



# International Journal of **Kannada** Research

www.kannadajournal.com

ISSN: 2454-5813

IJKR 2021; 7(4): 34-36

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Received: 02-07-2021

Accepted: 17-08-2021

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## Literary magazines and South Indian modern poetry

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### Introduction

Literary magazines have played a crucial role in the origin and development of South Indian Modern Poetry. Basically, a literary magazine is a publication dedicated to a literary movement or a school of thought. Poetry, short stories, essays, literary criticism, book reviews, bio-sketches and interviews etc are published in such a magazine. Only a few committed studies have been done on the roles played by literary magazines in the origin and development of South Indian modern poetry in related languages. The present paper will investigate how modern thoughts evolved in the early phase and how they kept the umbilical relation with modern poetry. These magazines are considered as propagandist apparatuses, as kindergarten for poets, as mediums between poets and readers, as promoters to poetic criticism and as platforms for literary traditions. Sometimes these were in the epicentre with which South Indian modern poetry added awareness and achieved advance. With these Magazines, poets have developed their skills, articulated their ideologies and trialled with new forms.

### The Dial and English modern poetry

Most of the South Indian modern poets have been highly influenced by English modern poems. Therefore, it would be better to examine the English Magazines which encouraged modern poetry before exploring the literary magazines in South Indian languages. The Dial was one of the most significant magazines of the early decades of the last century.

It was an American magazine published occasionally from 1840 to 1929. From 1840 to 1844, it was the primary publication of the Transcendentalists, the philosophers who asserts the primacy of the spiritual and transcendental over the material and empirical. "*The Dial* was officially born in July 1840, when its first issue, or 'number,' was released to the public, but the idea for a journal had been circulating since the first meetings of the Transcendental Club. The discussion group was founded by Frederic Henry Hedge (1805-1890), with Emerson's help, to refresh the contemporary discourse on religion and philosophy. Many of its members were dissatisfied with the dominance of John Locke's empiricism in philosophical and theological discussions, which privileged knowledge gained through the senses over inborn knowledge and inspiration."<sup>[1]</sup> From the 1880s to 1919 it was revitalized as a political review and literary criticism magazine. Between, 1920 to 1929 it was a dominant medium for modernist literature in English.

*The Dial* was re-established as a literary magazine by Scofield Thayer and Dr. James Sibley Watson. Jr. in 1920. *The Dial* published influential artwork, poetry and fiction, including W.B. Yeats' "The Second Coming" and T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*.

"In his inaugural address to readers in the first issue of *The Dial: A Magazine for Literature, Philosophy, and Religion*, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) allude to a revolution whose members share 'no external organization, no badge, no creed, no name [and] . . . do not vote, or print, or even meet together [or] ... know each other's faces or names' (1.1.2)...*The Dial* would function as the most recognizable voice for transcendentalism in New England, publishing book reviews, musings on art, poetry, selections from Confucian and Buddhist texts, feminist tracts, quasi-journalistic pieces about transcendentalist activities, theological discourse, sonnets, lectures, travelogues, German works in translation, and some difficult-to-categorize writing"<sup>[2]</sup>.

What is important to be noted here is that the opinion expressed in the first issue of *The Dial* – no external organization, no badge, no creed, and no name-could be echoed in the editorial of

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Kannada literary magazine called Sakshi. It introduced TS Eliot and other English writers and had endorsed their ideologies.

It was during October –November of 1921. T.S. Eliot wrote some part of the Wasteland at Margel and most of the portion at Lousen. On the way to London, he stayed in Paris and handed the manuscript over to Ezra Pound. Pound changed the title and edited it severely. He also made changes according to the suggestion of Mrs Vivian, the first wife of Eliot. The Poem was published in the Criterion in October 1922 and in the Dial a journal from Newyork in November 1922. Boni and Liveright (Newyork) published the poem including citations and notes in a book format [3].

*The Waste Land*, however, appeared in the pages of *The Dial*. The poem was suggested by Ezra Pound, the magazine's foreign advisor/editor (1920–1923). Eliot had been Scofield Thayer's classmate at Oxford and on the basis of the suggestion, he approved it. At the small amount *The Dial* wished to pay for the poem, Eliot became discontented. After the negotiations, Eliot was paid \$2130 for the poem. Magazine's second annual prize, which carried a grant of \$2,000 (£450), was also awarded to Eliot.

After the collapse of Babel Tower, Eliot seems to be assuming the reader as a person who could understand all languages of the world. Eliot was suffering from a nervous breakdown while he was writing the Wasteland. He underwent treatment in Switzerland. On the return journey, he visited Paris and gave 57 pages of broken poetry to Ezra Pound. Retaining the original sense, Pound condensed the poem to 19 pages, which is in the present-day form. The Criterion and The Dial have published the poem. Boni and Liveright, Hogarth have published the book, the Wasteland.

### **Sakshi and Kannada modern poetry**

Modern Poetry and Criticism have grown up simultaneously. Modernists agree that poetry and Criticism should be together. Critics took a crucial role in the understanding of modern Poetry. Writings of the Critics like K. Narasimha Murthi, U.R. AnanthaMurthi, G.S. Amur, G.H. Nayak and Giraddi Govinda Raj have helped to perceive the modern literature. Sakshi, Sankramana, Lahari, Sankeerna, Samanvaya are some magazines that accelerated the progress of Modernism in Kannada.

Sakshi, meaning evidence, began in 1962. It was a platform to introduce a new style of writing in the Kannada Language. Gradually it took the responsibilities to establish, share and defend the ideology of modernism. Text centric and Objective centric contents have found place in the pages of the Sakshi. As mentioned in the editorial, Sakshi was a ray of hope to the writers who had been waiting for. Rasavimarshe or Romantic Criticism, Author centredness, over emotion and Idealism, Wastage of language were to be broken and they had to have their own thought process. Sakshi became a platform and a medium for all these activities.

Sakshi for the first time used the words -Text centric and objectivity in the Kannada language. It introduced TS Eliot and other English writers and upheld their ideologies. Overwhelmed emotion made the romantic poetry futile, idealism forced them blinded towards reality, romanticism failed to search the innermost layers of the mind- Modernists criticized such notions of the Romantic writers. Sakshi announced that language is not only part of communication but also part of the responsibility. The author has a huge responsibility to make the language part of the communication. The first editorial of the Sakshi announced

that the magazine is not the mouthpiece of any person or group or school of thought. It is open to present all kinds of ideologies and theories. But later Sakshi became more famous in criticizing the opponent and existing ideologies and the magazine established the modernist canon. Structural Criticism and Formalist Criticism were introduced to Kannada readers. Modernism or Navyathe, a totally unfamiliar thought and way of expression came Kannada through Sakshi. It made two groups among the readers and critics; followers and opponents. Articles that appeared in Sakshi considered the criticism as an equal literary process to the poetry and was used to understand the poetry. The criticism got an important status in society.

In 1965, Sankramana emerged to propagate the modernist ideologies at the initial stage and later it became an ardent torchbearer of the Bandaya or Rebellion literature in Kannada. In 1982, Rujuvathu, a magazine came. The creative experiments, search new horizons, explore socio-cultural contexts-was the tagline of the Rujuvathu.<sup>[4]</sup> U.R. Anantha Murthy wrote editorials that stirred the hornet's nest in the intellectual arena of Kannada. It brought out a special issue on M.N. Roy.<sup>[5]</sup> When Rujuvathu on the spotlight, Modernism in Kannada has already reached its zenith and began to fade away. It brought western thoughts in the case of modernism to the Kannada language.

### **Deshabandhu and Malayalam modern poetry**

Modernism in Malayalam has emerged amidst the left-oriented literary movement. Malayalam had the sense of pure and impure poetry. Romantic poetry was considered pure and modern poetry as impure. N.V. Krishna Warriar wrote 'Madarasile Sayahnam', which brought shock to the readers of Malayalam. Ayyappa Panicker's Kurukshetram appeared 10 years after it was originally penned. There was huge struggle for the acceptance for the new poetry. Kurukshetram was accepted in 1960 in Srikantan Nair's Deshabandhu Weekly magazine.

### **Ezhuthu and Tamil modern poetry**

C.S. Chellappa started a magazine called 'Ezhuthu' in 1952. It encouraged Tamil Modern Poetry. They called Modern Poetry Vachana Kavithai, Lagu Kavithai, Sulabha Kavithai or Yaapilla Kavithai or Verse libre or Free verse. Ezhuthu was a very influential platform for contemporary poetry in the 1950 and 1960 in Tamil.

In 1963, C.S. Chellappa brought out an anthology called 'Pudukkuralgal', comprising 63 poems. Most of the poems were published in Ezhuthu during 1959-1962. The preface written by C.S. Chellappa to the anthology has been considered as the mouthpiece of the Ezhuthu poets. It shows how verse libre made an immense influence on Tamil poetry. Usage of Images and freshness in the word selection, novelty, new content- political and Psychological; diversified management of Time and Space were seen in Tamil Modernism as mentioned by Lakshmi Holmström<sup>[6]</sup>.

Na. Picchamurti is considered to be the father of modern poetry in Tamil and he began to write his first poem in the 1930s. It was published in 'Manikkodi', Tamil literary Magazine. In 1939, 'Shuravali', a magazine published Ka.Na. Subrahmanyam's poem 'Vadhu'. Subrahmanyam began to write articles defending modern poetry in another magazine called 'Saraswathi'. In one of his articles, he quoted Pound and Eliot and also said that it is beyond the reach of Tamil poetry.

Ka.Na. Subrahmanyam was highly influenced by T.S. Eliot and expressed that poem must be complicated, it must be like

riddles but it should not be beyond the grasping. The 'Ezhuthu; magazine staunchly stood in support of the modern poetry of Tamil and published its editorial defending that poetry got inspiration from the poets like T.E. Hume, Ezra Pound, Richard Aldington and Ami Laval and considered their poetry as the real modern poetry. Editorials also claimed that Rhyme and Prosody are all artificial and external to the poetry.

In the 43<sup>rd</sup> issue of the 'Ezuthu' Magazine, C. Mani's poem 'Narakam' (1962) [7] was published. It is the poem that is considered to be compared with T. S. Eliot's 'The love song of Alfred J. Prufrock' and 'The Wasteland'. In the later issue the translation of K.Ayyappa Panicker's Malayalam Poem 'Kurukshetram' was carried. The poem Kurukshetram was translated by Nakulan. According to Prof. S. Carlos, a famous critic in Tamil, Gandhian C.S. Chellapa's 'Ezhuthu' magazine was the spring panel to the modern writers in Tamil. It was the podium for the Tamil writers of Srilanka also. Kannada Poet Gopalakrishna Adiga, though he was a modern poet, has written some poems on Karnataka and Kannada Language. But Pichamurti has not written any such poems.

### **Andhra Prabha and Telugu Modern Poetry**

Arudra, a well known modern poet in Telugu, unveiled his inside as 'Kavi Hridayaniki' at the end of his poem collection Tvamevaham. It was a reply letter to the questions that had been raised by Dasarathi, a well known Telugu critic, in 'Andhra Prabha'. "Genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood" are words of T.S. Eliot with which I accord my opinion<sup>[8]</sup>. Arudra has agreed the opinion of T.S. Eliot is crystal clear.

Literary magazines and South Indian Poetry have been reciprocally supportive in most of the instances mentioned above. Poetry and Criticism are two parts of the same coin called literature. Modern poetry has faced internal and external criticism, it rejected the ideology of romanticism and at the same time in some cases, the social acceptance of modern poetry was delayed and denied. Gopalakrishna Adiga, a renowned Kannada Poet, called modern poetry a 'Buddhi Bhaavagala vidyudaalingana'- Electrified embrace of intellect and emotion, which itself gives the hint that poetry is within criticism and vice versa.

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