

Brahmin becoming a teacher and a *sudra* an administrator. It also reflects how education, a tool for empowering an individual is denied to the lower castes. The 'fatalist' thinking too is echoed in these words. Biregowda is successful in admitting his son in Srinivasacarya's pathasala, however the caste tag had its own effect later too in Kanakadasa's life. By the divine vision Kanakanayaka gives up his earthly possession and becomes a *dasa* (Servant of God) and hopes to get some spiritual training under Vyasaraya Swami. Here again the caste hood spreads its hood and haunts Kanaka. The Brahmin disciples around Vyasaraya Swami obstruct not only his entry for training but later play a series of tricks to belittle him. Other than caste hatred they had no motive for these acts. Divine grace and spiritual character of Kanaka bails him out of these straits. He reaches the horizon of spiritual level where he could see God in everything; even in a dog or a serpent. Though the guru is pleased, his other disciples appreciate him not out of love but out of fear that he is close to the God. Even in Tirupati he is not accepted that easily. It is repeated in Udupi too. Only miracles make the priests to accept Kanaka as a true devotee.

The play effectively evokes the main events and miracles of Kanakadasa; his act of not eating banana (as he was supposed to eat it in a secluded place - he believed that God exists everywhere and he cannot escape these eyes), pawning Krisna ornament, Krisna turn around view for his sake etc. However the playwright could have elaborated the work a little to avoid the fast pace and added few more songs of Kanaka. The end piece (Act V – SC III) where Rana Pratap appreciates Kanakadasa doesn't easily connect to the play as it has no link to the main plot. This time jump could have been avoided. Except these few drawbacks Basavaraj Naikar has put in the best effort to present Kanakadasa to English readers. It will definitely light up the stage; within and without. It is certainly a welcome addition to the realm of Indian English Drama, especially religious plays like *Siddhartha: The Man of Peace*, *Ramanujar* and *Fall of Kalyana*.

Raghu Venkatachalaiah

---

*A Survey of Indian English Drama* by Satish Kumar, Second & Enlarged Edition,  
Prakash Book Depot, Bareilly, 2019. Pp.278. Rs. 320.

Apart from K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar's pioneering *Indian Writing in English* and M.K.Naik's *A History of Indian English Literature*, there have been no separate and exclusive surveys or histories of Indian English Drama, perhaps because the genre of Indian English drama happens to be the poorest among the literary genres and suffers from many disadvantages, due to its alien medium (of English language) confined to academia and lack of an independent theatrical tradition. But in spite of all these disadvantages Indian English drama has survived because of own colonial contact with Britain and the English education introduced by the colonial rule. Though Indian English Drama cannot be seen on the stage, it has been read and studied in Indian Universities as part of their post-graduate curriculum and doctoral programme. But the information on Indian English Drama has not been abundantly

*Dialogue: A Journal Devoted to Literary Appreciation*  
Vol XIV No 2 December 2018

available in literary histories, as it is a new subject and there is no network of academic communication and centralized documentation in India. There are many plays, which have escaped the notice of literary historians like M.K.Naik.

When viewed against this background, Satish Kumar's *A Survey of Indian English Drama* happens to be an important and welcome addition to the realm of literary history. He starts his survey from the beginning – Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo up to the latest and contemporary playwrights like Mahesh Dattani. What is appreciable in his book is his generosity to recognize the feminist playwrights like Manjula Padmanabhan and Poile Sengupta and the contemporary playwrights like Arun Kukreja, Abhisek Majumdar, Neel Chaudhri and Aditya Sudarshan and son and brings it up to Basavaraj Naikar.

There is some critical controversy about whether to treat Rabindranath Tagore and Girish Karnad as Indian English playwrights or Indian Regional Playwrights in English Translation, because both of them wrote their plays in Bangla and Kannada respectively and then translated them into English (sometimes with the help of others). Such a controversy cannot be seen in the case of Sri Aurobindo. Satish Kumar ignores this important issue. It is high time now for Indian scholars to push Tagore and Karnad into the division of Indian Regional Literature in English Translation so that the pure Indian English dramatists may be studied separately for arriving at a better perspective.

Satish Kumar combines the techniques of panorama and close-up in his survey, by listing up all the playwrights, but yet highlighting a few, providing much biographical information and media-hyped data. This conglomeration of different methods, though not desirable on the principle of consistency, turns out to be quite useful to the students and researchers in the said field. Unfortunately he has not mentioned the latest plays of some dramatists like Partap Sarma (ex. *Begum Sumroo*) and others. His bibliography of secondary sources like critical works and anthologies on Indian English Drama is not up-to-date and exhaustive. But his chronological list of Indian English plays and author-wise plays happens to be very useful to students and researchers. As a one man's venture, Satish Kumar's *Survey* is highly admirable. There are, of course, a few spelling mistake like 'Polie' for 'Poile' and 'Pratap' for 'Partap', which could be avoided in a future edition.

On this occasion I would like to suggest to Indian English scholars and Professors to undertake the writing of separate histories of Indian English Poetry, drama, Fiction and Prose on a collaborative basis and revise and update them every five years. Another important point that I would like to make is that many of the early Indian English plays are not available in the market, but are rotting in the limbo of old libraries..(For example, the excellent plays like the *Tiger Claw*, the *Line of Mars* are not available in the Indian market.) So the adventurous Indian publishers should undertake the publication of the reprints of those plays either individually or in the form of thematically classified anthologies like Religious/Philosophical Drama,