

26 September 1989



Sahitya Akademi

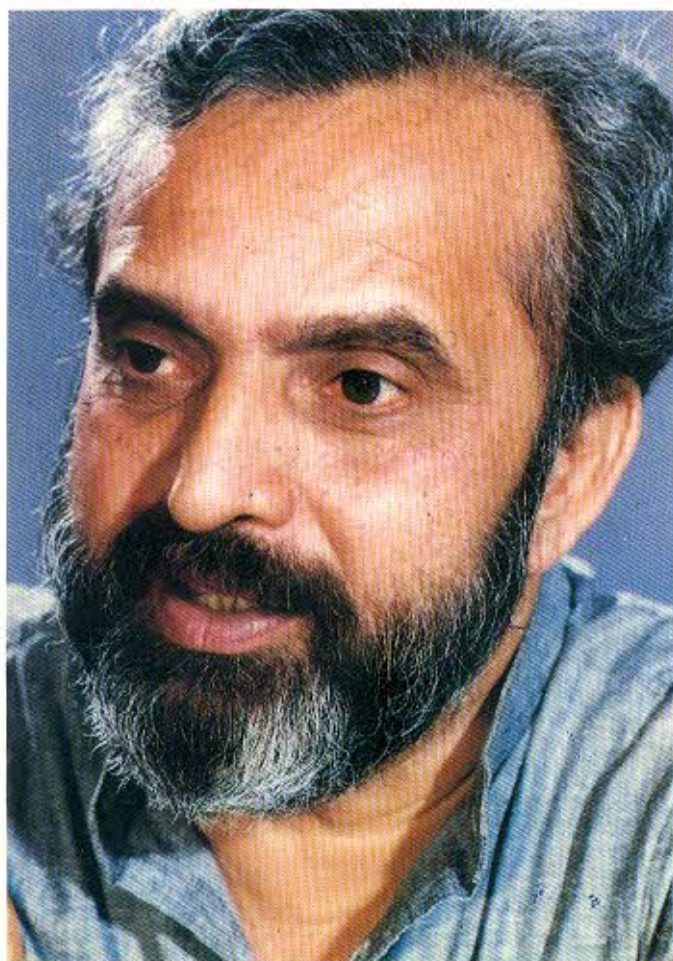


India International Centre

invite you to

meet the author

U.R. Anantha Murthy



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WHEN Anantha Murthy's Kannada novel *Samskara* was made into a film in 1970 by Pattabhi Rama Reddy, it ran into trouble with the censors, but a surge of public anger resulted in its release and *Samskara* launched the New Wave Cinema in India.

Like the film, the novel too had created a stir in the literary world when it first appeared in 1965. *Samskara* portrays the spiritual struggle of a village priest, Praneshacharya. The climax of the novel entails the impulsive rejection by the Brahmin pundit of his orthodox social and religious taboos, as he surrenders to Chandra, the beautiful, passionate Shudra woman. The pundit now regards himself no longer worthy of acting as the mentor of the community and wanders away. In the end Praneshacharya is seen returning to the village, but with apprehension.

Reviewing A.K. Ramanujan's English translation of *Samskara*, John Perry writes in *The Indian Literary Review Annual 1979*: "Anantha Murthy has responded to a deep social need to confront ambivalent feelings about village traditions—how much they bind and constrain, are riddled by superstition and repression, casteism and economic oppression; yet how that network of shared values and feelings of community, of meaningful relatedness, provides a living human-scale world for purposeful action, a functioning social consciousness."

After *Samskara* Anantha Murthy has published only two novels, *Bharatipura* (1973) and *Avasthe* (1978), a blend of the personal and the political.

Though Anantha Murthy shot into limelight at thirty-three with the publication of *Samskara*, and later with its filming at thirty-eight, his first short-story collection *En-*



With Umashankar Joshi



With Girish Kamad as Pranesacharya during the shooting of *Samskara*

dendu Mugiyada Kathe was published at twenty-three. He published four more collections and carved out a place for himself in Kannada literature.

Writing in the *Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature*, Ramachandra Sharma observes that Anantha Murthy uses the medium of the short story to explore the relevance of some of the traditional values in the changed context of today. Generally, he employs the method of point and counterpoint and creates characters to personify opposing value systems. Some of his stories sag under the weight of his intellectual pre-occupation but even his failures are significant because of the purpose and intensity he invests into the writing. He draws heavily from the rich background of his childhood and

adolescence to build his stories."

His stories range from the introspective through the reflective to the narrative.

Anantha Murthy has popularized the principles and techniques of the New Critics of England and America. In the words of Ramachandra Sharma, "Anantha Murthy's role as a critic has been of seminal importance in shaping the direction of modern Kannada criticism. He has generated a few original constructs and ably used his vast knowledge of English literature to assess the present literary output. His influence on younger critics has been considerable."

Anantha Murthy has so far published three novels, five collections of short stories, one drama, three collections of poetry and five collections of essays and criticism.



With actress Snehlata Reddy



With Bendre, Girish Kamad, Kurtkoty, Joshi and others

Since 1981, he has been editing *Rujuwathu*, a Kannada journal devoted "to experimentation in creative writing and open-minded dialogues on disturbing socio-political and cultural questions."



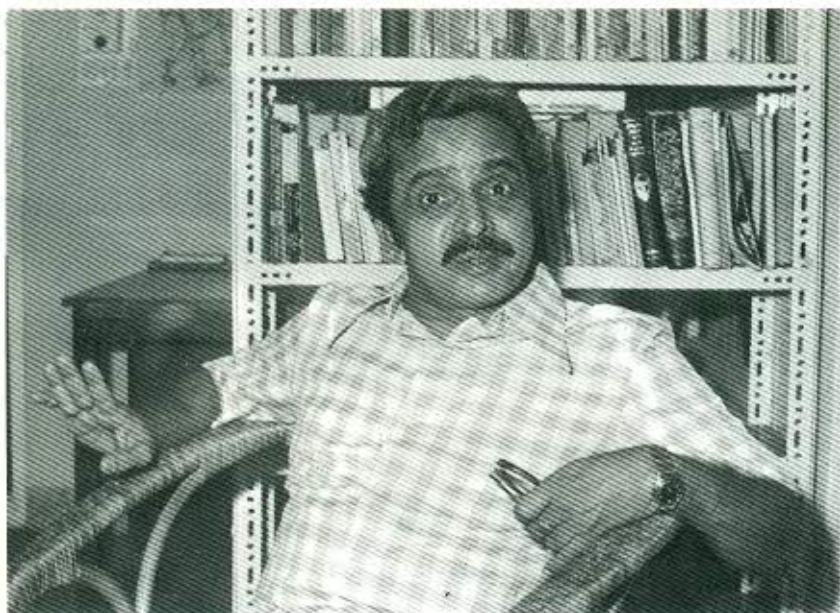
With B.K. Bhattacharyya, I.N. Choudhuri

From an English Lectureship at twenty-four to a Vice-chancellorship at fifty-five was a long but exciting career for the grandson of an orthodox Vaidika Brahmin. At the *agrahara*, where he grew up, the day of the boy Anantha Murthy would begin with *japa*, then the Sanskrit *pathshala* in the monastery, witnessing

fierce debates between pundits on interpreting ancient texts, or between themselves and visiting scholars or reformers on topics ranging from caste system to Darwin's theory, with school six kilometres away, and on the way seeing electricity, hearing radio or immaculate English or atheist talk. "Thus on a single day, I was exposed to world-views of different centuries, and they co-existed in my mind," recalled Anantha Murthy years later. Something of this "bewildering coexistence of centuries," the essence of the Universe breathes through Anantha Murthy's works.



With S.K. Desai



A Select Bibliography

NOVELS

SAMSKARA. Sagar: Akshara Prakashana, 1965. 152p. 18 cm.

SAMSKARA has been translated into Hindi, Malayalam, Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, French, Russian, German, Bulgarian and English. A.K. Ramanujan's English translation is an Oxford University Press publication. It has been prescribed as a text book in some American Universities.

BHARATIPURA. Sagar: Akshara Prakashana, 1973. 268p. 21 cm.

BHARATIPURA has been translated into Hindi and Malayalam.

AVASTHE. Sagar: Akshara Prakashana, 1978. 178p. 21 cm.

AVASTHE has been translated into Hindi, Malayalam and English.

SHORT STORIES

ENDENDU MUGIYADA KATHE. Mysore: Suruchi Prakashana, 1955. 86p. 18 cm.

PRASNE. Sagar: Akshara Prakashana, 1962. 180p. 18 cm.

MAUNI. Sagar: Akshara Prakashana, 1972. 88 p. 21 cm.

AKASHA MATTU BEKKU. Sagar: Akshara Prakashana, 1981. 154p. 25 cm.

ERADU DASHAKADA KATHEGALU. Sagar: Akshara Prakashana. 1981. 465p. 25 cm.

DRAMA

AVAHANE. Sagar: Akshara Prakashana, 1971. 45p. 25 cm.

POETRY

BAVALI. Shimoga: Sahyadri Prakashana, 1963. 40p. 18 cm.

15 PADYAGALU. Sagar: Akshara Prakashana, 1970. 42p. 25 cm.

AJANA HEGALA MELINA SUKKUGALU. Mysore: Rujuvathu Prakashana, 1989. 25 cm.

ESSAY AND CRITICISM

PRAINE MATTU PARISARA. Sagar: Akshara Prakashana, 1974. 236p. 25 cm.

SANNIVESA. Sagar: Akshara Prakashana, 1974. 104p. 25 cm.

SAMAKSHAMA. Shimoga: Aranya Prakashana, 1980. 202p. 21 cm.

PURVAPARA. Sagar: Akshara Prakashana, 1989. 25 cm.

KARNATAKA: A PICTORIAL BOOK. Bangalore: Gangaram's Book Bureau, 1989.

EDITED

KANNADA KAVYA. National Book Trust, India, 1972. 500p. 25 cm.

RUJUVATHU. A political, cultural and literary quarterly in Kannada, started from January 1981.

A Chronology



- 1932 Birth
- 1955 *Endendu Mugiyada Kathe*, first short story collection in Kannada
- 1956 Lecturer in English, University of Mysore
- 1963 *Bavali*, first poetry collection; Commonwealth Fellowship
- 1965 *Samskara*, first novel
- 1966 Ph.D., University of Birmingham, U.K.
- 1967 Reader in English, University of Mysore
- 1970 Best Story Award for the film *Samskara*
- 1971 *Avahane*, first drama
- 1972 Homi Bhabha Fellowship for Creative Writing
- 1975 University of Iowa: Honorary Fellowship in Writing, Visiting Writer, Visiting Professor
- 1978 Best Story Award for the film *Ghatashraddha*; Member, General Council of Sahitya Akademi; Visiting Professor, Tufts University
- 1980 Professor of English; Member, Academic Council, Mysore University; General Secretary, People's Union of Civil Liberties, Karnataka
- 1981 Editor, *Rujuvathu*
- 1982 Visiting Professor, Shivaji University
- 1983 Karnataka Sahitya Akademi Award for Fiction
- 1984 Karnataka Government Award for literary distinction
- 1985 Ida Beam Visiting Professor, University of Iowa
- 1986 Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence, University of Iowa
- 1987 Vice-Chancellor, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam
- 1988 Visit to Denmark
- 1989 Visit to Russia and China