 1965 to 1967. He retired from service in 1980. Sahni was fluent in Punjabi, English, Urdu, Sanskrit, and Hindi.

Bhisham Sahni was associated with several literary and cultural organizations. He was General Secretary of the All India Progressive Writers Association (1975–85) and Acting General Secretary of the Afro-Asian Writer's Association and was also associated with the editing of their journal Lotus. He was the founder and chairman of SAHMAT, an organization promoting cross-cultural understanding, founded in memory of the murdered theatre artist and activist Safdar Hashmi.

Literary works

Bhisham Sahni's epic work *Tamas* (Darkness/Ignorance 1974) is a novel based on the riots of 1947 partition of India which he witnessed at Rawalpindi.[3] *Tamas* portrays the horrors of senseless communal politics of violence and hatred; and the tragic aftermath – death, destruction, forced migration and the partition of a country. It has been translated to English, French, German, Japanese and many Indian languages including Tamil, Gujarati, Malayalam, Kashmiri, Marathi and Manipuri. *Tamas* won the 1975 Sahitya Akademi Award for literature and was later made into a television film in 1987 by Govind Nihalani. Two of his masterpiece stories, "Pali" and "Amritsar Aa Gaya Hai", are also based on the partition.

Sahni's prolific career as a writer also included six other Hindi novels: *Jharokhe* (1967), *Kadian* (1971), *Basanti* (1979), *Mayyadas Ki Madi* (1987), *Kunto* (1993) and *Neeloo*, *Nilima*, *Nilofar* (2000)., over hundred short stories spread over ten collections of short stories, including *Bhagya Rekha* (1953), *Pahla Patha* (1956), *Bhatakti Raakh* (1966), *Patrian* (1973), *Wang Chu* (1978), *Shobha Yatra* (1981), *Nishachar* (1983), *Pali* (1989), and *Daayan* (1996); five plays including *Hanoosh*, *Kabira Khada Bazar Mein*, *Madhavi*, *Muavze*, *Alamgeer*, a collection of children's short stories *Gulal Ka Keel*. But his novel named *Mayyadas Ki Mari* (*Mayyadas's Castle*) was one of his finest literary creations, the backdrop of this narrative is historical and depicts the age when the Khalsa Raj was vanquished in Punjab and the British were taking over. This novel is a saga of changing social order and decadent set of values.[4] He wrote the screenplay for Kumar Shahani's film, *Kasba* (1991), which is based on Anton Chekhov's story "In the Gully". Although Sahni had been writing stories for a long time, he received recognition as a story writer only after the publication of his story "Chief Ki Daawat" (The Chief's Party) in the *Kahani* magazine in 1956.[5]

Bhisham Sahni was one of the most prolific writers of Hindi literature. Krishan Baldev Vaid said, "His voice, both as a writer and a man, was serene and pure and resonant with humane reassurances. His immense popularity was not a result of any pandering to vulgar tastes but a reward for his literary merits—his sharp wit, his gentle irony, his all-pervasive humor, his penetrating insight into character, his mastery as a raconteur, and his profound grasp of the yearnings of the human heart.[10]

Noted writer, Nirmal Verma, stated, "If we see a long gallery of unmatched characters in his stories and novels, where each person is present with his class and family; pleasures and pains of his town and district; the whole world of perversions and contradictions; it is because the reservoir of his (Bhisham Sahni's) experience was vast and abundant. At the request of his father – would anyone believe? – he dabbled in business, in which he was a miserable failure. With his high-spirits and passion for life of the common people, he traveled through villages and towns of Punjab with the IPTA theatre group; then began to teach to earn a living; and then lived in the USSR for seven years as a Hindi translator. This sprawling reservoir of experience collected in the hustle-bustle of various occupations ultimately filtered down into his stories and novels, without which, as we realize today, the world of Hindi prose would have been deprived and desolate. The simplicity of his work comes from hard layers of experience, which distinguish and separate it from other works of simplified realism. ... Bhisham Sahni is able to express the terrifying tragedy of Partition with an extraordinary compassion in his stories. "Amritsar Aa Gaya Hai" (We have reached Amritsar) is one such exceptional work where Bhisham gets away from the external reality and points to the bloody fissures etched on people's psyche. This is possible only for a writer who, in the darkness of historic events has seen the sudden 'accidents' that happen inside human hearts from up close. ... After reading his last collection of stories *Daayan* (Witch), I was amazed that even after so many years there seemed no repetition or staleness in his writing. Each of his stories seemed to bring

something sudden from newer directions, which was as new for him as it was unexpected for us. That Bhisham never paused, never halted in such a long creative journey is a big achievement; but what is bigger perhaps is that his life nurtured his work and his work nurtured his life, both nurtured each other continuously.

Kamleshwar, "Bhisham Sahni's name is etched so deeply into the twentieth century of Hindi literature that it cannot be erased. With Independence and till the 11th July 2003, this name has been synonymous with Hindi story and playwriting. Bhisham Sahni had gained such an unmatched popularity that all kinds of readers awaited his new creations and each and every word of his was read. There was no need to ask a general reader if he had read this or that writing by Bhisham. It was possible to begin a sudden discussion on his stories or novels. Such a rare readerly privilege was either available to Premchand or, after Harishankar Parsai, to Bhisham Sahni. This too is rare that the fame he received from Hindi should, during his lifetime, become the fame for Hindi itself.

Krishan Baldev Vaid. "Bhisham Sahni's last published book, an autobiography with the quiet title Aaj Ke Ateet (The Past of the Present), is a beautiful culmination of a lifetime of excellent writing. Apart from giving us an intimate account of some of the salient phases of his life, it epitomizes his literary qualities. It is full of fun and insights; it is variegated; it is fair; it is unsmug; it is absorbing; it is also his farewell to his family, his milieu, his readers, and his friends. He begins at the beginning and ends very near the end. The book glows with the sense of ending without, however, any trace of morbidity or self-pity. The early part, where Bhisham tenderly evokes his earliest memories and records his childhood in an affectionate middle-class family in Rawalpindi, is for me the most moving part of this self-portrait. With characteristic elegance and an unfailing eye for significant detail, the elderly author looks back with nostalgic longing at the world of his childhood and achieves a small but brilliant portrait of the artist as a little child.

Temsüla Ao

(25 October 1945 – 9 October 2022)^[2] was a Naga poet, fiction writer, and ethnographer from India. She was a Professor of English at North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) from where she retired in 2010.^{[3][4]} She served as the Director of the North East Zone Cultural Centre between 1992 and 1997 on deputation from NEHU.^[3] She was awarded the Padma Shri award for her contribution to Literature and Education. Her book *Laburnum For My Head* received the Sahitya Akademi Award for English writing in the short story category.^[5] Her works have been translated into Assamese, Bengali, French, German, Hindi, and Kannada.^[6]

Early life

On 25 October 1945, Temsüla was born to Imnamütongba Changkiri and Nokintemla Longkumer in Jorhat. She had five siblings. When her youngest brother was only beginning to crawl, her parents died within nine months of each other. Thereafter, her youngest two siblings were taken to their ancestral village Changki village in Mokokchung district to live with their father's younger brother. The four eldest siblings—Khari, Tajen, Temsüla, and Along—stayed at Jorhat under the guardianship of Khari who was temporarily employed in Jorhat Mission Hospital. Soon, the youngest among the four, Along, was also taken to Changki. When Tajen got appointed as an assistant teacher in the village primary school, he took on the responsibilities of the younger siblings at Changki.^[3] Ao summarises her difficult childhood and adolescence in her memoir *Once upon a Life* as 'fractured childhood.' Her ancestral family were involved in the early settlement of Changki village and her visits and affinity to the village helped her "reaffirm the sensibilities that have given me my intrinsic identity."^[3]

She studied in Golaghat Girls' Mission for six years as a boarder. She studied in Assamese-medium there until class 6. For her matriculation exam later, she even wrote two papers in the Assamese language. She spoke the language fluently. She completed her matriculation from Ridgeway Girls' High School in Golaghat.^[3] She received her B.A. with distinction from Fazl Ali College, Mokokchung, Nagaland, and M.A. in English from Gauhati University, Assam. From English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, she received her Post Graduate Diploma in the Teaching of English and PhD from NEHU.

Teaching

Ao began teaching English in NEHU as a lecturer from December 1975.^[4] She completed her PhD in May 1983 under the guidance of Dr. D. P. Singh. Titled *The Heroines of Henry James*, her thesis examined female protagonists in James' stories who emerge victorious in their sophisticated and civilised society. For this, Ao analysed the following works of Henry James: *The Madonna of the Future*, *Daisy Miller*, *Madame de Mauves*, *Washington Square*, *The Portrait of a Lady*, *The Wings of the Dove*, and *The Golden Bowl*.^[8]

From 1992 to 1997 she served as Director, North East Zone Cultural Centre, Dimapur on Deputation from NEHU, and was a Fulbright Fellow at the University of Minnesota 1985–86.^{[9][2]} In 2010, Ao retired as a professor and dean of the English Department at NEHU.^[7]

Ao received the Padma Shri Award in 2007. She is the recipient of the Governor's Gold Medal 2009 from the government of Meghalaya. She was widely respected as one of the major literary voices in English to emerge from Northeast India along with Mitra Phukan and Mamang Dai. Her works have been translated into German, French, Assamese, Bengali and Hindi.^[10]

Writings

Ao conceded to Paulo Coelho's reflection in The Zahir that writing can be a lonely endeavour. However, "there are also times when words are flowing and seem to offer themselves happily to articulate one's thought." The resulting mood of exhilaration and joy, Ao suggests, lends a strange feeling of not being alone. It provides a sense of completeness similar to a fellowship felt in the company of equally happy people. Ao stated that she wrote for such rare moments of "completeness." This inner urge compels her to write along with her need "to probe, to question, and also to acknowledge that I exist in the one-ness with my fellow human beings."^[11] Reflecting on writings from Northeast India, Ao explained,

It is about the life we know, and want to share with our fellow citizens who have somehow always looked at us through the prism of 'otherness' and suspicion. Accepting the difference can also mean transcending the 'local' to discover the 'universal.' In that sense, these writings deserve more than the cursory perusals as 'categories' that they are subjected to at the moment.^[11]

She resisted clubbing of the Northeast as a composite identity. She called the North-eastern identity as a misnomer "because the region is home to a multitude of people with diverse languages, cultures, costumes." Using the term, "defaces the real identity" of the communities and people living in the region. Therefore, the term has relevance only as a geographical and geo-political indicator. In the same interview, she noted that Nagaland's Hornbill Festival is only the commercial face of Naga identity and not Naga identity itself.^[12] Journalist Patricia Mukhim reaffirmed Ao's conviction, "[She] was quietly confident about her purpose in life which is to rectify the lenses through which her people, the Nagas, were viewed by the rest of the world."^[13]

Poetry[

She has published seven poetic works.

- *Songs that Tell* (1988),
- *Songs that Try to Say* (1992),
- *Songs of Many Moods* (1995),
- *Songs from Here and There* (2003),
- *Songs From The Other Life* (2007).^[1]
- *Book of Songs: Collected Poems 1988-2007* (2013).
- *Songs along the Way Home* (2019).^[14]

Her first two poetry collections were published from Writers Workshop, Kolkata. The third, fourth, and fifth poetry collections were published by Kohima Sahitya Sabha, North Eastern Hill University and Grasswork Books respectively. The last two were published by Heritage Publishing House, Dimapur.

Journalist Aheli Moitra describes the 50-poem collection *Songs along the Way Home* as "a deep philosophical exploration of life—personal, social, political—as it has passed her [Ao] by. The poems are heavy, laden with layers of lament, written with the skill of a songbird singing its favourite dusk song." Moitra points that Ao is candid in her poems, registering life and wisdom, and never shy of showing emotions necessary.^[14]

Ethnography

When she was in the University of Minnesota as a Fulbright fellow, she came in contact with the Native Americans. She learned about their culture, heritage and especially their oral tradition. This exposure inspired her to record the oral tradition of her own community, Ao Naga. After returning from the University of Minnesota, she worked on the oral tradition for about twelve years. She collected the myths, folktales, folklore, rituals, law, custom, belief system. This ethnographic work was published in 1999 as the Ao-Naga oral tradition from Bhasha Publications, Baroda. This book is the most authentic document about the Ao-Naga community.

Short story

Temsüla Ao has published three short story collections. *These Hills Called Home: Stories from the War Zone*, Zubaan (2005), *Laburnum for my Head*, Penguin India (2009)^[1] and *The Tombstone in my Garden: Stories from Nagaland*, Speaking Tiger Books (2022).^[15]

These Hills Called Home consists of ten short stories and deals with insurgency in Nagaland fired by right to self-determination of the Naga people.

Speaking Tiger published her last book of short stories *The Tombstone in my Garden: Stories from Nagaland* in early 2022.^{[16][15]} The book blurb on the back cover describes the collection of five stories as holding 'a mirror to the lives of everyday people beyond the headlines.'

On 9 April 2022, Nagaland Director General of Police, T John Longkumer, released the book in Dimapur.^[6]

Pradip Phanjoubam found the book peculiarly 'dark' compared to her debut collection *These Hills Called Home*. He summarises the book as 'a subconscious sketch of the Naga nostalgia for a

traditional world being left behind.^[17] Author Rupa Gulab summarises the central thread of the five stories as, "we are brutally reminded of a universal truth: Love hurts, and death is a release." Advising against presuming that the small book is cosy bedtime book, she points that the stories are 'disconcerting' with endings of each often open pushing the readers to keep guessing.^[18]

Nagaland State Commission for Women

In January 2013, she was appointed as the Chairperson of the Nagaland State Commission for Women.^[22] As the chairperson, Ao was very vocal for women's rights in the state often challenging traditional status quo and legal stalemate.

Naga Customary Law

Ao advocated for redefining Naga Customary Law to remove its inherent gender bias. She made it clear that this did not mean abolishing of Customary Laws and they remain the bedrock of Naga society. Instead, it needed to be redone and changed to give new meaning in the present milieu. The redefinition must begin from within the patriarchal settings of customary law institutions as they remain 'the custodians of the laws'. She also envisioned a special focus to make way for women into village councils, town committees, and Nagaland Legislative Assembly along with women's inheritance to parental property.^[23] It was clear to her that civil society interventions or government efforts to promote gender equality would not change much despite gender budgeting and gender-safe workplaces,

Whatever be the results of such efforts, they will be superficial at best because the core of gender discrimination lies at the very heart of customary laws which direct and govern Naga life even in the twenty-first century.^[23]

In 2013, at one of her first public meetings holding the position, she called women and girls to play their part with conviction in the bid to make statutory laws for gender justice work. She was addressing a legal awareness campaign at Kohima College. She called the campaign to acquaint young students to not only give security to their 'physical selves but to ensure their intellectual growth.' While appreciating that certain social evils prevalent elsewhere in the country does not exist in Nagaland, she articulated that prevalent gender injustice in the Naga society is due to men persisting in their rigid stance that "governance, like the village council and decision making in the family for instance, is the prerogative of men." She also chided women for accepting their traditional role despite education.^[24] Ao made clear her support for customary law and practices and hailed them for providing "continuity and strength" to the Naga society. However, her critique lied in the inherent gender bias in customary law practices in cases of marriage, divorce and inheritance. She called for open deliberations on these issues for "incorporating changes and fair adjustments in a modern set-up which will be beneficial to women, and where men and women can work together as equals in all respect."^[25] She spent a significant part of her tenure relaying this message to different tribes of Nagaland in their respective districts. In August 2013, at a seminar on gender sensitisation among police personnel, judiciary, and civil society members, Ao boldly stated, "Only when the basic human rights of the Naga women get due acknowledgement from the family, clan, village, and the overall societal framework, can we say that the process of gender sensitisation has truly started in Nagaland." She recalled that several accounts of gender injustice exist in the Naga society due to the "cultural and traditional norms prevalent... [often impinging] on women's rights, for being of a different gender." She called for articulation and protection of women's identity at "the very existential level." She called for instituting shelter homes in every district in Nagaland for survivors of gender violence to deal with trauma, provide counselling, and teach livelihood skills.^[26] In September 2013, drawing from her experiences, she noted that cases of marital discord in Nagaland mostly go unheard and unattended as the woman is often too traumatised.^[27]

At the start of her tenure as the chairperson, she had initiated dialogues between the apex bodies of all tribes of Nagaland in this regard. Five years later, in 2018, she lamented that work around giving women a share in their parental property still remained half-done.^[28]

Human Trafficking

On 28 May 2017, at a programme on Human Trafficking in Phek district of Nagaland, she emphasised the vulnerability of Nagas youth to being trafficked. She called the society to be vigilant. She called people to report cases of abuse and ill-treatment of minors living as maids and domestic helps in Nagaland. She believed that the evil had to be investigated and addressed urgently.^[28] At

another meeting early in the month, she referred to police data that showed that a person went missing every fourth day in Nagaland. Of these, 83% of missing people were minors. She pointed out that customary law are not well-equipped to deal with practices of human trafficking and police needed to intervene and play a role. She also insisted on proper links between police, child rights agencies, labour department, social welfare departments, mental health agencies, and NGOs to curb human trafficking.^[29]

Legacy

Zahan writes that Ao was more than a writer and scholar for the Nagas. She summarises Ao's work as,

She was the guardian, the voice, and the mirror of the Naga society who brought the everyday lives of the Nagas blurred between insurgency and counter-insurgency in front of the world through her poetry, short stories, and memoirs.^[13]

Recalling her body of work and life, Walter Fernandes, founder-director of the North Eastern Social Research Centre based in Guwahati, called her an "institution of a scholar."^[13]

I Want to Destroy Myself” by Malika

Amar Shaikh

Malika Amar Shaikh’s memoir *Mala Uddhvasta Vhaychay*, originally published in Marathi in 1994, was unknown for several years until Jerry Pinto was introduced to a copy and took the responsibility of translating it in 2016. The author was born to communist activist parents, Shahir Amar Shaikh and Kusum Jaykar, neither of whom chose to define themselves through categories of caste or religion, in their political and personal journeys. Malika Amar Shaikh was raised in the same way, without the experience of a life defined by religion or caste. Apart from that, since Amar Shaikh was a sickly child, she grew up reading books ranging from plays to poetry. As recalled by her in her memoir, because of her lonely life as a sick child, in grade 4, she began identifying with the literary heroines of the novels she read. By virtue of her father’s popular and appreciated contribution to the arts in communist politics in Maharashtra, Malika was close to prominent literary figures of the region such as Prahlad Keshav Atre from a very young age. Without dismissing the financial issues faced by the activist couple during Malika’s childhood, her constant illness, the untimely death of her father and so on – in this essay I attempt to explore whether or not the question regarding ‘women’ raised by her through her memoir, shows inclusivity towards the Dalit woman’s voice as well. An attempt will be made to answer this question through a close reading of Malika Amar Shaikh’s memoir, *I Want to Destroy Myself*, translated in English by Jerry Pinto and published in 2016.

There is no doubt that Malika’s narrative about Namdeo’s politics opens up a lot of problematic strands both with the Dalit Panther group and the supporting left

parties. After marriage, when Dhasal entered into conflicts with Raja Dhale and J.V Pawar over taking funds from the Congress party, Malika recalled from her own knowledge about communist politics – that Dalits never favoured communists as the latter had Brahmanical political ideals and did not truly recognize the former's issues. But even so she claims, that the Dalit Panther group was closely supported by communists as they had no ideology or discipline of their own. The Panthers were drawn to money – no matter which side. According to Malika, the fall of the Dalit Panther Party took place due to their inability to handle funds and Namdeo's crass behaviour. Another very important dimension to her narrative is that it reflects ideas of 'masculinity' that existed among the Dalit Panther Movement of the 1970s. Also recorded by Sharmila Rege in her 1998 lecture in Pune titled, *A Dalit Feminist Standpoint* – even though the Party played an important role in the context of the Dalit question, their inclusivity towards Dalit women's voice in their politics was non-existent and women were only looked at in the roles of 'mothers' and 'wives' (Rege 1998, 1). Malika's narrative holds direct evidence to Rege's claim when she describes the way Namdeo treated both his wife and his mother.

Advertisement

Malika celebrates her mother-in-law as “a pillar in the movement”, as she always served Namdeo's party workers with food, irrespective of the time of arrival, number of people; or if she herself ate anything. Namdeo's notions about women was also reflected when his behaviour towards Malika changed after their son was born. He stopped sharing his personal and political life with his wife and was hardly ever at home, almost entirely leaving the responsibility of raising their son with Malika. Further – when Malika was silenced and beaten for speaking about his political and their personal life, or when Namdeo's party workers took her

hosting for granted – her role as a serving wife and woman is reiterated. After leading ten years of traumatic marital life with Namdeo, by the end of her memoir, she expresses anger over Namdeo's violent treatment towards his party workers – also patriarchal according to her. She also wonders about how after physical brawls and fights, the men would just get back together as friends solely on the basis of 'caste', which is all it took for them to endure anything.

One can argue that Malika opens the women's question explicitly by the end of her memoir and keeps it collective in nature without invoking it from a specific standpoint of either class, caste, religion etc. Her question is invoked with lived experiences of women residing in both urban and rural areas, of Siraj – a woman belonging to the Muslim community and also of women who do not hold education. She reflects on her own privileged position, by saying: "I chose to write because I can. Those who cannot, what happens to them?" As she points at negative literature produced by the Panthers or the failure of the movement, she blames the wrong human attitude shown by Namdeo. By giving instances of the suffering of Namdeo's mother throughout the memoir, even the Dalit female experience has not been silent in the book. She invokes an idea of solidarity among women by criticizing the patriarchal system which binds women to roles restricted inside households, not allowing them to leave the domestic space to support other women. Even though the women's question raised by her is broad, throughout the memoir, it can be observed that her tone reflects contradictions if one reflects upon the question of Dalit women, oppressed not just by the category of gender, but also caste.

Returning to Rege's lecture, one must think why she questioned the absence of 'Dalit women's' voices (and not women belonging to other castes, religions, ethnicities etc.) and positioning in the movement. The idea of masculinity gets

complicated when one reads the memoir from the vantage point of a non-Dalit woman writing the memoir. Malika herself claims that she was attracted to Namdeo because of his masculine personality; his violent political inclinations not being hidden from her. Even though Namdeo and his party workers took Malika and her mother-in-law's roles as serving women for granted, Malika – a non-Dalit woman, also superficially fed into these notions for the reasons she felt affection for him in the very first place.

Additionally, apart from exposure to education, literature and travel due to her parents' political careers, her religion-less and caste-less upbringing showed as she mentions traces of her childhood where she interacted with other religious families. In her description of one of her first friendships with V.V Bhatt's daughter, Rohini – she associates the lifestyle and strict regime followed by the family with Brahminism. This is soon contrasted with the untimely death of her father, after which her sister fills 'humanist' as religion in her job application, preceded by an argument with the clerk. While even today, the experience of menstruation among Hindu families is associated with pollution and dirt, Malika's narrative not only showed a lack of such notions, but due to her avid reading habits, she was already aware about the process of menstruation. This again hints at the range and nature of reading materials available to Malika while she was growing up.

Advertisement

It was clear from the description of her childhood and early-teen memories, that Malika and her family were strongly against identity being defined by categories of religion and caste. For the very same reason, Malika's family did not object to her marital alliance with Namdeo Dhasal due to the latter's caste. In fact their first introduction with Namdeo took place because of his close friendship with

Malika's brother-in-law, resulting in his constant visit to their house. However, there was another category which can be viewed explicitly in her narrative – that of socio-economic class. This category indeed did not affect Malika's liking for Namdeo, but her family objected to their alliance when they witnessed Namdeo's living conditions. As Malika pens her first visit to Namdeo's home in the Golpitha *chawl*, she too is disturbed by the physical disabilities and conditions of living conditions of a *chawl*. When Malika moved to Pune with Namdeo, her frustrations about party workers always gathering in the house, resulting in a lack of privacy of a newly-wed couple was expressed very overtly. These traces of Malika's memories reflect that she was married to a person who lived and grew in a very different environment. Even before she married him, it was not hidden that Namdeo's political inclinations endorsed violence, that he roamed in the red light areas and was the only son of a father who supported his family by working in a mutton shop. At this point one wonders if this narrative voice is replaced by a woman who has been oppressed by categories of both caste and class (along with gender), would she hold the same ideas of privacy of a newly-wed couple, space and violence? Even though Malika also expresses memories wherein in the midst of quarrels between her and Namdeo in Pune, as she received taunts from the women in the *basti*, she would feel that the "illiterate women" did not hold the right to comment on her actions.

Returning to the question I posed in the beginning of my essay, I do not believe that the question of 'women' in this memoir accommodates the voice of Dalit women inclusively. Firstly, because Malika's upbringing and narration itself shows instances of lending to masculinity and a constant middle-class gaze upon the Dalit population based on education and hygiene. Secondly and most importantly, because Malika is not voicing the women's question through the

categories of caste or religion and neither has she lived a life through religion at all, the category is absent from her voice. As long as this absence exists, the question cannot be all-inclusive. For instance, what if women belonging to caste panchayat communities are left with death as a consequence if they choose to end or voice opposition within a marital alliance?

Moreover, Sharmila Rege asserts the inclusivity of 'Dalit' women in larger Dalit politics because of oppression faced by them not only by men, but also by the universalized 'woman' who is often a part of the dominant feminist narrative of the region, speaking about the concerns of a selective population of women. In order to bring the caste and gender question together the lived experience and voice of a Dalit woman (in this case) is important. One can only read Malika's narration of Namdeo's mother's experiences, without the latter sharing it herself through Malika. As readers, we are unaware of possibly many other instances of caste-related oppression faced by Namdeo's mother, along with her experiences as a woman. Therefore, an inclusive women's question could be raised only when voiced from categories of 'Dalit' and 'woman' together, without an absence of caste and religion categories altogether.

MOTHER OF 1084

MAHASWETA DEVI

- The play Mother of 1084 (1997) is the original translation of Mahasweta Devi's Bengali play Hajar Churashir Ma that has the best illustrations for the marginalized category. The neglected and suppressed plight of the woman is represented by Sujata Chatterjee, mother of the protagonist of the play Brati Chatterjee whose ideology i.e. , commitment to the revolutionary and Communist Naxalite movement has labeled him as a rebel, and led to his ruthless killing by the police in an 'encounter'.
- In the play Mother of 1084 Sujata Chatterjee, a traditional apolitical upper middle class lady, an employee who awakens one early morning to the shattering news that her youngest and favourite son, Brati, is lying dead in the police morgue bearing the corpse no. 1084. Her efforts to understand her son's revolutionary activism lead her to reflect on her own alienation from the complacent, hypocritical, bourgeois society against which he had rebelled. The play moves around Sujata, a middle-aged woman belonging to a 'bhadralok', bourgeoisie Calcutta [family](#).
- Born into a conservative, affluent family, Sujata is advised to pursue her B. A. so that it helps her marriage prospects, but is ultimately married off to Dibyanath Chatterjee, a chartered accountant, despite his unsound financial situation. In thirty-four years of their married life, Sujata gives birth to four children, two sons (Jyoti and Brati) and two

daughters (Nipa and Tuli). When the novel opens, two of her children are already married, Jyoti to Bina and Nipa to Amrit.

- In the eyes of the world, all of them are leading perfectly happy and settled lives, but as Sujata goes on to discover later, that this [happiness](#) is only superficial. Significantly, Sujata makes several other discoveries, only after the sudden and mysterious death of Brati, her younger son, with whom she had always shared a very special relationship. For instance, she discovers that all her thirty-four years of her married life, she has been living a lie, as her husband, being an incorrigible philanderer, always cheated her with his mother's and children's tacit approval.
- He fixed up a petty bank job for her, when Brati was barely three years old, not out of any consideration for her economic independence, but essentially to help the family tide over a temporary financial crisis. And, as soon as the tide is over, he wants her to give up the job, which Sujata simply refuses. Later, she also discovers that her children, too, are leading lives very similar to her own. If there is someone who has dared to be different, it's Brati. Sullenly rebellious, right from his [childhood](#), Brati has made no secret of his disregard, even contempt, for his familial code and value-system.

- Turning his back upon this decadent and defunct code, Brati decides to join the Naxalite movement sweeping through the State of West Bengal in late 1960's and early 1970's. Unaware of his secret mission, Sujata is not able to dissuade her son from joining this movement. During his period of struggle, he comes into contact with a young girl, Nandini, who is also a member of the underground movement and with whom he shares his vision of a new world order. On being betrayed by one of his comrades, Brati and three of his close associates, Somu, Parth and Laltu, are brutally murdered by the assassin of the police.
- Later, the police call up his father, asking him to come and identify the dead body of his son, who, has in the meantime been divested of his identity as a person, and given another 'dehumanized identity' as corpse number 1084. Not only does the father refuse to go, but he also forbids other family members from doing so. Outraged at the manner in which his associates, his immediate family and the state have abandoned the dead Brati, his mother, Sujata decides to go, throwing all pretensions to false social respectability and the fear of public censure, to winds.
- Dibyanath Chatterjee, father of Brati Chatterjee is represented, as an honest representative of the male dominated society. As soon as he comes to know about the

news of his son, instead of rushing to the police station he tries to hush up the matter. Sujata is aghast to see the indifferent behaviour of her husband. He was least bothered to talk about this matter to his wife Sujata. The following sentences reveal very clearly how much she was neglected by him: Sujata : (uncomprehending, in a panic). What will you hush up? What are you talking about? Dibyanath: Jyoti, there is no time to waste.

- He goes out. Sujata : Jyoti! (Jyoti busy in dialing a number. He does not reply) Jyoti! (Reproving). Jyoti! What's Happened? (04) From the above lines one can easily conclude that Sujata was neglected though she was the second important member of the family. Dibyanath Chatterjee bothered to consult his son Jyoti rather than his wife, Sujata. Sujata felt shocked when Dibyanath Chatterjee refuses to go to the police station with the fear of stigma in the society for his son's involvement in anti - government affairs. In the words of Sujata: But that soon? Even before the body's been identified?
- A father gets the news on the telephone and does not even think of rushing to have a look? All he can think of is that he'd be comprised if his car went to Kantakapukur? (09) The four chapters in the play mark a new stage in the evolution of Sujata's

consciousness, as it enables her to re-order her fragmented and chaotic life in search of a cohesive identity. Every time she visits her own past or that of Brati, Somu's mother or Nandini, her long suppressed personal loss is slowly released into the ever-widening, spirals of betrayal, guilt and suffering.

- From a weak-willed, hopelessly dependent and a non-assertive moral coward, Sujata is transformed into a morally assertive, politically enlightened and a socially defiant individual. In the first chapter, significantly titled 'Dawn', Sujata primarily returns to her interior, private world of personal suffering, torture, betrayal and loneliness. Negotiating the inner time in relation to her immediate familial situation, she becomes aware of how she and Brati were not just fellow sufferers but also soul mates.
- In the second chapter, 'Afternoon', Sujata's visit to the bank to get **jewellery** from the locker is only a pretext for her to visit the house of Somu's mother. A close associate of Brati, Somu had been killed in the same encounter. More significantly, Brati had spent his night in Somu's house before his mysterious disappearance and death. While Sujata goes to Somu's mother with the specific aim of retrieving the memories of Brati's last few hours, it turns out to be her entry and initiation into another world altogether.

- It is the world of primitive squalor, filth, **poverty**, degradation and subhuman existence that only hovers tentatively on the margins of '**bhadraloks**' consciousness. She enters into the **little known** world of slum dwellers. The sight of Somu's ageing mother, her disgruntled daughter and that of their ramshackle tenement with a straw roof is enough to complete the rituals of initiation. In the third chapter, titled 'Evening', she visits Nandini, who apart from being Brati's comrade-in-arms was also his beloved.
- It is Nandini who reconstructs for Sujata all the events leading up to Brati's betrayal and murder. In the process, she also initiates Sujata into the little known world of the underground movement, explaining to her the logic for an organized rebellion, giving her first hand account of state repression and its multiple failures. It's through Nandini that Sujata is finally able to understand the reasons for Brati's political convictions and his rejection of the bourgeoisie code.
- All this leaves her so completely bewildered that she openly admits to Nandini, "I didn't really know Brati. " (87). In the last chapter of the novel titled 'Night', we meet a transformed Sujata, one who is more self-assured, morally confident and politically sensitive. She decides to leave the house in which Brati never felt at home, where he wasn't valued while he was alive, nor his memory respected after his death. Having

found a soul mate in Brati, she turns her back on Dibyanath and his decadent value-system.

- Bound by a sense of moral [responsibility](#), she does go through all the rituals and ceremonies connected with Tuli's engagement, but during the party, she maintains stiff, studied silence. Her insistence on wearing a plain, white sari for the party is also a significant gesture. The feelings of Sujata were not respected but misinterpreted by the members of the family. The given conversation between Sujata (Tuli, the second daughter of Sujata) and Tuli represents this thought: Tuli : Didn't Brati laugh at other people's beliefs?
- It is a well known fact in the society that father and mother play an important role in bringing up the children. But it is ridiculous to notice that when the children get spoiled, complete blame is thrown on mother. Being physically weak and fragile, (for a few years, she had been living with a rotten appendix inside her system), and traumatized by her younger son's death and subsequent repression of grief, she simply gives up on life. When she screams and collapses into a heap, her husband is quick to react that her "appendix" has burst.

- Whatever the symbolic overtones of his statement, she certainly succumbs to the slow process of inner-outer rot and decay. Finally, as she herself says, “Now that Brati is dead, I, too, wouldn’t like to go on living. ” She discovers her inner self but on the whole loses her will to live and survive. Time constantly swings back and forth, and so does the pendulum of two interconnected, intertwined lives, that of Sujata and her son, Brati. Interestingly, it is death that unites them both, irrevocably asserting the authenticity of their lives, too.
- Mahasweta Devi’s predominant concerns are the tribal backwaters, the “exploitations of the Adivasis by the landed rich or the urban-administrative machinery callously perpetuating a legacy of complicity with the colonizers, bonded labour and prostitution, the destitution and misery of city dwellers who are condemned to live at the fringes and eke-out a meager livelihood, the plight of woman who are breadwinners and victims of male sexual [violence](#), dependent widows, ill-treated wives, and unwanted daughters whose bodies can fetch a price – are adequately represented”. Sen).
- From the above situations, one can infer the insignificant role of Sujata in the play Mother of 1084, as a woman who has been relegated to the position of a neglected, suppressed, ill-treated, mechanical and marginalized in all forms in the male dominated society who consider

woman as an object of sex, only to reproduce, bring money when needed and does not possess even a voice to express her own concerns.

Vijay Tendulkar

- **Vijay Dhondopant Tendulkar** (6 January 1928 – 19 May 2008) was a leading Indian playwright, movie and television writer, literary essayist, political journalist, and social commentator primarily in Marāṭhi. His Marathi plays established him as a writer of plays with contemporary, unconventional themes.^[1] He is best known for his plays *Shantata! Court Chalu Aahe* (1967), *Ghāshirām Kotwāl* (1972), and *Sakhārām Binder* (1972). Many of Tendulkar's plays derived inspiration from real-life incidents or social upheavals, which provide clear light on harsh realities. He has provided guidance to students studying "play writing" in US universities. Tendulkar was a dramatist and theatre personality in Mahārāshtra for over five decades.

• Early life

- Vijay Dhondopant Tendulkar was born in a Gaud Saraswat Brahmin family^[2] on 6 January 1928 in Girgaon, Mumbai, Maharashtra,^[3] where his father held a clerical job and ran a small publishing business. The literary environment at home prompted young Vijay to take up writing. He wrote his first story at age six.
- He grew up watching western plays and felt inspired to write plays himself. At age eleven, he wrote, directed, and acted in his first play.^[4]
- At age 14, he participated in the 1942 Indian freedom movement,^[5] leaving his studies. The latter alienated him from his family and friends. Writing then became his outlet, though most of his early writings were of a personal nature, and not intended for publication. During this period, he participated in the activities of Nabajiban Sanghatana, a splinter communist group. He said that he liked sense of sacrifice and discipline of the communists.^[6]

• Career

• Early career

- Tendulkar began his career writing for newspapers. He had already written a play, *Āmcyāvar Koṇ Prem Karṇār?* (Who is going to love me?), and he wrote the play, *Gṛhasṭha* (गृहस्थ; The Householder), in his early 20s. The latter did not receive much recognition from the audience, and he vowed never to write again.^[7]
- Breaking the vow, in 1956 he wrote *Śrīmānt*, which established him as a good writer. *Śrīmānt* jolted the conservative audience of the times with its radical storyline, wherein an unmarried young woman decides to keep her unborn child while her rich father tries to "buy" her a husband in an attempt to save his social prestige.
- Tendulkar's early struggle for survival and living for some time in tenements ("cā//chawls") in Mumbai provided him first-hand experience about the life of urban lower middle class. He thus brought new authenticity to their depiction in Marathi theatre.^[8] Tendulkar's writings rapidly changed the storyline of modern Marathi theatre in the 1950s and the 60s, with experimental presentations by theatre groups like Rangayan. Actors in these theatre groups like Shriram Lagoo, Mohan Agashe, and Sulabha Deshpande brought new authenticity and power to Tendulkar's stories while introducing new sensibilities in Marathi theatre.^[9]
- Tendulkar wrote the play *Gidhāḍe* (गिडहाडे; The Vultures) in 1961, but it was not produced until 1970. The play was set in a morally collapsed family structure and explored the theme of violence. In his following creations, Tendulkar explored violence in its various forms: domestic, sexual, communal, and political. Thus, *Gidhāḍe* proved to be a turning point in Tendulkar's writings with regard to establishment of his own unique writing style.^[10]
- Based on a 1956 short story, *Die Panne* ("Traps") by Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Tendulkar wrote the play, *Śāntatā! Court Cālū Āhe* (शांतता! कोर्ट चालू आहे; "Silence! The Court is in Session"). It was presented on the stage for the first time in 1967 and proved as one of his

finest works. Satyadev Dubey presented it in movie form in 1971 with Tendulkar's collaboration as the screenplay writer.^[11]

• 1970s and 1980s

- In his 1972 play, Sakhārām Binder (Sakhārām, the Binder), Tendulkar dealt with the topic of domination of the male gender over the female. The main character, Sakhārām, is a man devoid of ethics and morality, and professes not to believe in "outdated" social codes and conventional marriage. He accordingly uses the society for his own pleasure. He regularly gives "shelter" to abandoned wives and uses them for his sexual gratification while remaining oblivious to the emotional and moral implications of his exploits. He justifies all his acts through claims of modern, unconventional thinking, and comes up with hollow arguments meant in fact to enslave women. Paradoxically, some of the women which Sakhārām had enslaved buy into his arguments and simultaneously badly want freedom from their enslavement.^[12]
- In 1972, Tendulkar wrote another, even much more acclaimed play, Ghāshirām Kotwāl ("Officer Ghāshirām"), which dealt with political violence. The play is a political satire created as a musical drama set in 18th century Pune. It combined traditional Marathi folk music and drama with contemporary theatre techniques, creating a new paradigm for Marathi theatre. The play demonstrates Tendulkar's deep study of group psychology,^[13] and it brought him a Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship (1974–75) for a project titled, "An Enquiry into the Pattern of Growing Violence in Society and Its Relevance to Contemporary Theatre". With over 6,000 performances thus far in its original and translated versions, Ghāshirām Kotwāl remains one of the longest-running plays in the history of Indian theatre.
- Tendulkar wrote screenplays for the movies Nishānt (1974), Ākrosh (The Cry) (1980), and Ardh Satya (The Half-Truth) (1984) which established him as an important "Chronicler of Violence" of the present.^[14] He has written eleven movies in Hindi and eight movies in Marathi. The latter include Sāmanā ("Confrontation") (1975), Simhāasan ("Throne") (1979), and Umbārtha ("The Threshold") (1981). The last one is a groundbreaking feature film on women's activism in India. It was directed by Jabbar Patel and stars Smitā Pātil and Girish Karnād.

• 1990s to 2008

- In 1991, Tendulkar wrote a metaphorical play, Safar,^[15] and in 2001 he wrote the play, The Masseur. He next wrote two novels — Kādambari: Ek and Kādambari: Don — about sexual fantasies of an ageing man. In 2004, he wrote a single-act play, His Fifth Woman — his first play in the English language — as a sequel to his earlier exploration of the plight of women in Sakhārām Binder. This play was first performed at the Vijay Tendulkar Festival in New York in October 2004.^[16]
- In the 1990s, Tendulkar wrote an acclaimed TV series, SwayamSiddha, in which his daughter Priyā Tendulkar, noted Television actress of 'Rajani' fame,^[17] performed in the lead role. His last screenplay was for Eashwar Mime Co. (2005), an adaptation of Dibyendu Palit's story, Mukhabhinoy, and directed by theatre director, Shyamanand Jalan and with Ashish Vidyarthi and Pawan Malhotra as leads.^[18]

• Family

- He was the brother of acclaimed cartoonist and humourist Mangesh Tendulkar.

• Death

- Vijay Tendulkar in late 2007 on a visit to Princeton, New Jersey, USA

- Tendulkar died in Pune on 19 May 2008,^[19] battling the effects of the rare autoimmune disease myasthenia gravis.^[20]
- Tendulkar's son Raja and wife Nirmala had died in 2001; his daughter Priya Tendulkar died the next year (2002) of a heart attack following a long battle with breast cancer.

• Comment on Post-Godhra communal carnage

- Following the post-Godhra communal carnage in Gujarat^[21] in 2002, Tendulkar reacted by saying that "If I had a pistol, I would shoot [Gujarat Chief Minister] Narendra Modi". This reaction of Tendulkar had evoked mixed reactions, local Modi supporters burning his effigies while others lauding his remark.
- Later, when he was asked if it was not strange that he, who was known as a strong voice against death penalty, had a death wish for Modi, Tendulkar had said that "it was spontaneous anger, which I never see as a solution for anything. Anger doesn't solve problems."

• Legacy

- In his writing career spanning more than five decades, Tendulkar has written 27 full-length plays and 25 one-act plays. Several of his plays have proven to be Marathi theatre classics.^[22] His plays have been translated and performed in many Indian languages.^[23]
- By providing insight into major social events and political upheavals during his adult life, Tendulkar became one of the strongest radical political voices in Maharashtra in recent times. While contemporary writers were cautiously exploring the limits of social realism, he jumped into the cauldron of political radicalism and courageously exposed political hegemony of the powerful and the hypocrisies in the Indian social mindset. His powerful expression of human angst has resulted in his simultaneously receiving wide public acclaim and high censure from the orthodox and the political bigwigs.^[24]
- Many of Tendulkar's plays derived inspiration from real-life incidents or social upheavals. Thus, the rise of Shiv Sena in Maharashtra in the 1970s was reflected in Tendulkar's *Ghāshirām Kotwāl*.^[25] The true story of a journalist who purchased of a woman from the rural sex industry to reveal police and political involvement in this trade, only to abandon the woman once he had no further need for her, is detailed in Tendulkar's *Kamalā*.^{[25][26]} The play was later made into a film *Kamla (film)*. The real-life story of an actress whose acting career got ruined after her same-sex affair became public knowledge inspired Tendulkar to write *Mitrāchi Goshta*.^[27]
- Tendulkar has translated nine novels, two biographies, and five plays by other authors into Marathi.
- Besides the foregoing, Tendulkar's oeuvre includes a biography; two novels; five anthologies of short stories; 16 plays for children, including *Bāle Miltāt* (1960) and *Pātlāchyā Poriche Lagin* (1965); and five volumes of literary essays and social criticism, including *Ratrani* (1971), *Kowali Unhe* (1971), and *Phuge Sobānche* (1974). All in all, Tendulkar's writings have contributed to a significant transformation of the modern literary landscape in Marathi and other Indian languages.
- In 2005, a documentary titled *Tendulkar Āni Himsā: Kāl Āni Āj* ("Tendulkar and Violence: Then and Now") with English subtitles^[28] (produced by California Arts Association - CalAA -^[29] directed by Atul Pethe) was released. In 2007, a short film about Tendulkar, *Ankahn*, (director Santosh Ayachit) was released.^[30]