

SATIRE (KONKANI)

of his shrukhs is to pin-point the difference between spirituality and demagogy.

Maqbool Kralwari (1820-1875) is a bitter satirist. He has directed his satire at peasants and priests alike, as well as at the institution of 'Shakhdar', the revenue collectors, in his poem *Shakhdarnama*. There is none who can excel him in an onslaught on the hypocrisy of the farmers and priests.

Hakim Habibullah (d.1914) is a satirist of merit. His satirical compositions, which expose the ills of society, have been very popular. In some longer narratives he has even mocked at natural calamities. His poetry is an amalgam of humour and satire. Ghulam Ahmad Mehoor (1885-1952) and Abdul Ahad Azad (1903-1948), the notable poets of this century, have also tried their hand at satire which can be quite sharp without any trace of humour.

Lala Laxman (d.1957) is another satirist. Nothing escapes him, be it society, family, individual, politics, social customs, etc.

Flashes of satire may also be seen in the poetry of Samad Mir (1897-1960) and D.N.Nadim (1916-1988). The latter has written some ghazals also in a satirical vein which show his command of theme as well as diction.

Ghulam Rasool Nazki (b.1909) has composed satirical poems in the form of quatrain. It is the element of satire present in most of his quatrains that marks him out as a poet of satire. Mirza Arif (b.1910) too like Nazki made quatrain the vehicle of his satire. In his 'rubais' he presses the power of language to the use of irony and sarcasm. The subjects of his satire are contemporary politics and the doings of politicians. Noor Mohammad Roshan (b.1919), another leading Kashmiri, has used quatrain as a vehicle of satirical expression. He is not a prolific writer, but the quality of his satirical rubais is very high. In Amin Kamil (b.1921) and Rehman Rahi (b.1926) too we occasionally see flashes of satire.

The tradition of prose in Kashmiri is only a few decades old. In the short stories of Akhtar Mohiuddin (b.1928) and in Ali Mohammad Lone's (1927-1989) socio-political drama, *Taqdir Saz*, we see an effective use of satire. Sattar Ahmad Shahid (b.1931) too writes good satirical prose, and in a lighter vein. Other satirists in Kashmiri literature are Mohammad Zaman Azurda (b.1943), Zarif Ahmad Zarif and Manzore Hasmir.

In the field of literary journalism, the weekly column of *Wattan* under the title 'Vuchan chus pakan chus' and *Kashur Akhbar's* column 'Bala dari pethi' have had

good pieces of satirical prose; unfortunately both the newspapers are no longer in existence.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: A.A.Azad, *Kashmiri zaban aur shairi* (Srinagar, 1962-63); Amin Kamil, *Kashir Asan trai* (Srinagar, 1964); B.B.Kachru, *Kashmiri Literature* (Wiesbaden, 1981); J.L. Kaul, *Studies in Kashmiri* (Srinagar, 1968); Moti Lal Saqi, *Gashri* (Srinagar, 1974).

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SATIRE (Konkani), with its variety and incisive power and often its sheer enjoyment deriving from clash of ideas, or exposure of some flaw in a person or society, has been reflected in a scattered fashion in many a work in Konkani literature, ranging from the playful and witty to the devastatingly vitriolic.

The most prominent manifestation of satire in Konkani has been in the sphere of drama, especially in the performing theatre, where it has a direct interaction with the people who flock avidly to popular performances. The righteous indignation that the long-suffering and now awakened people feel at the rampant corruption that has crept into governmental affairs, the pollution of all forms of life by politicians and their increasingly criminalised touts, the lack of public concern and craving for personal gain to the detriment of the common weal are some of the popular themes in drama. These concerns are reflected with biting sarcasm in a number of situations on the stage. One may find them in the organised plays called 'Tiatro' - operatic performances which have songs interspersed between Acts. These have a boom time in the months of October-November and April-May, with the holiday crowd swelling the audience, and on occasions of feast or festival.

A subsidiary nature of this kind of theatre is the folk-play or 'fell' (khell) particularly prevalent in the Sashti taluka of Goa, the most densely populated area in the State, and having a field day during the three-day Carnival festival in February/March, preceding the Lenten period of penance. These plays are enacted in the open air, with no stage or scenic effects to assist them, in an impromptu fashion, with bold characterisation and crisp dialogue that crackles and explodes in the colloquial idiom that sometimes verges on the raw, holding the foibles of the people, individual and society, to ridicule in the classical manner of 'ridendo castigant moris'. These performances are mainly of an oral nature and are not normally reproduced in writing. They have an epigrammatic force in their dialogue and phraseology that makes them memorable and amusing to the people at large.

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In written and printed form too drama has reflected this streak of satire. For instance, the play *Don ani Don* of Kisan Kamat delineates the clash of ideas in a feminist and male chauvinist confrontation, with some pointed and forceful satirical fireworks bordering on the vitriolic, while *Chovthicho chondr* of Ramchandra Shankar Naik builds up a satirical framework around the full-moon on Ganesh Chaturthi (Chovoth in Konkani) based on the misunderstandings that result from each of the characters in the play speaking his own dialect/idiolct and being misinterpreted among themselves in a total confusion owing to the homonymic resemblances or differing meanings. Descending to the farcical level is *Zhilba ranno* by Shennoy Goembab in its portrayal of ruler and merchant in chilling collusion for partisan, personal lucre. Joao Agostinho Fernandes's magnum opus, *Bhatkara* (The landlord) in two parts, revolves round the doings of the rural Christian aristocracy in ways that oscillate between satire and sympathy. His another play, *Kunmbi Jaki*, written and enacted at the turn of the century, deals in a similar style with the aboriginals, basically simple and noble.

Bernardo Francisco Cabral's *Matro novro sodanch boro* (1930), in seven acts, was a major satirical play, woven around an old man who, as husband, provides security for an aspiring bride. The same playwright introduces much more satirical matter in his other works like *Gabruchi sasumaim* (1923), *Amcho Bomboincar ani tancho sonvsar* (1912), *Edison-acho phonograph ani ghov - bailancho maramargraph* (1910) and *Minglu Balcheani ani tachi bail Picasano* (1928). In fiction of this type we have satirical works like *Eke bagik dog mali* (1947) by Ramon Dias around a love triangle, *Rebekisist ani tachim mogui merit* (1939) by Milton Caldeira which pokes fun, and throws sly asides at amorous relationships between a music tutor and his female ward. Pedro Mariano Costa-Bir hauls his contemporary Goan society over the coals in his *Amchim cortubam* (1923). *Sheboi Sheboi*, *Bahujan samaj* by Pundalik Naik, a contemporary playwright, satirises the politicians who exploit the masses, battenning on their votes.

Goenchi asmitai by A.N. Mhambro snipes at the flaws and foibles he notices behind the respectable facade of Goan society, exposing, with tongue in cheek, a Goan character and his way of life. He is at his prickly best in *Ponnji aatam mhataari zalea*, looking at his beloved Panjim city in the throes of aging under the weight of alien numbers and pursued by modernity that makes everyone go haywire. His 'absurd' short stories too give a mischievous twist to the narration of persons and incidents. Alex Pais from Mangaloré has some

vibrant satire in his fictional pieces, including short stories. Of note is his *Dumga dumguen* (1951) as well as C.B. Carvalho's *Andruchem rinn* (1957). Paul Luis Botelho too makes us explode with laughter with his mellow satire wafting through such books as *Ball Alex*, *Dek doivik* and *Kavyanjelo* (1960). Cyril Sequeira is the most humorous of the lot whose writing exudes an undercurrent of satire in *Fugetteo* and *Moskireo*. In Goa we have Dattaram Sukhtankar with pen-portraits of village characters in his *Manni punov* in which subtle satiric remarks surface from character descriptions, laying bare such sad aspects of Goan life as escape the normal eye. Tomaxinho Cardo too satirises rampant corruption in social and political life in his plays and poems - mainly in the former. C.F.da Costa makes use of unmitigated satire to give an acrid sting to his plays like *Tornem tornem mornem* (1989), *Sunnem mazor hansta* (1989) and *Magirchem magir* (1989), earlier published in Kannada script. In fiction, J.B.Sequeira in *Dot kitti* (1961) and *Solvonnent jik* (1957) laces his humour with a satiric underpinning, as does Anthony Saldanha in his *Gurkar ani Kumpadr* (1960) and *Kallokantlo kallo* (1957).

The short story too has been a vehicle of satire in Konkani. A few instances may be given here to make the point. *Amchea ganvant BDO ieta* by Manohar Sardessai gives glimpses of village characters as they put on airs to please an alien officer in a pathetic show, denying their true selves; *Makddav ponnam* by Olivinho Gomes chides those Goans who suppress their real identity in order to appear superior in an alien environment and then introspect to rediscover themselves; *Vikreachi vost* by Suresh Kakodkar views the prostitute as a ware for sale against the backdrop of society's hypocrisy. Jayanti Naik too presents the case of women rather stridently.

In poetry also satire has been used effectively to expose the evil deeds of those who enjoy power and pelf. Consider, for example, Manohar Sardessai's *Hundranchi sabha* which gives a funny picture of the first post-liberation Goa Legislative Assembly as also his *Ailo poll* dealing with the historic 1967 opinion poll held in Goa to decide its future. Again, R.V.Pandit's poetry lays bare man's inhumanity to man, crying out to high heaven in the voice of the suffering aboriginal in *Mhojem utor gavddeachem*. In his other collections of poems also, including *Dorya gazots*, we have satire and pathos inextricably linked up. Pundalik Naik too in his *Ga ami rakne* gives satiric vent to the cry of the downtrodden who, awakened from their slumber, ask for their rightful due. C.F.da Costa's poetry is mildly satirical as are his plays mentioned earlier. Olivinho Gomes too has some poems, particularly in *Suskare*

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(1984), where nature recounts its tale of woe and exploitation at the hands of marauding men. The poems of his earlier volume, *Punzail'leo Pakileo* (1974), also put into focus the greed and inhumanity of man. There are a host of other poets as well who have written in a satiric vein in Konkani. The latest in the genre is Shanti Tendulkar whose snatches of satirical verse in *Mogream atti*, dealing with topical issues are an indication that Konkani poets are becoming increasingly aware of contemporary problems and are as much affected by them as their counterparts in the rest of the country.

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