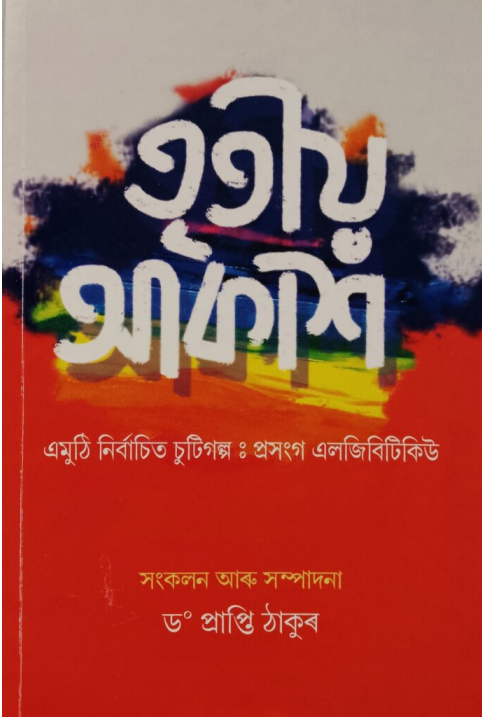


A Fresh Perspective on Queer Studies in Assamese: 'Tritiya Akash'



"Tritiya Akash," translating to "the third sky," is more than just a title; it represents a bold venture into uncharted territories. Dr. Prapti Thakur compiled and edited this anthology of short stories in Assamese, delving deep into the lives, struggles, psychology, and obstacles faced by the queer community. While Queer studies are gaining traction in various writer and researcher communities, this anthology stands out for several reasons. In Assam, Queer studies in the academic field and other creative pursuits are in the infant stage. Unlike most academic institutions that confine their publications to the prescribed syllabus, our educational institution has dared to publish such a book as part of our academic endeavour. Additionally, this anthology challenged the prevailing norms by openly discussing a taboo topic for many.

It's noteworthy that Sarupathar College isn't nestled in the bustling city but rather situated in upper Assam, distanced from the state's intellectual hub. Dr. Prapti Thakur, the college's principal, deserves commendation for advocating such a radical academic approach.

This anthology comprises thirty-one short stories penned by writers from across the state, spanning various age groups. However, it's noticeable that only two senior writers contributed: Sneha Devi (1916-1990) and Dr. Gobinda Prasad Sarma. Sneha Devi, primarily a homemaker, wasn't extensively involved in literary social circles. Hence, witnessing her empathy toward such a significant topic is surprising and heartbreaking, especially amidst limited discussions. On the other hand, Dr. Gobinda Prasad Sarma, a former Professor of Guwahati University, known for his scholarly creative works and openness, bravely tackled the social taboo by addressing the theme of lesbians in his story. While the other writers explore diverse themes and social issues, delving into such a topic is not unusual for them. Not all stories have high literary standards, yet they should be applauded for their theme and creative openness.

Dr. Pori Hiloidari contributed a comprehensive critical preface, dissecting the short stories' thematic and structural nuances. This preface serves as a guiding light for writers, enabling them to grasp the theme's essence and craft more impactful narratives from varied social perspectives.



This collection has sparked numerous questions, prompting us

to seek insights from the Editor and the college's principal, Dr. Prapti Thakur.

What inspired you to edit and publish this anthology?

The inspiration behind curating this anthology stemmed from the recognition that queer subjects, despite being incorporated into the English literature curriculum of Delhi University, remain largely unaddressed within the Assamese literary syllabus. Consequently, this project aims to bring these narratives to the forefront, fostering a broader discourse on queer representation within the academic landscape.

Considering that the Queer subject may not be part of your college syllabus, how do you anticipate this collection contributing to academic discourse?

Although the queer subject matter may not currently be a part of the prescribed college syllabus, this collection holds the potential to enlighten our students about the diverse content of Assamese short stories. The content of this anthology is socially significant, and I think our students will become aware of a social issue that is still regarded as taboo. From an academic point of view, it can be said that presenting a diverse array of narratives that explore queer experiences prompts critical engagement and encourages intellectual inquiry into the multifaceted dimensions of gender and sexuality in the Assamese context. This anthology provokes scholarly discussions, challenging existing paradigms and enriching the philosophical landscape.

How have your colleagues and students responded to this anthology?

The reception of this anthology among colleagues and students has been overwhelmingly positive. They were very enthusiastic from its inception as they felt that our college would do something radical. Without the support of my colleagues, it

would not have been possible to publish a book on such a topic from an educational institute.

Could you share the reactions of both readers and writers to the collection?

The reactions from both readers and writers have been equally commendable. During the anthology's release on January 7th, 2023, in the presence of several esteemed writers, noted gender activists, and readers, the project garnered widespread acclaim and appreciation for its significance in amplifying marginalised voices and promoting inclusivity within the literary norm from an academic institution.

Were there any obstacles encountered during the production process?

Remarkably, the production process was devoid of any substantial obstacles. All the writers participated in the project with excellent support for the cause. Dr. Pori Hiloidari, a leading literary critic of the state, wrote the anthology's preface at my request. I am sure this preface will stand as a significant work in Queer studies in the Assamese language.

What are your plans regarding publishing books on this topic and others?

Our Sarupathar College is very excited to publish more books on this queer topic and other important, socially significant, and literary themes. We are committed and determined to work on projects that benefit our students' community and society.

A sensitive attempt to hear the unheard 'third voice'

"I learned about sexuality when I was in high school. I wanted to know if I was such a person or if there were other people like me. I thought I would tell my parents when I mentioned my marriage. I thought I would die if I married a man. After passing high school, I was angry when my mother told me about marriage. I met 'A' in the first semester of my BA. After talking, I realized that she was probably like me."



Queer Voices from the Periphery

A Collection of Perspectives from Northeast India



Editors

Kaustav Padmapati

Prateeti Barman

In exploring the Assamese language, one inevitably confronts an obvious gap: the absence of a recognized term to encompass individuals beyond the traditional dichotomy of male and female. Within this framework, the term 'third gender', often equated with 'queer', remains an elementary construct, lacking the nuanced depth required for full comprehension. Its acknowledgement in ancient Indian literature and portrayal in artistic depictions of sexual activities serve as examples of historical acceptance, countering prevailing narratives of deviance and abnormality.

Yet, despite this deep-rooted socio-cultural tradition, the contemporary discourse surrounding the third gender has, regrettably, been relegated to the periphery. Social taboos and deeply ingrained prejudices have conspired to throttle open dialogue, relegating the experiences of this marginalized community to the shadows of society's consciousness. However, amidst this prevailing silence, there exists a glimmer of hope – an increasing recognition and acknowledgement of the inherent rights and dignities of third-gender individuals.

Recent shifts in societal attitudes, coupled with governmental initiatives aimed at addressing the needs and concerns of this oft-overlooked demographic, signify a slow departure from the status quo. Concurrently, scholars and researchers are embarking on a journey of discovery, exploring the psychological intricacies and socio-cultural dimensions of third-gender identity. Through their nuanced analyses and empathetic inquiries, they seek to illuminate the lived experiences of this community, thereby amplifying their voices and advocating for their rightful place within the fabric of society.

Edited with meticulous care and scholarly acumen by Dr. Kaustubh Padmapani and Dr. Prateeti Barman, the book **'Queer Voices from the Periphery- a collection of perspectives from Northeast India'** serves as a beacon of enlightenment amidst the prevailing darkness of ignorance and indifference.

Centered on the portrayal of 'queer' identities in the vibrant landscape of North East India, its pages offer a comprehensive exploration of the complexities and challenges faced by this marginalized demographic. While awareness of queer issues may be blossoming in the region, the dearth of literature serves as a poignant reminder of the pressing need for greater social engagement and discourse.

Comprising an anthology of contributions from researchers and scholars, each chapter endeavours to navigate the undiscovered alleys of queer identity with sensitivity and shades. From probing examinations of cultural nuances and identity dynamics to insightful critiques of general homophobia within Assamese society, the book offers a rich compilation of insights and perspectives. Through rigorous research and empathetic inquiry, the authors seek to peel back the layers of societal prejudice and misconceptions, offering readers a deeper understanding of the lived realities of queer individuals.

Namami Sharma's compelling discourse on homophobia in small-town Assam serves as a stark reminder of the entrenched biases and systemic inequalities that continue to infuse our social fabric. By shining a light on these injustices and advocating for greater awareness and inclusivity, Sharma underscores society's collective responsibility towards nurturing a more equitable and accepting environment for all its members. It is through such concerted efforts and unwavering commitment that we may begin to dismantle the barriers of prejudice and discrimination that have long hindered the full realization of human dignity and equality.

In intertwining together these diverse narratives and perspectives, the book offers readers a panoramic view of the lives, struggles, and triumphs of queer individuals in the unique context of North East India. From the emergence of queer identities within the cultural landscape to the challenges of navigating societal expectations and prejudices, each chapter serves as a testament to the resilience and

courage of those who dare to defy convention and embrace their true selves. Dr. Bibhuti Patel's commendation of the book as a critical catalyst for encouraging dialogue and understanding among diverse identities speaks to its profound impact and enduring relevance. Grounded in evidence-based research and filled with a deep sense of empathy and compassion, the book stands as a testament to the power of scholarship and advocacy in advancing the cause of equality and justice for all.

First published in

<https://cutt.ly/Rw8ZiNqv>

Capturing Assamese Icons and Nature: A Mumbai Transplant's Perspective through Utpal Datta's Lens



Some of the Photographs from the Exhibition

I am new to Guwahati, and I am even newer to its arts scene. I came from Mumbai with a background at NCPA and Jehangir Art Gallery. So, I was pleasantly surprised when I visited a solo photography exhibition by the renowned film critic and author Mr. Utpal Datta of Guwahati. It featured faces and nature combined and intertwined to explore the relationship between humans—some prominent, some iconic, and some unknown—in their natural surroundings.

Utpal Datta, currently a Professor of Practice and Dean of Performing Arts at Assam down town University, Guwahati, has worked for All India Radio for a long time and is a man of many talents. His books '24 Frames' and 'Film Appreciation' are well-known in film studies. He has also received a special jury mention for his writings in the National Film award. Utpal Datta is creative, and his creations do not end with writing books and making films; they also involve photography. He has a keen and observant eye for things, which is well reflected in his photography show.

Seeing Bhupen Hazarika, Deepali Borthakur, Homen Borgohain, and Birendra Nath Datta was a pleasure. Particularly, I liked Birendra Nath Datta's photo in chiaroscuro in his simple yet elegant study. The light falling on the bookshelf reflected his love for studying in depth. Deepali Borthakur, the iconic singer of Assam, looking fondly over a calendar with her own photo, made by Utpal Datta, is another memorable piece. A rare photograph of Bhupen Hazarika with a full open smile accompanied well by his wife in another frame. Utpal Datta, over his illustrious and long career, was privileged to capture the moments of the icons of Assam. So, a Homen Borgohain looking askance and a Jadab Payeng, the forest man of India, looking tenderly over his greenery creation is something to experience at the exhibition.

It was not only with great people he hobnobbed but also, his photos of female vendors in a busy local market and an old photographer suavely dressed and standing to focus his camera exuded a certain amount of energy. Then there were serene beach photographs of the Andamans and the river banks of the mighty Brahmaputra. In the end, the exhibition concluded with the painted scriptures of "Sarva bhabantu Sukhina" from the Upanishads beautifully capturing the theme of nature and humans.

Overall, it was a delightful experience peering into the nature and icons of Assamese culture, coming from Mumbai. I was thrilled to experience some of the unique faces and landscapes inextricably intertwined. (Exhibition venue: Guwahati Artists Guild, dates 8th to 12th march 24).

Tailpiece: Well-known film director Biswajeet Das made a short film 'Fragments in Time' based on the exhibition. The film is available on YouTube.

World's largest literature festival concludes



Einstein World Records gives certificate of achievement

The last day was dedicated to the differently abled writers

More than 850 children of Delhi NCR More took part in the programme 'Aao Kahani Bune'

New Delhi, 16 March 2024: The Festival of Letters 2024, which is being organized by Sahitya Akademi as the world's largest literature festival, concluded today. The last day of this six-day festival was dedicated to differently abled writers. To provide national platform to differently abled writers All India Differently Abled Writers' Meet was organized. To awaken interest in literature among children many competitions were

organized for more than 850 children at the programme 'Aao Kahani Bune'. Today's other important programmes included "Symposium on the Life and Works of Gopi Chand Narang", "Translation in a Multilingual, Multicultural Society", "Preservation of Indian Languages", "Translation as Rewriting/re-creation in the Indian Context", "Indian English Writing and Translation". Apart from this, the ongoing national seminars on "Indian Oral Epics" and "Post-Independence Indian Literature" also concluded.

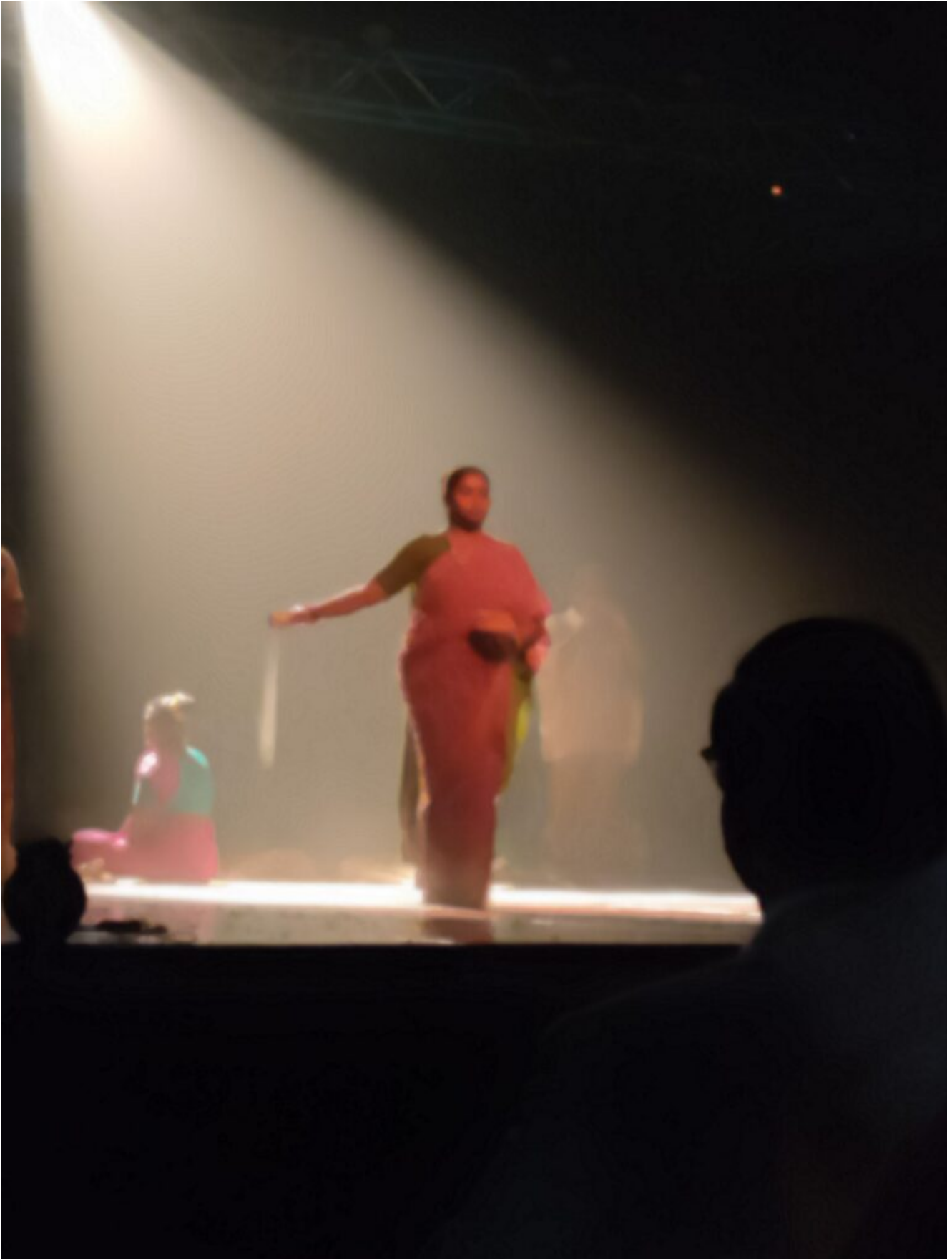
Considering this six-day festival as the world's biggest literary festival, today the team of Einstein World Records, Dubai, presented the certificate of a world record in ceremoniously to Sri Madhav Kaushik, Prof. Kumud Sharma and Dr. K. Sreenivasarao, respectively President, Vice President and Secretary, Sahitya Akademi. The certificate mentions the participation of more than 1100 writers in 190 sessions in this world's largest literature festival that lasted six days and over 175 languages were represented. Delivering the inaugural address at the inaugural session of the All India Differently Abled Writers' Meet, renowned English scholar Prof. G.J.V. Prasad said that we have to work with awareness and affection in connection with the differently abled. Disability is not congenital but many times we acquire it due to our own ignorance and carelessness. He requested all the differently abled writers to identify their special abilities and work on them, they must achieve their destination. In her presidential address, Vice President of Sahitya Akademi, Prof. Kumud Sharma, while discussing the achievements of the differently abled people in various fields, said that the differently abled people will have to move forward with the energy and courage, only then they will be able to achieve their desired destination.

At the beginning of the inaugural session, Sahitya Akademi Secretary Dr. K. Sreenivasarao while giving the welcome address said that Sahitya Akademi is feeling proud to have differently abled writers from 24 Indian languages present here today. Remembering the great writer and critic Gopichand

Narang, a symposium was organized on his literary contribution. The chief guests of which were Sri Gulzar and Narang ji's wife Manorama Narang. Sri Gulzar in his inaugural address said that the personality and work of Gopi Chand Narang is a beautiful combination of his talent and greatness. The key-note was given by the eminent Urdu scholar Nizam Siddiqui. Sadiqur Rahman Kidwai delivered his speech as the special guest. Sahitya Akademi President Madhav Kaushik presided over. Introductory remarks were made by Sri Chandra Bhan Khayal, Convener of the Urdu Advisory Board. Important writers and scholars who participated in these programmes were – Harish Narang, Damodar Khadse, Anvita Abbi, Rita Kothari, K. Enoch, Debashish Chatterjee, Udaya Narayana Singh, Mamang Dai, Sukrita Paul Kumar, Shafe Kidwai, Shamim Tariq.

(K. Sreenivasarao)

Dakḷakatha Devikavya –
Provoking and Contemplative



A review by Manohar Khushalani for IIC DIARY

Daklakatha Devikavya is an open ended play performed in an engagingly

informal folk style, evolved from the epic poetry and stories of K.B. Siddaiah's .
It was Directed by Lakshman K.P. It presents the inner workings and external experiences of the Daklas – a Dalit community.

Presented by Jangama Collective, Bengaluru with Bindu Raxidi (Dakla Devi, Kadiramma); Santhosh Dindgur (Dakla, Cheluvaiah)l; Bharath Dingri (K.B. Siddiah & narrator); Narasimharaju B.K. (Narasappa); and Ramika Chaithra (Gangavva, Munivenkatamma)

Accompanists who also added tone and tenor to the performance were: Poorvi Kalyani & Skanda Ghate (vocal); Bharath Dingri (tamate); and Narasimharaju B.K. (arevadya)



The Flower Sellers

*The setting of the play had **flower sellers** squatting in the background and*

rising in turns as actors with robust voices. The traditional Folk device, a half

*curtain, known as, **Yavanika**, was used to introduce the important characters.*

The actor would peep over the curtain which was lowered after he started

speaking or singing.



The Traditional Yavanika

The most important aspect of the performance was that it retained the spiritual richness of the Dakla community, through its music. Two of the characters appear on the stage playing tamate (hand drum) and arevadya (urmi), instruments not seen in contemporary theatre. Daklas are people who are protected by the untouchables and hence are still lower in the social hierarchy. But whatever notions people have about Adivasis or Daklas being a backward community, better revise them forthwith. First of, the female roles were done by women and not female impersonators. These women unhesitantly lighted beedis, and were not coy about

using cuss words,
which is true to their life. It is also true of contemporary
OTT films, which claim
to be more modern and truer to our life.

The author had a strong faith in mysticism as exemplified by
his poetry which
was the soul of the performance:

*O mother as you rock the world
And rock the child
Bear me again in your womb
Walk this infant from the cave of your vagina
Into the cave of contemplation.*

Here in the above context the poet brings out that once the
mother bears him
in her womb the stigma of untouchability will not be so
strong. One recurring
metaphor that has remained constant is hunger. The poet throws
a direct
question to the creator:

*O God! Take birth like me
Then
Try to touch and be polluted!
Try to take like me, like me take birth!*

Untouchability does not generate self-pity in the play, in
fact it is an instrument
of self-awareness and enlightenment. Sheer magic was created
in the dark
night by luminous display of improvised spinning fire wheels
urns with radiant
charcoal cinders. All elements in the play contributed to an
experience of a
magical night to remember.

Watch the entire play on You Tube:

Provoking and Contemplative

PLAY: *Daklakatha Devikavya: An Experimental Play Drawing from the Epic Poetry and Stories of K. B. Siddaiah's Selected Writings*

DEvised AND DIRECTED BY: Lakshman K. P.

PRESENTED BY: Jangama Collective, Bengaluru with Bindu Raxidi (Dakla Devi, Kadiramma); Santhosh Dindgur (Dakla, Cheluvaiah); Bharath Dingri (K. B. Siddiah & narrator); Narasimharaju B. K. (Narasappa); and Ramika Chaithra (Gangavva, Munivenkatamma)

ACCOMPANISTS: Poorvi Kalyani & Skanda Ghate (vocal); Bharath Dingri (tamate); and Narasimharaju B. K. (areye)

2 November 2023

Daklakatha Devikavya is an open-ended play performed in an engagingly informal folk style, evolved from the epic poetry and stories of K. B. Siddaiah. It presents the inner workings and external experiences of the Daklas—a Dalit community.

The setting of the play was flower sellers squatting in the background and rising in turn as actors with robust voices. The traditional folk device, a half curtain, *yavanika*, was used to introduce the important characters. The actor would peep over the curtain which was lowered after he started speaking or singing. The most important aspect of the performance was that it retained the spiritual richness of the Dakla community through its music. Two of the characters appeared on stage playing *tamate* (hand drum) and *urumi* (hourglass drum), instruments not seen in contemporary theatre. Daklas are people who are protected by the untouchables and hence are still lower in the social hierarchy. But whatever notions people have



about Adivasis or Daklas being a backward community better revise them forthwith. First, the female roles were played by women and not female impersonators. These women unhesitatingly lighted beedis, and were not coy about using cuss words, which is true to their lives. It is also true of contemporary OTT films, which claim to be more modern and truer to our lives.

The author had a strong faith in mysticism, as exemplified by his poetry, which was the soul of the performance.

*O mother as you rock the world
And rock the child
Bear me again in your womb
Walk this infant from the cave of your vagina
Into the cave of contemplation.*

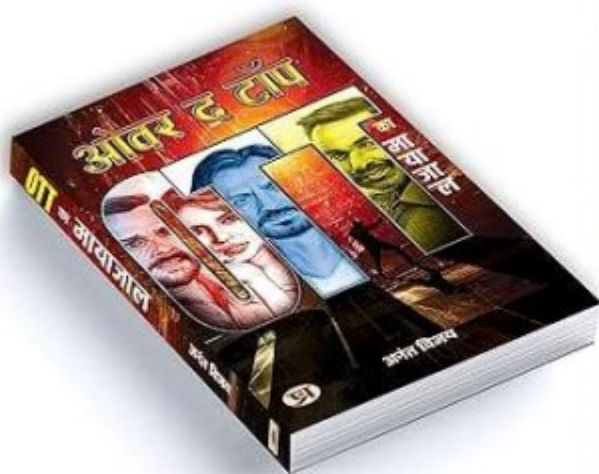
In the above context, the poet is saying that once the mother bears him in her womb the stigma of untouchability will not be so strong. One recurring metaphor that has remained constant is hunger. The poet throws a direct question to the creator:

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Untouchability does not generate self-pity in the play; in fact, it is an instrument of self-awareness and enlightenment. Sheer magic was created in the dark night by the luminous display of improvised spinning fire wheels and urns with radiant charcoal cinders. All elements in the play contributed to a magical night to remember.

■ MANOHAR KHUSHALANI

Is anarchy acceptable in the name of artistic freedom? The magic of OTT.



Book Review by
Utpal Datta

OTT platforms, a new addition to the media, have become competitors to cinema and television programs, raising a few uncomfortable questions. Does OTT concern discern viewers? Is the tasteless and obscene content on OTT platforms a result of the absence of a censor board? Is this the beginning of a dangerous practice for society and culture? Journalist and author Anant Vijay seeks answers to these questions through his Hindi book 'OTT Ka Mayajal.' This is his latest book and probably the first Indian book on OTT. Anant Vijay, a national award-winning film critic, journalist, literary critic, and political analyst, reveals all these identities through this book. The writing style reflects more of his journalistic mentality than a writer's, making the book easy to read, even

for non-Hindi-speaking readers familiar with Hindi.

OTT is a platform primarily for movies and similar content. This book mainly discusses programs aired in Hindi. During the pandemic, cinemas were closed, people were under house arrest, and television became the sole means of entertainment for cinema lovers. At the same time, OTT platforms became well-established in the minds of the audience, and OTT directors started planning to provide the audience with a new taste. OTT had old popular movies replaced by new ones, especially those that failed in theatres. At one point, cinemas opened, but due to the limited audience and the popularity of OTT, new Hindi films were released on this platform. Filmmaking for OTT started, and web series in the style of a TV series also began.

Most web series used elements like obscene abuse, violent scenes, and explicit sexual content to attract a larger audience. While censor boards for movies monitor such scenes, many producers took unimaginable liberties due to the lack of controls for OTT, resulting in chaos in the world of creation.

Some directors are notably aggressive, using verbal abuse to grab the audience's attention. The unhindered and uncontrolled environment of OTT platforms is reflected in his encouragement in the series 'Sacred Games.' Anant Vijay rightly comments, 'When there is no bondage and no need to apologize, freedom turns into anarchy.' He also wrote, 'In fact, such people use abuse, violence, and sexual scenes to cover up their incompetence.'

Not only have movies or series been created for the OTT platform with sexually violent elements, but also series with wholesome entertainment and reality. The author balances the subject with detailed discussions of several such series and maintains his responsibilities as an author.

Author Anant Vijay carefully observes and explains the clever

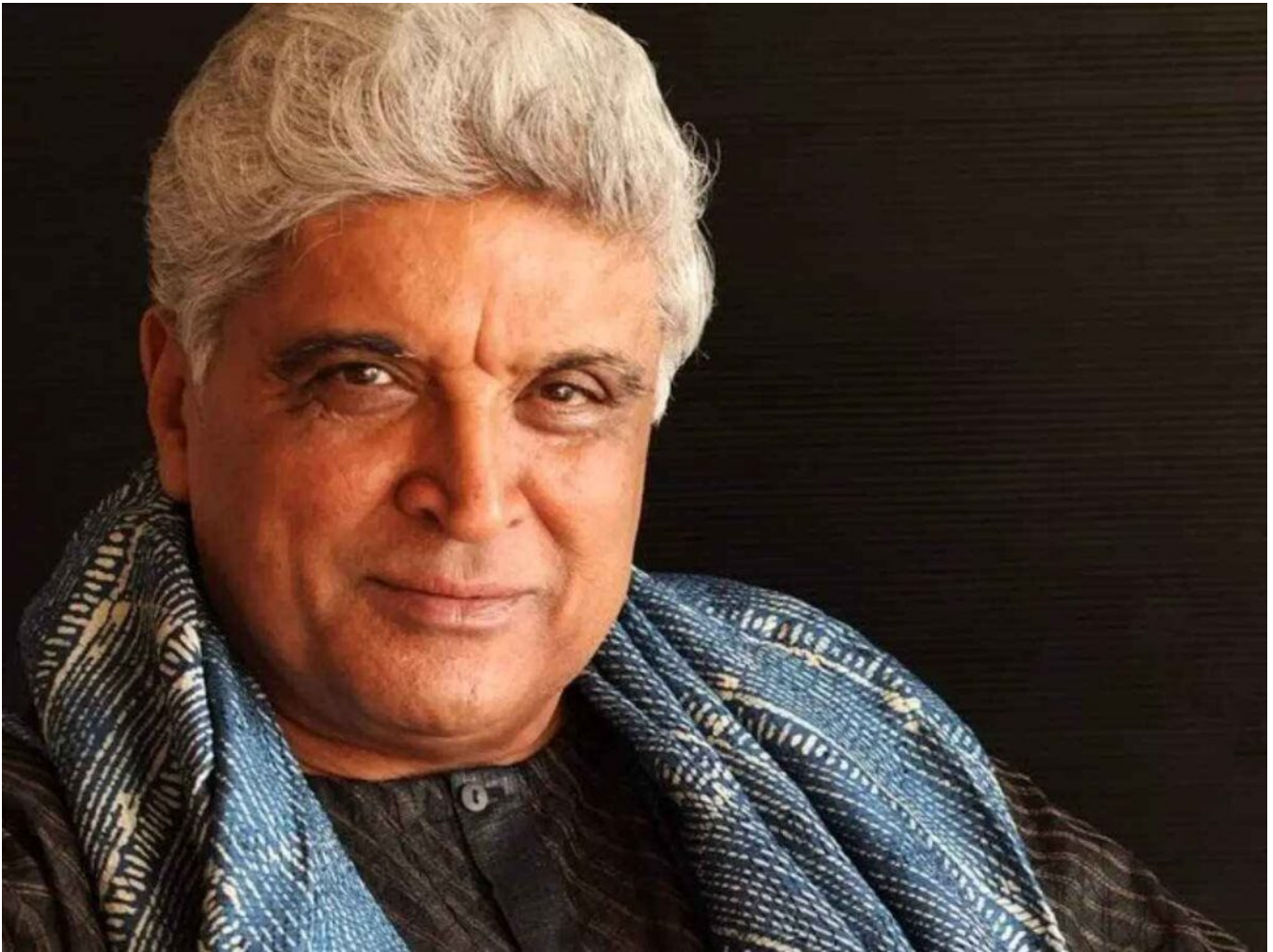
construction of a 'fake narrative' through OTT programs. The same narrative of anti-Hindu and Muslim praise created in Hindi films is seen differently in OTT. The brains of political power control agendas and promotion tactics under the guise of entertainment. It involves either the creator's political beliefs or profit motives or the goal of obtaining the blessings of an influential force. When analysing the present from a political perspective, two things are needed – political knowledge of the past and the ability to predict the future in light of it. The author rightly considers the political background while discussing the web series 'Leila' by the once-famous filmmaker Deepa Mehta. "Art was turned into a rehearsal ground for politics". He further elaborates by explaining that this was done after the last two Lok Sabha elections. There are many reasons why a distorted image was created of the political dispensation and promoted by portraying some organizations as radical. It can be assumed that a part of that agenda was Deepa Mehta's 'Leila.' Although 'Leila' is told as a fictional story, it combines the, so-called grim future it depicts with the image of the agenda. Anant Vijay has informatively analysed many other such agendas. The web series 'Jubilee' also beautifully describes how the Russian Communist Party used Indian films as part of their agenda. The author also refers to Dev Ananda's autobiography 'Romancing with Life' in support of this.

Overall, this book analyses both the artistic work and the process of agenda-building through the latest entertainment medium in depth and can provide the reader with thought. In India, the relationship between art and politics has been judged in a one-sided manner. This book has broken down that wall of limitations. This is the real power of the book.

The book is published by Prabhat Prakashan, and the price is Rs 300. The book must be translated into regional languages.

It is worth mentioning that the author dedicated the book to the Maa Kamakhya Temple and released it for sale.

Jadunama – The Power of Time in Literature



First Published in IIC DIARY

India International Centre New Delhi, recently organised an evening evening with Javed Akhtar, where the celebrated poet recited his outstanding poetry and conversed candidly with Anil Shrivatav and audience.

Shri Shyam Sharan, President India International Centre introduced the legendary poet and writer Javed Akhtar as apart from being an author and a poet, was also an outstanding lyricist, script writer who has been awarded with several

awards and honors from home and beyond.

Anil Srivastav, engaged with Javed Akhtar in a candid conversation as he talked against casteism and fundamentalism. He used the metaphor of toy very appropriately and said most of us are happy with toys as a child and not when grown up.

He said lineage, heritage didn't give any pride as the genes are not as important as the environment of poetry that made him. He recited wonderfully with great sensitivity two of his brilliant poems, waqt(Time) and Anshu(Tears) to the appreciative audience overflowing in the auditorium.

He took it as a compliment when asked by Allok Srivastav that though he calls himself an atheist still he wrote of Lord Shiva's tandava, He went on to say that an author has to write differently in different situations that the script demands. He made an extremely significant statement that , "We have to surrender to time and norms." And also mentioned that we are living in a bubble and everyone wants to be victorious. Instead we have to look for yesterday's innocence, respect, honesty and surrender. He talked of the golden era of Hindi film songs with great appreciation as common people don't attend philosophy classes but learn from good film songs.

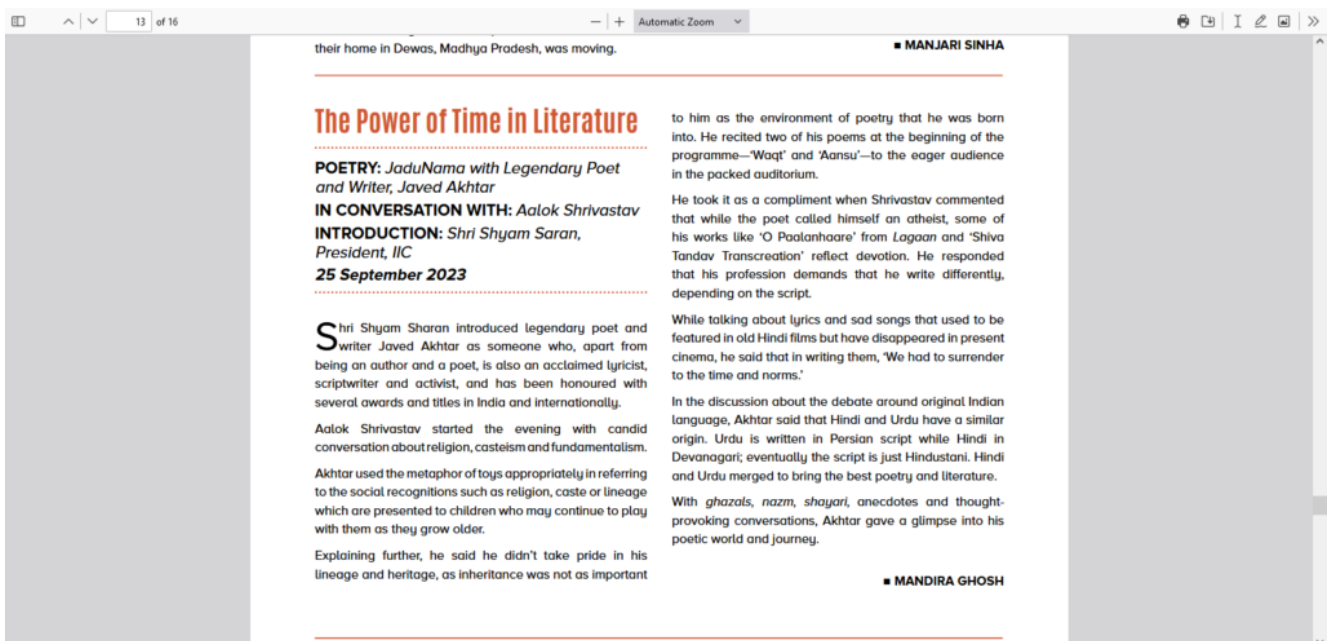
One very significant statement the erudite poet mentioned is that Hindi and Urdu are of the same origin . Urdu is written in Persian script while Hindi is written in Devanagari and eventually the script is just Hindustani .According to him Hindi and Urdu merged together bringing the best poetry and literature though only time will tell what is good literature. With ghazals, nazm, shayari and splendid conversation a splendid evening passed in an overflowing auditorium with Jadunama or journey of Javed Ji in hands of the captive audience.

Mandira Ghosh

Note

Jadunama is about a writer, poet, lyricist, and political activist. It is also about this one man's struggle since childhood to become what he is today and to create a hallmark of success in everything he does. Named Jadu at birth, it was Javed sahab's father, Jan Nisar Akhtar's poem, 'Lamha, lamha kisi jadoo ka fasana hoga (Every moment will be the story of a certain magic)' that was the inspiration behind the name. When the little boy was in kindergarten, everyone realised that Jadu was not a serious name and to have a word as close to Jadu as possible, he was renamed Javed (meaning 'eternal'), Akhtar (meaning 'star')—Eternal star! Not only has he remained in the limelight ever since, he continues to shine brightly like the eternal star!

Javed Akhtar (born 17 January 1945) is an Indian screenwriter, lyricist and poet. Known for his work in Hindi cinema, he has won five National Film Awards,[1] and received the Padma Shri in 1999 and the Padma Bhushan in 2007,[2] two of India's highest civilian honours.



their home in Dewas, Madhya Pradesh, was moving. ■ MANJARI SINHA

The Power of Time in Literature

POETRY: *JaduNama with Legendary Poet and Writer, Javed Akhtar*

IN CONVERSATION WITH: *Aalok Shrivastav*

INTRODUCTION: *Shri Shyam Saran, President, LIC*

25 September 2023

Shri Shyam Saran introduced legendary poet and writer Javed Akhtar as someone who, apart from being an author and a poet, is also an acclaimed lyricist, scriptwriter and activist, and has been honoured with several awards and titles in India and internationally.

Aalok Shrivastav started the evening with candid conversation about religion, casteism and fundamentalism.

Akhtar used the metaphor of toys appropriately in referring to the social recognitions such as religion, caste or lineage which are presented to children who may continue to play with them as they grow older.

Explaining further, he said he didn't take pride in his lineage and heritage, as inheritance was not as important

to him as the environment of poetry that he was born into. He recited two of his poems at the beginning of the programme—'Waqf' and 'Aansu'—to the eager audience in the packed auditorium.

He took it as a compliment when Shrivastav commented that while the poet called himself an atheist, some of his works like 'O Paalanhoare' from *Lagaan* and 'Shiva Tandav Transcreation' reflect devotion. He responded that his profession demands that he write differently, depending on the script.

While talking about lyrics and sad songs that used to be featured in old Hindi films but have disappeared in present cinema, he said that in writing them, 'We had to surrender to the time and norms.'

In the discussion about the debate around original Indian language, Akhtar said that Hindi and Urdu have a similar origin. Urdu is written in Persian script while Hindi in Devanagari; eventually the script is just Hindustani. Hindi and Urdu merged to bring the best poetry and literature.

With *ghazals, nazm, shayari*, anecdotes and thought-provoking conversations, Akhtar gave a glimpse into his poetic world and journey.

■ MANDIRA GHOSH

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(समस्त तेरह नाटकों पर व्याख्यान एवं प्रश्नोत्तर)

महाकवि भास का नाट्य वैशिष्ट्य

भारतरत्न भार्गव





भास्व

नाट्य समग्र

अनुवाद एवं सम्पादन
भारतरत्न भार्गव

किसी भी व्यक्ति को धमकाया जाता है, तो वह उसे धमकाया जाता है
किसी भी व्यक्ति को धमकाया जाता है, तो वह उसे धमकाया जाता है
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TRUE LIE

Mithi knew she was lying. She had no option but to lie. She lied and lied and became a mythomaniac. One day she did not want to lie. But the mania would not leave her. Her mouth emitted a lie that her heart did not consent. She became frustrated as she was continually telling lies all the time when she could avoid doing so. One day, she went to a Babaji and told him to give her a remedy. Babaji smiled and said, "when you are tempted to lie, just imagine that the truth that you are speaking is a lie. You will do alright." Next day, Mithi experimented it. Her father asked her, "Mithi did you take 200 rupees from my pocket?" Mithi replied, "YES." And while she spoke yes, she imagined it were a lie! And yes, she got rid of the habit!

STORY SAYS, "Your thoughts make it true or false."

For comments if any please write in the box given below.