

MASTER'S DEGREE IN ENGLISH (MEG-14)
Contemporary Indian Literature in English Translation
ASSIGNMENT

Course Code: MEG-14
Assignment Code: MEG-14/TMA/2020-2021
Max. Marks: 100

Attempt all the questions

1. Discuss the woman's point of view by referring to texts written by women. What are their themes and concerns? (20)
2. Choose a Bhakti poet from your region and discuss a few of his/her poems, illustrating how the Bhakti movement had an impact on Indian writing. (20)
3. Give a brief description of the trend towards social realism in Kannada drama. Can you find equivalences in drama in other Indian languages? Give examples. (20)
4. What do you understand by Dalit literature? Discuss Dalit writing from the contrasting perspectives of privileged/disadvantaged. (20)
5. Translation is the most effective means of accessing various writings both in India and abroad. Do you agree? Give reasons. (20)

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M.E.G.-14

Contemporary Indian Literature in English Translation

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Attempt all the questions.

Q. 1. Discuss the woman's point of view by referring to texts written by women. What are their themes and concerns?

Ans. Salt, one of the most humble but important elements of human life has been used Devi in her story as a metaphor for exploitation of the tribals. The salt represents the humble lives of the tribals and their quest for it shows their struggle for survival at the very primitive level. When tribals are deprived of salt, the tribals try to solve the problem by using different methods. The entire episode presents the exploitation in its cruelest form. It shows us the picture where people are being deprived of their basic need and no one bothers about it.

Salt is not just a tragic story of a tribal community deprived of salt by a tyrant landowner, but it is also a sharp and severe attack on the authority. It tries to bring out the level of exploitation of the tribals. It shows that hoe the things are being wrongly interpreted by the people living in urban areas. All this is done by the use of a sophisticated literary technique. The thoughts of the character are presented by the narrator in the form of drama and the narrator is able to understand the animal psychology.

The most prominent theme of the story is exploitation of tribals, not only by Uttam Chand but by everyone who are in position of power. Mahasweta Devi, in her most of the writings is concerned about the denial of land rights to tribals. She describes the disastrous effects of development in Paumanu area in her essay '*The Slaves of Paumanu*'. She says, "At one time the district boasted of great jungles. Today, the jungles are largely destroyed and the district can be described as dry upland". She also talks about the growth of bounded labour system after the crushing of jagirdars in 1857. She says, "After 1857, the zamindars and the moneylenders usurped all the land. The Kamiiauti-seokia or the Bandhua system or debt-bondage system was born." In the story we see the tribals being affected by this system.

The story uncovers the link between the politics at the national level and the power structure at the local level in form of landowners, the traders, and the youth committee. We see that the authorities are blind to what they do not want to see. For the tribals there is no existence of law and order. This is clear demonstrated by the fact that when the tribals demand for the fair distribution, Uttam Chand finds a legal but inhuman way to retaliate.

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The story is a disturbing stark reality and urges us to use our social conscience. The tragedy of Purti conveys the fact that in some situation it is impossible to make a black and white moral judgment. At first headman accuses Purti for putting the life of entire community in danger, but when the three men and the elephant died, he feels that someone else is responsible for their death. We learn from the story that when the entire life becomes a mere struggle for survival, the usual moral standards do not apply. On the surface it seems that Purti has violated the law but the text suggests that the real culprit is someone else.

The writer has used the title of the story as a strong and intense symbol which central to the story. *The Empty Chest* works as a number of symbols in the story. First it is the symbol of emptiness of the life of the protagonist. Just like the emptiness of the chest, Taradoi in her young age was lured by empty promises, later in her life her marriage is also empty and whatever hope or belief she has is shattered after her brother tells her the truth about Saru Babu, and her life becomes empty again.

The Empty Chest is also a symbol of love, especially because the body of the lover of protagonist has been carried in it. She drags the chest in her shack and decorates her and sleeps inside it. *The Empty Chest* also is a symbol of her union with her lover, and it later becomes the symbol of detachment. The fact that the author has used single object as a symbol for different things, tells us about the aesthetic ability of the writer.

Empty Chest is a story about the death of the love of the protagonist, Taradoi, for her estranged lover Saru Babu, the son of the local Zamindar. Taradoi falls in love with the zamindar's son while working in his house. But their dream of marriage could not come to reality because of family opposition. Her love for Babu is real, intense and strong. All this happened twelve years ago. After her estrangement with Babu, she marries to a driver, owing to her circumstances. But she remains faithful to her first love thinking that it is because of her love he has not married.

The entire setting of the story reflects the love of Taradoi for Saru Babu. She lives with her two children in poverty and struggle to survive everyday but still not conforms the advances of Haibol, who has promised her a life of comfort. It is her love that gives her the courage and power to sustain and struggle. Reader can feel that she is annoyed by the advances of Haibol in lines like, "What is left in this body to keep drawing you here."

After she finds the empty chest in which her lover has been brought to the cremation ground, her love reaches to the level of frenzy. The following lines from the story best describe it.

"Its [the empty chest] very existence gave strength to Taradoi. She ran her hands over the chest caressing it. The bakul flowers, beautifully engraved on its side, seemed real. She pressed her cheek to the flowers. Then as on the other days, she wriggled into huge chest and lay there.."

It is important to consider the fact that she has put on her wedding blouse, and in spite of her being married and two children she feels that she is married to Saru Babu.

She comes out this illusion when she is informed by her brother that Saru Babu was ready to marry to someone else. This point of the story is most of important part, and also is the turning of the story. The narrator describes it as following:

"Taradoi remained rooted to the spot near the pile of wedding cards. She reached out for cards like someone groping for the bones of the dead among the ashes of the crematorium."

After this disillusionment her life changes, she forgets her love for Babu and burns the chest. She is comes out of her shack without the chadar, which is the sybol of respectability and is determined to do anything for living. Her determination immediately draws our attention to Scarlett O' Hara's vow that she will never be hungry again, in *Gone With the Wind*. She is even ready to take prostitution, but the irony is that Haibol is not there waiting for her outside.

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The opening paragraph of the story sets the atmosphere of the story, which is somber, enlivened by love and also by lust. The combination of death and life or death and love gives a strange atmosphere to the story. This strangeness is further intensified by the episode in which Taradoi drags the empty chest in her shack and decorate herself only to sleep in the chest. And not just for one time but for several days, until she come to know about the truth.

The title of the story suggests the emptiness of the life of Taradoi. When she was young he was lured by the empty hopes by her lover, Saru Bapu. Her marriage is also empty as her husband is worth nothing. And later whatever belief she had is being shattered and once again her life becomes hollow.

Q. 2. Choose a Bhakti poet from your region and discuss a few of his/her poems, illustrating how the Bhakti movement had an impact on Indian writing.

Ans. Bhakti movement started in the 6th century on the Tamil region of the country. This movement was powered by the two groups of saints called Nayanmars and Alwars, who were the devotees of Shiva and Vishnu respectively. This movement lasted till the 10th century in the Tamil region. It must be taken into consideration that Vishnu was also worshipped in his avatars of Rama and Krishna. While at the beginning of the millennium Buddhism and Jainism had influenced the region, but Hinduism reasserted itself during the middle of the 6th century. Triujnana Sambandhar, who was a Nayanmar, is being said to have defeated both Buddhism and Jainism single handedly. He is being said to have a great singer and composer and like other Nayanmars and Alwars he would sing in front of the deities. The dancing and singings of saints and their followers their devotion became of the most common thing during this era. Actually, the ecstasy in the worship which was felt during the Bhakti movement had its origin in the early practice of Tamil religious culture. George says, “the custom of ecstasy in worship survived in Tamil Nadu to produce Nayanmars and Alwars, who went about Tamil Nadu singing ecstatic songs about Shiva and Vishnu, and were largely responsible in the later times for the positions of the pre-eminence those Gods attained as well as for the Bhakti movement” (29). The three major texts which were given rise by the Tamil Bhakti movement are – *Tevaram Nalayira Divya Prabandhan*, and *Srimat Bhagavat*. *Tevaram* is actually an anthology which was composed by three of the Nayanmars (Saivite saints) – Sambandhar, Appar, and Sundarar, and is written in Tamil. *Nalayira Divya Prabandhanis* an anthology of four thousand songs written in tamil and was written by twelve Alwars. Both of these were compiled in the 10th century. *Srimat Bhagavat* is written in Sanskrit and perhaps entirely composed in the 10th century. It actually expresses the views and the emotion of the Bhakti which was headed by both Nayanmars and Alwars. As we have already seen that this Bhakti was actually an overflowing of emotion and ecstasy of devotion. According to **Sisir Kumar Das**, “the saints spread a new message of love and hope for the common man. If the Bhakti movement emerged mainly as a reaction against the life-negating rigorous principles of Buddhism and Jainism, it was partly against the dry formalism of Brahmanical system as well”. (*Das 2005: 50*). He further says, “by their social behaviour and personal practices the saints went beyond the taboos of caste and birth”. So what actually came of the surface was a kind of person mode of worship which marked a rebellion against the organized religion. It became such a force that it swept the whole India and even challenged the orthodoxies while affirming the cultural values that had always characterized the people of the land.

There are numbers of name which can be associated with the Bhakti movement. For example, we can cite the names of figures like Andal in the 9th century in Tamil to Meera in the 16th century in the north, from Tukaram in Maharashtra to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in the east India. Apart from these there are number of names which can be associated with the Bhakti movement all across the country. In the north India the Bhakti movement became a major force during the 14th to 17th century. Some of the spread heads of the movement are Vallabha, Kabir, Tulsidas along with Meera, Chaitanya, and Tuka. There can be marked a demarcation between the Bhakti poets on the basis of the

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god they worship. Not on the basis of the names of god, but on the basis of the God with form or formless God. But this demarcation between the Bhakti poets does a little good as all the poets of the movement actually sang of their personal faith in the God. So what actually makes their poetry rich is not what sort of gods there are singing for but their faith in God. Bhakti poets were not from a particular region but came from different state, and many of them were women. Some of the most famous women poets of the movement were Akkamahadevi in the 12th century, Meera and Jahinabai in the 13th century, and Bahinabai in the 17th century. These poets wrote and sang in the language which was common to people, and thus they pervaded the message of personal devotion to ordinary people. This way what they actually did was they democratized the literary culture and also strengthened literature in various local languages. They used imageries and songs from everyday life for their compositions along with the various elements of drama, dance and speech. Some of the poets known for such uses are Jayadeva of the 11th century, Vidyapati of the 14th century, Chandidas in 14th and 15th century and Bhakta Narsimha in the 15th century and Meerabai. All of these poets come from the different parts of India and composed in different languages. Keeping Urdu as an exception, we find almost all the languages being used and established and therefore owe a great deal to the Bhakti movement for their development.

Ramakant Rath : His Life And Works

Ramakanta Ratha was born on December the 13th 1934 at Cuttack. His father's name was Loknath Mahapatra and mother's name was Parvati Devi. He was then adopted by his foster parents, who belonged to the village in the coastal district of Puri. He got his master's in English literature in 1956. He worked as a lecturer in a college and then joined IAS. He also worked as Chief Secretary of Orissa and secretary to the Government of India. He became the president of Sahitya Akademi, after he got retired from Government service.

His started writing at an early age and was influenced by Marxist ideology. Though not sure, but he might have joined the Student federation of India. Rath is mainly perceived and admired as a poet. He famous for his seven collections of poetry, which are: Kete Dinara, Aneka Kothari, Sandigdha Mrigya, Saptam Ritu, Sachitra Andhara, Sri Radha and Sri Palataka. Among all these collections, it was Sri Radha which made him famous and brought immense prestige.

He has also won Kendriya Sahitya Akademi award for Saptam Ritu, Sarala Puruskar for Sachitra Andhara. Sri Radha brought him Saraswati Samman.

His Oeuvre: An Overview

Over the period of twenty years, between 1950 and 1970, Rath only produced two collection of poetry. The basic themes of his poems are love, lovelessness, loneliness and death consciousness. Rath's attempt to modernize the Oriya idioms made him concentrate on style and technique and the subject matter took back seat. The protagonist of most of his poems is a defeated, self reproachful and ironic person.

The title of his second collection automatically tell us about the subject-matter of poem. Some of them are – 'Bagha Shikar', 'Anant Shyam' and *Biman Durghatnare* Mrityu. These poem along with some of his late poems make us sense a reluctance to sing full-throated on poet's part. There are 32 poems in his "*The Dubious Hunt*", which are significant for complexity of thought. Some of the important titles are: "*Mastrani*", "*Hemlatara*", "*Atithi Satkar*", "*Bhikarunira Baranugamana Darshanand*" and "*Madhabira Panchtrimastama Janmdina*".

The collection also contain a poem called "*Hridayasri*", which can be read as a clue to Rath's method and intent in Sri Radha. The poem is about Parakiya.

A long poem called Tamehni, appeared in 1982 collection, which deals with subject of love in such a way that looks forward to women's perspective in Shri Radha. Another two poems of this collection indicates Rath's interest in Krishna-Radha mythology.

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Sri Radha: Meter and Technique

This works of Rath can be looked upon both as a long dramatic monologue and a series of dramatic monologues. This form of poetry was popularized Browning and later used by poets such as Pound and Eliot.

The meter used in the poem is payaarwith minor variation though. A Payaarchhand has lines of four syllable units is followed by six syllable units. The rhyming is either *aabb* or *abab*. Another meter used by Rath in the poem is bangalashri, a traditional line which came in use by contemporary poets but soon was abandoned. An example of payaarchhand would be – Tame Note (4) Jeuthara (4) Prathamechhuinla (6)

The mythical method of James Joyce, as pronounced by Eliot made its appearance in Oriya literature. According to Eliot this technique involved the juxtaposition of antiquity and contemporaneity, which he said had made the modern world an, “immense panorama of futility and anarchy”, possible for poetry. And it is because the popularity of this technique that Oriya poets were not able to extricate themselves from the dominant mythologies, the *Oriya Bhagbata* and *Ramayana*. In the poem *Sri Radha* poet has made several reference to the river, Kadamba tree, the cattle, cowhands, and the figure of Krishna, which gives the poem a colour of antiquity.

Introducing The Poem: Sri Radha

If we consider *Sri Radha* as one long poem then it has 61 section but we can also consider it as a collection of 61 independent poems. Whatever the case may be the poems are arranged in such a sequence that it convey the emotion of lovelorn Radha. However, the Rath completely denies that his radha has anything to do with mythical Radha. He also admitted that it was not ment to be one long poem and was written as several separate poems but, later arranged in a sequence.

On the intertextuality of the poem, Jitendra Mohan Mohanti said, “[B]ehind the poem lies the familiar backup of Vaisnava cult and the various perspective, themes and expressive modes in numerous poem which has been written after Radha-Krishna Love for over 400 years”. Despite the poet claims that there is no connection between mythical Radha and his Radha, the connection seems to be obvious. One reason is because without the context the many lives of the poem do not make sense. Reader can not enjoy the poem considering the protagonist as any lovelorn woman pining for the lover. For the proper understanding and enjoyment of the poem one need to relate it with the tradition of such poetry as it existed in India.

Who is/was Sri Radha?

Concept and character of Radha can be traced back to Rigveda but Radha as a lover of Krishna evolved with Jaydev’s *Gita Govinda*. For many years Radha was not worshiped along side Krishna in Orissa. It is believed that after *Gita Govinda* and *Gudiya Vaishnavism*, Radha entered in the bhakti tradition and folk lore of Orissa.

Sri Radha was daughter of Brushbhaneand wife of one Ayan. Her mother’s name was Kurtada. Though she was not born to her. Radha is considered as symbol of love, and the best way to seek Krishna. Many do not consider her separate from Krishna. She is thus a shadow without her own identity.

The Tradition

The theme of poem is crucial to the medieval bhakti tradition. In the pan-Indian context of vaisnavism especially in Sahajia and Radhapyari cults, all the male members would dress up as women, considering themselves to be Radha and Radha’s friend and will show their devotion to be male God/lover.

These rituals actually take place due to writing of male mystics who would address male god as bridegroom in terms of bridal mysticism. Many of the Oriya poet like Abhimanya Kavisurya and Gopalkrishna deals with the theme of Rasha-Krishna love. Their works also show various other dimensions of human emotion like sorrow, sense of deprivation, pang of separation from the beloved, sadness and anger expressed through the subjectivity of Radha.

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Sri Radha: The Poem

In the afterward to the poem Rath writes:

All the poem in this collection are about Radha. The writing of so many poems on a mythical character in the twentieth century might seem unnecessary and unsatisfied. But since the poem defines on those aspects of Radha's life which do not feature in any well known legends about her or the *Puranas*, it might be worth while to look for other reasons for the readers indifference to the poems.

Rath might have been taken by surprise when the reaction of the readers came far from indifference. The readers were attracted by the simplicity of the poem. The simplicity of the poem hints that perhaps Rath was aware of changes of complexity and obscurity that has been labelled against his earlier volumes.

The poem capture well-known sequences in the life of Krishna—from his nativity to Kamsa's attempt to kill him, followed by the killing his enemies, and gopila, his absence during *Mahabharata* and finally to his death.

Section-1

The opening of the poem is quite dramatic. It says, the morning today is somehow very different. In the opening lines we see that Radha is agitated after her premonition of Krishna's arrival. To her morning seems different and unique. The lines can also be read as emotional state of any woman, not necessarily Radha's.

In the subsequent stanza the poet prepare us for the theme of poem by putting the image of the lover in disguise thus reaching the speaker's mind. Then the poet goes onto describe the uniqueness of the particular morning.

In the last stanza, we see that Radha defines her own mortal identity. The poet here uses words like "old ages, disease and death" to signed the temporality of the speaker.

Section-2

With the beginning of section 2, we see that Radha is now aware of the cause behind the predomination. The scene shifted from thought to action with the arrival of Krishna. We see Radha thinking about divine and miraculous while engaged in the ordinary experiences. One can but not miss the questions about strange happening ever ion these ordinary experiences. The poet highlights the pervasiveness of Krishna.

Section-3

In this section the poet makes a jump in narrative. The scene depicts various assassination tempt of Krishna by Kansa. The ferociousness of assassins is depicted by the fact that people lost their lives and ability to chant sacred names. But after the death of assassin the peace was regained. The meeting of lovers also takes place and "I" and "you" were replaced by "we". The image of peacock is used to enunciate the promise and possibilities of love.

Section-4

In this section we see the difference between Radha's response to miraculous powers of Krishna and those of others ion Gopapuran. She calls herself as "stupid women" but it is her questioning attitude which makes her Krishna's chosen one. She is not grateful that Krishna has restored things and saved the city from further destruction but question about those who have already suffered.

Section-5

In this section the theme of the poem grows into a complex one. After section 6th, the eroticism starts coming. It becomes more flesh than sprit later is never far from the former. We see the guilt of a married woman, and with this the poem moves towards the interest of a secular reader.

Section-6, 7

In these two sections, idea of love move towards erotic from spiritual. We see Radha analyzing the bodily love. She begin with "When for the first time you touched me" and then shows her hesitation in giving her consent.

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It seems that the poet has made his strategy keeping in mind the limitation of female subject. But soon enough she admits, “When for the first time, I thought I would touch you, my hand froze”. It shows the eternal male fantasy of woman full of desire and yet hesitant.

Poet takes us high with intensity and depicting a series of passionate unions, finally reaching an emotional plateau where the subject meditates regarding the meaning of love, relationship and its implication for her, life and death. Very soon the pace of the poem increased and we witness the question regarding morality, bodily decrepitude, youth and old age.

In the 16th section we see that Radha starts anticipating the loss of her love. The dramatic elements increase in the poem. The plot becomes linear and follows a symbolic progression: anticipation of Krishna’s coming, confirmation through the news of his arrival, meeting, union, separation, fruitless waiting, the anticipation of death and finally the news of Krishna’s passing.

Radha flaunts her infidelity through which she has gained her individuality. She is courageous and faces the challenges of being unchaste. She is courageous because she is aware of the consequences of her love for Krishna.

The character of Radha, as Rath brings out in this poem makes her stand out in the Plethora of traditional representation.

Criticism

The relevance of a work in late 20th century, which depends on ancient myths for its meaning is highly questionable. *Sri Radha* as a poem, which is based on Vaishnavite thought can be termed as escapist. Many critics have highlighted the point that how male poet faces difficulty in giving expression to certain kind of feelings, for example loneliness and homo erotic desire. And that is why he chooses the female person. Feminist critics have argued that the female persona of the protagonist is essentially a patriarchy construct according to its own ideological imperatives.

Recently, Jayanta Mahapatra, an Indian English poet writes:

Contemporary Oriya poetry appeared to have been dominated in the last few decades by practitioners who haven’t found (or possibly did not find) much use for incorporating their own living world into their poems. In other words this highly praised so called successful poetry, has completely sidelined social political issues, those that matter to the ordinary individual. The poetry has been one of “Escape” evolving around the same old myths poet were talking about a hundred years ago. This has sadly brought on an unnaturalness in Oriya poetry, an absence in looking at the world in which the poet or writer lives (Mahapatra : 2001, P. 38). An interesting point is that Mahapatra is not alone in raising these objections, there are many others. Feminists also argue that the sexuality of Radha has been represented along patriarchal lines.

Q. 3. Give a brief description of the trend towards social realism in Kannada drama. Can you find equivalences in drama in other Indian languages? Give examples.

Ans. The nascent beginnings of modern Kannada literature can be traced to the early 19th century under the stewardship of Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III, the ruler of the princely state of Mysore and court poets who attempted to steer away from the ancient champu form of prose and popularize prose renderings of Sanskrit epics and plays. Kempu Narayana’s *Mudramanjusha* (“Seal Casket”, 1823) can be considered the first modern novel, anterior to English influence on Kannada. Though inspired by Visakhadatta’s Sanskrit original *Mudrarakshasa*, the work displays a creativity of its own.

The impetus to modern literature came from a western style education and the Christian missionaries who relied on the local language to propagate the gospel. The arrival of the printing press was a catalyst to this process. Among the several early Kannada publications, the first Kannada-English dictionary by Ferdinand Kittel (1894) is noteworthy.

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B.L. Rice edited and published ancient Kannada classics and compiled a brief history of Kannada literature while J.H. Fleet compiled a collection of folk ballads including the well known *Sangoli Rayana Dange* (“*The Revolt of Sangolli Raya*”). The most outstanding lyrical poet of this period, whose poems were reminiscent of the medieval mystic Kannada poetry, was Sisunala Sharief.

In the latter half of the 19th century, progress towards original works in prose narratives initially gained momentum through translations from Sanskrit, English (Yatrikana Sanchara from “*The Pilgrims Progress*”, 1847), Marathi (Yamuna Paryatana) and Bengali languages (Durgesanandini). Early dramatic literatures were translations from Sanskrit (*Shakuntala*, 1869) and English (*Macbeth*, *King Lear* and *Romeo and Juliet*).

With the standardization of modern prose, the earliest original social fictions were *Suryakantha* by Lakshman Gadagkar (1892) and *Indira Bai* by Gulvadi Venkata Rao (1899). With the theme being reform, the latter work critically examines social issues, reflecting an awakening. Original plays carrying the same theme include, among others, the *Iggappa Heggadeya Vivaha Prahasana* by Suri Venkataramana Sastri (1887). Nanadali Lakshminarayana (‘Muddanna’) wrote two important prose pieces; *Adbhuta Ramayana* (1895) and *Ramaswamedham* (1898). What makes the latter writing historically important is that the epic *Ramayana* is looked at from a modern sensibility with the author as the narrator and his wife as the listener, the narration being interrupted at various stages with humorous exchanges between the couple, resulting from questions raised by the listener. The transition from the age of verse to prose may be summed up with Muddanna’s proclamation “poetry deserves killing whereas prose reaches the heart” (“*Padyam Vadyam, Gadyam Hridyam*”).

With the turn of the 20th century, B.M. Srikantaiah (‘B. M. Sri’), regarded by some as the “*Father of Modern Kannada literature*”, gave the call for writing originals in modern Kannada, emancipating the language from ancient courtly classics and stressing the need for the influence of English literature. This period can be considered a seed time, for a golden age to come. His adaptation of lyrics from English were effective, the best known among his works being the English Geethagalu (“*English Songs*”), a seminal work that set the trend for “*Navodaya*” (new birth) Kannada poetry to come. Other notable poets who were able to evolve new metrics out of old ones were Masti Venkatesh Iyengar in his poem of love and tragedy, the Madalingana Kanive (“*Madalinga’s Valley*”, 1924) and Govinda Pai in the *Kavitavatara* (1916).

Though Panje Manjesh Rao (1900) is considered a pioneer in the field of short stories, it is Masti Venkatesh Iyengar who is credited for laying the foundation for a generation of short-story tellers with his *Kelavu Sanna Kathegalu* (“*A few Short Stories*”, 1920) and *Sanna Kathegalu* (“*Short Stories*”, 1924).

Q. 4. What do you understand by Dalit literature? Discuss Dalit writing from the contrasting perspectives of privileged/disadvantaged.

Ans. Dalit Poetry: The Poetry of Rebellion: The word dalit is a short form of the Sanskrit adjective pada-dalit which means crushed under feet. The social structure of Hindu society made the clan which was at the lower ladder of the social hierarchy to be crushed under the feet of higher castes and clan. This heightened during the 18th century. Because of this oppression and exploitation a sense of rebellion emerged among the Dalits mainly because of the support and inspiration given by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. During the sixties people like Namdeo Dhasal and Raj Dhale formed a group called Dalit Panthers in order to fight with various atrocities towards the Dalits. This group was socio-political in nature. They used poetry as one of their weapon to fight this battle. Thus, Dalit poetry is a result of protest, which demands for revolution. It denies the tradition structures and patterns and also calls for strict rebellion. The major themes of these poetry are rejection of scriptures, entry for the untouchables into temples, the

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problems faced by Dalits regarding food, shelter, faith and respect, fights for drinking water, need for education and strength of Dalits, etc. The language used in the poetry is strong, violent and sometimes abusive. It is full of irony and sarcasm. Some of the famous poets are Namdeo Dhasal, Raja Dhale, Daya Pawar, Waman Nimbalkar, Yashwantmanohar, Arjun Dangle, J.V. Pawar, Tryambak Sapkale, Jyoti Lanjewar, Hira Bansode, etc.

Sitanshu was interested in the myth of Orpheus for some time but it was the series of discontinuities, which prompted him to pen his poem. In his poem Sitanshu narrates the myth of *Orpheus* in a different way. The incidents and the idea are similar but yet they are different.

The poem which seems to be a lyric song, on a closer examination reveals to be both anti-lyrical and anti-song. It is anti-lyrical because it replaces the lyrical element of original poem from its opposite. There are various instances of this replacement. The musical element of Orpheus has been replaced by the cries and the pain of the eagles in the first two lines of the poem.

In the original we see that the relationship between the ruler of Hades and Orpheus is of 'pleaser and pleased'. But in this poem it has been replaced by killer and killed relationship of eagles and snake. The poem shows a journey from myth towards the modernity.

Namdeo Dhasal is Maharashtra's leading Dalit poet and the only Indian poet to have received a Lifetime Achievement Award from country's apex literary institution, the Sahitya Akademi. He is the author of nine books of poetry. Dhasal is a quintessentially Mumbai poet. Raw, raging, associative, almost carnal in its tactility, his poetry emerges from the underbelly of the city – its menacing, unplumbed netherworld. This is the world of pimps and smugglers, of crooks and petty politicians, of opium dens, brothels and beleaguered urban tenements.

Namdeo Dhasal has shaken society's conventional notion of poetry. Like in these lines from his poem titled '*Autobiography*' which appeared in his 1995 book '*Ya Sattet Jeev Ramat Nahi*' (*The Soul Doesn't Find Peace In This Regime*), Dhasal has prodded the classes and castes persistently to acknowledge the oppression against Dalits and the underdog. Common sense conveys that such evocative words cannot flow from the pen of one who has not been a witness and, often, victim, to the caste-based politics and ostracism himself.

Dhasal's experiences comprise the camaraderie among other Dalit activists, all of whom look up to Dr. Ambedkar as the fountain head of inspiration. No wonder then '*Golpitha*' includes an elaborate ode to the man who drafted the Constitution of the country. Referring to the aftermath of Dr. Ambedkar's death when his followers mourned his death and several Dalit leaders found themselves handicapped, Dhasal wrote, among other thoughts:

*They-who never make the error of going
One step forward or backward from the pioneer-
Don't possess the fuel and the velocity with which are born
The ones who have the spunk to lift their foot as high as their leader did
Or to move it differently.*

In his own lifetime, Dhasal has surely displayed the spunk he was born with, and has large foot has traversed quite a distance in literature, and thus, in effecting a pattern of thinking.

The Dalit literature tradition is very old, although the term was only introduced officially in 1958. Dhasal was greatly inspired by the work of Baburo Bagul, who employed photographic realism to draw attention to the circumstances which those deprived of their rights from birth have to endure. Dhasal's innovative poems broke away from formal and stylistic conventions. His use of vulgar language offended literary taste. He wrote in Marathi, the official language of the state of Maharashtra, but included many words and expressions which only the Dalits normally used. In *Golpitha*, for example, he adapted his language to that of the red-light milieu, which shocked middle-class readers.

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The Establishment's assessment of Dhasal's political, as opposed to his artistic, achievements may differ drastically, but for the writer they are inextricably linked. In an interview in 1982 he said that if the aim of social struggles was the removal of unhappiness, then poetry was necessary because it expressed that happiness vividly and powerfully. Later he stated, "Poetry is politics". Dhasal adheres to this principle in his private life. He told the photographer Henning Stegmüller, "I enjoy discovering myself. I am happy when I am writing a poem, and I am happy when I am leading a protest of prostitutes fighting for their rights."

Q. 5. Translation is the most effective means of accessing various writings both in India and abroad. Do you agree? Give reasons.

Ans. The history of English in India is around three century old. After the colonial invasion of British, their language i.e. English became the language of power and governance and became the must learn language of the country. One of the oldest effects of English education can be seen in the form of Bengali renaissance in mid-18th century which was the first sign of modernity in the nation. Some of earliest Indian novels like *Indulekha* by O. Chandu Menon, talks about the 'propagation' of English education among the common people. In the country like India, where various languages are being spoken and 24 major language literatures have been recognized, the necessity of the link language becomes inevitable. During the British reign English became the medium of education in the country and also the language of fashion which was used as the status symbol. An interesting thing which must be noticed is that the great poets of regional languages like Malayalam who held their mother tongue very close to their heart used English as the language of their personal correspondence. The language did not lose power after the Indian independence. Today, English not only has become one of the widely spoken languages in the world but also enjoys the status of *lingua franca*, wielding enormous power.

India as a country of multilingual culture has grown up with at least three languages; one of them is of course English, which can access literature of any language through translation. Translation of various literatures of regional languages in English will make available to us a body of literature which is truly Indian in essence. Many of the students studying in different regions will be able to study English as the language and the literature which they will study will also remain Indian. Many of the universities stress much on the British literature in their honours and post-graduate course because there is not enough English translation of Indian literature. If the English translation of Indian literature keeps happening at an adequate level, the students will be able to study Indian literature in English.

Another important aspect of English translation is to make the Indian literature available to the rest of the world, which is also very important. This will not only make Indian writers of regional languages widely read in the country but also make them available in the world so that they can get their dues which has been denied to them for a long time.

Many of the western writers have translated Indian works in English. Some of the examples are *Bhagavadgita* by Charles Wilkins, Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* by William Jones, *Indulekha* by J.W.F. Dumergue, Tagore's works by William Radice, Muhammad Basheer's works by Wiliamradice, etc. Apart from these western translators, many Indian translators are also producing works of high standard.



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