Indian Literature

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25 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE
VTES IS NOW Vallath

English in India

The Beginnings

- English language reached India in the early 1600's , when
  - The East India Company was established in India
  - English missionaries first began their evangelical efforts
- Early "Orientalists" (as against the Anglicists)
  - Sir William Jones (1746-94)
    - Interested in the rediscovery of India's past
    - Believed that classical Greek and Latin were derived from Sanskrit
    - Established the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784
- 1794: *The Travels of Dean Mahomet* was published, the first book ever written and published by an Indian in English

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Oriental Education in the 18th Century

- The British strove to educate as well as civilize the population
- Oriental education was promoted at first
- They promoted
  - Printing presses
  - Missionary schools
  - Books in the vernacular as well as in English
  - Grammars, dictionaries and translations
  - Private schools that imparted English education

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Indianization of English

- From Vasco da Gama's landing in Calicut (1498)
  - Indian words entered Portuguese and then English
- The interaction increased after the English East India Company was launched (1599)
- G. Subba Rao's Indian Words in English: A Study in Indo-British Cultural and Linguistic Relations (1954)
  - fakir, guru, hakim, imam, jaggery, maharaja, nabob, pariah, shawl, toddy, yogi, zamindar
- Also gave rise to Anglo-Indian literature
  - The first study of Anglo-Indian literature was A Sketch of Anglo-Indian Literature (1908) by Edward Fairley Oaten
  - Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction (1934) by Bhupal Singh

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Important Dates and Events

- 1498 - The discovery of the sea-route to India by Vasco da Gama
- 1600 - 31 December—The East India Company was formed. Queen Elizabeth signed the Charter.
- 1639 - The EIC acquired Madras on lease from the Indian ruler.
- 1651 - The EIC was permitted by the Mughal rulers to trade at Hoogli in Bengal.
- 1668 - The EIC acquired Bombay from Portugal. Bombay was fortified to become the EIC's centre on the west coast of India.
- 1689 - In England, Parliament became supreme as a result of the Bill of Rights.
- 1691 - The EIC resumed its activities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras.
- 1600-1700 - Till the end of the seventeenth century, the EIC was trying to get a foothold on the Indian subcontinent. It had to face its rivals in England, its European rivals in India—the Portuguese, the Dutch and the French, and the Indian rulers. Missionaries were allowed to come to India for the benefit of Europeans stationed in India. The EIC was subservient to the Indian rulers whose permission they petitioned to begin and carry on trade. They were 'petitioners' in the Mughal courts

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- 1698 - The EIC built Fort William around its factory; the three villages around that came to be known as Calcutta.
- 1717 - The EIC secured permission to extend trade in Gujarat and the Deccan.
- 1757 - The Battle of Plassey. The English won the battle and that sealed the fate of the Mughal rule in India.
- 1765 - The EIC secured the Diwani (right to collect revenue) of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.
- 1780-95 - English newspapers started during this period: India Gazette, Calcutta Gazette, Bengal Journal, Oriental Magazine of Calcutta Amusement, and Calcutta Chronicle (from Calcutta); Madras Courier, Harkaru, Madras Gazette, Indian Herald (from Madras); Bombay Herald, Courier, Bombay Gazette (from Bombay)
- 1781 - Calcutta Madrassa (an educational institution for higher learning) founded by Warren Hastings
- 1784 - The EIC brought under the control of the British Parliament by the Pitt Indian Act
- 1791 - Benares Sanskrit College established
- 1792 - Tipu defeated by the British; the EIC became strong in the south of India. Charles Grant published ‘Observations’.
- 1793 - Resolution asking the EIC to accept responsibility for education in India partly accepted
- 1794 - William Carey, an English missionary, started the first school in Bengal where the medium of instruction was Bengali.

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- 1795 - Censorship of newspapers introduced in Madras
- 1797 - Charles Grant persuaded the EIC and the parliament in England to impart English education to Indians.
- 1799 - Tipu died in battle; Mysore conquered by EIC
- 1800 - Bengali elementary school opened at Serampore, Bengal
- 1813 - Charter Act Renewal; education made the responsibility of the EIC; missionaries allowed to go to India
- 1817 - The Hindu College, Calcutta, started due to individual initiative; imparted English education
- 1821 - Sanskrit College, Poona
- 1823 - Agra College, Agra. A general committee of Public Instruction was formed. Raja Rammohan Roy wrote to Lord Amherst.
- 1824 - Sanskrit College, Calcutta
- 1829 - College at Delhi (All these colleges were started to impart Oriental education. But soon they also started English classes to meet the demand from Indians.) Bentinck wrote to the committee on introducing English as official language of the Government and that of education.

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Major Developments

- Lord Bentinck was the Governor General during 1828-35. He voiced the opinion that Western education should be imparted to Indians through English
- Macaulay's Minute of 1835 on Education became the Manifesto of English education in India
- Missionaries began to provide a significant part of the facilities for learning English; English became the language of administration, and soon after that, the language of the judiciary.
- A high school called 'The University' was set up in Madras in 1841; it imparted education in English. It was turned into a university by a Government order in 1853
- 1848—Savitribai Phule (and Jyotirao Phule) opened a school for girls in Pune and she became the first female teacher in India

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Major Events Till the 20th C

- East India Company was formed—1600
- Hickey's Bengal Gazette started—1780
- Censorship of newspapers introduced in Madras—1795
- Charles Grant persuaded the EIC to start English education in India—1797
- Charter Act or East India Company Act—1813
- English Education Act—1835
- Wood's Despatch—1854
- Hunter Commission—1882

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Charles Grant Commission

- Charles Grant (1746-1823) British politician and evangelist
  - Chairman of the British East India Company and MP
- Father of Modern Education in India
  - The first man to address the issue of education in India
  - In 1771, he made recommendations for introduction of English education in India and English to be official language of the company for the local affairs to help spread Christianity
  - His intentions and methods were not accepted by British Parliament
- His missionary friends
  - William Wilberforce (1759-1833)—British politician, philanthropist and a leader of the movement to abolish the slave trade (father of British abolitionist movement)
  - Henry Thornton (1760-1815)—Abolitionist and reformer
- Formulated the Charter Act of 1813

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Charter Act of 1813

- Asserted the Crown’s sovereignty over British possessions in India and ended the monopoly of the Company
- Governor-General-in-Council may spend less than one lakh for education
- Allowed the Christian Missionaries to
  - Promote literature and knowledge of the sciences
  - Spread their religious ideas in India

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The English Education Act of 1835

- Prepared by Thomas Babington Macaulay in consultation with, and submitted to, Lord William Bentinck, the then Governor-General of India
- Recommended withdrawal of support to Sanskrit and Arabic books, and reduce support for traditional education
- If we have funds, we should deploy those funds to teach “what is best worth knowing”
  - English is better worth knowing than Sanskrit or Arabic: “a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia.”
  - The natives are desirous of learning English
  - Whoever knows English has ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth which all the wisest nations of the earth has created and hoarded in the past 90 generations

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Main Arguments of Macaulay's Minute

- English should replace Persian as the official language
- English should be the medium of instruction in all institutions of learning
- Translation of Western knowledge into undeveloped vernacular languages need not be encouraged
- Indians trained in English can undertake the training of the rest of their countrymen
    - This is called Downward Filtration Theory (coming down of education from the higher class people to the lower classes or the masses)

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The English Education Act of 1835

- “We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, opinions, morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population.”

- “The languages of western Europe civilised Russia. I cannot doubt that they will do for the Hindoo what they have done for the tartar.”

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Reference in Rushdie

- Vasco Miranda: “Bleddy Macaulay’s minutemen! Don’t you get it? Bunch of English-medium misfits, the lot of you. Minority group members. Square-peg freaks. You don’t belong here. Country’s as alien to you as if you were what’s-the-word lunatics. Moon-men. You read the wrong books, get on the wrong side in every argument, think the wrong thoughts. Even your bleddy dreams grow from foreign roots.”

- “Stop making a fool of yourself, Vasco,” said Aurora.

- *The Moor’s Last Sigh* by Salman Rushdie

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Responses to the Act of 1835

- JS Mill responded to the Act and criticized it
  - English education may not lead to cultural change
  - It is not clear how far the Indian masses will be influenced by this interim class
  - Recommended that the focus should be on the already learned Indians and teach them English
- The recommendations of Macaulay were partly carried out

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Macaulay’s Rule

- 1835-55 period
  - English educated people increased
  - Several thousands of English books were sold in India among Indians every year
  - Western manners and culture spread in the big cities. Lucknow looked like a European city.
  - 1853: First railway line opened in India
  - 1854: The telegraph and modern postal system opened
  - When distances were bridged, medium of communication became English
- After the Great Revolt of 1857
  - Powers shifted from East India Company to British govt
  - Rapid strides in English education, often leading to dissent
  - Flowering of Indian English literature

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Wood’s Despatch of 1854

- Called “Magna Carta of English Education in India”
- Presented by Charles Wood, MP, to Lord Dalhousie
- Recommendations
  - To set up education departments in every province
  - Setting up universities in all major cities of India modelled on the new London University
  - At least one government school in every district
  - Grants to be given to private schools
  - Primary schools – vernacular education; High Schools – Anglo-vernacular education; Colleges – English education
  - Stressed on vocational education and women’s education
  - Wanted to create a class of Indians as the workforce (like Macaulay)

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Implementation

- Education departments were set up in every province
- Universities
  - Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857
  - University of Punjab in 1882 (after Hunter Commission)
  - University of Allahabad in 1887

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The Indian Education Commission of 1882

- In 1858, the Crown took over from the EIC
- In 1882, Lord Ripon appointed the first Indian Education Commission with Sir William Hunter, Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, as its Chairman
- Also known as the Hunter Commission
- Submitted its report in 1884
- Reiterated the ideas in Wood's Despatch, hence most of the recommendation of the Despatch were not implemented
- Recommended a commercial (or what is now called vocational) stream supporting a practical education

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The Indian Education Commission of 1882

- Objectives
  - To look into the non-implementation of Wood's Despatch
  - Study the contemporary status of elementary education in English provinces
- Recommendations
  - Primary education is lagging and must be handled by municipal councils and district boards supervised by the government
  - Secondary education is making progress in Bengal
  - Secondary schools should be handed over to the private sector, and given grants as payment-by-result
  - Exclude Religious education
  - Focus on moral and physical, vocational and literary, female and Muslim education

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The Indian Universities Commission 1902

- Chairman Sir Thomas Releigh
- Appointed in 1902 by Lord Curzon after a Conference on Education at Shimla
- Objective: To reform university education in India
- Blamed school education for the poor standard in universities and as a remedy suggested the improvement of English at the school level
- Lord Curzon used the Commission's report to tighten Government control on educational institutions.
- Resulted in the Indian Universities Act of 1904
- Recommendations
  - Regulation of the formation of university senates
  - Greater representation to affiliate colleges in the senate
  - Strict monitoring of the affiliate colleges
  - Measures to reform school education, curricular reforms, exam and research reforms
  - Student welfare, state scholarships
  - The “reforms” were very controversial and were strongly opposed by Indians
  - The resistance was crushed and the Indian Universities Act 1904 was passed

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Calcutta University Commission 1917 or Sadler Commission

- Chairman Michael Sadler, VC of the University of Leeds
- Boldly pointed out the mismatch between the intentions of the government and the implementation regarding mother-tongue education and the development of the vernacular languages
- Emphasised mother-tongue education as a preliminary to the effective use of English
- Strongly favoured of bilingual education.
- Recommendations
  - Reforms in Calcutta University, also applicable to other universities
  - University system particularly in Bengal is defective
    - Too many students; too few faculty; courses are too literary, not suited to various needs
  - Check out pardha schools!

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Other Committees

- Abbott-Wood Report 1937
  - Focus on Vocational education
  - Suggested a complete hierarchy of vocational institutions parallel with general education
  - Resulted in the formation of the Polytechnic
- Zakir Hussain Committee of 1938 or the Wardha Scheme of Education
  - Focus on Basic education called Nai talim or bunyadi talim (basic curriculum) supported by Mahatma Gandhi
  - Proper teaching of the mother tongue is the foundation of all education

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Hartog Committee (1928-29)

- The Simon Commission of 1928 appointed an Auxiliary Committee popularly known as the Hartog Committee, under the chairmanship of Sir Philip Hartog
- Reviewed all aspects of education—primary, secondary and university
- Concluded that quantitative expansion in the field of education had been effected at the cost of quality
- Expressed the view that immediate need was to improve quality rather than increasing the number of institutions

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Abbot-Wood Committee (1936-37)

- Mr Abbot, former Chief Inspector of Technical Schools, Board of Education in England, and Mr S.H. Wood, Director of Intelligence, Board of Education in England, were appointed to study the problem of education and make recommendations
- Submitted report in 1937 known as the Abbot-Wood Report
- Due to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, no action was taken on the recommendations of the report

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Zakir Hussain Committee on Basic Education

- In 1937, a conference of national workers was called at Wardha under the Presidentship of Mahatma Gandhi
- The conference appointed a committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Hussain, to prepare a plan for an Indian style of education.
- A scheme, known as the Wardha Scheme of Education, was prepared and it included a seven-year Course of Basic Education.
- The seven-year Course of Basic Education was to include the basic crafts like spinning and weaving, carpentry, agriculture and gardening, leatherwork, and other crafts, locally useful.
- This Course of Basic Education was adopted as the National System of Education
- Features of the scheme
  - Free and compulsory education should be provided on a nation-wide scale for seven years.
  - The medium of instruction should be the mother tongue.
  - Education throughout the seven-year period should centre around some form of manual and productive work, largely related to the environment of the child
- Due to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, this was also not implemented

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Sargent Report 1944

- Prepared on the basis of Abbott-Wood Report 1937
- For Post-War educational development in India
- Promotion of Pre primary education in the form of nursery schools
- Establishment of elementary schools and high schools
- Two types of High schools
  - Academic
  - Technical and Vocational
- Abolition of intermediate courses
- Degree course should be three years

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Commissions and Committees of Independent India

- 1948-49 - The University Education Commission. Popularly known as the Radhakrishnan Commission
- 1951 - Committee on Primary Education
- 1952-53 - The Secondary Education Commission. Popularly known as the Mudaliar Commission
- 1956 - The Official Language Commission
- 1958 - All India Language Conference.
- 1963 - The Official Language Act (Amended in 1967)
- 1964-66 - The Education Commission, popularly known as the Kothari Commission
- 1968 - NPE : National Policy on Education
- 1969-71 - The Study Group Report on the Teaching of English, popularly known as the Gokak Committee Report
- 1986 - The Draft National Policy on Education by the Government of India NEP and POA: National Education Policy and Programme of Action (NEP is also known as NPE: National Policy on Education)
- 1989 - CDC Report : The Report of the Curriculum Development Centre
- 1990 - Acharya Ramamurti Commission

This PPT is made by Kalyani Vallath

Official Language Commission 1956

- Chairman B.G. Kher
- Recommendations based on Article-344 of the Indian Constitution include
  - The progressive use of the Hindi language for official purposes
  - Restrictions on the use of the English language for all or any of the official purposes
  - Every student should be given knowledge of Hindi till 14 years of age
  - All the universities should make proper arrangements for those students who wish to appear through Hindi medium in the examinations.
  - Justice, in the country, should be delivered in the language of the country
- After many protests in South India, changes were made and English continued to be used for official purposes according to the Official Language Act of 1963.

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Kothari Commission 1966

- Also called National Education Commission
- Free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14
- 10+2+3 pattern for secondary, higher secondary, and university education
- Emphasis on teacher education
- Development of Languages
  - The regional languages should continue to be in use as media of education at the primary and secondary stages
  - At the secondary stage, the State Governments should adopt, and vigorously implement, the three-language formula
  - Hindi should be developed as a link language
  - Learning Sanskrit and International Languages should be promoted
- Efforts should be made to equalize educational opportunity (for girls, backward classes, physically and mentally handicapped children).
- Talent in diverse fields should be identified at an early age

Kothari Commission 1966

- Work-experience and national service included in school education
- Science and mathematics should be an integral part of general education
- Special emphasis should be placed on the development of education for agriculture and industry.
- Focus on production of high quality textbooks for schools and universities
- Improve the reliability and validity of examinations
- Facilities for secondary education should accordingly be extended to the areas and classes
- Increase facilities for technical and vocational education

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Kothari Commission 1966

- Care to be taken in establishing new universities
- Special attention should be given to the organization of postgraduate courses and to the improvement of standards of training and research
- Part-time education and correspondence courses should be developed on a large scale
- Measure for eradicating mass illiteracy necessary
- Games and sports to be developed on a large scale with the object of improving the physical fitness and sportsmanship of students
- Broadly uniform educational structure in all parts of the country

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National Education Policy 2020

- New Curricular and Pedagogical Structure (5+3+3+4)
- No hard separations between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams
- Emphasis on promoting multilingualism and Indian languages: The medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the mother tongue/regional language
- A new National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development)
- Equitable and inclusive education - Special emphasis given on Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs)

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National Education Policy 2020

- Increasing GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) in higher education to 50%
- NTA to offer Common Entrance Exam for Admission to HEIs
- Establishment of Academic Bank of Credit (ABC, a virtual store-house which will keep records of academic credits secured by a student)—NAD National Academic Depository
- Setting up of Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs)
- Setting up of National Research Foundation (NRF)
- Single overarching umbrella body for promotion of higher education sector including teacher education and excluding medical and legal education—the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)
- Internationalization of Education
- Establishing a National Mission for Mentoring
- Creation of an autonomous body, the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology

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Renaissance in India

Impact of Colonial Education

1. Indians mastered the colonizers' language, English
2. Literature in English was written by Indians on social themes which later reflected in other Indian languages

- *The Persecuted: Dramatic Scenes Illustrative of the Present State of Hindoo Society in Calcutta* (1831) by Krishna Mohan Banerjea
  - A play about Hindu orthodoxies and an Indian losing faith in his religion
  - 18-year-old Banerjea wrote this after his conversion to Christianity
- *A Journal of Forty-Eight Hours of the Year 1945* (1835) by Kylas Chunder Dutt
  - A play about an imaginary uprising against the British in 1945

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Impact of Colonial Education

3. Transformed 19th century literature in Indian languages
   - Led to journalistic prose & experiments in poetry and the novel
   - Hybridisation and variety, mutation, social divides brought about by colonialism
   - Writers inspired by English literature
   - Rangalal Banerjee (who wrote *Padmini Upakhyan* in 1858 based on Rajasthan) and Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay in Bengali
   - Nandshankar Mehta in Gujarati
   - Samuel Vedanayakam Pillai in Tamil
   - M.V. Rohalkar in Marathi
   - Kandukuri Viresalingam Pantulu in Telugu
   - O. Chandu Menon in Malayalam

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Renaissance in India

- The result of widespread education
- Renaissance in modern India began with Raja Rammohan Roy (1772-1833)
  - Rammohan Roy was called the Father of Indian Renaissance
  - First high-caste brahmin to travel to England
  - Understanding of the different religions of the world
  - Started Brahmo Samaj with Debendranath Tagore
  - Dissatisfied with the system of education and the rote learning method of teaching English

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Bengal Renaissance

- Raja Rammohan Roy (1772-1833)
- Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905)
  - Established Tattwabodhini Sabha
- Dayanand Saraswati (1824-83)
  - Founder of Arya Samaj
  - He was a renunciate of the Hindu order of sannyasa, a renowned traditional teacher of Advaita Vedanta
- Keshub Chunder Sen (1838-84)
  - Wanted complete abolition of caste system in support of Brahmoism above Hinduism
- Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-94)
  - Essay “Samyo” (Equality)

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Rammohan's Contribution

- Wanted English-medium education in India as against Sanskrit
- Founded a Western-curriculum-based Anglo-Hindu school
- Produced many works in English including the famous tracts against sati
- His autobiographical letters initiated the tradition of Indian leaders writing autobiographies
- Started an association to promote European learning and science (1816)
  - With David Hume, British educationist, and Edward Hyde-East, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Bengal
- Raja Rammohan Roy established Hindu College on 20 January 1817
  - Became Presidency College (college of Bengal Presidency), then Presidency University
  - One of the oldest educational institutions of western education in South Asia
- Founded a boys' school (1816-17) and Anglo-Hindu School (1822)
- Went to Britain in 1830 as the envoy of the Moghul emperor who conferred him the title "Raja"

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Works of Rammohan Roy

- Rammohan Roy edited periodicals in English, Bengali and Persian
- Wrote 32 original English essays on various subjects, including Christianity
- A Defence of Hindu Theism (1817)
  - First original publication of significance in the history of Indian English literature
  - A defence of monotheism
- Anti-Sati tracts include
  - A Conference between an Advocate for, and an Opponent of, the Practice of Burning Widows Alive (1818)
  - Address to Lord William Bentinck (1830)
  - Anti-Suttee Petition to the House of Commons (1832)
- The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy (6 volumes, 1945-51), edited by Kalidas Nag and Debajyoti Burman

Works of Rammohan Roy

- Letter on English Education (11 Dec 1823)
  - Addressed to Lord Amherst, the Governor-General
  - Also called Letter to Amherst
  - Called “the manifesto of Indian Renaissance”
  - Preferred an English school to a Sanskrit school

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Resistance to Western Education

- While Rammohan was attracted by Western education and repelled by Western practices, many upper-caste Hindus took up cudgels against Christian conversion and Western education
- Maharshi Debendranath Tagore is said to have gone from house to house entreating Hindu parents not to send their children to missionary schools
- Meanwhile, Western education took rapid strides in Western and South India and gave rise to the earliest literary works in English

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Gandhian Movement

- 1870s. Nationalism brought anti-English sentiments.
- Gandhi and Nehru wrote in English and showed how English education can be the means to insubordination and freedom. However, they were politically against English as the common language for all, and supported Hindi.
- Gandhian movement inspired Indian English literature.
  - Fight against untouchability and poverty, resistance to communal and religious division, valorisation of rural life and lower classes
  - Murugan the Tiller (1927), Untouchable (1935), Kanthapura (1935), So Many Hungers (1947), Waiting for the Mahatma (1955)

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English Studies in India

English Studies in India

- The word Indo-Anglican was first used in Calcutta in Specimen Compositions from Native Students (1883)
- Srinivas Iyengar used it in 1943 as the title to his first boom: Indo-Anglian Literature (1943)
- Two-century old discipline came into prominence at the end of the 20th century and intersected with Cultural Studies and issues related to globalization.
- English in India: Its Present and Future (1964) by V.K. Gokak (Indo-Anglian literature is works of Indian writers in English; Indo-English literature is translations by Indians from Indian literaures to English)
- Indo-English Literature in the Nineteenth Century (1970) by John B. Alphonso Karkala
- Indo-Anglian Literature 1800-1970: A Survey (1976) by H.M. Williams
- Moving Frontiers of English Studies in India (1977) by C.D. Narasimhaiah
- Pigeon Indian: Some Notes on Indian English Writing (1982) by Mulk Raj Anand
- The Indianization of English: The English Language in India (1983) by Braj B. Kachru
- The Alchemy of English: The Spread, Functions and Models of Non-Native Englishes (1990) by Braj B. Kachru
- Masks of Conquest (1990) by Gauri Viswanathan
- The Rhetoric of English India (1992) by Sara Suleri
- The Lie of the Land: English Literary Studies in India (1992) edited by Rajeswari Sunder Rajan
- Provocations: The Teaching of English Literature in India (1993) edited by Sudhakar Marathe et.al.

English Studies in India

- Colonial Transactions: English Literature and India (1993) by Harish Trivedi
- Rethinking English: Essays in Literature, Language History (1994) edited by Svati Joshi
- Problematizing English in India (1997) by R.K. Agnihotri and A.L. Khanna
- Subject to Change: Teaching Literature in the Nineties (1998) edited by Susie Tharu
- English Studies in India: Widening Horizons (2002) by C.D. Narasimhaiah
- The Story of English in India (2006) by N. Krishnaswamy and Lalitha Krishnaswamy
- The Queen's Hinglish: How to Speak Pukka (2006) by Baljinder K Mahal
- This Gift of English: English Education and the Formation of Alternative Hegemonies in India (2009) by Alok Mukherjee
- Chutnefying English: The Phenomenon of Hinglish (2011) edited by Rupert Snell and Rita Kothari
- Writing India, Writing English: Literature, Language, Location (2011) by G.J.V. Prasad

Indian Literature in English: Beginnings

Earliest Work in English

- Travels of Dean Mahomet (1793)
  - The first book written by an Indian in English
  - By Sake Dean Mahomet
    - Traveler, surgeon and entrepreneur
  - Extols conquerors like Genghis Khan, Timur and the first Mughal Emperor Babur
  - Describes several important cities in India
  - Describes military conflicts in India

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Earliest Verse Play

- The First Parsee Baronet (1866)
  - First Indian verse play in English
  - Written by C. S. Nazir (Cooverjee Sorabjee Nazir)
  - Subtitle: “Being passages from the life and fortunes of the late Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy Baronet”
  - Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy was a Parsi-Indian merchant and philanthropist

Earliest Novel

- Rajmohan’s Wife (1864, 1935)
  - The first published English novel by an Indian
  - Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s debut novel
  - Never wrote in English again and wrote Bengali novels: Durgesh Nandini, Anandamath
  - Stirred nationalist feelings
  - First serialized in 1864; appeared as a book in 1935
  - Protagonist is 18-year-old Matangini, wife of Rajmohan

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The Plot

- A complicated tale involving family treachery, dacoity, kidnapping Set in an East Bengal village called Radhaganj in late 19th century
- The melodramatic story of the sufferings of Matangini at the hands of Rajmohan, who is a bully
- Matangini loves Madhav, her sister Hemangini's husband
- She overhears a plot by her husband Rajmohan to steal an important document from Madhav
- She loves her sister dearly and Madhav in more ways than one.
- So she immediately sets out in the middle of the night through the forest to her sister's house to warn them.
- The book shows the importance of women as Matangini is the one who foils the plot.
- She is shown as a beautiful woman who is not scared to break rules

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Early Playwrights

- Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)
  - Plays are symbolic, allegorical, humanistic, universal
  - Firmly rooted in Indian ethos
- Harindranath Chattopadhyay (1898-1990)
  - Plays showing socialist sympathies
  - Abu Hassan (1918)
  - The Widow and the Parrot
  - The Coffin
  - The Evening Lamp

Vallath

Early Novelists

- T. Ramakrishna Pillai (1854-?)
  - Padmini: An Indian Romance (1903)—a village girl prefers a poor but pure-souled man to an aristocrat
  - The Dive for Death: An Indian Romance (1911)—a por chivalrous hero is loved by a princess; he dives from a cliff to save an enemy; finally discovered to be a prince
- Toru Dutt (1856-77)
  - Bianca or the Young Spanish Maiden (1878, unfinished novel)
- A. Madhavaiah (1872-1925)
  - Satyananda (1909)
  - Clarinda (1915)—about a woman Christian convert of Tanjore
  - Thillai Govindan (1916)—psychological development of a South Indian Brahmin youth who loses his faith but rediscovers it in the Gita
  - Markandeya (1922)
  - Nanda, the Pariah who overcame Caste (1923)
  - Manimekalai (1923)
  - Lieutenant Panju, a Modern Indian (1924)

Vallath

Early Novelists

- Krupabai Satthianadhan (1862–94)
  - First Indian woman author of an autobiographical novel in English
  - Saguna: A Story of Native Christian Life (1895)
  - Kamala, A Story of Hindu Life (1895)
- Shevantibai M. Nikambe (1865-?)
  - Ratanbai: A Sketch of a Bombay High Caste Hindu Young Wife
- K.S. Venkataramani (1891-1952)
  - Murugan the Tiller (1927)
  - Kandan the Patriot (1932)

Vallath

Early Novelists

- Sirdar Jogendra Singh (1877-1946)
  - Nur Jahan: The Romance of an Indian Queen (1909)—historical novel set in the Mughal period
  - Nasrin: An Indian Medley (1911)—describes the decadent aristocratic life in North India
  - Kamla (1925) and Kamni (1931)—social fiction

Vallath

Early Novels

- Raj Lakshmi Debi's The Hindoo Wife or The Enchanted Fruit (1876)
- Ram Krishna-Punt's The Boy of Bengal (1866)
- Tarachand Mookerjea's The Scorpions or Eastern Thoughts (1868)
- Lal Behari Day's Govinda Samantha, or The History of a Bengal Raiyat (1874), revised as Bengal Peasant Life (1908)
- Shoshee Chunder Dutt's The Young Zamindar (1883)

Vallath

Major Writers of the 19th Century

Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809-1831)

- First Indian poet in English
- Derozio was born in Calcutta in 1809, the same year as Tennyson and Darwin
- Of mixed Indo-Portuguese descent
- He was the assistant headmaster of Hindu College, Kolkata.
- He was also associated with the Young Bengals, a group of free thinkers emerging from Hindu College who were guided by Derozio himself.
- He owned and edited a newspaper called The East Indian, where he wrote and commented extensively on contemporary issues.
- Derozio's radical ideas had profoundly influenced the Bengal Renaissance of the 19th century.
- Inspired by British Romantic poets, his poetry is rich in Indian myth and imagery
- Poems was the first volume of Derozio's work published in 1827. He died of cholera at the age of 22
- In poems like 'Faqueer of Jungheera', 'Song of the Hindustanee Minstrel' and 'To India-My Native Land' he laments the imperial subjugation of India and expresses hope for a brighter future
- A Byronic melancholy is a keynote in his poetry
- Edward Fairley Oaten, in A Sketch of Anglo-Indian Literature (1908), considers Derozio "Anglo-Indian"

Vallath

Young Bengal Movement

- In 1826 Derozio joined the Hindu College, Calcutta as a teacher
- He wanted to spread intellectual revolution among young students.
- He influenced many people in the college
- He encouraged them to think freely, and promoted radical ideas in his teachings
- This started an intellectual revolution in Bengal called the Young Bengal Movement.
- His followers of the Young Bengal Movement were also known as Derozians.
- The Derozians attacked old traditions and decadent customs.

Vallath

Derozians

- Krishna Mohan Banerji (1813-85)
- Ram Gopal Ghose (1815-68)
- Harish Chunder Mukherji (1824-60)
- Rajendra Lal Mitra (1824-91, called by Tagore as Sabyasachi)
- Girish Chunder Ghosh (1829-69)

Major Works

- Fond of sonnet form
  - Series of five sonnets addressed to ‘Night’
  - “Sonnet: To the Moon”
  - “The Golden Vase”
  - “Sonnet: Death, My Best Friend”
- Had an eye for Nature in its twin aspects of Beauty as well as Terror
- Sang in defence and in praise of his country
  - As in “To India—My Native Land”
- Satire was called Don Juanics

Vallath

“The Harp of India”

- A patriotic poem by Derozio which pays a glorious tribute to the rich tradition of the art of Indian poetry
- Here he laments the decline of the rich tradition of Indian literature during the period of British domination of India
- This poem is one of his many sonnets

Vallath

“The Fakir of Jungheera”

- A narrative verse with Byronic echoes
- Presents the Brahmin widow Nuleeni and the strange vicissitudes of her star-crossed life
- Nuleeni gets a brief new lease of life when she is carried away by the Fakir, her former lover at a time when she was about to be consumed by the flames on the funeral pyre of her dead husband
- Her lover dies in the hands of her furious father and she finds her peace in blissful death in the arms of her dead lover

Vallath

“To the Pupils of Hindu College”

- A poem that Derozio dedicated to the students he had taught during his tenure at the Hindu College
- It talks about the great benefits that acquiring an education will have in these students’ lives
- However, it also makes a point about the nobility of the teaching profession
- This is not immediately recognized in the poem
- Still, a close reading of its text will confirm that it was part of Derozio’s intention in writing this poem to speak of the greatness of the British administration’s so-called civilizing mission.

Vallath

Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-73)

- Wrote exclusively in English in his early writing career
- A pioneer of Bengali drama
  - Translations from Bengali
    - Razia, Empress of Inde (1858)
    - Sermista (1859)
    - Ratnavali (1858)
    - Is This Called Civilization (1871)

Vallath

Other Works

- Meghnad Bodh Kavya (1861)
  - Tragic blank verse epic
  - Exceptional in style and content
- Tilottama
  - Another blank verse epic
- “The Captive Ladie”
  - A long narrative poem about the mother of his close friend
  - Published under the pseudonym Timothy Penpoem
  - Describes the exploits of the Rajput King Prithviraj, in close imitation of English poets
  - Prithviraj abducts the Kanouj king’s daughter, wages an unsuccessful battle against a Muslim invader, kills himself and his queen
- Visions of the Past (1849)
  - On the Christian theme of temptation and fall
  - Written in Milton blank verse
- Also wrote poems about the sorrows and afflictions of love as spoken by women

Vallath

After the Indian Mutiny

Socio-cultural Changes

- Evangelical Revival in England
  - Under the leadership of the brothers John and Charles Wesley and their friend George Whitefield
  - Parallel to the Great Awakening in the United States
  - Christian revivals in the 1730s and 1740s
- Advent of steamships in the 1840s
  - The first successful steamboat was the Clermont, which was built by American inventor Robert Fulton in 1807
  - Became the chief means of transatlantic cargo shipping as well as passenger travel

Vallath

Socio-cultural Changes

- Changes in recruitment to East India Company service in the 1850s
  - The East India Company's commercial monopoly was broken in 1813
  - From 1834 it remained a managing agency for the British government of India
  - The Company lost that role after the Indian Mutiny (1857)
  - In 1873 it ceased to exist as a legal entity.
- “Going native” began to be considered a criminal offence of the whites, after 1857

Vallath

Romesh Chunder Dutt (1848-1909)

- Civil servant, historian, writer
- Cousin of Toru Dutt and Aru Dutt
- Translated Ramayana and Mahabharata in Tennyson's 'Locksley Hall metre'
- Wrote 4 historical novels including
  - Slave Girl of Agra
    - Set in the Mughal empire in the 17th century
  - The Lake of Palms
    - An English version of his novel Sansar; set in 19th century Bengal

Vallath

Other Works

- Scholarly Studies
  - The Peasantry of Bengal (1875)
  - The Literature of Bengal (1879)
  - A History of Civilisation in Ancient India (3 vols., 1889)
  - Famine and Land Assessment in India (1900)
  - The Economic History of India (2 vols., 1902, 1904)—first history of a colonial regime written from the point of view of the subject of a colonial empire (economics of colonialism)

Vallath

Toru Dutt (1856-77)

- Toru and her sister Aru lived with their family in Europe
  - Her uncles are the writers Shoshee Chunder Dutt (1815-65), Hur, Greece and Omesh
  - A family anthology of poetry called The Dutt Family Album came in 1870
- Toru wrote poems and a novel each in French and English
- Toru Dutt's A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields (1876)
  - Contains original poems as well as translations from French poets
  - 165 poems which includes translations from about 70 French poets including Victor Hugo
- Bianca, or the Young Spanish Maiden
  - Unfinished English novel published posthumously
- Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan
  - Translations and adaptations from Sanskrit literature

Vallath

“Our Casuarina Tree”

- The speaker, living abroad, pines for her native land
- Even when the speaker is in foreign lands, she hears the dirge-like lament of the casuarina tree in the courtyard of her house
- The speaker makes a wish for the tree: “Mayst thou be numbered when my days are done / With deathless trees – like those in Borrowdale”
    - Wordsworth immortalized the yew trees of Borrowdale in his poem ‘Yew Trees’
- The memory of the tree in the courtyard of her Indian house is her bond between past and present
- The tree is also a symbol of the motherland

Vallath

“Lakshman”

- The poem is in the form of a conversation between Sita and Lakshman after Ram goes to capture the golden deer for Sita
- Sita hears Ram’s cry for help and urges Lakshman to go after him
- Lakshman is in a dilemma because he knows his duty is to protect Sita, but also understands Sita’s plight
- Lakshman’s character is powerfully drawn in the poem
- Lakshman is presented as a stoic hero who doesn’t take offense at Sita’s wild and angry words

Vallath

“The Lotus”

- A Petrarchan sonnet which argues that the Lotus (national flower of India) is better than the Lily (national flower of France) and Rose (national flower of England)

- The Lotus is the queen of flowers because it is as stately as the Lily and as delicious as the Rose

Vallath

“Baugmaree”

- Describes the various colors and plants that Dutt's speaker observes in her garden home, ranging from tamarinds to mangoes, to palms and seemuls, to bamboo and lotus plants

- After listing the wide variety of plants in the garden that surrounds the home, Dutt's speaker mentions the intoxicating quality of the plants' beauty and suggests that the garden represents a type of "primeval Eden.”

- This allusion to the Bible not only underscores the religious and spiritual significance that Dutt invests in nature, but also the importance of Christianity and Christian imagery to Dutt.

Vallath

“The Tree of Life”

- Relates the experience of a speaker who begins with her eyes closed and with her "hand [...] in [her] father's," passing time "in silence."
- Suddenly, this scene of quiet meditation is interrupted by a vision, where the speaker imagines her father and herself to be in a "vast plain," centered on "a tree with spreading branches and with leaves."
- There, the speaker imagines an "Angel," standing "beside the tree," who "pluck[s] / A few small sprays, and [binds] them round [her] head."
- When the leaves of the tree touch the speaker's head, "the fever in [her] limbs" disappears, and she asks for the Angel to also treat her father with the leaves.
- When the Angel moves to treat the speaker's father, however, he whispers "Nay" and does not go through with it.
- Still, the speaker is struck by the look "of holy pity and of love divine" in the Angel's face.
- As the poem closes, the speaker's vision of the Angel fades, and she finds herself once again by her father's bedside, with her hand "close-prest" in his.

Vallath

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

- Gained modern India a place in world literature
- Image of a prophet; Mahatma Gandhi called him “The Great Sentinel”
- Wrote primarily in Bengali; translated many of his poems into English
  - “The Child” is a poem written originally in English inspired by the performance of a passion play in Germany
  - As a child, he hated learning English
- In his active literary career of 65 years, he probably wrote the largest number of lyrics ever attempted by a poet
- Jiban Smriti (My Reminiscences) is his autobiography
- Yeats was introduced to Tagore by the artist William Rothenstein, and it is to him that Yeats addressed his introduction to Gitanjali

Vallath

Early Works

- Tagore’s memoirs on his early life
  - Reminiscences (1911)—written when he was 50
  - My Boyhood Days (1945)—written in his 80s
- Speeches
  - Sadhana (1913)—lectures delivered at Harvard
  - Personality (1917)
  - Nationalism (1917)
  - Creative Unity (1922)
  - The Religion of Man (1930)—Hibbert lectures delivered at Oxford in May 1930
  - Man (1937)—two lectures delivered at Andhra University
  - Crisis in Civilisation (1941)—translated from Bengali original

Vallath

Gitanjali (Song Offerings)

- First published by Macmillan in 1913
- Collection of 103 poems in English (157 in Bengali)
  - In 1912, just before he left for England for medical treatment, he had tried translating some of his Bengali poems into English
  - He lost this manuscript in the Tube Railway in England, but was retrieved by his son Rathindranath
  - This manuscript was much praised by William Rothenstein and WB Yeats and took the London literary world by storm
- Motto: “I am here to sing thee songs”
- Opens with these lines: ‘Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure. This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again, and fillest it ever with fresh life.’
- Yeats wrote in the Introduction: “I have carried the manuscript of these translations about with me for days, reading it in railway trains, or on the top of omnibuses and in restaurants, and I have often had to close it lest some stranger would see how much it moved me.”

Vallath

Features of Gitanjali

- Subject: the relationship between a human being and the divine
- Tagore drew upon the Vaishnava tradition for his imagery
- Poems have the tender tone of conventional love poems
- Several motifs repeated throughout the poems
  - The speaker’s smallness and helplessness before his lord
  - The need to live a life of truth, purity, and simplicity, thus reflecting the nature of the divinity he serves
  - The union with the divine does not mean renunciation of the senses but a fuller appreciation of the beauties of the natural world
  - Toward the end of the volume, the writer turns to the subject of time and anticipates his own death

Vallath

Other Poetry Collections

- The Gardener (1913)
- The Crescent Moon (1913)
- Fruit-Gathering (1916)
- Stray Birds (1916)
- Lover’s Gift and Crossing (1918)
- The Fugitive (1921)
- Fireflies (1928)
- Poems (1942, posthumous)

Vallath

Tagore’s Novels in English Translation

- The Wreck (Naukhadubi, 1906)
  - Originally published in 1906
  - Two marriage parties are drowned in a boat-wreck, the only survivors being one of the bridegrooms and the other’s bride
  - It starts off with a boat overturning due to a storm and the mistaken identity which is its resul
  - Ramesh picks up a survivor of the tragedy thinking her to be his newly wedded wife whose face he has never seen.
  - He brings her home and showers her with affection.
  - When she discovers that Ramesh is not really her husband she leaves him. Interposed with exquisite descriptions of nature The Wreck is a moving story of complicated human relationships told with power and feeling.

Vallath

Tagore’s Novels in English Translation

- Gora (1910)
  - Gora consists of two parallel love stories of two pairs of lovers: Gora and Sucharita, Binoy and Lolita.
  - Their emotional development is shown in the background of the social and political problems prevalent in India towards the end of the 19th-century.
  - The novel begins on a light note of a young man Binoy being affected by the pangs of love on hearing a Baul singer, and almost instantaneously, falling in love with a beautiful young girl, Sucharita.
  - Binoy, with the honest zeal of an ardent lover pines to embrace his lady love in a life long vow of bliss and joy.
  - Gora grows up as an orthodox, almost fanatic, Hindu, until he learns that he is but a foundling, his mother being Irish
  - Finally, he becomes a true Indian when the divisions between Hindu, Muslim and Christian disappear from his mind
  - It brings forth the shallowness of man’s beliefs in the purity of his body and his ignorance of soul’s true agenda in this life
  - It exhibits the path of self discovery that the characters undertake to understand their true purpose and inclination in life, with great drama being played in the name of religion, freedom and reforms.

Vallath

Tagore’s Novels in English Translation

- The Home and the World (Ghare Bhaire, 1916)
  - In revolutionary Bengal of 1905, the autobiographical narratives of 3 characters intertwine: Nikhil, the idealistic husband; Bimal, his wife; and Sandip, his friend
  - Much of the book comprises their internal and external dialogues as they consider serious issues such as
    - Tradition, the roles of men and women in Indian culture,
    - The nature of political change, the occasional need for violence in political activism
    - Rhetorical exercises such as the weighing of the public good.
  - It is a tragic example of the conflict between realism and idealism.

Vallath

Other Works

- Poems
  - “The Gardener”
  - “The Crescent Moon”
  - “Fruit-Gathering”
  - “Waiting”
  - “On the Nature of Love”
  - “Paper Boats”
  - “Where the Mind Is Without Fear”
  - “Endless Time”
  - “Freedom”
  - “Bhagna Hriday”
- Short stories, plays, prose, philosophy

Vallath

Thesis Plays

- Sanyasi
  - An ascetic escapes from the love of an orphan girl
  - When he returns to her, she is dead
- The Cycle of Spring
  - A middle-aged king is afraid of approaching old age
  - When a poet stages a symbolic play for him, the king learns to accept change
- Chitra
  - Arjuna rejects the princess Chitra for not being beautiful
  - When the god of love transforms her into a beautiful maiden, he is infatuated with her
  - When she resumes her original form, he learns that true love transcends physicality
- Malini
- Sacrifice
- Natir Puja (The Court Dancer’s. Worship)
- Red Oleanders
- All these plays show the importance of a liberated mind against orthodoxy and physical prowess

Vallath

Psychological Dramas

- The King and the Queen
- Kacha and Devayani
- Karna and Kunti
- The Mother’s Prayer
- These plays throw show insight into the female mind

Vallath

Mukta-Dhara

- Published in 1922
- Tagore’s greatest play with a political slant
- A protest against the onslaught of machinery and technological power on human personality
- It conveys the idea that human values are paramount, and to ignore this truth is to canter toward self-destruction
- It takes its name from mountain stream named Mukta-dhara which means a free rivulet.
- The drama is full of social injustices that vex the modern world-the misuse of science by men, the pursuit of pleasure and the worship of the machine race and the system of education.
- A protest against the onslaught of machinery and technological power on human personality
- It conveys the idea that human values are paramount, and to ignore this truth is to canter toward self-destruction

Plot

- Chitrakoot, ruled by the despotic King Ranajit, is dependent for its financial might on Shibtarai. Ranajit attempts to control it by denying the Shibtarai people water. He builds a dam across the waterfall Muktadhara. The play chronicles the hostilities between the denizens of the two states and the non-violent resistance to Ranajit by the enigmatic singer-sage, Dhananjoy Boiragi.

- The heir to the throne, Abhijit, nurtures a deep attachment with the free flowing Muktadhara. His love for the waterfall and his refusal to allow the King to exploit the people of Shibtarai prompts him to demolish the dam. The force of the waterfall is let loose and in the process Abhijit too is swept away.

Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902)

- Born Narendranath Datta
- Inspiring personality, monk, philosopher, orator, author
- Disciple of the mystic Ramakrishna Paramahamsa (1836-86)
  - Founded Ramakrishna Mission
- Introduced Vedanta and Yoga to the West
- Best known in the United States for his ground breaking extempore speech on 11 September 1893 World's Parliament of Religions
  - Held in Chicago
  - Opening words: "Sisters and brothers of America"
  - In which he introduced Hinduism to America
  - Called for religious tolerance and an end to fanaticism
  - Romain Rolland said it was like a "tongue of flame"

Vallath

Themes of Lectures

- To the West (“I have a message to the West as Buddha had a message to the East)
  - Bring to the West the true nature of Hinduism
  - Essential unity of all religions
  - Need to reject sectarianism and fanaticism
- To Indians
  - Current degradation of the country—causes and cure
  - India’s medieval insularity and diffidence
  - Superstition and obscurantism
  - Devaluation of women
  - Bad education

Vallath

Cornelia Sorabji (1866-1954)

- Indian lawyer, social reformer and writer
- First female graduate from Bombay University
- First woman to study law at Oxford University and the first woman advocate in India
- Short story collections
  - Love and Life Behind the Purdah (1901)
  - Sunbabies: Studies in the Child Life of India (1904)
  - Between the Twilights: Being Studies of Indian Women by One of Themselves (1908)
  - Indian Tales of the Great Ones among men, Women and Bird-People (1916)
- Memoirs
  - India Calling: The Memories of Cornelia Sorabji (1935)
  - India Recalled (1936)

Vallath

M.K. Gandhi (1869-1948)

- Born in 1869
- Did not learn English until the last three years of high school
- Learning English made him a stranger at home
- In London, studied law from 1888, where he learnt the language and became a voracious reader
- In 1893, sailed for South Africa, spent two decades there in political activism and legal battles
- His own voice and style soon established

Vallath

The Story of My Experiments with Truth

- In Gujarati, the book was serialized in the weekly Navjivan
- In English, the book was serialized in the weekly Young India
- The book was translated from Gujarati to English by Mahadev Desai
- It was published in book form in 1925
- It covers the period of Gandhi’s life from his early childhood to 1920
- His life was inspired by Ruskin’s Unto This Last

Vallath

Hind Swaraj (1909)

- Written in Gujarati
- Rhetorically powerful
- In the form of a dialogue between Editor and Reader
- Translated it himself and published as Indian Home Rule
- Became an iconic work of Indian nationalism during the period of its South African ban 1919-38
- Central idea: History provided lessons, examples and even laws about the future of human action

Vallath

As an Editor of Newspapers

- Started his first paper Satyagraha, an unregistered weekly, in 1919
- Edited the English-language Young India (1919-32)
    - Used Young India to spread his unique ideology and thoughts
- In 1933 Gandhi began publishing a weekly newspaper, Harijan, in English
- Also published Harijan Bandu in Gujarati, and Harijan Sevak in Hindi
- Edited Gujarati monthly Navajivan

Vallath

Songs from Prison (1934)

- Gandhi made a number of translations of Indian lyrics into English during his stay in a British jail in India
- This was later adapted for publication by John S Hoyland with the title Songs from Prison
- The pieces are from Veda and the Upanishads, from the Mukundamala, and from bhaktas like Thulsidas, Surdas, Kabir, Nanak, Mirabai, Tukaram

Vallath

Manmohan Ghose (1869-1924)

- Brother of Sri Aurobindo
- One of the first Indian poets in English
- Poems published in book Primavera (1890) along with English authors Stephen Phillips, Laurence Binyon, Arthur Cripps
- In England, he was friendly with members of the Rhymers Club, such as Lionel Johnson and Ernest Dowson
- In his review of Ghose's poems, Oscar Wilde wrote: his "verses show us how quick and subtle are the intellectual sympathies of the oriental mind and suggest how close is the bond of union that may some day bind India to us by other methods than those of commerce and military strength"

Vallath

Works

- In his own lifetime, he published only a single collection of poems, Love Songs and Elegies (1898)
- Songs of Life and Death was published posthumously in 1926 with Laurence Binyon’s Introductory Memoir
- Yeats greeted this volume as “one of the most lovely works in the world”
- ‘Immortal Love: Songs of the Triumph and Mystery of Beauty’ and ‘Orphic Mysteries: Songs of the
  Pain, Passion and Mystery of Death’ are examples of his mature poetry

Vallath

Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950)

- Freedom fighter, philosopher, spiritual reformer, poet
- First writer of Indian blood and birth to produce a major literary corpus almost entirely in English
- Learned only English at first; Bengali and Sanskrit later
- Born in Bengal; lived in Baroda for many years
- Entered politics; organized a revolutionary network which even turned to terrorism, for which he was arrested and put in Alipore Jail
  - “Narayana Darshan” is about his mystic experience in jail
- Siddhi Divas—the day of his enlightenment
  - 24 November 1926

Vallath

As Editor of Newspapers

- Bandemataram was a daily started by Bepin Chandra Pal
  - Aurobindo wrote fearless editorials for this paper and was arrested
  - Then, Tagore wrote the celebrated poem “Rabindranath Salutes Aurobindo” in 1928
- Later, Aurobindo also edited the weekly paper Karmayogin (ran for a year)
  - A weekly review of national religion, literature, science, philosophy, etc.
- Along with Paul and Mirra Richard, he started Arya: A Review of Pure Philosophy (1914-21)
  - Aimed at presenting “a synthetic philosophy which might be a contribution to the thought of the new age that is coming upon us”
  - The Life Divine, The Future Poetry etc first appeared here

Vallath

Aurobindo's Spiritualism

- With his spiritual collaborator "The Mother," he founded the Sri Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry
- Formulated a spiritual vision of evolution
  - While the evolution from mind to supermind is inevitable, human beings can participate in the process consciously and hasten the birth of a new race
- Spiritual works
  - Essays on the Gita (1928)
  - The Life Divine (1939-40)
  - Heraclitus (1941)—comparative study of the Greek philosopher and Vedic-Upanishadic thought
  - The Synthesis of Yoga (1948)

Vallath

The Life Divine (1919)

- Appeared between 1914 and 1919
- It is a massive treatise on metaphysics and is also a work of prose art
- Central theme—the affirmation of a divine life upon earth and an immortal sense in mortal existence
- Deals with the theory of “integral yoga”
- Freedom from the world as a first step towards the transformation of the world as a vessel of the divine sat-chit-anaanda
- Offers a synthesis of western and eastern philosophy
- Praised by Aldous Huxley

Vallath

Savitri (1954)

- Aurobindo started writing Savitri when he was in Baroda and worked upon it for nearly fifty years
- An epic poem based on the Mahabharata, in 3 parts

- Twelve books is the manner of the epic
- Blank verse
- Subtitle: “A Legend and a Symbol”
- The characters undergo the evolutionary process, bringing divinity upon earth, transforming it spiritually
- In this epic he works upon a large canvas of history, geography, poetry, science, philosophy
- He deals with the origin of man, birth of the universe, birth of the gods – from the religious angle, from the mythological, the scientific, the philosophical and the yogic

Vallath

Future Poetry

- Aurobindo, in The Future Poetry (1917-20), held that the poetry of the future will more and more approximate to the mantra
    - This means that in the poetry of the future, the middlemen – intellect, senses and even imagination – should be minimized and eliminated, and the communication between the poet and the reader should take place in a swift step
- Poetry of the future will rekindle these five lamps of our being, ‘five suns’ – Truth, Beauty, Delight, Life and Spirit

Overhead Poetry

- Aurobindo's poetry can be best described as "Overhead Poetry"
- This means poetry arising from overhead planes:
  - the Higher mind
  - the Illumined Mind
  - the Intuition
  - the Overmind
- The theory of overhead poetry, or mantric poetry, means all one needs is an attentive and receptive ear, a mood of imaginative concentration, for radiant poetic communication

Vallath

Socio-Political Works

- The Renaissance in India (1920)
- The Foundation of Indian Culture (1953)—defends Indian culture against William Archer's attack in India and the Future (1917)
- The Human Cycle (1949, originally called The Psychology of Social Development)
- The Ideal of Human Unity (1919; revised 1950)
- War and Self-determination (1920; revised 1962)

Vallath

Aurobindo’s Plays

- Plays deal with different cultures and countries in different epochs
- Elizabethan style, imitating Shakespeare, mixing supernatural elements
- Perseus the Deliverer
  - Grounded on the ancient Greek myth of Perseus
- Vasavadutta
  - A romantic tale of ancient India
- Rodoguna
  - A Syrian romance
- The Viziers of Bassora
  - Romantic comedy which takes us to the days of great Haroun al Rashid
- Eric
  - Romance on Scandinavia, a story of love and war between the children of Odin and Thor

Vallath

S. Radhakrishnan (1888-1975)

- Interpreted India’s philosophy to the West
- Kalki or the Future of Civilization (1929)
    - A Gandhian warning about the increasing mechanization and industrialization of the modern world
- Translated the Bhagavad Gita, the Dharmapada, the Principal Upanishads and the Brahma Sutras

Vallath

Prose Works

- Indian Philosophy
  - Written in 2 volumes
  - First appeared in 1923 and the second four years later
  - Gives an account of the highest conceptions of Hinduism and an interpretation of Indian philosophy from within
  - A blend of Eastern conceptions with Western terminology

Prose Works

- Some of the major works include:
  - The Hindu View of Life (1926)
  - An Idealist View of Life (1929)
  - Eastern Religions and Western Thought (1939)
  - Religion and Society (1947)

Translations of the Bhagavad Gita

- Major translators of the Bhagavad Gita are
  - S. Radhakrishnan
  - C. Rajagopalachari (also retold Ramayana and Mahabharata)
  - Sri Aurobindo
  - Mahatma Gandhi
  - Edwin Arnold
  - Charles Wilkins
  - Annie Besant

Vallath

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964)

- Born in 1889 in Allahabad
- Student of natural sciences at Cambridge, and law in London
- Wide reading; Edwardian literary sensibility
- Wrote numerous articles, essays, pamphlets, letters
- Intertwined personal and public histories in his narratives

Vallath

Glimpses of World History (1934)

- Written during the 1930s
- Comprises nearly 200 sections
- 196 letters from Nehru to Indira
- Written entirely during Nehru’s prison life
- A broad view of the history of mankind, from 6000 BC including the rise and fall of civilizations, and histories of great heroes from across the world
- One of the earliest non-Eurocentric attempts at historiography

Vallath

An Autobiography (1936)

- Originally titled “In and Out of Prison”
- Dedicated to “To Kamala, who is no more”
- Also called “Toward Freedom” (1936)
- Written in prison during 1934-35
- Examines the rationale for his civil disobedience

Vallath

The Discovery of India (1946)

- Written in prison during 1942-46, while jailed for his participation in the Quit India Movement
- Broad view of Indian history, philosophy, culture
- Argued that India is a historic nation with a right to sovereignty

Letters from a Father to His Daughter

- Collection of 30 letters written in 1928 to his daughter Indira Gandhi when she was 10 years old
- Contain teachings about natural history and the story of civilisations
- The letters written in English were later translated into Hindi by the famous Hindi novelist Munshi Premchand

Vallath

Nirad C. Chaudhuri (1897-1999)

- Bengali author and scholar
- Pro-liberal and anti-conservative
- In his youth he read William Shakespeare as well as Sanskrit classics, and he admired Western culture as much as he did his own.
- He was opposed to the withdrawal of British colonial rule from the Indian subcontinent and the subsequent rejection of Western culture in independent India.
- “The intellectual in India”- first of his books to be published in India
- Describes his own writing as form of self-assertion
- Critics in India called him the “last British imperialist”

Vallath

Features of his work

- Ability to evoke a sense of place
- Humour
- Independence of judgement
- A sense of futility and recoil from established views which resulted in him being called anti-Indian and pro-British
- Phenomenally prolific writing

Vallath

Works

- The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian (1951)
- A Passage to England (1959)
- The Continent of Circe (1965)
- The Intellectual in India (1967)
- To Live or Not to Live (1971)
- Culture in the Vanity Bag (1976)
- Thy Hand, Great Anarch (1988)
- Got the Sahitya Akademi Award (1975) for Scholar Extraordinary, a biography of Max Muller (1974)
- Last work Three Horsemen of the New Apocalypse (1997)

Vallath

The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian (1951)

- Published by Macmillan on the recommendation of literary critic John C. Squire
- Chaudhuri's essay "The Objective Method in History" is part of this work
- In 1998, it was included, as one of the few Indian contributions, in The New Oxford Book of English Prose
- Records Nirad C. Chaudhuri's life
  - Birth in Bangladesh
  - His growing up in Calcutta
  - His mental and intellectual development
  - His observations of vanishing landmarks
  - Changing Indian situation and historical forces that was making exit of British from India an imminent affair
  - His fiercely independent responses to India's independence and to historical trends
- It has been described as being 'more of a national than personal history'
- Iyengar says that Chaudhuri's real aim is to write history, and the autobiographical exercise is merely a means to get the history started

Vallath

Dedication

- The novel begins with its infamous, controversial dedication, capitalized throughout on the very first page

- The dedication of the book runs thus:

- “To the memory of the British Empire in India,
  Which conferred subjecthood upon us,
  But withheld citizenship.
  To which yet every one of us threw out the challenge:
  "Civis Britannicus sum“ [Citizen of Britannia I am]
  Because all that was good and living within us
  Was made, shaped and quickened
  By the same British rule.

- Chaudhuri was hounded out of government service at the AIR, deprived of his pension, blacklisted as a writer in India and forced to live a life of penury as the result of this controversial dedication

Vallath

A Passage to England (1959)

- It is meant to be an ironical titular reply to E.M. Forster's A Passage to India
- An impressionistic account of five weeks in England, two in Paris and one in Rome
- Portrays a vivid account of his delightful discovery of his visit to England in the spring of 1955
- The author shows preference for some of the Victorian virtues of the British in this novel
- In this work he advances a thesis which he develops in his next books, the controversial Continent of Circe (1965)
    - That Englishmen who are kind and calm at home became offensive in India due to the climatic changes

Vallath

Other Works

- To Live or Not to Live
  - A treatise on social and family relations in India
- The Intellectual in India
  - Chaudhuri discusses India’s historical past and three main traditions – Hindu, Muslim and modern
  - He then suggests how the intellectual can survive in India, the stress being mainly on the utilitarian aspects rather than on the social responsibility of the Indian intellectual

Vallath

Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949)

- Bengali who lived in Hyderabad
- Called ‘the Nightingale of India’
    - She was given this sobriquet on account of having written beautiful, romantic, musical poetry
- The first Indian woman to become the President of the Indian National Congress
- The first woman to become the Governor of a state (Uttar Pradesh)
- Love predominant theme in her poetry
- Her works admired by leaders like Gopalakrishna Gokhale
- Her birthday is celebrated as Women’s Day in India

Vallath

Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949)

- First anthology was The Golden Threshold (1905)
  - Praised by Arthur Symons
  - Many poems are about common people engaged in daily vocations
- The Bird of Time (1912)
  - Songs of love and death
- The Broken Wing (1917)
- The Sceptred Flute (1943)
- The Feather of the Dawn (1961, posthumous)
- The Indian Weavers (1971)

Vallath

Poems of Sarojini Naidu

- “Bird sanctuary”
    - Nature (God) as the ideal refuge for birds of all types, where the poet would also take refuge, being a bird with a broken wing
- “The Queen’s Rival”
    - Based on a Persian legend
    - Queen Gulnaar is tired of her beauty; wants a rival
    - King Feroze brings many beautiful women from across the world, but Gulnaar is dissatisfied
    - At last her beautiful two-year-old daughter, like a fairy, snatches away Gulnaar’s mirror, and she says, laughing, ‘Here is my rival’

Vallath

Poems of Sarojini Naidu

- The Temple is Sarojini Naidu's trilogy of lyric sequences, sub-titled "A Pilgrimage of Love"
- "Indian Weavers"
  - About the different coloured clothes woven by Indian weavers
  - The poem describes the clothes for a new-born baby, a bride, and a dead man
- "Bangle Sellers"
  - The bangle-seller/narrator presents bangles as a symbol of the happiness of women in three stages of their life
    - a virgin maiden (silver and blue)
    - an expectant bride (golden yellow)
    - finally a mature matriarch (purple and gold-flecked grey)

Vallath

Poems of Sarojini Naidu

- “Palanquin Bearers”
- “Coromandel Fishers”
- “The Pardah-Nashin”
- “To a Buddha Seated on a Lotus”
- “The Bird of Time”
- “The Soul’s Prayer”
- “The Sins of Love”
- “The Silence of Love”
- “The Menace of Love”

Vallath

Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi (1887-1971)

- Popularly known as Kulpati Dr. K. M. Munshi or by his pseudonym Ghanshyam Vyas
- He was an Indian independence movement activist, politician, writer and educationist from Gujarat
- He was a well known name in Gujarati literature; wrote in Hindi and English also
  - Munshi has written mostly based on fictional historical and mythical themes
    - Jay Somnath (on Somnath temple)
    - Krishnavatara (on Lord Krishna)
    - Tapasvini (The Lure of Power)—a novel with a fictional parallel drawn from the Freedom Movement of India.
- Founded of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (1938)
- Served on the committees that drafted the Indian Constitution under the leadership of B. R. Ambedkar and the Ad Hoc Flag Committee that chose the country's flag in August 1947

Vallath

Major Works

- Patan Trilogy
  - Patan trilogy consists of three Gujarati historical novels
  - Patan Ni Prabhuta (transl.The Glory of Patan)
  - Gujarat No Nath (transl.The Lord and Master of Gujarat)
  - Rajadhiraj (transl.The King of Kings)
- Patan Ni Prabhuta (1916)
  - Asmita (self-consciousness) is the main theme.
  - Minaldevi, the mother of the king, craves for power at any cost, while Munjal, the amatya (minister) believes in the people's rule.
  - He is interested in the harmony and integrity of Gujarat.
  - Just to gain power, Minaldevi joins hands with Anandsuri but the people of Patan revolt and depose Minaldevi, who ultimately realizes the greatness of Patan.

Vallath

Major Works

- Gujarat No Nath (1917)
  - Puts forward the concept of the integrity of entire Āryāvarta
  - The novel emphasises that national unity is essential to face outside invasion and defend liberty.
  - Just to project this idea, the author introduces the fictional character of Kirtidev
- Rajadhiraj (1922)
  - The importance of Kak is further heightened here
  - The last of the series where Kak departs for Sorath.
  - In the absence of Kak, Revapal revolts in the region of Lata and declares independence, but the army of Patana crushes the revolt.
  - To bring about a union of Lata and Patana, Kak arranges the marriage of Mrinalkumvariba, the princess of Lata, with Maharaj Jaidev, but fails to establish peace.
  - He struggles hard to win over the disgruntled soldiers of Lata and at last becomes successful.

Vallath

Balachandra Rajan (1920-2009)

- An Indian diplomat and a scholar of poetry and poetics.
- He served as Chairman of the UNICEF Executive Board from 1955 to 1956
- Rajan's scholarly work covered a wide range of English poetry
- Rajan also wrote two novels

Vallath

Major Works

- The Dark Dancer (1958)
  - A sobering study of the conflicts of the Partition
  - It is much too deep and subtly allusive for a commoner’s zeal to categorize and label it only as a portrayal of a sociological confrontation between two cultures, in which convenient and facetious judgments are made of winners and losers
  - Portrays the quest of the Cambridge-educated Krishnan for identity and enlightenment
  - And it deals with the myth of the dark dancer, Shiva, the central symbol of the story
- Too Long in the West (1962)
  - A more light-hearted satire, influenced by Tagore's Farewell, My Friend
  - About a girl's return to her home village after an emancipating education in New York.

Vallath

Post-Independence Indian Poetry and Drama

Features of Post-Independence Poetry

- Disillusionment and identity crisis
- Poets tried to evoke the sense of “Indianness” both in content and language
- The Indian poets on par with the British and American poets of the modernist period
- A confident rejection of the romantic past
    - Instead they employ a direct, matter-of-fact, unsentimental tone
- Alienation and exile
    - Poets turn completely inward, resulting in a highly personal poetry, confessional in tone

Vallath

Techniques

- Intellectualized ironic and sarcastic tone
- The use of symbolism
- Words from regional languages
- Rhyme and stanzaic forms are replaced by free verse
- Verbal melody evoked through the use of alliterative and assonant words
- Poetry written in a clear, hard, unsentimental voice and in everyday language
- Later Postmodernist tendencies seem to promise a variety of new devices including parody, pastiche, collage, intertextuality and literary allusiveness

Vallath

Poets of the 1960s and After

Shiv K. Kumar (1921-2017)

- Poet, playwright, novelist, and short story writer
- He was born in Lahore, British India
- He is considered the most academic of Indian poets; modernist in style
- Received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1987 for his collection of poems *Trapfalls in the Sky* (1986)
- Received the Padma Bhushan in 2001

Vallath

Features of Poetry

- His poetry has two distinct and separate layers, one a mocking Western skepticism and the other, a cerebral sexuality
- Gives a distinct touch to Indian sensibility
- Experiences coloured by his sexuality, desires, broken marriage and life in India
- Social themes such as superstition, injustice, hypocrisy, poverty
- East-West encounter, Indian landscape, national identity, contemporary reality

Vallath

Major Works

- Poetry
  - *Articulate Silences* (1970)
  - *Cobwebs in the Sun* (1974)
  - *Subterfuges* (1976)
  - *Woodpeckers* (1980)
  - *Trapfalls in the Sky* (1987, Sahitya Akademi award)
- *The Last Wedding Anniversary* (1975, play)
- *The Bone's Prayer* (1979, novel)

Vallath

Major Poems

- “Indian Women”
- “Kali”
- “My Correspondent”
- “Pilgrimage”
- “Days in New York”
- “Woolgathering”
- “A Tibetan Refuge Woman”
- “At Whorehouse”
- “Broken Columns”, a sequence of twelve poems
- Thus Spake the Buddha
- Losing My Way, Peacock Books
- Voice of Buddha: A Poetic Transcreation of The Dhammapada
- Which of My Selves Do You Wish to Speak?
- Where Have the Dead Gone?

Vallath

“Indian Women”

- The infinite patience that the Indian women practice in their lives while they go through suffering at the hands of the sun, sex and poverty
- Also evokes India’s long history of political and historical upheavals
- They are passive receivers of others’ angry emotions
- Passive receivers of male love without their own participation
- It is the woman who fills the water pots by trekking long distances to fetch water for the family

Vallath

“Indian Women”

- She sits on the mouth of the village well like an empty pitcher waiting for her turn to collect water
- But the trickle of water is not deep enough to reflect her image with her eyes filled with tell-tale tears
- She pleats her Mississippi-long hair in braids of hope
- She listlessly scrawls zodiac shaped figures in the sand
- She will wait for her man there till even the shadows roll up their contours and are gone beyond the hills

Vallath

“Lear to Cordelia”

- Presents a good difference between intuition and reason
- King Lear craves for the love of his daughter Cordelia but realizes his desire is futile
- She reasons logically and replies mathematically that only half of her love can be given and the other half to her husband
- Lear did not expect a logical reply from his dear Cordelia and so further explains:
  - Come, my dearest, feign
    Some movement of the soul
    Beyond the empiric point
- But Cordelia finds that words are insufficient to express her feelings

Vallath

Nissim Ezekiel (1924-2004)

- Poet, playwright and editor born in Mumbai
- Belonged to Mumbai's Marathi-speaking Jewish community, known as the Bene Israel
- Ezekiel’s poetry is the poetry of a minority that is painfully aware of its own identity
- Was educated at and later taught in universities both in Mumbai and in London
- Received Sahitya Akademi Award in 1983 for *Latter-Day Psalms* and Padma Shri in 1988
- Edited many journals including *Quest*
- Contracted Alzheimer’s disease in his old age

Vallath

Ezekiel as a Poet

- Ezekiel is acclaimed as the father of post-independence Indian-English verse
- He is a poet of modern era presenting the authentic crisis of existence of modern man
- His poetry emerges from a self-questioning attitude
- His poetry centres on love, personal integration, the contemporary Indian scene, modern urban life and the spiritual side of life

Vallath

Major Works

- *Time To Change and other Poems* (1952)
- *Sixty Poems* (1953)
- *The Discovery of India* (1956)
- *The Third* (1959)
- *The Unfinished Man* (1960)
- *The Exact Name* (1965)
- *Snakeskin and Other Poems*, translations of the Marathi poet Indira Sant (1974)
- *Hymns in Darkness* (1976)
- *Latter-Day Psalms* (1982)
- *Collected Poems 1952-88* (1989)

Vallath

Major Poems

- Night of the Scorpion
- The Doctor
- Case Study
- Poster Prayers
- The Traitor
- Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher
- Latter-day Psalms
- The Railway Clerk
- Enterprise
- Goodbye Party For Miss Pushpa T.S.
- In India
- In the theatre
- The Professor
- The Company I Keep

Vallath

Plays

- *Three Plays*
  - *Nalini*
  - *Marriage-Poem*
  - *The Sleepwalkers*
- *Song of Deprivation*
- *Don’t Call It Suicide*
- *Who Needs No Introduction*

Vallath

The Sleepwalkers

- Indo-American farce
- Character Ganguli
- This play is a satire on the so - called liberal, modern, intellectual and educated men and women of progressive India.
- The play exposes the hollowness of the so-called elite class of today who still look up to Americans visiting India.
- Instead of being themselves and relying on their own heads they look forward to the ‘superior’ American heads; American town planner, educational advisor, architect, consultant, tea taster, garbage disposal planner, traffic control expert, even American wheat sunshine and air
- They are all lost in their own shallow knowledge.
- They are wearing masks and all are alike
- In a nutshell, it can be said that this play is an appropriate satire on the so-called liberal, modern, intellectual and advanced men and women of progressive India.
- Makes fun of the Indians’ craze for everything American; they are the sleepwalkers who are not aware of their situation
- Themes: lives of middle / upper class indians, clash between modernity and conservatism

Vallath

Don’t Call It Suicide

- A domestic tragedy in two acts, is a social criticism of the behavior of indifferent and callous individuals
- The play begins with the tormenting reminiscences of the suicide of a young man, develops under the murky, grim atmosphere of strain and pressure caused by the tragedy
- And it ends with a preventable suicide of a middle aged man, and leaves the reader/ audience flabbergasted and writhing with unbearable pain
- Mr. Nanda, a middle aged sensitive man is exchanging words with Mr. Sathe, a friend and impulsively tells him about the suicide of his twenty-five years old elder son
- Mr. Nanda terribly who in utter despondence and helplessness swallows the sleeping pills and dies

Vallath

Essays

- “Ideas and Modern Poetry”
- “The Knowledge of Dead Secrets”
- “Poetry as Knowledge”
- “Sri Aurobindo on Poetry”
- “Should Poetry be Read to Audience?”
- “K.N. Daruwalla”
- “Poetry and Philosophy”
- “Hindu Society”
- “Modern Art in India”
- “Thoreau and Gandhi”
- “Censorship and the Writer”
- “How Normal is Normality”
- “Tradition and All That a Case Against the Hippies”
- “A Question of Sanity”
- “Our Academic Community”

Vallath

“Night of the Scorpion”

- The poem evokes the stronghold of superstition within our social psyche
- Ezekiel recalls the night when his mother was stung by a scorpion; the responses to it reveal the character of everyone, including the suffering mother’s love
- The father reacts like a sceptic and a rationalist
- Despite everyone’s efforts, the mother suffered and is thankful that her children were spared

Vallath

Symbols

- The poem is interpreted as a symbolic juxtaposition of darkness and light
- The night, the scorpion, the poison and the suffering represent darkness
- The incessant rain stands for hope and regeneration
- Candles, lanterns, neighbours and ultimately the recovery of the mother represent light
- The poem can also be thought of as symbolic of Good and Evil

Vallath

“Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher”

- “The best poets wait for words” rather than pursue them; the poem is something found, not created
- In the case of poetry, and in the rather unintellectual activities of love and birdwatching, the attitude that is recommended is of passive alertness, not of anxiety, hurry or hyperactivity
- Describes the “slow movement” of love and poetry at the end of which the poet is released from his suffering by the poetry he creates

Vallath

“Enterprise”

- Based on the travellers on this journey
- About the inevitable disillusionment which greets the conclusion of any grand enterprise
- A rewriting of the biblical story of Exodus
- Describes a metaphorical journey toward a specific goal
- Some critics have noted that Ezekiel’s “Enterprise” is also his attempt to bring together two “homes”: his place of birth and his journey to a European city
- Last line: “Home is where we have to gather grace”

Vallath

“Background Casually”

- A commissioned poetic autobiography
- Describes his childhood, schooldays, stay abroad, return home, marriage, change of jobs
- Depicts the poet’s failures as well as achievements
- Portrays the poet’s uneasy relationship with India, his home
  - Experience of religious and communal discrimination
- However affirms that his roots lie very deep in India and he cannot get rid of his sense of being an Indian

Vallath

Did you know?

- “Naipaul’s India and Mine”
  - Ezekiel’s essay that responded to Naipaul’s book An Area of Darkness (1964)
  - Shows the importance of India in his life
  - “My quarrel with Mr. Naipaul, which I hope to conduct in a way that will be understandable to him, is not because of these condemnatory judgements of his, so fiercely, so blazingly expressed. My quarrel is that Mr. Naipaul is so often uninvolved and unconcerned. He writes exclusively from the point of view of his own dilemma, his temperamental alienation from his mixed background, his choice and his escape. That temperament is not universal, not even widely distributed, that choice is not open to all, the escape for most is not from the community but into it. To forget this is to be wholly subjective, wholly self-righteous, to think first and last of one”s own expectations, one”s extreme discomfort. If only Mr. Naipaul could have realized how utterly unreasonable this attitude is! It nearly undermines the validity of his arguments.”
  - “In the India which I have presumed to call mine, I acknowledge without hesitation the existence of all darkness Mr. Naipaul discovered. . . . To other countries I am a foreigner. In India I am an Indian”

Vallath

Major Poems

- “The Professor”
  - A satirical poem written in the form of a conversation between a geography professor called Sheth and his student
  - The professor is caricatured because of his erroneous dialect
  - Composed in Indian English, the poet mocks Indians who find it prestigious to speak in English rather than in their mother tongue
  - Included in Collected Poems
  - If you are coming again this side by chance,
Visit please my humble residence also.
I am living just on opposite house’s backside.

Vallath

Major Poems

- “My Cat”
  - Alludes to Verlaine’s “Cat and Lady” and Baudelaire’s “Le Chat”, both from mid-19th century
  - Ezekiel shows how his poetry diverges from past literary tradition—Verlaine’s cat brings up associations of evil while Baudelaire’s cat reminds the poet of his lover. In contrast, Ezekiel’s cat in “My Cat” is a perfectly normal cat, which does not bring up unnatural associations of any kind.
- Ezekiel chooses to show how unhinged the speaker is through his interaction with an everyday cat.
- Ezekiel embraces the tenets of modernism and chooses to delve into the human psyche, to show what truly might be unsettling in a relationship between a man and his cat.

Vallath

Major Poems

- “A Morning Walk”
  - From The Unfinished Man
  - An unnamed speaker describes his observations of the natural and human-made world as he takes a morning stroll.
  - Throughout the poem, the speaker's observations of the awakening world inspire his thoughts on subjects such as death and time.
  - Talks about Bombay as a barbaric city sick with slums.
  - Compares the city to Dante’s purgatory

Vallath

Major Poems

- “A Time to Change”
  - The speaker describes a stubborn workman who works hard in the soil. He is an allegory for the poet himself, who must toil over the blank page and language in order to create something with meaning.
- “How the English Lesson Ended”
  - Typical irony
  - Ezekiel shows the condition of female child in Muslim families, where at the school going and playing stage, they have to get married and become housewives
- “The Railway Clerk”
  - In the poem "The Railway Clerk " he represents the miserable plight of lower middle class as “My wife is asking for money Money, money where to get money? My job is such no one is giving bribe I wish I was a bird”
- Poems like “Tribute to Upanishads” and “Hymns in Darkness” are based on Hindu traditions and scriptures

Vallath

Major Poems

- “Poverty Poems”
  - The stark reality of India’s backwardness
  - He presents pictorial description of beggars begging near public places. Like a reformist, he finds a leverage to show the pathetic condition of poor sleeping on the railway platforms and on the sidewalk of the roads risking their valuable life. He also describes that some beggars are cunning, and they befool people to get alms.
- “Ganga”
  - The precarious and pathetic position of a poor maid servant
- The Truth About the Floods”
  - Describes the response of a group of urban students who visited a flood affected village for social service. They were more eager to get photographed while distributing biscuits for the hungry victims of flood
  - A satirical comment on the inefficiency of our administrative system, where Ezekiel himself becomes the witness of the whole episode

Vallath

Major Poems

- “Entertainment”
  - Describes a street performance
  - The gathered crowd gets dispersed by the time of its “anticipated payment” to the street show, they have recently enjoyed
  - The poet also shows the hardships of the life of the performers
  - The monkey is sad for its performance has remained unpaid
  - Anticipating time for payment, the crowd dissolves.
    Some, in shame, part
    With the smallest coin they have.
    The show moves on

Vallath

“Very Indian Poems in English”

- Poems that mix Indian vernacular and half-baked English
- Explores patterns of power that are associated with British colonial rule
- Lay bare the imperialistic and separatist tendencies that underlie cultural conflicts, and lead to social discord
- They contest English cultural hegemony by adopting Indian contexts and idioms
- They constitute a “geographical realism”

Vallath

“Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa TS”

- The poem is a part of his collection *Hymns in Darkness* and is in the form of a monologue
- The occasion is the farewell party hosted by a group of friends to Miss Pushpa who is going abroad to improve her prospects
- The poet makes fun of the way in which semi-educated people in India speak English
- He ridicules the errors in grammar, syntax and idioms which many Indians commit

Vallath

Summary

- The speaker says that their dear sister Miss Pushpa is leaving for a foreign country, and they all wish her bon voyage
- He says that they “are all knowing” the sweet nature of Miss Pushpa who “is smiling and smiling for no reason, but simply because she is feeling”
- The speaker goes on to say that her father was a renowned advocate in Bulsar or Surat, and that he is “not remembering” the correct place
- Then he suddenly remembers that the place is Surat
- He seems to be a poor speaker when he points out the irrelevant fact that he stayed there once with his uncle’s very old friend whose “wife was cooking nicely”

Vallath

Summary

- The speaker continues praising Miss Pushpa, and says that she is very popular with men and ladies also
- Whenever he asked her to do anything, she said, “just now only I will do it”
- Clearly the speaker means Miss Pushpa’s readiness to do any work, and the unnecessary use of “just” and “only” exhibit the Indian speaker’s ignorance of the usage of English words, creating laughter and fun
- He informs that Miss Pushpa “will do the summing up”, when the other speakers finish their talk
- Thus the poet makes good-humored fun of the faulty Indian way of talking English
- He also makes fun of parochial attitudes

Vallath

Jayanta Mahapatra (b. 1928)

- Bilingual poet and essayist from Cuttack, Odisha
- Part of the trio of poets, along with A K Ramanujan and R Parthasarathy
- Professor in Physics; started writing poetry at the age of thirty-eight
- Has authored 27 books of poems, of which 7 are in Oriya and the rest in English
- Edited the famous journal *Chandrabhaga*
- The first Indian English Poet to receive the Sahitya Akademi award (In 1981 for *Relationship*)
- Received Padma Shri in 2009

Vallath

Features of His Works

- Landscape poetry on the golden triangle Cuttack, Bhubaneswar and Puri, as well as Kalahandi
- Social life of Orissa and the rites and rituals of the people of Orissa
- Physical and psychological features of his country expressed in a metaphysical tone
- Deliberate use of imagery to evoke mental pictures
- Circle, sky, dawn, sun, moon and rain are recurrent symbols in Mahapatra’s poetry
- Symbolist-surrealist techniques
- His hopeless search for the meaning of human condition is an important characteristic of post modernism
- Relationship of the self with the other

Vallath

Major Poetry Collections

- *A Rain of Rites* (1976) – Much acclaimed collection of poems; major poems are:" Dawn at Puri," "Hunger," etc
- *Relationship* (1980, a long poem)
- *Life Signs* (1983) – Includes the poem "Evening Landscape by the River"
- *A Whiteness of Bone* (1992)
- *Shadow Space* (1997)
- *Bare Face* (2000)
- *Land* (2013)

Vallath

Relationship

- Won Sahitya Akademi Award in 1981
- Twelve sections
- Epigraph drawn from Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself"
- Reflects Mahapatra's major themes
  - Concern for the society
  - An existential sense of the self as detached from the outside world
- Also
  - Search for roots
  - A Hindu sensibility
- Not only interpersonal relationship, but that of man to time, to land, to generations past and yet to come, and the relationship of man to his own soul

Vallath

“Hunger”

- The title signifies the desire to eat something and also the desire for sexual gratification
- The speaker feels a weight upon his back – the urge for sexual gratification
- He finds himself before a fisherman, who is willing to ‘compromise’ on his daughter
- The fisherman is “trailing his nets” – laying out a net for customers
- He shows his white teeth but his eyes reflect his misery
- The man feels a weight upon him, symbolizing the weight of guilt and regret
- He can refuse the offer and turn back to escape the guilt
- But he remains silent

Vallath

“Dawn at Puri”

- The morning scene on the sandy sea-beach at Puri
- The crows are cawing endlessly and the speaker notices a skull on the holy sea-beach where dead bodies are cremated
- The sight evokes the extreme poverty of the people of Orissa
- The speaker then observes a large number of widows in white waiting to enter the Great Temple to perform holy rites
- These elderly women have despair in their eyes like creatures which have been caught in a net
- The only thing that sustains these women is their religious faith and the hope which is born of it
- At this moment a sudden thought occurs to the speaker
  - His mother who is getting old, had said that her last desire in life is that after her death she should be cremated on the same sandy beach

Vallath

“Grandfather”

- Set against the famine of 1866 called Na Anka that killed one third of Orissa’s population
- As mentioned in his biography, once his father handed him an old diary having yellow pages
- It was his grandfather’s diary
- This diary gave him many answers but also aroused many other questions

Vallath

“Grandfather”

- His grandpa’s diary is his tale of woe and describes how he starved to the point of death and then changed his faith to save himself
- He puts his grandfather’s suffering in this poem
- He recalls how people were so helpless, hunger made them eat tamarind leaves and some unknown tubers which led to epidemics
- Many people lost their lives, even domestic animals died due to the lack of fodder and grass, everywhere there was suffering, and endless hunger only jackals and other man eaters were happy

Vallath

“Dhauli”

- The poem is also called “Dhaulagiri”
- The place Dhaulagiri or Dhauli comes again and again in the poems of Mahapatra
- Offers surrealistic images of the Kalinga War
- This was the place where the bloody war was fought at the banks of river Daya, turning the river red
- He recalls those fallen and nameless ancestors who fought and died untimely
- Many of them didn’t even receive final rituals and their bodies were left for the birds at Dhauli
- But he also feels his words are useless
- Youth of the land is unaware of their sacrifice and praise Asoka for his peace
- Asoka who took millions of lives only to realize it was his mistake, stands as hero of peace in our history

Vallath

Other Major Poems

- “Total Solar Eclipse” describes the state of affairs in the town of Puri on 16th February 1980 when a total solar eclipse had occurred and it describes the sun’s transformation into a meek and humble personality

- “The Abandoned British Cemetery at Balasore” describes the author’s reflections upon entering a cemetery in which a number of British people lie buried; the speaker looks beyond the bitter imperial conflict during the British occupation of India, and shows sympathy for the many British soldiers who lost their lives in India and lie buried in forgotten cemeteries here

Vallath

- “Evening Landscape by the River” conveys an over-powering feeling of sadness; the past is recalled through fishermen who are lively characters in Mahapatra’s other poems as well

- “A Missing Person” presents a woman who is watching for her lover in the “darkened room”, and fails to find her “reflection in the mirror”

- “Lost” explores existential concerns; the poet recalls a woman he made love with and the past is brought back alive as he watches the changing contours of her body

- “The Hour before Dawn” records his concern for his ailing father; embodies the Hindu faith that parents are born to their children as their children

- “The Lost Children of America” describes the predicament of young American people who come in our country in search of peace and solace and wander their way into oblivion

- “A Pastoral Perhaps” reveals his concern for national identity and national concern

- “Bazaar Scene” describes the plight of an undernourished child and a poverty stricken mother. The poet speaks of a three year old girl child who had stolen a rotten mango from the fruit vendor’s basket and given it to her ‘crippled brother slumped on the road side.’

- “Indian summer”
    - The image of a somber wind moaning and of the priests chanting holy verses in such loud voices that it seems that the whole of India has opened its mouth. Next comes the image of crocodiles moving into deeper waters, to be followed by refuse-heaps smouldering and smoking under the sun. Finally, there is the image of a good wife relaxing in her husband’s bed through the long afternoon and continues dreaming, exhausted by the deep roar of funeral pyres.
- “A Morning Walk in Bhopal”

- “Freedom”
  - In the poem Freedom, Jayanta Mahapatra questions the concept of freedom popular in India and celebrated with great pomp and show. He compares and contrasts the life of politicians and godmen with that of the poor on the street
  - The poem has an arresting beginning when the poet says art time he sees the dead body (of his own country) float down the river.

    At times, as I watch,
    it seems as though my country’s body
    floats down somewhere on the river.

Vallath

“The Whorehouse in a Calcutta Street”

- Taken from the poetry collection, A Rain of Rites (1974)
- It is an unusual poem which speaks about poverty, hunger and scarcity on the one hand while on the other moral depravity, sexuality and lust
- Walk right in. It is yours.
  Where the house smiles wryly into the lighted street.
  Think of the women
  you wished to know and haven't.
- The poem begins when the protagonist is invited to enter into the brothel and is tempted by being told that there he would meet all the women he has always liked to meet, and whose images he has seen on posters and public hoardings
- The faces (women) on posters and hoardings are all there together, and the speaker has the freedom to pick and choose
- The speaker is told not to feel ashamed of his being there

- The speaker shifts his attention to the condition of the whorehouse. Though the house looks like a sacred house, the hollow courtyard suggests harbouring of great conspiracies

- The people in the light keep waiting for, expecting, those smiling, showy faces. Love is sold just as nightingales or cuckoos in cages

    - Dream children, dark, superfluous;
      you miss them in the house's dark spaces, how can't you?
      Even the women don't wear them—
      like jewels or precious stones at the throat;
      the faint feeling deep at a woman's centre,
      that brings back the discarded things:
      the little turnings of blood
      at the far edge of the rainbow.

- Dream children are left in the dark spaces. These women have their family, children and people which they need to focus on rather than the temporary relationship they find in the whorehouse

- The word Dream children takes us to Charles Lamb's Dream Children: A Reverie where the speaker fancies about the dream children in a different way in the poem

Vallath

- The woman is a victim, a mere tool, a mere money earning machine. Hunger and male exploitation have driven her into the flesh trade and she accepts her lot with stoic resignation.

- Mahapatra is extensively conscious of the poverty, the plight of the masses and women as victim of male lust in our society, it gives his poetry a tragic disillusioned tone.

- In the poems “Hunger” and “Whorehouse in Calcutta Street”, and “Man of His Night”, he resorts on the theme of sex. The tragic consciousness does not appear figuring in the poetry of any other Indian poet in English as desperately as in that of Jayanta Mahapatra

- K.A. Panikar writes, “Mahapatra’s treatment of sex and love is quite a contrast to the calculated cynicism of Ezekiel, the flaunting sick melody of Kamala Das, or the sly indulgence of Shiv Kumar.”

Vallath

A Whiteness of Bone (1992)

- 59 poems on a wide range of subjects
- Themes include landscape, time and contemporary reality
- Time theme which Mahapatra dealt with in The False Start and in Relationship resurfaces again in this poetry collection. Mahapatra's conception of time does not always have a simultaneous existence. It is spatial
- "Silent in the Valleys" is the first poem in this collection, which sets the tone of the book by laying emphasis on time
- Poetry collection include situational poems such as "Of Independence Day", "A Sullen Balance", "Red Roses for Gandhi" etc

Vallath

Rain Poems

- No Indian English poet has written so many poems on rain as Mahapatra has done
- Mahapatra’s well known ‘rain poems’ are:
  - In a Night of Rain
  - A Day of Rain
  - The Rain Falling
  - After the Rain
  - A Rain
  - Four Rain Poems
  - Rains in Orissa
  - Another Day in Rain
  - This is the Season of the Old Rain
  - Again the Rain Falls

Vallath

As a Postcolonial Poet

- Mahapatra writes to establish a native tradition by resisting the former coloniser and asserting national identity
- Like Raja Rao in Indian English fiction, Mahapatra also tries to create a contemporary myth out of Gandhi in his recent poetry
- Mahapatra like other leading post-colonial Indian English poets such as Nissim Ezekiel, A.K.Ramanujan, Shiv K. Kumar and a few others believe that our ‘identity be symbolized anew’
- Mahapatra wrote a short, straightforward poem titled ‘Gandhi’ in his first book of English poems, Close the Sky Ten by Ten (1970)
- The closing lines of the poem ‘Gandhi’ went like this:
- We have burst open his blood to bleed
- We are on his side perhaps
- We hate him
- We do not know it

Vallath

- Mahapatra effectively tries to create a contemporary myth out of Gandhi in his recent poetry. Gandhi has become a living myth suggesting non-violence, truth and righteousness. According to him, Gandhi becomes an integral part of post-colonial literature.

- Mahapatra's recent poem "Excerpts for Requiem" (A poem on Gandhi) is an example. Section XII begins with a statement

  You became the red earth

  that a perfect, constant gravity

  achieved through the aeons

- In a fitting eulogy to Gandhi, the poet acknowledges Gandhi's unseen presence amongst the Indians

  Today the voice that points a finger at you

  floats over the breath of discarded ideals,

  the breath of dead flowers day after day at Rajghat

Vallath

- Mahapatra observes that for the misguided people Gandhi has become a faded picture. With a tinge of irony, Mahapatra writes

  “What you left behind are

  faded pictures on bare office walls. A day

  every year as a national holiday”

- Mahapatra can be highly regarded as a post-colonial poet, if creating new national myths is part of post-colonial writing

A.K. Ramanujan (1929-1993)

- Major Indian poet, scholar and author, a philologist, folklorist, translator and playwright
- Born in Mysore; studied linguistics in Pune and did PhD from the Indiana University
- Taught in Universities of Chicago, Harvard, and other universities in the US
- Wrote both in English and Kannada; best known as a translator
- A group of his poems are called Hindoo Poems
- Awarded Padma Shri in 1976

Vallath

Themes in Ramanujan's Poetry

- A blend of the traditional and the modern
- An expatriate's memory and commitment to roots
- The conflict between the colonial identity of India and its historical and post-colonial identity
- Human sentiments, feelings and emotions presented as they are
- The web of family life, and the role of the individual within it
- The vitality of Indian culture and tradition, and the changes which have taken place in the structure of Indian society
- Allusions to Hinduism, Indian mythology and folklore

Vallath

Poetry, Fiction and Drama

- The Striders (1966) – The poet remembers events from his past in India, while located abroad; questions of memory and identity predominate; poems include:
  - “Looking for a Cousin on a Swing”
  - “Self Portrait”
  - “A River”
- Hokkulalli Huvilla, No Lotus in the Navel (1969)
- Relations (1971) – Includes “Love poem for a Wife”
- Samskara (1976) – Translation of UR Ananthamurthy’s novel
- Second Sight (1986)

Vallath

Studies of Literature

- The Interior Landscape: Love Poems from a Classical Tamil Anthology (1967) - The poems come from one of the earliest surviving texts of Tamil poetry, the Kuruntokai, an anthology of love lyrics probably recorded during the first three centuries AD; based on Tinai aesthetics

- Speaking of Siva (1973) - Selection of vacanas or free-verse sayings from the Virasaiva religious movement, dedicated to Siva as the supreme god; written by four major saints, the greatest exponents of this poetic form, between the tenth and twelfth centuries

- The Literatures of India (1974)

- Hymns for the Drowning (1981) – Poems about Vishnu, one of the Hindu Trinity

- Folktales from India, Oral Tales from Twenty Indian Languages (1991)

Vallath

“A River”

- Poets usually romanticize a description of a city or river, but the poet here gives a realistic description of the river Vaigai that flows through the city of Madurai

  - In Madurai,
    city of temples and poets,
    who sang of cities and temples,
    every summer
    a river dries to a trickle

- In the summer season the river is dry and in the thin stream, the ribs of sand are clearly visible

- A lot of straw and women’s hair clog the watergates

- The rusty bars show under the bridges

Vallath

Summary Contd.

- The speaker is in the city just for a day during a flood
- The people everywhere talk about the flood
  - The inch-by-inch rising of water
  - The number of stone steps submerged at the bathing place
  - The three village houses being washed away by the flood
  - How a pregnant woman and two cows, Gopi and Brinda were carried away by the strong current of the river “as usual”
- The poet describes this with blunt realism and wry humour
  - This shows the ubiquitous and inevitable nature of suffering

Vallath

Summary Contd.

- Poets have failed to address the complete truth about the river and about the city
- The new poets quote the old poets but are indifferent to the suffering of the pregnant woman
  - She had probably twins in her belly, which might have kicked the walls of her womb when she drowned in the river
- The speaker now refers to himself in the third person
  - This gives the poem greater objectivity
  - The speaker wants to focus on the external conditions he describes rather than on his own personal reaction to them

Vallath

“Small Scale Reflections on a Great House”

- Ramanujan’s version of Yeats’s theme of “great houses as monuments of a society’s history and culture”
- The speaker seems to be an inmate of a great house and he enumerates some of the events of his life in this house through his recollections of the past and his reflections on the past happenings
- Reflects Hindu customs, rituals, myths and superstitions that are part of a Hindu family’s everyday life

Vallath

As an Allegory

- The poem is a national allegory
- The house is a symbol for India as a country who has absorbed everything into it
- Parallels between the family’s fortunes and the modern social history of middle-class and upper-caste India as a whole

“Obituary”

- The speaker ironically talks about his father who died a trivial death of heart failure at the fruit market
- At his death, he left behind a “table heaped with newspapers full of dust, debts and daughters”, the Grandson named after the father, and a decrepit house
- The father’s body burnt properly in the pyre, where his eyes appeared like coins
- With his meagre achievements in life, the father managed to get two lines of obituary inserted in some newspaper in Madras which was sold to the hawker, from where it reached the grocer
- The poet reads the wrapping paper of jaggery and salt carefully these days to find those lines of his father’s obituary

Vallath

“Love Poem for a Wife 1”

- About how an unshared childhood separates an aging husband and a wife
- The speaker’s wife has only a hazy knowledge of the speaker’s childhood and she sometimes grows nostalgic during cousins’ reunions and try to recognize her husband from flashes of various recollections
- The poet in turn also feels a tinge of jealousy in not sharing his wife’s past
- The wife’s father who once protected her does not care for any memories now
- Now when the speaker’s wife has a heated argument with her brother, the speaker and the sister-in-law are helpless onlookers because they do not share their childhood
- The speaker then muses on marriage systems: Egyptian traditional method of marriage where princes are married to their sisters is perhaps better than the Indian ones that relied much on the scrutiny of horoscopes

Vallath

Other Major Poems

- “Of Mothers, Among Other Things” is about the speaker’s recollections of his mother’s youth and middle age
- “Relations” has a disparaging reference to his ancestors and speaks chiefly about his daughter and in a sarcastic tone, about his daughter’s daughter who is yet unborn.
- “The Last of the Princes” describes the decline and fall of the Mughal dynasty of emperors
- “Looking for a Cousin on a Swing”
  - The poet has a memory of a girl-cousin with whom he shared a ride on the swing
  - The girl-cousin, having gone to live in the city, is nostalgic about it, and longs for the swing in the city and the innocent joys it stands for
  - But she is bound to fail in her futile search

Vallath

- “Ecology”
  - Deals with the problem of environmental pollution; the speaker is devoted to his mother and is angry because his mother has a severe attack of migraine caused by the fragrance of the pollen of the flower of the red champak tree; the son decides to cut down the tree, but is prevented by his mother who sees the positive side of the tree in her garden
- “On a Delhi Sundial”
  - Describes life of Delhi in a picturesque manner

- “Snakes”
  - The poet is reminded of snakes by the yellow veins of books in a library or museum
  - A poor snake-charmer once visited his home; the poor take any risk only to extinguish the starvation of the family by providing entertainment to the rich
  - The poet is reminded of a snake when he sees his sister’s long hair
  - Bruce King says, ““The poem presents an image, a complex of feelings, distilled memories and events which are not elaborated or commented upon. But as it begins in the present ‘now’ of museums of book stacks which contrast with rural India and family life, the poem celebrates the liberation from the fears of the past, ‘ghosts’ from which Ramanujan now feels safe.”

Vallath

- “Some Indian Uses of History on a Rainy Day”
  - Structured in three stanzas, the poem tries to juxtapose ironically the ancient Hindu ethos with the situation of the modern Hindu.
- “Blindspots”
  - The poem hints at the failure of physical parts in human life. The poem tries to bring in the idea that physical organs are sensitive to physical things but fail to read the thought in the minds of people

- “Death and the Good Citizen”
    - The poet contemplates the ways of disposing the body after the death. He discusses about three types of cremation—natural, Hindu customary ritualistic and Christian traditional funeral
- “The Guru”
    - A satire on the so called gurus in our society. According to the poet, the ‘Guru’ in the poem is a hypocrite who urges his disciple to forgive animals and birds but not men and women of their faults.

- Three “Hindoo Poems”—“The Hindoo: He Doesn’t Hurt a Fly or a Spider Either”, “The Hindoo: He Reads His Gita and is Calm at All Events”, “The Hindoo: The Only Risk”

- “The Striders”

  - The poet thinks on water bugs (striders) and compares them to prophets

  - “See them perch / on dry capillary legs/ weightless / on the ripple skin / of a stream. / No, not only prophets / Walk on water.”

- “Poona Train Window”
  - The observations of a train traveller looking out of his window
  - Powerfully disturbing images: tea that “darkens like a sack traveller’s urine” and a man between two rocks recalling the image of “the symmetry / of human buttocks”
- “Of Mothers, Among Other Things”
  - The poet’s sense of grief for the helpless mother

No Fifth Man

- The poem begins with a conversational tone to tell a story. It is based on an old Sanskrit parable of four brahmans who they though acquired knowledge, lacked commonsense.

- The story begins when five brahmans meet again in the woods outside after their training abroad. They met a dead tiger in the woods and wanted to bring it back to life, as they had learnt ‘the sixty four arts’

- The three of them gave it skin, bone and legs and the tiger stood lifeless waiting for life to be instilled in it. The fourth one chanted a mantra to give life. The tiger pounced on them and killed them all

- The fifth Brahman was saved because of his commonsense.

Vallath

Love Poems (“Love 1 to Love 6”)

- Express different moods like his well known poems, “Love Poem for a Wife I”, Love Poem for a Wife II” and “Love Poem for Wife and her Trees.”
- In "Love 1: what she said “, though the man was cold and also a rapist, the woman lives with him for his 'heart is a piece of gold'. Thus, the poet states:
    - Yet I grow lean.
    - His heart is gold
    - to my greed. My eyes are fed
    - when he turns his head
- There is an emphasis of true love in “Love 2”

Vallath

- If Love wanes with advancing age, in "Love 3”
  - 'the hours brown/blood tide more ebb/ than flow, the women loved remain young for ever in "Love 4".
- If for the woman the man she loved grows older in time, for the man, she remains the same over the years. Thus, writes the poet:

I love him, she said

at eighteen

But he’s seventy

I said, forgetting

at sixty three

that’s all the women

I've ever loved

have stayed eighteen

for ever

Vallath

- “Love poem 5”
  - A sonnet in three quatrains and an ending couplet, depicts the act of love making through appropriate imagery
- “Love 6”
  - Ramanujan speaks of love in terms of green leaves and flowers, and finally blindness. Thus he says, Though blindness cannot see,

> It can hear the hours
> chime, now close now far, from clocks
>
> across any shop-window city,
>
> a hall of mirrors of squirrels,
> till the blind eye begins
>
> to look for grey within grey,
>
> skyscrapers in silhouette,
>
> every cell lit in gold without waiting for night

Vallath

Major Essays

- “Where Mirrors Are Windows: Toward an Anthology of Reflections” (1989)
  - Reflects on Indian folklore and the intertextual relations of oral and literary traditions
- “Is There an Indian Way of Thinking?” (1990)
  - Discusses Indian thought as “context-sensitive”
- “Three Hundred Ramayanas: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translations” (1991)
  - Controversy over its inclusion in the B.A. in History syllabus of the University of Delhi in 2006
  - About the existence of many versions of the Ramayana and a few versions that portrayed Rama and Sita as siblings

Vallath

P. Lal (1929-2010)

- Indian poet, essayist, translator, professor and publisher
- Best known as the translator into English of the entire Indian epic poem Mahabharata and the Upanishads
- He was the founder and publisher of Writers Workshop in Calcutta, established in 1958
- Under the name of P. Lal, he wrote eight books of poetry, over a dozen volumes of literary criticism, a memoir, several books of stories for children, as well as dozens of translations from other languages, chiefly Sanskrit, into English

Vallath

Works

- Poetry
  - *The Parrot's Death and Other Poems* (1960)

- Poems
  - The Old Man
  - The Guava Tree (excerpted)
  - Darling Talk of Crime
  - From Calcutta, a Long poem

Vallath

Arun Kolatkar (1932-2004)

- Poet from Maharashtra
- Led a reclusive life
- Wrote in both Marathi and English, often mixing myth, allegory and contemporary history
- *Jejuri* (1976)
- Two more collections in English: *Kala Ghoda Poems* and *Sarpasastra*

Vallath

Jejuri (1976)

- His first book of English poems
- A collection 31 poems describing his visit to a religious place called Jejuri in Maharashtra, where the deity is Khandoba, an incarnation of Shiva
- The visit was in 1963, along with his brother and a friend
- The poems are not religious
- They evoke a series of images to highlight the ambiguities in modern-day life, and present the agonized relationship of a modern sensitive individual with the indigenous culture
- The book won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 1977

Vallath

Chaitanya Series of poems

- Chaitanya series of poems tagged under Jejuri
- It is a re-telling of the folklore with regard to the visit of the Vaishnava saint
- Satire on the blind faith of the Maharashtrians in the legend relating to the temple of God Khandoba

Vallath

R. Parthasarathy (b. 1934)

- Editor, translator, anthologist and critic
- Born in 1934 in Tirupparaiturai, Tamil Nadu and educated in Mumbai and at Leeds University, UK
- Taught in Colleges in Mumbai and joined Oxford University Press in 1971 as Regional Editor in Chennai
- Associate Professor of English and Asian Studies at Skidmore College, New York
- The disturbing experiences he has had form the matrix of his poetry making it primarily a poetry of experience

Vallath

Rough Passage (1977)

- The poem is about the influence of two entirely different cultures upon an individual
- The poet dwells upon the questions of language and identity, and upon the inner conflict which arises from having been brought up in two different cultures
- Divided into three sections which suggests the loss and recovery of a colonized self

Vallath

“Exile”

- Gives a sense of both displacement and belonging; a rediscovery of one’s roots and the acute awareness of the loss of one’s language
- The culture of India is juxtaposed with that of Europe
- Examines the consequences of British rule on an Indian, especially an Indian’s loss of his identity and therefore his need to go back to his roots
- Against such a cultural turmoil, the personal gives him a sense of belonging

Vallath

The Two Later Parts

- “Trial”
  - Celebrates love as a reality here and now
  - Speaks of experiences which are very depressing; refers to the end of life and even the end of poetry
- “Homecoming”
  - Explores the phenomenon of returning to one’s home
  - Speaks of the politics of identity and of native language
  - The poet returns not to a country but to a language, Tamil, his tongue in chains

Vallath

Other Major Works

- Translated the Tamil epic Chilappathikaram into English
- “Under Another Sky”
  - Describes the decline which has taken place in the poet’s native Tamil Nadu and the decline in Tamil culture as a consequence of the western influence
  - Expresses his disenchantment with the language and the country of his dreams – English and England
  - The poem begins with the poets return to Chennai from his self-imposed exile
  - The mood here is reflective of exhaustion of the poet’s own feeing of exhaustion ofter his journey to England
  - The sea and the land between fort st. George and Santhome pahaps remind him of the British rule in India
  - The poet gives a vivid picture of the commercial glory of Chennai in the past.
- “And so it eventually happened” is known as “Sundari Poem” because it is about a girl called Sundari
- Edited the popular anthology Ten Twentieth-Century Indian Poets

Vallath

Kamala Das (1934-2009)

- Indian English poet and a leading Malayalam author
- Born in Punnayurkulam, Thrissur to V. M. Nair, a former managing editor of Malayalam daily Mathrubhumi, and Nalapat Balamani Amma, a renowned Malayalam poetess
- Wrote short stories and autobiography in Malayalam; intense poems and explicit autobiography in English
- Assumed the name Kamala Suraiyya after her conversion to Islam in 1999; also known by her one-time pen name Madhavikutty
- Her open and honest treatment of female sexuality, marked her as an iconoclast in her generation
- Shortlisted for Nobel Prize for Literature in 1984

Vallath

Kamala Das as a Poet

- In Kamala Das's poetry we find
  - Romantic subjectivism
  - The best expression of feminine sensibility
  - The suppression of the feminine in a male dominated society
  - Confessional and autobiographical elements
    - Poetry of anguish and suffering; an uninhibited expression of the self
  - Sometimes she universalizes what is personal
- The main themes of her poetry include home, freedom, journeys, communal conflict and gender politics

Vallath

Summer in Calcutta (1965)

- Major poems in this collection are:
  - “An Introduction”
  - “My Grandmother’s House” – A reminiscence of the poetess’ grandmother and their ancestral home at Malabar in Kerala; remembers her old grandmother’s love for her; when her grandmother died, even the house seemed to share her grief
  - “The Sunshine Cat” – About the decline and disintegration of a woman; the protagonist is an attractive, sensitive, creative but rebellious and misunderstood woman trapped in a love-less marriage
- “The Dance of the Eunuchs”, “In Love”, “Winter”, “Too Early the Autumn Sights”, “The End of Spring”, “Freaks”

Vallath

“An Introduction”

- A defence for writing in Indian English
- The poem is a strong remark on patriarchal society prevalent today
- The poet says that she is not interested in politics but claims that she can name all the people who have been in power right from the time of Nehru
    - Thus she indirectly states the fact that politics in the country is a game of few chosen elite who ironically rule a democracy
- Next, she describes herself
- She is an Indian, born in Malabar and very brown in colour
- She speaks in three languages, writes in two and dreams in one
- She talks about her own oppressed felinity and seers her self at the end

Vallath

“My Grandmother’s House”

- The poet remembers her grandmother’s home
  - Far away from where she currently resides
  - Here she “received love”, felt secure and was loved by all
- After her grandmother died, the house was filled with grief
  - It accepted the seclusion with resignation
  - Dead silence haunted the house
- The poet says snakes moved among the books
  - Symbolizing a feeling of deadness, horror and repulsion
  - This feeling made her blood go cold and turn her face pale
- She often thinks of going back to that old house
  - Just to peek through the “blind eyes of the windows” which have been dead-shut for years, or just to listen to the frozen air

Vallath

Summary Contd.

- The poet now contrasts her past with her present
    - Her present has been so tormenting that the darkness of the grandmother's house does not horrify her anymore
    - It is rather a comfort for her in the present life
- She says that it is hard for one to believe that she once lived in such a house and was so loved by all and lived her life with pride
- She says that in her desperate quest for love, she has lost her way
    - Since she never received any love from the people whom she called her own, she now has to knock "at strangers' doors" and beg for love, at least in small measures

Vallath

“Dance of the Eunuchs”

- The poem evokes the atmosphere of a hot, corrupt, sterile world through vivid symbols and images
- The joyless and mechanical dance of the eunuchs reflects the poet’s fractured personality
- The living conditions of the eunuchs and the climate are forbidding
- The spectators are merciless
- The eunuchs’ voices are harsh and their songs melancholic

Vallath

“Dance of the Eunuchs”

- They sing of lovers dying and children left unborn
- Some beat their drums; others beat their flat breasts and weep
- They are destined to remain unfulfilled
- The eunuchs are the objective correlative of suppressed desires, persecution and inadequacy reflecting the psychological traumas of the poet
- The poem thus contrasts between superficial joy and inner depravity

“A Hot Noon in Malabar”

- This poem shows Kamala Das's deep-rooted involvement in the past.
- The poet remembers with love her ancestral house in Malabar, and the daily activities of the passersby including beggars, fortune-tellers, Kurava girls, the bangle sellers etc.
- Having been married off at a young age, she is nostalgic about her ancestral home in Malabar and compares it with her life in cities, expanding on themes of alienation, identity and emotional longing

Vallath

“The Freaks”

- The poem The Freaks by Kamala Das is about the poet’s marriage in which there is no love between the couple. Her husband, who is an old man (as depicted in the poem) is attracted towards her outward appearance but is unable to enjoy her inner beauty or soul.

- In the poem, Kamala describes how in a male-dominated (patriarchal) society, a woman must submit to her husband thought the latter may be ugly, older, lustful etc. She is supposed to satisfy him in all the ways without thinking about herself, her sexual needs and desires.

- The poet calls herself and her husband “freaks”. The word freak means abnormal or stranger. Her husband is freak because of his old and ugly appearance while she herself is freak because she is in a loveless relation with such a person since long, satisfying him in all the ways.

Vallath

“The Looking Glass”

- The poet exhorts women to be cautious in matters of love, and suggests that a woman’s weakness lies in her body, which has its needs

- Oh yes, getting
  A man to love is easy, but living
  Without him afterwards may have to be
  Faced…
  His last voice calling out your name and your
  Body which once under his touch had glared
  Like burnished brass, now drab and destitute

Vallath

“The Suicide”

- This poem has sexual undertones
- The poet speaks about her growing up and life as a woman.
- She wants to attain freedom in suicide

Vallath

“The Old Playhouse”

- Love is a means of knowing about oneself
- Personal poem addressed presumably to the husband
  - You called me wife,
    I was taught to break saccharine into your tea and
    To offer at the right moment the vitamins. Cowering
    Beneath your monstrous ego I ate the magic loaf and
    Became a dwarf.
- Then she talks about the constraints of married life and the domination of the man
  - There is
    No more singing, no more dance, my mind is an old
    Playhouse with all its lights put out.

Vallath

Other Poems

- “Punishment in Kindergarten”
- “Middle Age”

More Works

- *The Descendants* (1967, poetry; includes the poems “The Looking Glass”, “The Maggots”, “Substitute”, “The Conflagration”)
- *The Old Playhouse and Other Poems* (1973, includes “The Stone Age”, “Gino”)
- *My Story* (1976) - An autobiographical book; originally published in Malayalam, titled *Ente Katha*; a chronologically ordered narrative written in a realist style
- ***Alphabet of Lust*** (1977, novel)

Vallath

More Works

- *The Anamalai Poems* (1985, poetry)
- *Padmavati the Harlot and Other Stories* (1992, collection of short stories)
- *Only the Soul Knows How to Sing* (1996, poetry; includes “The Rain”)
- *Yaa Allah* (2001, collection of poems)
- “My Mother At Sixty-six” (1999, Poem)

Vallath

Keki N Daruwalla (b. 1937)

- Major Indian poet and short story writer in English language born in Lahore
- One among the Parsi quartet, others being Adil Jussawalla, K.D. Katrak and Gieve Patel
- Awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award, in 1984 for his poetry collection *The Keeper of the Dead*
- Awarded Padma Shri in 2014

Vallath

Daruwalla as a Poet

- Blends traditional, contemporary, Indian, global
- A poet of violence – flood, drought, famine, outbreak of an epidemic, the cholera ward
- A poet of the morgue and the Tower of Silence, where the dead bodies are kept and the autopsy done and the bodies placed upon the structure as for the birds of prey to feast and feed upon
- A poet of wild nature and animal images
- Vigor and immediacy of language, concern with love, death and domination, a skeptic cynicism about the plight of human society and a rare intensity in portraying living individuals

Vallath

Poetry Collections

- Apparition in April (1971)
- Crossing of Rivers (1976)
- Winter Poems (1980)
- The Keeper of the Dead (1982)
- Landscapes (1987)
- A Summer of Tigers (1995)
- Night River (2000)
- Map-maker (2002)
- The Scarecrow and the Ghost (2004)

Vallath

Major Poems

- Before The Word
- Sappho To Aphrodite
- Fish
- Suddenly the Tree
- Routine
- Migrations
- Underwater Notes
- Bars
- Map-Maker
- Alexander Crosses the Hellespont
- Notes From The Underground
- The Poseidonians
- Hawk
- Death of a Bird
- Pestilence in Nineteenth Century Calcutta

Vallath

“Fire-Hymn”

- The poem centres around two incidents
- As a boy moving with his father along a river bank and passing the ghat where the Hindus cremated their dead saw a half-burnt fingers of a dead body
    - As a Parsi, the boy felt pained by the thought that the fire, of which he was a worshipper, sometimes failed to perform its task fully and he swore that he would never again allow the fire to commit the sin of forgetting its function

Vallath

“Fire-Hymn”

- Twenty years later his own first-born child was dead
    - As per the Parsi custom, the dead body should be exposed on the Tower of Silence to be eaten up by birds of prey; but the nearest such place was a thousand miles away and thus he was compelled to have his child cremated
    - When the body was consigned to the fire, he heard the fire telling him that he was forgiven for having committed a sin by violating a Parsi code
    - Now the poet felt that the fire had committed yet another sin by forgiving him for his violation of the Parsi code

Other Poems

- “Coral Poem” is about the scenic beauty of the Chester Isle
- “Speaking to Mandelstam Through Poem 119” re-interprets the arrest of Mandelstam, a Russian poet who died in a prison camp in 1938

“The Ghaghra in Spate”

- The poet depicts a river named Ghaghra flowing in northern India
- This river, besides being a boon for the villagers, becomes a curse during flood and brings a widespread damage for the villagers and for those who live at the banks of the river
- During flood this river presents its most fierceful form
- One day suddenly the water level rises so high and gave an open invitation for the risk of a great destruction
- It destroyed the life of humans and animals
- Even though people tried to save life they couldn’t survive the violence

Vallath

Major Works in English

- An Anthology of Marathi Poetry (1945–1965)
- Ambulance Ride (1972)
- Travelling in a Cage (1980)
- Says Tuka (1994)
  - Famous translation is of the celebrated 17th century Marathi bhakti poet Tukaram
  - Won Sahitya Akademi Award for Translation
- The Mountain (1998)
- No-Moon Monday On The River Karha (2000)

Vallath

Dom Moraes (1938-2004)

- Jewish poet, autobiographer, travel writer and journalist
- Started writing poems when he was 12 years old
- He is a central figure among the first generation of post-independence Indian English writers even before he had turned twenty
- His first collection A Beginning won him the Hawthornden Prize in 1958
- My Son’s Father (1968) and Never at Home (1992) are his autobiographies

Vallath

Dom Moraes as a Poet

- Moraes's poems are characterized by an elegant and hypnotic imagery and a surrealistic texture
- His writings depict repeated attempts at reconciling himself with his alienated motherland and to come back to it again and again in cyclical journeys of exile and return
- His poems have a confessional cast
- Themes dealt are love and war, friendship and alienation, myth and religion.

Vallath

Works

- Key
  - The key is a metaphor, the key to the memories of the past, the key to childhood
- The Garden
  - A psychological poem on the Biblical story of Cain slaying his younger brother Abel
- Autobiography
- Words to a Boy
- Letter to My Mother
- Voices
- Absences
- Rendezvous
- Spree
- Architecture
- Serendip (won Sahitya Akademi Award)

Vallath

Adil Jussawalla (b. 1940)

- An influential presence in Indian poetry in English; is also a critic
- Born in Mumbai in a Parsi family
- He writes complex poetry that evokes and indicts a dehumanised, spiritually sterile landscape, ravaged by contradiction, suspended in a perpetual state of catastrophe
- His poems are ironic, fragmented, non-linear, and formally strenuous
- His collection of poems Trying to Say Goodbye was conferred the Sahitya Akademi Award 2014

Vallath

Works

- After two books of poetry, Land's End (1962) and Missing Person (1976), turned to journalism
- Edited a seminal anthology of new writing from India (1974) and co-edited an anthology of Indian prose in English (1977)
- Returned to poetry after a break of 35 years
- His poems present the artificiality and vulgarity of this age, the paradoxical nature of our emotions and desires, the unbridgeable gulf between 'you' and 'I', between dream and reality and the beauty and ugliness of love
- His poetry is born of a decision to look at the present unromantically, in all its disfigured and fractured reality

Vallath

Major Poems

- Land’s End
- Evening on a Mountain
- Bats
- Halt X
- Freedom Song
- Connection
- Sea Breeze, Bombay
    - A partition poem and also a Bombay poem about the cosmopolitanism of the city

Vallath

Eunice De Souza (1940-2017)

- Poet, literary critic and novelist
- Editor of a number of anthologies on poetry, folktales, and literary criticism
- Major poetry collections
  - Women in Dutch painting (1988)
  - Ways of Belonging (1990)
  - Nine Indian Women Poets (1997)
  - These My Words (2012)
  - Learn From The Almond Leaf (2016)
- Novels
  - Dangerlok (2001)
  - Dev & Simran (2003)

Vallath

“Bequest”

- In every Catholic home there’s a picture
- of Christ holding his bleeding heart
- in his hand.
- I used to think, ugh.

- The only person with whom
- I have not exchanged confidences
- is my hairdresser.

- Some recommend stern standards.
- Others say float along.
- He says, take it as it comes,
- meaning, of course, as he hands it out.

- I wish I could be a
- Wise Woman
- smiling endlessly, vacuously
- like a plastic flower,
- saying Child, learn from me.

- It’s time to perform an act of charity
- to myself,
- bequeath the heart, like a
- spare kidney –
- preferably to an enemy.

Gieve Patel (b. 1940)

- Gieve Patel is a poet, playwright and artist, as well as a practising doctor
- He was born in 1940 in Mumbai
- He is one of “the Parsi Quartet” of Indian English poetry
- He is considered to be the poet of the body since human body is a recurrent theme in a majority of his poems
- His poems deal with Indian scene and articulate the pains of growing up

Vallath

Works

- Poetry Collections
  - Poems (1966)
  - How Do You Withstand, Body (1976)
- Poems
  - On Killing a Tree
  - Forensic Medicine
  - Squirrels In Washington
  - Public Hospital
  - Old Man's Death
  - From Bombay Central
  - Urban
  - Post Mortem
  - It Makes
  - Evening
  - Servants
  - Nargol
  - Naryal Purnima

Vallath

“On Killing a Tree”

- A sarcastic poem about man’s indiscriminate destruction of trees
- Man is presented as a professional killer who thinks of all possible ways to torture the tree as if torturing an enemy
- The poem begins ironically, describing the crime committed by the tree
- For years it has consumed the earth’s crust
- Like a thief it has absorbed sunlight, air and water and has grown up like a giant
- So the tree must be killed, but it is not an easy task
- If you cut it, it will grow to its former size and again become a threat to man
- So the tree should be tied with a rope and pulled out entirely
- For the tree to be killed, its white, bleeding root should be exposed; then browned and hardened and twisted and withered
- The poem shows how man destroys his greatest boons and thus brings about his own downfall

Vallath

Gauri Deshpande (1942-2003)

- Gauri Deshpande was a novelist, short story writer, and poet from Maharashtra, India
- Daughter of Irawati Karve—author of Yuganta: The End of an Epoch, a study of the main characters of the Mahabharata; treats them as historical figures and uses their attitudes and behavior to gain an understanding of the times in which they lived. Karve wrote the book first in Marathi, and later translated it into English. The book won the 1967 Sahitya Academy Award for best book in Marathi.
- She wrote in both Marathi and English
- Her translation of Richard Burton’s Arabian Nights into Marathi is particularly well-liked
- Major poem: "The Female of the Species”

Vallath

Works

- Lost love (1970)
- The Murder
- Beyond the Slaughterhouse (1972)
- The Position of Women in India (1973)
- An Anthology of Indo-English poetry (1974), edited

Vallath

K. Satchidanandan (b. 1946)

- An Indian poet and critic
- Writes in Malayalam and English
- A pioneer of modern poetry in Malayalam
- Bilingual literary critic, playwright, editor, columnist and translator
- He is the former editor of Indian Literature journal
- The former secretary of Sahitya Akademi from 1996-2006
- Social advocate for secular anti-caste views
- Well known speaker on issues concerning contemporary Indian literature
- Major Poems
  - Genesis
- Critical works in English
  - Indian Literature: Positions and Propositions (1999)
  - Authors, Texts, Issues (2002)—Essays in Indian Literature

Vallath

A.K. Mehrotra (b. 1947)

- Poet, anthologist, literary critic and translator born in Lahore
- He was a founder member of the iconic poetry publishing collective called Clearing House along with Adil Jussawalla, Gieve Patel and Arun Kolatkar
- His poetry uses both traditional forms and unconventional techniques
- Has edited An Illustrated History of Indian Literature in English published by Columbia University Press

Vallath

Mehrotra as a Poet

- Mehrotra’s poetry largely falls into two groups
  - Earliest work reveals various modern, post-modernist and earlier avant-garde style and poetics
  - His present phase involves a precise recording of external details, presenting small details of everyday life in India, of what he calls, “location”
- Influenced by Surrealism
- Post-modernist in style
- Often his subject matter comes from memories of childhood or from reading history
- Most of his poems are related to the nostalgic reminiscences of Allahabad where he had spent a major portion of his life; he also presented Dehra Dun

Vallath

Poetry Collections

- Middle Earth (1984)
- Nine Enclosures (1976)
- Distance in Statute Miles (1982)
- The Transfiguring Places: Poems (1998)
- Along with Adil Jussawala, Gieve Patel and Arun Kolatkar, started a publishing house called Clearing House in the 1970s.
  - Clearing House poets responded to the post Emergency India with graphic violent surrealistic images and designs
  - The themes of their poetry, diction, cover designs all went hand in hand to create a distinctive disruptive perception of contemporary society.

Vallath

Poems

- The Death of a Sunday Painter
- Songs of the Ganga
- The Sale
- Continuities
- A Letter to a Friend

“On the Death of a Sunday Painter”

- A weekend painter is described
- He smoked a cherry-wood pipe, he knew about the flowering plant canna, opined on cricket, and read literature
- The poem ends with a tone of understatement; a fitting tribute to a man who was not a great artist perhaps, but one who mattered in his own way to those who knew him

Vallath

“Songs of the Ganga”

- This poem has the river Ganga speaking in its own voice and revealing its thoughts and feelings
- The Ganga plays a variety of roles from being a beggar to a clown to finally being shadowless
- Not being confined within a particular gender slot, the Ganga claims: ‘I am both man and woman.’
- The ocean teaches the river to keep away from bias and prejudice
- Mehrotra celebrates the identity of the river Ganga and expresses an enjoyment of the imaginative freedom he has discovered in presenting the picture of Ganga

Vallath

Agha Shahid Ali (1949-2001)

- Agha Shahid Ali was a Kashmiri Muslim born in New Delhi
- Ali is best known in the U.S. and identified himself as an American poet writing in English
- His poems are concrete accounts of events of personal and political importance
- He often blended the landscapes of America (especially the southwest) with those of his native Kashmir

Vallath

Poetry Collections

- Call Me Ishmael Tonight: A Book of Ghazals (2003)
- Rooms Are Never Finished (2001)
- The Country Without a Post Office (1997)
- The Beloved Witness: Selected Poems (1992)
- A Nostalgist’s Map of America (1991)
- A Walk Through the Yellow Pages (1987)
- The Half-Inch Himalayas (1987)
- In Memory of Begum Akhtar and Other Poems (1979)
- Bone Sculpture (1972)

Vallath

Major Poems

- The Wolf’s Postscript to ‘Little Red Riding Hood’
- Even the Rain
- Tonight
- I See Chile in My Rearview Mirror
- Taxidermist
- Stationery
- Ghazal
- Snowmen
- Shaving

Vallath

“The Wolf’s Postscript to Little Red Riding Hood”

- Tells us the wolf’s story and his motive for the first time
- He has personified the wolf, one of the most infamous creatures in a European mythical tale
- The poet becomes didactic and assigns the wolf write a postscript to highlight his point of view in the poem
- The woodcutter from the story is also re-created to provide an opposite viewpoint of the same traditional story

Vallath

Meena Alexander (1951-2018)

- Meena Alexander was born in Allahabad, in a Syrian Christian family from Kerala
- In her childhood, the family shifted to Sudan
- Now she lives in New York
- She is known for lyrical writing that deals with migration, its impact on the subjectivity of the writer, and the sometimes violent events that compel people to cross borders
- Her poems frequently confront the difficult issues of exile and identity

Vallath

Works

- Poetry Collections
  - House of a Thousand Doors (1988)
  - Birthplace with Buried Stones (2013)
  - Quickly Changing River (2008)
  - Raw Silk (2004)
  - Illiterate Heart (2002)
- Poems
  - House of a Thousand Doors
  - Muse
  - Cadenza
  - Central Park
  - Carousel
  - Night Theater
  - Lost Language
- Novels
  - Nampally Road
  - Manhattan Music
  - Fault Lines

Vallath

“A House of a Thousand Doors”

- Explores the effects of colonization and exploitation
- This particular house has a thousand doors referring to its vibrancy and its openness to guests, foreign ideas and new aspects of culture
- The concept of vasdaivakudumbakam is evoked
- However, this positive aspect proved to be a disaster for India, as the colonial powers spread the network of their web in India utilizing trade as a pretext
- In the contemporary era because of the thousand doors, there is brain-drain from India
- The title also signifies the diversity and innate unity of India

Vallath

Vikram Seth (b. 1952)

- Vikram Seth is an Indian poet, novelist, travel writer, librettist, children's writer, biographer and memoirist
- He was born in Calcutta, India, in 1952
- He has received several awards including Padma Shri, Sahitya Akademi Award, Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, WH Smith Literary Award and Crossword Book Award

Vallath

Vikram Seth as a Poet

- Vikram Seth’s poems are mostly personal, revealing the poet’s preoccupation and his personality
- The poet resolves issues about love, friendship, familial ties, the loneliness of living in a foreign land and so on
- Major themes dealt with are nostalgia, detachment, observation, and exile
- His style is lucid without being simplistic, emotional without being cloying

Vallath

Works

- Poetry
  - Mappings (1980)
  - The Humble Administrator's Garden (1985)
  - All You Who Sleep Tonight (1990)

Major Poems

- All You Who Sleep Tonight
- Round and Round
- Promise
- Unclaimed
- Distressful Homonyms
- Interpretation
- Protocols
- The Wind
- Prandial Plaint
- From California
- The Frog and The Nightingale
- Progress Report
- At Evening
- The Tale of Melon City

Ranjit Hoskote (b. 1969)

- Poet, cultural theorist, translator, curator
- Curated more than 50 exhibitions of Indian and global art
- His seven collections of poetry
  - Vanishing Acts (2006)
  - Central Time (2014)
  - Jonahwhale (2018)
  - Hunchprose (2021)
- I, Lalla: The Poems of Lal Ded
  - Translation of Lalleshwari (14th-century Kashmiri Shaivite woman mystic)’s poetry

Vallath

Major Works

- Major Poems
  - Madman
  - The Nomad's Song
  - Bhanu Athaiya
  - Ghalib in the Winter of the Great Revolt
  - The Hotel Receptionist's Confession
  - To The Sanskrit Poets
  - The Empire of Lights
- Editor of Dom Moraes: Selected Poems
- Awards
  - Sahitya Akademi Golden Jubilee Award
  - Sahitya Akademi Translation Award

Vallath

Writers from the Northeast

- Janavi Barua
  - Next Door
- Siddharta Sarma
  - The Grasshopper’s Run
- Ankush Saikia
  - three-book Detective Arjun Arora series

Vallath

Indira Goswami (1942-2011)

- Assamese writer
- Works translated into English
- Her pen name Mamoni Raisom Goswami and popularly as Mamoni Baideo, was an Assamese editor, poet, professor, scholar and writer.
- She was also well known for her attempts to structure social change, both through her writings and through her role as mediator between the armed militant group United Liberation Front of Asom and the Government of India

Vallath

Major Works

- The Chenab’s Current (1972)
- The Rusted Sword (1980)
- The Moth Eaten Howdah of a Tusker (1988)
- An Unfinished Autobiography (1988)
- Pages Stained With Blood (2001)
- The Man from Chinnamasta (2005)

Vallath

Temsula Ao (1945 – 2022)

- From Nagaland
- Poet, fiction writer, and ethnographer
- Poetry Collections
  - Songs that Tell (1988)
  - Songs that Try to Say (1992)
  - Songs of Many Moods (1995)
- Songs along the Way Home (2019)
- Zubaan (2005)
  - Short story
- Laburnum for My Head (2009)
  - Collection of 8 short stories

Vallath

Mamang Dai (b. 1957)

- From Arunachal Pradesh
- Poetry Collections
  - River Poems (2004)
  - The Balm of Time (2008)
  - Hambreelmai's Loom (2014)
  - Midsummer Survival Lyrics (2014)
- Novel - The Black Hill (2014)
  - Received Sahitya Akademi Award in 2017
- Non Fiction - Arunachal Pradesh: The Hidden Land (2003) and Mountain Harvest : The Food of Arunachal (2004)

Vallath

Robin S Ngangom (b. 1959)

- Time's Crossroads (1994)
- The Desire of Roots (2006)
- Words and the Silence (1988)

Vallath

Contemporary Poets

Hoshang Merchant (b. 1947)

- Modern India’s first openly gay poet
- Professor at University of Hyderabad
- Wrote many poetry collections
- Edited India’s first gay anthology Yaraana: Gay Writing from India (1999)

Vallath

Vijay Seshadri (b. 1954)

- Won 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry
- Famous poems
  - “Rereading”
  - “Visiting Paris”
  - “Thought Problem”
  - “The Disappearances”
    - Response to memories of John F. Kennedy’s assassination

Vallath

Jeet Thayil (b. 1959)

- Poet, songwriter and guitarist
- Several poetry collections
  - These Errors Are Correct (2008)
- Novel
  - Narcopolis (2012)

Vallath

Vijay Nambisan (1963-2017)

- Poet, writer, critic and journalist
- His poem “Madras Central” won the first All India Poetry Competition in 1990
  - Organized by the Poetry Society of India and the British Council
- Gemini (1992)
  - His debut collection shared with Jeet Thayil
  - Introduction by Dom Moraes
- First Infinities (2015)—second collection
- Non-fiction books
  - Bihar Is in the Eye of the Beholder (2000)
  - Language as an Ethic (2003)
- Two Measures of Bhakti (2009)
  - Translations of the devotional poetry of Poonthanam and Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri.

Vallath

Jerry Pinto (b. 1966)

- Poet, novelist, short story writer, translator, as well as journalist
- Poetry Collections
  - Asylum and Other Poems (2003)
  - Co-edited with Arundhati Subramaniam Confronting Love (2005)
- Prose
  - Bombay, meri jaan: writings on Mumbai, with Naresh Fernandes (2003)
  - Helen: The Life and Times of an H-Bomb (2006)
  - Novel—Em and the Big Hoom (2012)

Vallath

Ranjit Hoskote (b. 1969)

- Won many awards
- Many collections
  - Zones of Assault
  - The Cartographer's Apprentice
  - Central Time
  - Jonahwhale
  - The Sleepwalker's Archive
  - Vanishing Acts
- Translated the 14th-century Kashmiri mystic-poet Lal Ded

Vallath

Vihang A. Naik (b. 1969)

- Bilingual poet writing in Gujarati and English
- Collections
  - City Times and Other Poems (1993)
  - Making A Poem (2004)
  - Poetry Manifesto (2010)
- His poetry has appeared in many anthologies

Vallath

Arundhathi Subramanian (b. 1973)

- Poet and writer from Mumbai
- Poetry Collection
  - Love Without a Story
  - When God Is a Traveller
    - Sahitya Akedami Award (2020) for English
  - Where I Live (2005)
  - On Cleaning Bookshelves (2001)
- Edited the work Eating God: A Book of Bhakti Poetry (2014)
- Has written prose works on spirituality
  - Women Who Wear Only Themselves
    - A book of essays on contemporary women on sacred journeys

Vallath

Post-Independence Drama

Features of Post-Independence Drama

- Modern urban theatre in India has a 200-year history
- Based on the British legacy
- Theatre was well-established in major cities like Calcutta (East), Madras (South), Bombay (West), Varanasi (North), paving the way for modern Indian drama
- Western norms fused with the Indian tradition, myth or history

Vallath

Features of Post-Independence Drama

- An indoor theatre called proscenium theatre (Parsi) developed
  - Focus on entertainment
  - Offered a mix of music, spectacle, melodrama, humour, romance and social criticism
  - Influenced Indian cinema
  - In reaction developed literary drama and amateur theatre
    - Influenced by modern European playwrights like Shaw, Sartre, Camus, Giradoux and Brecht
    - Associated with IPTA (Indian Political Theatre Association) experiments

Vallath

Tradition of Earlier Playwrights

- Rabindranath Tagore in Bengali
- Samsa and Kuvempu in Kannada
- Subrahmanya Bharathiar in Tamil
- Sreekanthan Nair in Malayalam
- Bharatendu Harishchandra and Jaishankar Prasad in Hindi

Vallath

Early Developments

- Early stalwarts in the age after Independence
  - Utpal Dutt and Shambhu Mitra in Bengal
- Sangeet Natak Akademi was established to promote drama and the arts
- National School of Drama was established under the directorship of Ibrahim Alkazi, BV Karanth, etc
- More art and drama schools emerged such as Ranga Mandal in Bhopal, Kalakshetra in Chennai and Chorus Theatre in Imphal

Vallath

Proscenium Theatre

- Western style mainstream theatre introduced in India in the late 18th century
  - Built in Bengal and Bombay (at first patronised by the rich, especially Parsis)
  - In Bengal Baishnab Charan Auddy, played Othello in 1848
  - By the last quarter of the 19th century, proscenium Indian theatre had become public and commercialized
  - Influenced Indian cinema
  - Against the folk traditions of India

Vallath

Theatre Groups

- Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA)
  - The oldest association of theatre-artists in India
  - Influenced by the Indian Communist Party
  - Formed in 1943
  - Promotes themes related to the Indian freedom struggle
- Nandikar (Bengal, 1960)
- The Madras Players (Chennai, early 1950s)
- The Kohinoor Theatre (Assam, 1976)
- Pierrot’s Troupe (New Delhi, 1989)
- Aasakta Kalamanch (Pune, 2003)

Vallath

Modernist Playwrights

- Vijay Tendulkar (Marathi)
- Badal Sircar (Bengali)
- Dharamvir Bharati (Hindi)
- Mohan Rakesh (Hindi)
- Girish Karnad (Kannada, English)
- Chandrashekhara Kambara (Kannada)
- P Lankesh (Kannada)
- Indira Parthasarathy (Tamil)

Vallath

Habib Tanvir (1923-2009)

- Popular Indian Urdu, Hindi playwright, theatre director, poet and actor.
- Known for blending theatre, folk art and poetry
- Worked with tribals of Chhattisgarh and developed “theatre of the people”
- Founded Naya Theatre in 1959 in Bhopal
- Managed plays with a very large cast and orchestra
- His famous play Charandas Chor was made into a movie by Shyam Benegal

Vallath

Ebrahim Alkazi (1925-2020)

- Leading figure in post-independence theatre
- Influenced by Shakespeare, like many of his contemporaries
- Father was a Bedouin trader from Saudi Arabia and his mother a Kuwaiti
- Began his theatrical career in the English-language Theatre Group of Sultan “Bobby” Padamsee, a pioneer of the English theatre movement in India
  - Acted in in Padamsee productions: Othello (opening on the bedchamber scene with Othello slaying Desdemona, and then proceeding in flashbacks), Macbeth and Twelfth Night, and later in Oscar Wilde’s Salome and Lajos Biro’s God and Kings.
- Became Director of National School of Drama (1962-77)
- Developed a professional and technically informed approach to all aspects of drama
- Famously directed in and around spectacular historical monuments around Delhi
  - Dharamvir Bharati’s Andha yug (1963), a play in blank verse
  - Samuel Beckett’s Waiting for Godot (1952)
  - Mohan Rakesh’s Ashadh ka ek din (1958)
  - Girish Karnad’s Tughlaq (1964)
- Became founder-director of the Art Heritage Gallery in New Delhi

Vallath

Badal Sircar (1925-2011)

- Badal Sircar was the famous Bengali dramatist who is known as the innovator of contemporary Indian theatre
- He was a popular name in Bengali theatre and is popular for his anti-establishment plays during the Naxal Movement in Kolkata in the 1970s
- He is the recipient of Padma Shri, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award and Padma Bhushan, etc
- He represents the New Theatrical Movement in India
- He has created an appropriate ‘people’s theatre’, a theatre supported and created by people

Vallath

Major Plays by Badal Sircar

- Evam Indrajit (And Indrajit) (1963)
- Baaki Itihaash (Remaining History) (1965)
- Pralap (Delirium) (1966)
- Tringsha Shatabdi (Thirteenth Century) (1966)
- Pagla Ghoda (Mad Horse) (1967)
- Shesh Nahi (There’s No End) (1969)

Vallath

Plays by Badal Sircar

- *Evam Indrajit* (1962, And Indrajit)
  - Breaks free from the well-established realistic techniques of the day to create a more impressionistic theatre, new to the Indian stage
  - A cast of seven characters — except Indrajit and Writer, the others are stereotypes of men and women in contemporary urban India
- *That Other History* (1964)
- *There Is No End* (1971)
- Most of his plays were enacted by Shatabdi theatre group

Vallath

Evam Indrajit (1965)

- Presents the disorganized and fractured life of modern man in an absurdist style
- Themes: the meaninglessness of existence, guilt and responsibility, lives of maladjusted persons who belong to the urban middle class, a world which is full of violence and inhumanity
- It is a tale of a playwright who struggles in vain to write a play
- The Writer is unable to write a play because
  - He finds that modern life is too chaotic and fragmentary to have any meaning
  - As a conscientious and an honest artist, he finds he has nothing to write about

Vallath

The Plot

- When the play opens, Auntie insists that he stop scribbling and come to eat
- The Writer is frantically in search of material for a play as he tears sheet after sheet of his manuscript
- A girl, Manasi, suggests that he should write about the audience, but the Writer is dubious about such characters for a play
- He calls out to some gentlemen who have just entered the auditorium, invites them to come up the stage and they do
  - They present themselves as Amal, Vimal, Kamal and Nirmal
  - But on the Writer's angry insistence, Nirmal admits he is actually Indrajit

Vallath

- Indrajit and Manasi are cousins and have been great friends
- The play offers glimpses of Amal, Vimal, Kamal and Indrajit growing up as young men in college, attending classes, discussing “cricket, cinema, physics, politics and literature”; graduating; planning marriage; attending job interviews
  - This is indicated by the men changing their roles, language and dresses, etc. with the progress of the play
- Indrajit wants to marry Manasi, but she cannot make up her mind, as she does not want to break any rules; Indrajit goes to Bhopal

Vallath

- Amal, Vimal and Kamal have office jobs and the Writer is both peon and boss
- They marry and their families go through many stages of life
- Manasi considers marriage to Indrajit, but he is now uncertain
  - Indrajit goes out of the country, as an engineer, to London
- He does marry, years later, but he marries another woman called Manasi

Manasi

- Manasi is the generic name assigned to the wife of Amal/Kamal/Vimal, the happy young wife in a recent marriage, the disgruntled middle-aged wife caught in an insipid marriage, the enraged and bitter older woman ranting against an irresponsible husband

- Manasi (as well as Auntie/Mother) is everywoman, the caricature of every woman in the urban audience

- The Writer, still unable to write his play, is tired
- He was hopeful of finding a hero for his play in Indrajit who perseveres to know the meaning of life by resisting to become mediocre and stereotyped unlike his worldly-wise friends Amal, Kamal and Vimal
- But his interaction with Indrajit proves that he is not a fit subject for his play since he does not have a core and commitment
- Indrajit, the revolutionary, has dwindled into a Nirmal, “just an ordinary man”
- Moreover, he is too elusive to be contained within the structured framework of the play

Vallath

- The play ends with the Writer’s assertion of his belief in a journey towards no defined goal, knowing for certain that the road is meaningless and the journey is irrational and futile
- The Writer realizes the relevance of Manasi to his writing and to life
- He declares that he is planning to call his play “Amal, Vimal, Kamal, Indrajit and Manasi”
- This grand pronouncement finds no place in the play. The love of Indrajit and Manasi peters out with a whimper
- Like Amal, Kamal and Vimal, Manasi too, fails to make it to the title
- The title denotes the individuality as well as the independence of Indrajit

Vallath

Mahasweta Devi (1926-2016)

- Mahasweta Devi was born at Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Among her many awards is the Jnanpith Award in 1996, Sahitya Akademi award in 1979, the Padmashree award in 1986 and the Magsaysay Award in 1997
- She wrote about the life and struggles faced by the tribal communities in the states like Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh
- Her plays present the protests of a rebellious mind, a protest against oppression and injustice, a protest for the liberation of the most down-trodden sections of the Indian society

Vallath

Works

- Jhansir Rani (1956)
  - First novel in Bengali
  - Based on biography of the Rani of Jhansi
  - She had toured the Jhansi region to record information and folk songs from local people for the novel
  - Translated by Sagaree and Mandira Sengupta
- Hajar Churasir Maa (Mother of 1084, 1974), novel
- Aranyer Adhikar (Rights to the Forest) (1979), novel
- Agnigarbha (1978), short story collection

Vallath

Bayen

- Bayen was published in *Five Plays*, translated by Samik Bandhyopadhyay in 1997
- This play talks about Chandidasi who is separated from her husband and son when she is accused of being a Bayen, a woman who breastfeeds dead children and has the ability to curse others
- The play deals with a pathetic situation where she works in burial ground and is at the time lactating
- Even in such a condition she is singled out of the society and called a witch
- All the evils and deaths in that society are supposed to be because of this Bayen
- Mahasweta Devi also tries to point out the miserable life of the woman in rural India
- The protagonist of this play is by the end able to survive all emotional and physical devastation that she undergoes

Vallath

Mother of 1084

- Hajar Churashir Maa is the Bengali title of this novel
- It is the story of a mother as she relives, years later, the death of her son in the political upheaval that left almost no home untouched
- Presents Sujata, whose son Brati, corpse number 1084 in the morgue, was brutally killed by the state because of his ideology
- The story starts on the eve of Brati's death anniversary when Sujata recollects her son starting from his birth
- Throughout the story she is portrayed as a strong woman who fought against the odds

Vallath

The Plot

- Sujata is the wife of wealthy Dibyanath
- She has been neglected by her husband and her family members; only her son Brati understands her
- At first she blamed Brati for not caring for his career
- After the death of Brati, she begins to search for her identity and also about her son
- She learns from Nandini, Brati's follower, about a part of her son's life that she never knew before
  - Nandini was nearly blinded and broken physically by police torture
  - But she held in her heart a stern faith in her movement and an intense love for Brati
- She feels punished for not having known her son enough

Vallath

The Plot

- When Brati was 2 years old, Sujata had refused to bear a child for the fifth time; this was her first act of rebellion
- Her second act of rebellion was her refusal to leave her job
- After Brati's death, she rebelled a third time when she tells her husband, "I never asked you where you spent your evenings, or who accompanied you on your tours for the past ten years, or why you paid the house rent for your ex-typist. You are never to ask me a thing. Never."
- From a submissive woman, she develops to be self-assured, confident and politically aware

Vallath

Draupadi

- One of the three stories in Breast Stories along with “Breast-Giver,” and “Behind the Bodice”
- The theme of sexual exploitation of tribal women
- Set in the background of the Naxalite activities of the period 1967-1972
- The Naxalites of Bengal were disowned by the mainstream leftist parties, and were repressed by the forces of the State by 1972

Vallath

Dulna is Killed

- Tribal Naxals Dopdi (tribal name for Draupadi) and her husband Dulna Majhi are underground
- There have been search operations headed by Senanayak, who is well equipped with the knowledge of the activities of the naxals
- This intensified effort results in Dulna Majhi getting killed in an ‘encounter’
- His body is kept as ‘bait’ in order to capture Dopdi, who however does not turn up
- Innocent tribals are killed during the search

Vallath

Dopdi Retaliates

- Finally, the Senanayak captures her
- After the interrogation, when the evening advances, Dopdi is subjected to multiple rape and abandoned
- However, later when the Senanayak wants to meet her, she refuses to cover herself and confronts him with her bare body and pushes him fiercely with her mangled breasts

Vallath

Vijay Tendulkar (b. 1928)

- Born at Kolhapur, Maharashtra
- Wrote film-scripts, novels, short stories, literature for the children, journalistic writing, translations, adaptations and essays
- His plays derived inspiration from real-life incidents or social upheavals, which provide insight into harsh social realities
- Violence was an important element in his works
- Regarded an Angry Young Man and rebel of the theatre
- He wrote about poverty, corruption, women's issues, lust, greed and violence, and other social themes
- Received Nehru Fellowship in 1973-74 for a project titled “An Enquiry into the pattern of Growing Violence in Society and its Relevance to Contemporary Theatre”

Vallath

Plays by Vijay Tendulkar

- Gruhastha (Householder) (1947)
- Shrimant (The Rich) (1956)
- Mānoos Nāwāche Bet (An Island Named 'Man') (1958)
- Thief! Police!
- Gidhāde (The Vultures) (1961)
- Pātlāchyā Poriche Lagin (Marriage of a Village Mayor's Daughter) (1965)
- Shantata! Court Chalu Aahe (Hindi: Khāmosh! Adālat Jāri Hai) (Silence! The Court is in Session) (1967)
- Ajgar Ani Gandharwa (A Boa Constrictor and "Gandharwa")
- Sakharam Binder (Sakhārām, the Book-Binder) (1972)
- Kamalā ("Kamala") (1981)
- Kanyādān (Giving Away of a Daughter in Marriage) (1983)

- Dāmbadwichā Mukābalā (Encounter in Umbugland)
- Ashi Pākhare Yeti (Hindi: Panchi Aise Aate Hain) (Thus Arrive the Birds)
- Safar/Cyclewallah (The Cyclist) (1991)
- Pāhije Jātiche (It Has to Be in One's Blood)
- Jāt Hi Poochho Sādhu Ki (Ask a Fakir's Lineage)
- Mājhi Bahin (My Sister)
- Jhālā Ananta Hanumanta ("Infinite" Turned "Hanumanta")
- Footpāyrichā Samrāt (Sidewalk Emperor)
- Mitrāchi Goshta (A Friend's Story) (2001)
- Anand Owari [A play based on a novel by D. B. Mokashi]
- Mee Jinkalo Mee Haralo (I won, I Lost)
- His Fifth Woman [in English] (2004)
- Mita ki kahani "(Mita's Story)

Features of Plays

- Most of his plays deal with contemporary yet unconventional themes.
- They portray the desires, agonies, and anxieties of the urban, educated, middle-class in India.
- His plays often focus on the confrontation between the individual and the society.
- The anger and disappointment of the characters are expressed through the rejection of traditional and conventional social norms.
- His plays try to create a world that is anti-establishment and anti-cultural which is in opposition to the values set by mainstream society.
- Hence, the plays explore the human psyche in modern times in all its complexity.

Tendulkar's View on the Craft of the Play

- He discusses his views in the essay "Characterization and Structure: Two Essentials for a Playwright".
- For him, the skill of characterization and the sense of structure are the two important skills every playwright should possess.
- Better characterization imparts a sense of reality to the play.
- In a play, the structure should not be seen but felt.

Silence! The Court is in Session (1968)

- Part of New Indian Drama Movement
- Based on a real incident
- Employs a play-within-a-play structure
- Raised a controversy
- Leela Benare, the central character
  - A school teacher who is proud of her profession
  - Possesses a natural zeal for life and personal freedom
  - Ignores social norms and dictates
- Being different from the others she is easily isolated and made the victim of a cruel game cunningly planned by her co-actors
- The play examines the social problem of the society's cruel attitude to an unmarried woman

Vallath

- The “game” is a mock-trial
- The setting is the rehearsal of a play in an untidy old room of a small village by a theatre group named ‘Jagruti Sabha’ of Sonar Moti Chawl
- The characters have come on stage to rehearse a play and the play ends before the anticipated rehearsal begins
- One actor Rawte is sick
  - So Samant, the active boy of the village who is in the charge of the hall is selected for the role
  - Samant doesn’t know anything about the court
  - In order to show him the course of action of a court they play a mock trial
- All the characters except Leela Benare decide to set a trial on Benare for the offence that she has committed against the society

Vallath

- The characters produce Leela Benare as an accused in the court before the judge Mr. Kashikar
  - Mr Kashikar is a social reformer and chairperson of the group
  - The Kashikars are always seen together, and Mrs. Kashikar is extremely docile and gregarious
  - He tries Benare for infanticide
- Balu Rokade is a feeble and helpless student and he is totally dependent on Kashikars
- Sukhatme is a pretentious lawyer
- Ponkshe has failed in the intermediate but thinks of himself as a scientist
- Karnik is an experimental theatre actor
- The character who doesn’t appear on the stage is Prof. Damale

Vallath

- During the mock-trial, Miss Benare’s private life is exposed and publicly dissected
  - She is labelled by all dirty adjectives
  - Her freedom and unmarried state are condemned as indicative of her immorality
  - That she is an immoral woman teaching children is also condemned
- The trial exposes Benare’s love affair with Prof. Damale, a married man with a family, which has resulted in her pregnancy
  - Benare starts crying and is literally and metaphorically unable to escape from the trial room
- Ponkshe reveals that Benare had wanted to marry him in order to give her illegitimate child a father

Vallath

- Professor Damale is significantly absent at the trial denoting his total withdrawal of responsibility, either social or moral, for the whole situation into which he had landed Miss Benare
- During the trial he is summoned merely as a witness while Benare remains the prime accused as the unwed mother of his illegitimate child
- Against all such charges Miss Benare tries to defend herself and it is represented through her long monologue, which has become famous
- Interestingly, the accusation raised against her at the beginning of the trial – that of infanticide – turns into the verdict at the conclusion
  - “No memento of your sin should remain for future generations therefore this court hereby sentences that you shall live. But the child in your womb shall be destroyed.”

Vallath

Features of the Play

- Uncompromising realism
- Candid presentation of human nature
- Analysis of individual and group psychology
- Experimental technique

Vallath

The Vultures (1970)

- Tendulkar wrote Gidhade in 1961 but it was performed only in 1970 after a gap of ten years
- Priya Adarkar translated Gidhade into English as The Vultures
- The play presents the deep-rooted vulturine instinct in man. Tendulkar has taken Hari Pitale‘s family as the microcosm and shows how each member is responsible for its breakdown.
- Themes: unfulfilled desires, selfishness and greed,

Sakharam Binder (1972)

- The play was written in Marathi.
- It was first performed in 1972.
- It was translated into English by Kumud Mehta and Shanta Gokhale.
- The play revolves around Sakharam Binder and his unconventional relationships with abandoned wives of others, particularly with his seventh and eighth mistress Laxmi and Champa respectively.
- It deconstructs the conventional notions regarding institutions like family and marriage.
- It was banned in India for its conflicts with cultural traditions and allegations of vulgarity in 1974.

Characters

- Sakharam Binder
  - A book binder who is also a Brahmin.
  - He is a rebel and tries to live by flouting the conventional norms and values in society.
  - Self defined as “a rascal, a womanizer, a pauper”, he takes in castaway wives of others as mistress.
- Laxmi
  - A meek and submissive woman, She is Sakharam’s seventh mistress.
  - She was abandoned by her abusive first husband who was a drunkard.
- Champa
  - She is Sakharam’s eighth mistress.
  - A voluptuous woman, she is manipulative and stands up to Sakharam time and again.

Characters

- Dawood Miyan
  - He is Sakharam's Muslim friend.
  - Later in the play, he has an affair with Champa.
- Fouzdar Shinde
  - Champa's former abusive husband.

The Plot

- Act One
  - Sakharam, an outcast who has waged a war with the conventional society brings home his seventh mistress; or ‘birds’ as Dawood calls them; Laxmi home.
  - Lakshmi was abandoned by her former husband for failing to bear a child by him.
  - Sakharam claims to be open about his lifestyle and condemns the hypocrisy of some people who will do ‘immoral’ stuffs at night yet are ‘decent’ in daylight.
  - For him, he is honest and truthful about his unconventional lifestyle.
  - He informs Lakshmi that she can stay in his house as long as she wants and she will be provided food and clothes.
  - But she should respect him and treat him like the master of the house.
  - If she fails to do that, she will be kicked out of the house.
  - If she wants to leave him in a later period, she is free to do that too.
  - Because of his open ways with women, he claims to be better than a conventional husband.

The Plot

- Act One
  - But Sakharam physically, sexually, and emotionally abuses the women in his life.
  - His bosom friend Dawood Miyan is also introduced in this act.
  - Though Lakshmi was able to bring some sort of order in his life, Sakharam exploits her excessively.
  - He brutally beats Lakshmi on the Ganpati Puja day because she objects Dawood's participation in the Puja since he is a Muslim.
  - The differences between Sakharam and Laxmi become acute and they quarrel often.
  - Finally, Sakharam persuades her to leave him as they are no match for each other and they are not bound by the demands of a traditional marriage.
  - He accompanies Laxmi to the railway station though Laxmi is reluctant to leave.

The Plot

- Act Two
  - Sakharam brings his eight mistress Champa home.
  - Champa's former husband Fouzdar Shinde brutally abused her and eventually she left him.
  - Unlike Laxmi, she is voluptuous and resists authority.
  - Since the beginning, Sakharam is enraptured by her beauty and sensuality.
  - Champa is not afraid to openly express her opinions.
  - As usual, Sakharam tries to have sexual relationship with Champa.
  - But she resists it and says she won't do anything to harm her honour.
  - She eventually submits to him for survival.
  - She has sex with him only when she is drunk.
  - Meanwhile, Champa's former husband comes to Sakharam's house in search of her.
  - Champa reacts to it violently and physically abuses him.
  - Towards the end of the act, Laxmi comes back who was staying with her nephew.
  - Her nephew threw her out on accusations of theft.

The Plot

- Act Three
  - Though Sakharam resists in the beginning, Champa persuades him to let Laxmi stay.
  - But her approach to Laxmi is not friendly.
  - She demands that Laxmi can stay only if she takes care of the household chores.
  - Sakharam feels stifled by Laxmi's presence and he fails to have sexual intercourse with Champa.
  - Champa begins an affair with Dawood and Laxmi finds out about it.
  - Laxmi is offended by Champa's brazen ways but keeps her mouth shout.
  - Champa's husband comes again and Laxmi feels sorry for him.
  - She takes care of him while Champa was away with Dawood in the afternoon.
  - Eventually, Champa finds out and threatens to throw Laxmi out if she double crosses her.

The Plot

- Act Three
  - Sakharam temporarily becomes impotent because of his inner turmoil caused by Laxmi's presence.
  - This leads to altercations between him and Champa.
  - He gets angry at Laxmi and thrashes her for being a nuisance.
  - Before getting thrown out, Laxmi reveals to him that Champa is having an affair with Dawood.
  - Hurt and angered, Sakharam strangles Champa to death.
  - Once the deed is done, he is burdened with remorse which makes him inactive.
  - Laxmi advices him not to worry and advices him to bury the body in the kitchen.
  - When he does nothing, she starts digging in the kitchen to bury the body.

Analysis

- Theme of patriarchy and violence
  - Though Sakharam is the sole perpetrator of violence for most part of the play, he falls prey to his own action towards the end.
  - Laxmi represents the women who support patriarchal oppression in the name of custom and duty.
  - On the contrary, Champa openly opposes Sakharam's dominance and negotiates with him for her survival.
  - Laxmi redefines her status as a meek and submissive woman once she takes charge of the situation after Champa's murder.
- Hypocrisy
- The play dismantles conventional ideas about family and marriage.
- It deals with different shades of violence.

Ghashiram Kotwal (1972)

- A political satire written as Historical Drama
- Based on life of Nana Phadnavis
- Notable for the use of “Tamasha” form in Marathi folk theatre
- Nana, the diwan of Pune is corrupt and visits the lavani dancer with whom Ghashiram is working
- He is impressed by the wit of Ghashiram
- As he is a Brahmin, he goes to collect alms at the peshwa’s festival the next day where he is ill-treated, charged with pick-pocketing and imprisoned for the offense.
- He decides to take revenge
- He shamelessly barters his own daughter Gauri to get the post of Kotwal of Pune from Nana.
- Having got that he begins to prosecute people for even the smallest offense. When commoners complain to Nana, he ignores them.
- Meanwhile, Gauri becomes pregnant by Nana and dies in childbirth. Nana asks her body to be thrown in the river in secret.
- The situation becomes worse when a few Brahmins are put in jail and die due to suffocation. The Brahmins of Pune then complain to the Peshwa.
- The Peshwa summons Nana and due to protest by Brahmins, Ghashiram is executed.

Vallath

Mitrachi Goshta (1981)

- It was first performed in 1981.
- It was translated into English as A Friend's Story by Gowri Ramnarayan.
- It is considered as one of the first modern Indian plays dealing with lesbian themes.
- Characters
  - Mitra—A college girl who is conflicted by her sexuality.
  - Nama—Mitra's treacherous friend with whom she had a romantic relationship.
  - Bapu—A shy boy who is attracted to Mitra. He is the true confidant of Mitra through out the play.

The Plot

- Mitra is conflicted by her sexuality and society's expectations about what is 'normal'.
- She is an open person who tries to be true to herself.
- She is attracted to Nama about which she talks only to Bapu.
- Bapu is Mitra's boyfriend but more than that, he is an understanding friend.
- Though Nama likes Mitra, she perceives it as a burden.
- One day, Manya Dalvi, Nama's boyfriend, finds out about Mitra and Nama's relationship and exposes Mitra to everyone.
- Eventually, Nama's family sends off her to Calcutta to get married.
- Towards the end of the play, Mitra commits suicide which is conveyed through Bapu.

Kanyadaan (1983)

- It was first performed in 1983 and published in 1996.
- It was translated into English by Gowri Ramnarayan.
- The play explores caste and class conflicts in Independent India as unfolded through a marriage.

Characters

- Nath Devalikar
  - A Gandhian and an MLA.
  - He considers himself and his family to be progressive.
  - Hence, he supports his daughter's decision to marry a Dalit youth.
- Seva
  - Nath Devalikar's wife and a social worker.
  - She seems to be more realistic than her husband and daughter.
- Jyoti
  - Nath Devalikar's twenty-year old daughter.
  - She is deeply influenced by her family's idealism.
  - She marries Arun Athavale who is a Dalit.
  - The caste-class conflict is explored through her marriage.

- Jayaprakash
  - Jyoti’s twenty-three year old brother who is also a college student.
- Arun Athawale
  - A highly talented individual yet an abusive husband.
  - Deeply scarred by the caste discrimination experienced in his life, he abuses Jyoti as an expression of his revenge to upper-caste, upper-class people.

Acts

- Act One: Jyoti announces her decision to marry Arun Athawale, a Dalit youth to her parents and the resultant anxieties.
- Act Two: Jyoti is abused by her husband and her parents, especially her father, fails to provide a solution through his idealism.

Plot: Act One

- Nath Devalikar's idealistic perspective on life is discussed from the beginning itself.
- Jyoti informs her decision to marry Arun Athawale, a Dalit youth to Nath and Seva.
- Arun is a college student and an aspiring poet whom Jyoti met in a Socialist's study group.
- Nath is thrilled about Jyoti's decision as it is an opportunity to practice what he has been preaching about Dalit upliftment.
- Seva and Jayaprakash object to the marriage pointing out the stark class differences between Jyoti and Arun.
- Seva is worried that Jyoti won't be happy in such social circumstances and she asks Jyoti to decide wisely.

- Later, Jyoti brings Arun to meet her parents.
- Arun is uncomfortable in her house because of the class divide.
- Arun talks about the horrible life Jyoti will have if she marries him. It is a commentary on the everyday life of Dalits in India.
- Both Jayaprakash and Seva are not pleased to see Arun.
- Arun is upset by Seva's continuous questioning.
- He offends Seva by talking about illicit liquor brewing as a prospective job.
- Nath expresses his joy to see Arun and says he has become a "true Indian" by accepting Arun into his family.
- Arun abruptly leaves them.
- The rest of the family members question Jyoti about her decision.
- Though she is unsure, she informs that she cannot run away from commitment.
- Only Nath supports Jyoti's decision.

Act Two

- Jyoti is unhappy in her married life.
- Nath and Seva worry for her.
- Nath proposes to Jyoti that she and Arun can move into the Devalikar household.
- But Jyoti has left Arun because of his abuse.
- Nath is unhappy about this decision as he sees it as a failure of his “wonderful experiment”.
- Arun comes in search of Jyoti but Jyoti does not go with him at first.
- He blames his uncouth nature and abusive behaviours upon his caste and social circumstances.
- Eventually, Jyoti goes back to him as Nath slightly persuades her to do so.
- After a few months, Jyoti is pregnant but Arun’s abusive behaviours has not changed.

- He has written an autobiography about his experience as a Dalit which Nath appreciates in the beginning.
- In reality, Arun does not want to do any job but there is no restraint in abusing Jyoti either.
- Meanwhile, Arun demands that Nath talk about his autobiography in a public event which he denies.
- Arun later comes up with a few other friends to persuade/blackmail Nath but he denies again.
- But Seva persuades Nath to deliver the lecture because if not, Arun will torture Jyoti more.
- Nath at last delivers the lecture but he is tormented by the hypocrisy—both in his words and what is written in the book by Arun.
- Jyoti is furious with Nath for his hypocrisy.
- She lashes out at him saying he ruined her life with his false idealism.
- She has come to know the true nature of life after her experience with Arun.
- She leaves Devalikar household saying she will never come back again.

Asif Currimbhoy (b. 1928)

- India’s first authentic voice in the theatre
- He interweaves the public events with the private to create exciting drama which asks moral questions about humanity in cataclysmic period of de-colonisation
- He deals with the contemporary burning social and political issues and problems of Post-Independence period
- The class issues manifest themselves in Currimbhoy’s plays in the binary opposition of the ruler and the ruled, the colonizer and the colonized, the rich and the poor, the master and the employee
- He has written and published more than thirty plays

Vallath

Plays by Currimbhoy

- *The Tourist Mecca* (1959)
- *The Restaurant* (1960)
- *The Doldrummers* (1960)
- *The Captives* (1963)
- *Goa* (1964)
- *Monsoon* (1965)
- *An Experiment With Truth* (1969)
- *Inquilab* (1970)— presents the violent Naxalite Movement in Calcutta in 1970
- *The Refugee* (1971)
- *Sonar Bangla* (1972)
- *Angkor* (1973)
- *The Hungry Ones* ()— aims at depicting the real picture of the city of Calcutta during the 1960s

Vallath

Goa (1964)

- Set against the Indian takeover of Goa in December 1961
  - For 14 years after India got independence, Goa had lived under Portuguese rule
  - India’s takeover was seen as a colonial rape
- The story of Krishna, an Indian boy's love for a Goan girl named Rose, who is dark and deaf
- The girl is caught within the complex relationships of her half-Portuguese sexually free mother Senhora Miranda and her Portuguese lover Alphonso
- Alphonso admires Rose and says, “Rose is Goa, Goa is Rose”. He does not want Krishna to meet Rose.
- After 14 years of waiting, Krishna is overcome by hatred and murders Alphonso and rapes Rose (with Miranda’s help) on the night of 18th December 1961
- After this Rose and Miranda become sex workers.

Vallath

The Refugee (1971)

- One-act play with five scenes — deals with the influx of Bangladeshi refugees into India (Bengal) in 1971
- Part of the Bengal Trilogy
  - Inquilab (1970)
  - The Refugee (1971)
  - Sonar Bangla (1972)
- The story of Yassin, a young intellectual who escapes from East Pakistan to India
  - He is escaping from the the intellectual massacre of university scholars under the regime of military dictator Yahiya Khan
  - He is welcomed into the house of Sen Gupta, who was himself a refugee years ago
  - At first Sen Gupta (who had been the lover of Yassin's mother Rukaiya in his youth) I kind to the refugees, but as their number increases, he begins tons them as a threat
  - At first Yasin is unconcerned about the problems of the refugees where there is cholera and death reigning
  - At the end Yassin leaves the comfort of the Gupta household to help the refugees and work for the liberation of his country

Vallath

Girish Karnad (1938-2019)

- Born in Matheran, Maharashtra
- Playwright, actor
- Employed History and Mythology to tackle contemporary issues
- His plays are counter canonical discourses, subverting the assumptions of British canonical texts for postcolonial purposes
- Makes use of indigeneous folk and classical techniques like Bhagavata and dolls that plays an integral part in plot development

Vallath

Features of Plays

- The narratives of myth, folklore and the Indian history are employed to evoke an ancient world that resonates within the contemporary world
- Conflicting ideologies
- Political freedom of India
- The psychological analysis of the modern man is done in all his plays
- Plays based on myth
  - *Yayati*
  - *Bali: The Sacrifice* (also based on *Yashodhara charite*, the thirteenth century Kannada epic)
  - *The Fire and the Rain*
- Plays based on Mahabharata
  - *Yayati*
  - *The Fire and the Rain*

Vallath

Plays by Karnad

- *Yayati*
- *The Fire and the Rain*
- *Bali the Sacrifice*
- *Hayavadana*
- *Naga Mandala*
- *Flowers*
- *Tughlaq*
- *Tale-Danda*
- *Dreams of Tipu Sultan*
- *Wedding Album*, one-act play in 9 scenes

Vallath

The Dreams of Tipu Sultan (1997)

- The story follows the last days as well as the historic moments in the life of ruler of Mysore, Tipu Sultan.
- Based on a Farsi manuscript written by Tipu in his own handwriting preserved in the India Office Library
- Karnad uses 4 of the 7 dreams for his play: Dream 9, Dream 10, Dream 13 and the fourth one as having victory over the British

Vallath

The Fire and the Rain (1998)

- It’s a story based on Mahabharata and deals with universal themes such as alienation, loneliness, love, family, hatred through the daily lives and concerns of a whole community of individuals.

- Subversion of the myth of Raivya, Paravasu, Arvasu and Yavakri narrated by sage Lomash

Vallath

Yayati (1961)

- Theme taken from the first chapter of the Mahabharata's 'Adiparva'
- Written in the style of Yakshagana
- Opens with Sutradhara's speech
- Yayati represents the self-indulgent, sensual modern man
- He also stands for the quest for meaning and value, freedom and truth

Vallath

The Plot

- Yayati has a relationship with
  - His wife Devayani, daughter of sage Shukracharya
  - Sharmishtha an ‘asura’ girl
- Shukracharya places a curse on Yayati that he will lose his youth and become decrepit by night fall
- But however if Yayati is able to persuade someone else to bear the curse on his behalf then he would enjoy everlasting youth
- Yayati asks the people of his kingdom and his sons to exchange their youth with him

Vallath

The Plot

- Only Pooru, the youngest half-caste son married to Chitralekha, willingly offers his youth
- Yayati thus remains young while his son turns into a weak and senile man
- Yayati forsakes his life of sensual delights only after indulging in it for a thousand years
- At last Yayati accepts his old age by embracing Pooru
- Pooru again becomes young but he has lost his beautiful bride

Vallath

Tughlaq (1964)

- 13-Scene play based on the historical character of Muhammad bin Tughlaq who ruled Delhi in the 14th century
- He is shown as a man of opposites, the ideal and the real—his great ideas failed miserably
- The play has three kinds of intrigues: of the Sultan against the nobles and against royal family, of the nobles against the Sultan and among the nobles
- Tughlaq is an idealist and secularist—he wants to treat Hindus and Muslims as equal, and favours Hindus
- It is with this purpose that he wants to transfer the capital in his empire from Delhi to Daulatabad (Deogiri), a Hindu-majority city in South India
  - Many people die on the way

Vallath

Tughlaq

- Aziz, a dhobi who has changed from Muslim to Vishnu Prasad, a Hindu Brahmin, has filed a case in court against the Sultan. Aziz wins and gets a compensation from the Sultan because the latter had acquired his land.
- Aziz and his friend Aazam are planning to cheat people and make money as they move to Daulatabad.
- Tughlaq's stepmother is worried about Tughlaq's eccentricity and negligence. She entrusts the historian baron to care for the Sultan.
- Ain-ul-Mulk is leading a rebellion against the Sultan
- Sheikh-Imam-Uddin turns the people against the Sultan
  - Tughlaq gets him to dress like the Sultan and approach Ain-ul-Mulk for peace, and Sheikh gets mistaken for the Sultan and is killed
- Tughlaq's enemies plan to kill him and he gets them killed. He also banishes prayer.

Vallath

Tughlaq

- Another mad project of the Sultan is the introduction of copper currency which will be equal in value to silver currency
- People start minting fake coins and the economy of the state collapses
- Najib, Tughlaq's trustworthy advisor is killed, to the Sultan's great consternation
- It is found that the stepmother killed Najib, and she is stoned to death
- Ghiyasuddin-Abbasid, the descendant of the khalif, is about to visit the kingdom and prayer ban would be lifted, but people are tormented by starvation and do not care.
- Only the rogue Aziz can understand the Sultan and he is rewarded rather than punished
- At the end, tired and disappointed, the Sultan falls asleep on the throne; and wakes up suddenly dazed and frightened. It is suggested that he is mad.

Vallath

Analysis

- Tughlaq is a tragic hero with a complex personality and shows the paradox of idealism
- The characters are in a way extensions of his personality
- Considered a reflection of Nehru’s regime
- Aziz and Azam symbolise the chaos of Tughlaq’s reign
- Tughlaq plays chess and it is a symbol of political manipulation in the play

Vallath

Hayavadana (1971)

- Published in *Three Plays: Nagamandala, Hayavadana, Tughlaq*
- The central episode in the play–the story of Devadatta and Kapila–is based on a tale from *The Vetalapanchavimshati katha*
- Karnad has also drawn heavily on Thomas Mann's *The Transposed Heads*, a reworking of the tale
- The tale is also found in Somadeva's *Kathasaritsagara*, an ancient collection of stories
- Mann ridicules the philosophy which holds the head superior to the body
- The story has a semi-classical manner drawn from Yakshagana

Vallath

The Metafictional Opening

- In Part I, Introduction, a mask of Ganesha is brought on the stage and pooja is done and the Bhagavata sings in praise of Ganesh
  - This is based on the tradition of Naandi or Invocation
  - The troupe is asking blessings for the politicians
- Then the Bhagavata narrates the story of Devadatta, Padmini and Kapila
- But a Nata (Actor) interferes and brings Hayavadana
  - A man with a horse's head
  - Son of a princess of Karnataka and the prince of Araby, a white stallion who turned out to be a gandharva
  - He searches for completeness
- The Bhagavata sends him to seek the blessings of the goddess on Chitrakoota mountain
- Ganesha and Hayavadana are both symbols of a fragmented identity

Vallath

The Bhagavata

- Narrator, commentator and a participant in the play
- Steps into the play from time to time to comment on the action
- Equal to Sutradhar
- From folk as well as classical tradition
- Author’s mouthpiece

Vallath

The Main Plot

- The play is set in Dharmapura, home of two inseparable friends Devadatta and Kapila
  - Devadatta, son of the Brahmin Vidyasagar, is a scholar and a gifted poet
  - Kapila, son of the blacksmith Lohita, is muscular and illiterate
  - They are like Lava and Kusha, Krishna and Balrama or Rama and Lakshmana
  - They are introduced to the audience by the Female Chorus
- Both friends fall in love with Padmini, a fun-loving, beautiful daughter of a merchant from the same town
- Padmini marries Devadatta
- This leads to a fascinating love triangle full of romance, insecurity, jealousy, sacrifice, opportunism and deception

Vallath

The Love Triangle

- Six months after marriage Devadatta, Padmini and Kapila go for the picnic
- Padmini is attracted by Devadatta's intellect and Kapila's strong body
- On their way Padmini is fascinated by the Fortunate Lady's flowers auspicious for a married woman, which Kapila fetches for her
- They stop en route
- Kapila knows about the temples of Rudra and of Kali
- Kapila wants to go to the temple of Rudra, but Devadatta wants go to the temple of Kali

Vallath

The Temple of Kali

- At the temple, Devadatta prostrates himself before the goddess and begs for her forgiveness as he has forgotten his word to offer his arms to her
- To carry out the promise he beheads himself
- Kapila and Padmini search for Devadatta
- Kapila discovers Devadatta dead in the temple of Kali
- Bewildered at the sight and frightened by the social slander Kapila too picks up the sword and beheads himself

Vallath

Kali speaks

- Padmini finds both men dead, picks the sword and is on the verge of killing herself
- Kali speaks to her
- In her speech, Kali is angry and indifferent to human suffering

Vallath

Kali speaks

- The rascals! They were lying to their last breaths. That fellow Devadatta—he had once promised his head to Rudra and his arms to me! Think of it—head to him and arms to me! Then because you insisted on going to the Rudra temple, he comes here and offers his head. Nobly too—wants to keep his word, he says—no other reason! Then this Kapila. Died right in front of me—but ‘for his friend’ Mind you! Didn’t even have the courtesy to refer to me. And what lies! Says he is dying for friendship. He must have known perfectly well he would be accused of killing Devadatta for you. Do you think he wouldn’t have grabbed you if it hadn’t been for that fear? But till his last breath—‘Oh my friend! My dear brother! Only you spoke the truth.

Vallath

The Mix Up

- The goddess tells her to join the heads of the dead to their respective bodies and press the sword on their necks to bring them to life; she does so
- But soon she finds that she has mixed up the heads and joined the head of Kapila on the body of Devadatta and vice versa; probably a shrewd act on her part
- Kapila and Devadatta laugh to see the mixup but afterwards both of them claim to be Devadatta
- Kapila says that Padmini is carrying a baby of his body whereas Devadatta says that the head is said to be the sign of man

Vallath

Bhagavata speaks

- So our three unfortunate friends went to a great rishi in search of a solution to their problem. And the rishi—remembering perhaps what King Vikrama had said—gave the solution: As the heavenly Kalpa Vriksha is supreme among trees, so is the head among human limbs. Therefore the man with Devadatta's head is indeed Devadatta and he is the rightful husband of Padmini.

The Transformation

- In the Act second Kapila has run away into the forest and Devadatta is staying with his wife Padmini
- The new change in Devadatta is welcome to Padmini
- But Padmini misses the strong smell which Devadatta's body had
- Two dolls comment on the happenings in Devadatta's house
- After some days Devadatta's body is completely changed to his original self
- Padmini gives birth to a son

Vallath

The Dolls' Conversation

- The other characters can't hear them
- They are at once serious and trivial
- The dolls talk about this good house and Padmini's pregnancy
- They know Devadatta doesn't care when Padmini tells him Kapila's mother has died
- They know there has been a man in Padmini's dream who is not her husband
- They curse Devadatta and Padmini for wanting to replace these old dolls

Vallath

Padmini seeks out Kapila

- Devadatta goes to Ujjain to bring new dolls
- Padmini longs to know where Kapila has disappeared
- Bhagavata enters and informs about Kapila’s residence and activities
- With her son in her arms, Padmini succeeds in locating Kapila in the forest
- In her opinion she is a loser and Kapila and Devadatta have won
- She also accuses Kapila of torturing himself needlessly and for the mix up of their heads
- At first Kapila resists her love, but soon he lifts her up and takes her “behind the trees”

Vallath

Devadatta meets Kapila

- Holding a sword and two dolls, Devadatta enters
- Bhagavata informs him that Padmini has been with Kapila for the last 4-5 days
- Kapila tells Devadatta he loves Padmini and proposes that they should live like the Pandavas and Draupadi; but soon changes his mind
- Both of them agree that they should die; and in a sword fight both are killed
- Padmini hands over her son to Bhagavata and asks him to give it to the hunters and tell them it was Kapila's son; after five years he should be handed over to Devadatta's father as his grandson
- Then she gets ready for Sati

Vallath

Hayavadana becomes a Horse

- Hayavadana now appears on the stage
- He appears as a complete horse but still speaks in human voice
- When Hayavadana laughs, Padmini's five-year old son, who looks sad, also starts laughing
- When Hayavadana laughs with the child, he loses his human voice and he turns into a whole horse
- Bhagavata thanks Ganesha and he is joined by Hayavadana, Kapila, Devadatta, and Padmini

Vallath

Features of the Play

- The existential theme of search for completeness, hybridity and identity crisis treated in a comic vein
  - This represents everyman's predicament
- Hayavadana and Padmini both search for completeness
  - Hayavadana attains it, but Padmini realizes a perfect partner is impossible to attain
  - Hayavadana is also like Padmini's son because both are outcasts, and attain completeness through each other

Vallath

Features of the Play

- In the play, women (Padmini and Hayavadana's mother)
  - Ambitious and shrewd
  - But also very strong; they get what they want
  - They break the patriarchal code
  - Weak Devadatta is no match for Padmini
- Neither love nor friendship is idealized
  - They are presented in the light of ego clashes, manipulations, and selfishness

Vallath

Features of the Play

- All the characters in the play are leading a dual life
- The dolls present the psyche of Padmini
- It is ironic that Sati, meant for pativratas, is performed by Padmini, who has had two men, and hence is “immoral”
  - Thus, social conventions of morality are questioned

Vallath

Features of the Play

- That the main characters are introduced by the Female Chorus indicates that Padmini is the central character in the play
  - The Female Chorus also reveals hidden information and interpretation of human relationships
- The play is based on the conflict between intellect or spirit and bodily joys and physical relationship
- Folk techniques of masks, curtain, dolls, story-within-the-story in forging a national identity

Vallath

Nagamandala (1990)

- Based on two oral tales that Girish Karnad had heard from his friend, A.K. Ramanujan, narrated by women
- Written in Kannada during his stay at the University of Chicago
- Published in *Three Plays: Nagamandala, Hayavadana, Tughlaq*
  - The central theme in all three plays is the narcissism of the self-involved hero, who undergoes a test put to him in order to survive
  - The three plays represent three phases in Karnad's career

Vallath

The Prologue

- Begins with a prologue
- In a ruined village temple with a broken idol, a passer-by stops at night for shelter
  - He is a former playwright and functions as the Sutradhar
  - He is required to keep awake for the whole night to save his life
  - This is a curse for having put people to sleep with his plays
  - If he is able to save his life, he swears not to have anything to do with writing again
- ‘Flames’ enter the temple premises, talking to one another
  - The ‘flames’ have come from different households in the village
  - Each flame is a female, a story-teller, sharing with the others her observations and new experiences

Vallath

The Flame Tells a Story

- The playwright enters into their conversation and listens to Flame 4
  - The woman in her house had a story and a song in her head which she did not reveal to anyone
  - One day, when she was sleeping, the story and song jumped out of her mouth
  - The story became a woman; the song her saree
  - They now tell the tale of Rani
  - Despite his vow not to write after this, the playwright decides to pass this story on to others

Vallath

Appanna and Naga

- Rani is a young bride who is neglected by her indifferent and unfaithful husband, Appanna
- Appanna spends most of his time with his concubine and comes home only for lunch
- Rani wants to win her husband’s love, but he locks her in and ill-treats her
- In her isolation, she imagines stories of a demon who has locked her up, of an eagle who carries her away, longs for her parents’ affection and takes an imaginary lover

Vallath

Appanna and Naga

- With Kurudavva's help, she decides to drug her husband with a love root which she mixes in a curry which turns blood red
- Frightened, she pours the curry on the nearby anthill and Naga, the Cobra consumes it
- Naga, who can take the form of a human, is enamoured of her and begins to visit her every night in the guise of her husband
- This changes Rani's life completely as she starts to experience the good things in life though she never knows that the person with her is not her husband but the Naga

Vallath

- Rani becomes pregnant
- Appanna accuses her of adultery and says that he has not had sex with her
- The issue is brought before the village Panchayat
- Rani is then asked to prove her fidelity by putting her hand in the snake burrow and taking a vow that she has not committed adultery
  - It is a popular belief that if any person lies holding the snake in their hand, they will be instantly killed by the snake God
- Rani places her hand in the snake burrow and vows that she has never touched any male other than her husband and the Naga in the burrow.
- She is declared chaste by the village Panchayat

Vallath

- However, her husband is not ready to accept that she is pregnant with his child and decides to find out the truth by spying on the house at night
- Appanna is shocked to see the Naga visiting Rani in his form, spending time with her and then leaving the house
- Appanna realizes his mistake and accepts Rani along with the child she is carrying
- In End One of the story about Rani and Appanna, the Naga enters Rani's bedroom again and dies for the sake of Rani and her family
- Though Rani grieves for her lover, the Naga's sacrifice paves the way for Rani's happy married life
- In End Two of the story, the snake does not die. He is allowed by Rani to live in her "dark, long and cool tresses, like snake princess"

Bali: The Sacrifice (1980)

- Based on The King, The Queen, The Queen Mother (the King's Mother), The Mahout
- 1st brought out in Kannada in 1980 by the name Hittina Hunja.
- Translated into English in 2004
- Based on ancient Kannada epic Yashodhara Charite
- 4 major characters The king, The Queen, The King's Mother and the Mahout.
- The confrontation between Hinduism and Jainism are presented through the play

Vallath

Flowers (2005)

- Monologue of a pious priest who falls in love with a courtesan Chandravati
- The Preist’s life is torn between love for God and Chandravati
- ‘Les fleurs’ is said to be the first French translation of Girish Karnad’s play

Vallath

Wedding Album (2006)

- Wedding Album, a one-act play of nine scenes, presents the routine life of the members of the south Indian Saraswat Brahmin family and their anxiety of Indianness in search of a suitable expat boy for their daughter. The play is set in Dharwad. The Nadkarni's parents try to preserve their caste and tradition from the effect of hybridity and multiculturalism. But their children are modern.

- Mr. Nadkarni, the father, a retired doctor, is in government service. His elder daughter Hema is married to an NRI lives in Australia

- His son Rohit, a software engineer, is working for T.V serials and is in love with Isabel a Christian girl.

- The family members are anxious about Vidula's marriage

- Vidula is a younger daughter happy enough to marry Ashwin, a suitable boy from the US she has never met

Vallath

Wedding Album (2006)

- The play opens as Vidula speaks in front of a camera. Her brother Rohit is handling the camera.
- Karnad presents the story surrounding Vidula Nadkarni's wedding in the form of a television serial. As the play progresses, each scene reveals some hidden secrets of human yearning as the characters continue in their search for emotional and sexual fulfillment. The older members find it difficult to adjust to modern lifestyles in the technologically advanced world. The new generation on the other hand has its own ambitious plans of easy success. They have their dreams to scale and seek emotional fulfillment in sexual freedom, ignoring certain values and traditions.
- In the subplot, Radhabhai, the loyal cook, plays a major role. Rohit finds her life story appealing, impressive and melodramatic due to her husband's death and her adopted daughter's forced madness. She is quarrelsome, demanding and not so good in cooking. The secret story of Radhabhai's life makes Rohit feel pity for her. To him, it appears as a modern serial on the television and decided to make her story into a TV serial hoping that it will grip the interest of the audience. Her daughter Yamuna is being maintained by a rich trader and one day she is thrown out of the family. Yamuna has gone insane.

Vallath

Other Plays

- Boiled Beans on Toast (2014)
- Crossing to Talikota (2019)
- Broken Images
  - Monologue of Manjula

Vallath

Uma Parameswaran (b. 1938)

- Uma Parameswaran, a poet, playwright, and short-story writer, was born in Madras and grew up in Jabalpur, India
- She was the founder of Performing Arts and Literature of India (PALI)
- She describes the different phases of the immigrant experience in her works
  - The first phase points out the nostalgia and the feelings of wonder and fear at the new world
  - The second phase, concentrates on family and career, due to their impulse to survive
  - The third phase shows an interest in the activities of their own ethnic community
  - The final phase leads to participation in the larger political and social arena of the new country

Vallath

Plays by Uma Parameswaran

- *Sons Must Die* (a play centered on the Partition of 1947)
- *Meera* (1971)
- *Sita's Promise* (1981)
- *Dear Deedi, My Sister* (1989)
- *Rootless but Green are the Boulevard Trees* (1998)
- *Mangoes on a Maple Tree*

Vallath

Kiran Nagarkar (1942-2019)

- Novelist, playwright, film and drama critic and screenwriter
- Wrote in Marathi and English
- Play
  - Bedtime Stories (1978)
    - Against authoritarianism, patriarchy and casteism
    - Attacked by Hindu fundamentalists and was banned in Maharashtra for 17 years

Vallath

Novels

- Saat Sakkam Trechalis (Marathi, 1974)
  - First novel
  - Translated as “Seven Sixes are Forty Three”
- Ravan and Eddie (1994)
  - Started in Marathi, completed in English
  - Wildly comic novel that attacked religious fundamentalism
  - First of a trilogy with The Extras (2012) and Rest In Peace (2015)
- Cuckold (1997)
  - Story of Meerabai’s husband, Bhoj Raj
  - Sahitya Akademi Award in 2001
- God’s Little Soldier (2006)
- Jasoda (2017)
- The Arsonist (2019)

Vallath

Gurcharan Das (b. 1943)

- Born in British India, studied at Harvard and became CEO of Procter & Gamble India
- Wrote a trilogy based on the classical Indian goals of the ideal life
- Larins Sahib (1970)
  - Historical play set in Punjab of 1946-47, in the confused period after the death of Ranjit Singh
  - Won Sultan Padamsee award in 1968
- Mira (1969)
- 9 Jakho Hill (1996)
- Non-fiction Trilogy based on Indian concept of an ideal life
  - India Unbound (2002)—theme of artha or material life, based on Indian economics from independence to globalization
  - The Difficulty of Being Good (2009)—theme of dharma or morality
  - Kama: The Riddle of Desire (2018)—on the theme of desire; argues that that if dharma is 'our duty to others', kama is a 'duty to ourselves'

Farrukh Dhondy (b. 1944)

- Indian-born British playwright and screenwriter
- Major plays
  - Mama Dragon (1980)
  - Trojans (1982)—Adaptation of a play by Euripides
  - Kipling Sahib (1982)

Vallath

Poile Sengupta (b. 1948)

- Real name Ambika Gopalkrishnan
- Especially known as a writer for children
- Founder of Theatre Club, an amateur theatre group
- Major children’s works
  - The Way to My Friend's House (1988),
  - The Story of the Road (1993),
  - How the Path Grew (1997)

Vallath

Major Plays

- Mangalam (1993)
- Inner Laws (1994)
- A Pretty Business (1995)
- Keats Was A Tuber (1996)
- Collages (1998)
- Alipha (2001)
- Thus Spake Shoorpanakha, So Said Shakuni (2001)—The backdrop is that of an airport where two travellers are killing time in wait for their delayed flight. They are the evil characters Shoorpanakha and Shakuni who retell history.
- Samara's Song (2008)

Vallath

Manjula Padmanabhan (b. 1953)

- Manjula Padmanabhan was born in 1953 in Delhi
- She is also a cartoonist
- She is a playwright, journalist, comic strip artist, and also authored children's books
- She won the first Greek Onassis Award for the play Harvest

Vallath

Plays by Manjula Padmanabhan

- *Lights Out* (1984)
- *Harvest* (1997)
- *Hidden Fires* (2003)
  - In the form of monologues
  - Brings out the disastrous results of violence and riots in the nation

Vallath

Lights Out (1984)

- Exposes the violence against women
- Based on an eyewitness account of an incident that took place in Santa Cruze, Mumbai in 1982
- A group of urban middle class people watch the brutalization of a woman in a neighbouring compound but fail to perform any meaningful action
- The play highlights man’s growing indifference towards his social commitments

Vallath

Harvest (1997)

- The play describes how one family falls victim to the flesh-market controlled by the technocratic Western world
- Brings out the power relation of the First World and the Third World, with overtones of a Mephistophelian deal
- Om Prakash agrees to sell his organs through Inter Planta Services Inc to a rich person in the First World for a small fortune
- After Om is hired to donate his organs when required by the receiver, his family is kept in confinement because Inter Planta and the recipients are obsessed with maintaining Om's health
- Om, his mother Ma and wife Jaya are locked up in their one-room apartment in a Mumbai chawl

Vallath

The Power of Technology

- The recipient, Ginni, looks in on them through the contact module (videophone) installed in the room
- The contact module acts like a demigod as Ginni begins to demand a report of every sneeze and every smile and treats them condescendingly
- Om discourages his wife to take care of his brother Jeetu because he thinks that Ginni will disapprove of it
- Om's mother also remains in her own world most of the time; it is a self-imposed withdrawal
- Jaya decides that she will kill herself if she is pushed against her will
- In the end, Om's diseased brother Jeetu is mistakenly taken to give organs instead of Om

Vallath

Safdar Hashmi (1954-89)

- Communist playwright associated with Indian People's Theatre Association
- Pioneer of street theatre (Nukkad Natak)
- Studied at St. Stephen’s College and DU; associated with SFI
- In 1973, 19-year-old Hashmi, along with other amateur theatre practitioners, founded the Jana Natya Manch (People's Theatre Front; Janam for short)
  - Performed open-air proscenium and street plays aimed at taking theatre to the masses
- At the age of 34, died of injuries on 2 January 1989 after a group of men attacked his theatre group Janam

Vallath

Mahesh Dattani (b. 1958)

- Mahesh Dattani was born in Bangalore, Karnataka
- He is the first English playwright to be awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award (1998)
- All his plays address social issues, especially the deep-seated prejudices and problems that the society is usually silent on
- Gender identity, gender discrimination, and communal tensions are major themes

Vallath

Plays by Dattani

- *Where There's a Will* (1988)
- *Dance Like a Man* (1989)
- *Tara* (1990)
- *Bravely Fought the Queen* (1991)
- *Final Solutions* (1993)
- *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* (1998)—adapted as the film Mango Souffle
- *Seven Circles Round The Fire* (Radio play for BBC) (1998)
- *30 Days in September* (2001)
- *Brief Candle* (2009)
- *Where Did Leave My Purda* (2012)
- *The Big Fat City* (2012)

Vallath

Major Themes

- Dattani questions mainstream perceptions of gender in many of his plays in relation to the idea of the theatre as a powerful tool of social change.
- Themes
  - Parental authority and patriarchy—Tara, Dance Like a Man, Where There is a Will
  - Gender Discrimination—Tara
  - Gender role conflict—Dance Like a Man
  - Family discord—Dance Like a Man, Tara, Where There is a Will, Bravely fought the Queen, Final Solutions
  - Communal conflict—Final Solutions
  - Female child sexual abuse—Thirty Days in September
  - Marginal sexualities—On a Muggy Night in Mumbai, Do the Needful and Seven Steps Around the Fire

Where There’s a Will

- One of the four earliest plays of Mahesh Dattani
- The play is a drawing room comedy first performed by Playpen in Chowdiah Memorial Hall, Bangalore, with Mahesh Dattani playing Ajit Mehta
- A rich businessman Hasmukh Mehta tries to control his family even after his death through his ‘will’
- Hasmukh's mischievous will stipulates that they will not inherit his wealth anytime soon and, worse, his mistress Kiran Jhaveri (being named the executrix of the will for 21 years) must come to stay with them.
- The ghost of Hasmukh provides the occasion for humour
- Like other plays, the play has Gujarati setting

The Plot

- The narrative of the play takes place in the lavish house of Hasmukh Mehta a businessman and staunch patriarch who is now no more.
- Then dramatist introduces the ghost of Hasmukh Mehta watching over his family and criticising his dimwit and spendthrift son.
- The stage is divided into three spaces
  - The fancy dining cum-living room
  - The bedroom of Hasmukh and Sonal Mehta
  - The hideously trendy bedroom of their son Ajit and his pregnant wife, Preethi who followed the steps of his father in his life

The Plot

- As the play opens Ajit is on the phone talking to a friend about his frustration as his father does not give him Rs.5 Lakhs to modernize the factory. Here, we can see the relation between father and son. Hasmukh Mehta's ghost on stage criticises Ajit's irresponsible and crackpot schemes.
- The women Sonal and Preeti are always busy in the kitchen making dinner. Sonal is victimised and exploited by Hasmukh's patriarchal authority.
- Preeti tells Ajit:"He was a slave driver, your father! He almost drove me mad with his bossy nature. He succeeded with your mother." At the end of the play, it is revealed that Preeti had hastened the death of her father-in law by replacing his tablets, resulting in his heart attack.
- By trying to establish supreme control over his family through his money and will, Hasmukh is only perpetrating the filthy tradition inherited from his father. Somewhere the hegemony had to stop. Ajit revolts against patriarchy and establishes his final victory.

Kiran

- One strong lady character depicted in the play is Kiran Jhaveri, a New Woman and a very hard headed marketing executive.
- Hasmukh Mehta has made her the trustee of the trust named Hasmukh Mehta Charitable Trust. He has donated all his property including finances, shares etc. to the trust. As per the will, if the family members obey the rules mentioned in the will, they will get a regular allowance from the trust.
- The trust will be dissolved when Ajit Mehta turns forty five. He had done this to control his family members. As per the will Kiran has to stay with the family members but when they refuse this she tells them, “As the trustee of the Hasmukh Mehta Charitable Trust, I have the right to make a statement declaring that since the recipients of the trust, namely you all, are not complying with the rules set down by the deceased, the holdings of the trust will be divided between certain charitable institutions recommended by the founder, which will mean that you won’t ever get to see even a single rupee earned by your father in-law. Now will you refuse to let me stay here?”
- She teaches them everyday new lessons at home as well as office. She has got both brain and body like modern woman who can use any of them to satisfy her needs very successfully. Gradually, the family befriends Kiran. She becomes Ajit’s mentor, Sonal’s friend, and she discovers Preeti’s secret involvement in Hasmukh’s death, using the secret to tame Preeti.

Dance Like A Man

- Raises several universal questions regarding tradition and stereotyped gender roles in the post-independence society
- Jairaj Parekh and his wife Ratna are both Bharatnatyam dancers
- The play takes place in the living room of their house
- The play oscillates between past and present, presenting Jairaj and Ratna in their sixties as well as in their youth when Jairaj rebels against his father Amritlal Parekh who didn’t like his son’s career as a dancer
- There are four performers, and three of them do double roles: Young Jairaj-Viswas, Young Ratna-Lata, Old Jairaj-Amritlal, Old Ratna

Vallath

The Plot

- The play opens with Lata, a young dancer, bringing her boyfriend Viswas home to meet her parents
- Just when Lata's fiancé is in the process of imitating her grandfather Amritlal's style of wearing the brocade shawl, Lata's parents enter
- They do not talk about marriage, instead they talk about Lata's performance at a high profile party
- Though Jairaj and Ratna were passionately devoted to dance, they didn't become very successful
- Instead they shifts their hopes on to their daughter Lata now
- Jairaj and Ratna criticize and blame each other revealing their past struggle as dancers
- In spite of a seeming harmony, it soon becomes clear that there is little joy and satisfaction in their married life

Vallath

- Jairaj’s ambition of a career as a Bharatnatyam dancer was stifled by his ageing father
- His father, a freedom fighter, is an eminent figure in the post-Independence society
- The son does not appreciate the father’s achievements and he ridicules the reforms that freedom fighters fought for
- Jairaj wants to create an alternative world that will enable him to practice the one thing that he loves the most—dancing
- However, his father altogether stops Jairaj’s dancing classes

Vallath

- In anger, the son leaves home only to return as he is financially dependent on his father
- The father then smooth talks his daughter in-law to discourage her husband from his passion and agrees to let her continue her dancing lessons
- Being overly ambitious, Ratna will comply with the father-in-law’s wish and turn it to her advantage for her career to take off
- The father’s intention is to pull Jairaj out of his obsession and make him a ‘manly’ man.

Vallath

- Viswas, whose father is a well-to-do businessman, has no particular interest in art and dance, and wants to leave because of the quarrel between Jairaj and Ratna
- But Jairaj and Ratna talk to him about the marriage and are happy that Viswas would let Lata pursue her career even after marriage
- At the end, Ratna suggests that Jairaj is not man enough to realize his dreams, and is responsible for his self-destruction
- Images of a dancing man, dressed in the garbs of a woman, and that of a weak man, are brilliantly juxtaposed

- There is a suggestion that there has to be a clear mark between what a man has to do and what a woman is expected to perform. In the end, it is clear that both are able to solve their differences as man and woman, only after their death in heaven; a complete transcendence can be gained only after death.
- The play is a bitter commentary upon a patriarchal family system
- The play also dramatizes the conflict between the aged and the youth

Tara (1990)

- The story of conjoined twins Chandan and Tara, often referred to as “freaks”
- They were surgically separated for survival in an unequal manner favouring the boy. Their mother Bharati is worried that her daughter tara may never be accepted by the world being part of conjoined twins. The doctors know that the leg would suit Tara better than Chandan, and so he gets it while sharp and witty Tara (who defeats Chandan in card game), who has high dreams and aspirations, becomes a cripple. Science and Nature thus complement each another.
- Bharati’s father also leaves his property to Chandan.
- Tara is disadvantaged in every way, and unable to survive, eventually passes away
- Chandan is racked with guilt over Tara’s life and early death
- He moves from India to England where he attempts to start a new life, repressing memories of his personal history, and assuming a new identity as “Dan”
- Dattani’s play shows the attempts of Indians to develop into a global society, but failing due to cultural inhibitions and stereotypes

Bravely Fought the Queen (1991)

- Three Acts: **Women** (focus on the women, their conversations, life), **Men** (the careers of the men, their struggles and frustrations) and **Free for All** (the hypocrisy in their relationships)
- The story deals with three couples existing in a hierarchical order, Jiten and Dolly, Nitin and Alka and Shridhar and Lalitha. Jiten and Nitin are the Trivedy brothers who are the respective husbands of two sisters Dolly and Alka. They own an advertising company and are the stereotypical rich businessmen, employers of Sridhar, their accountant and Lalitha's husband. They deal their life according to the strict dictates of patriarchy.
- There are other characters too who are closely connected to the main characters and impact significantly the progress of the play for instance Baa, Daksha (daughter of Jiten and Dolly), Praful and auto driver. Praful is the brother of both Dolly and Alka who marries off Alka to his gay partner Nitin to conceal his relationship.
- The play establishes the position of women in Indian society as marginalized however the globalization has affected the core of our society. But the play scrutinizes the opportunities that has been introduced in our social set-up due to globalisation as Dolly and Alka have reduced merely as the show-piece in their house without any real assertion of their will. The presence of Dolly and Alka has been taken for granted.
- Music thumri creates an atmosphere of love and romance which is in direct contrast with the lived realities of the two sisters Dolly and Alka.

This PPT is made by Kalyani Vallath

Bravely Fought the Queen (1991)

- The play depicts a few hours of an evening in the rich Gujarati Trivedi family
- There are total six female characters in the play, out which four are physically present (Dolly, Alka, Lalitha and Baa), while the two do not physically appear on the stage (Daksha and a prostitute whom Sridhar uses against Jiten). But the agonies and the torments of all the six females characters are not altogether different. However, they have the same story of oppression of their own.
- The play starts in medias res, meaning in the middle of an action, the consequences felt and realized, the cause of which have to be traced back in the past or rather in past wrongdoings. Lalitha is coming to meet Dolly because Jiten asked her to meet Dolly to discuss the “masked ball” which they are organising to launch a new product ReVaTee. Lalitha is a freelance writer of a magazine, a bonsai expert and an equal partner in her husband’s professional affairs affirms her space in male dominated society
- Dattani, from the very beginning, has hinted at the pretensions and hypocrisies in the lives of the characters through various symbols. The appearance Dolly makes in the beginning putting a ‘mud mask on’ while she welcomes Lalitha is indicative of a life which hides truths to make it more palatable and comfortable, if not to the individual concerned then at least to the guest present.
- The tone of dialogue between these two ladies projects a difference of social class and status. Dolly expects Lalitha to go home, but Lalitha cannot risk the journey by an auto to her home at the outskirt of the city as there is a fear of crime against women, especially, rape.

The Bored Suffering Wives

- Drinking alcohol as a fashion and consumerist culture became a habit for Alka. She lost control once in a dinner, abused her mother in law in front of her husband and she was thrown out of the home for two months. Her brother Praful came twice begging and pleading with Nitin to take her back.
- Alka is among those few women who could speak and fight back bravely which draws the name of the drama itself following the English rendering of the Hindi poem, Jhansi Ki Rani and Alka proved the spirit of the historic Rani in her brave fight against the tyrannical husband and mother in law. Alka plans to appear as Jhansi Ki Rani in the mask ball while Dolly prefers to play the role of tawaifs. Alka's dance in the rain is her liberation from the shackles of loveless marriage. Rain also symbolizes her tears that she has shed all through her life as a woman and now she has got the strength to fight back like the brave queen.
- Bored as a rich man's wife, Dolly allows Kanhaiya, a 19 year old servant to ravish her beauty; she enjoyed the young touch, tight arms around her and the warmth of the body as well as the soul amid the slow music of Thumri. However it is not clear whether Kanhaiya is a real man or a fantasy of Dolly
- Both the sisters bear the brunt of Baa mainly because of their mother's second marriage with a already married man.
- Meanwhile, Trivedi brothers are ready to exploit their own brother in law for investing in their advertising company. The current advertisement for a brand of women's under-garments is designed as Re Va Tee in which women are shown as sex objects

Baa

- Dolly and Alka might be superior to Lalitha in terms of class, but their condition is equally marginalized. Baa, their tyrannical mother in law is also disadvantaged being a woman. In the decrepit old age also she cannot forget the trauma of being treated cruelly by her husband. She was dominated in her youth violently as her husband beat her regularly, and stopped her pursuing her passion for singing. Ill-treated, Baa has a paralytic attack and becomes incapacitated. Even in this condition her past memories haunt her but she is unable to break away from the past.
- The sons were also not spared from ill treatment. The process of socialization made Jiten a monster, and Nitin was a gay by his very basic nature, grappling with his need for relationships with men. Baa could see the image of her tyrannical husband in Jiten. He is very violent with his wife Dolly as his father was with his wife, Baa. He hit Dolly badly even when she was pregnant, and their daughter Daksha was born invalid due to that.
- Baa's possessive nature prevents Nitin from developing any kind of emotional attachment with Alka. As a woman she is a catalyst of male dominance of her husband reacting with both of her sons and then hastening the process of a complete breakdown of the family with Dolly deciding to walking out and the tragic death of Alka.

Lalitha

- Lalitha cannot engage in social parties and drinking like Dolly and Alka, and spends her time writing columns on women or nurturing bonsai plants, symbolic representation of how the natural growth of the women in our society has been stunted under the pressure of patriarchal code. Lalitha shirks away from cosmetics, big talks, big show or bragging; rather she prefers to keep her desires pruned off like bonsai
- Dolly and Alka, Daksha, even Baa at one point in her life, are shrunk bonsais, whose lives have been confined within a narrow trough, whose vital decisions like marriage have been taken by men.
- Naina Devi's thumri is heard thoughout the play Bravely Fought the Queen. The significance is multi-layered. Thumri celebrates the eternal love between Radha and Krishna, the iconic lovers in Indian mythology.

Final Solutions (1993)

- The play addresses the issue of communalism, focusing on the Hindu-Muslim enmity
- It exposes the stereotypes and clichés and the collective sensibility of one community against another
- The approach is not sentimental or simplified or moralistic
- At the end comes the realization that the demons of communal hatred are located deep within us

Vallath

The Plot

- The play spans the period from the Partition (1947) to the end of the 20th century and examines the attitudes of three generations of a middle-class Gujarati business family
- Hardika represents the first generation
- Her son is Ramnik and daughter-in-law Aruna
- The granddaughter Smita is not allowed to have a relationship with a Muslim boy
- The play shows how people transfer their own perceptions, impressions and viewpoints to the younger generation

Vallath

The Plot

- When the communal riot occurs, Hardika, the grandmother, remembers her past (at which time she was called Daksha) when another riot had taken place before 40 years
- She reads the entry made in her diary nearly four decades ago and comments, “Yes, things have not changed that much”
- Ramnik Gandhi is the only sensible person in the family
- He is not a hardened communalist like his mother and wife Aruna

Vallath

The Plot

- Hardika's daughter-in-law Aruna strictly and fanatically follows the Hindu traditions and customs but hides her communalistic zeal
- The drama begins when two Muslim boys, Babban and Javed, seek shelter in their house while fleeing from a Hindu mob
- The Hindu family is sharply divided over giving shelter to the unknown Muslim youths in the midst of communal frenzy and violence
- After a nightlong exchange of arguments and retorts, they come to the conclusion that tolerance is the only possible solution of the crisis

Vallath

Symbols and Staging

- The play becomes a timely reminder of the conflicts raging not only in India but in other parts of the world
- The stage is dominated by a crescent-shaped ramp, with the ends sloping to stage level on which the action of the Mob/Chorus takes place
- The mob in the play is a symbol of our own hatred and paranoia

Seven Circles Round The Fire (1998)

- Munnaswamy, a constable helps Uma in her efforts to bring out the truth of Kamala's murder but he also asks her to stay away from transgender people. Uma's husband Suresh does not like her to be involved in Kamala's case. He asks her to take some other topic for her research but she disagrees. Uma is also in a marginalized position. Her condition is no better than Kamala’s.
- Kamala had loved Subbu and secretly married him, and was killed soon after her marriage by the goons of Mr Sharma, an influential politician and Subbu’s father.
- All the characters of the play are assembled at the house of Mr. Sharma on the day of his son, Subbu’s wedding where the truth of Kamala’s murder is revealed. Uma arrives at Mr. Sharma’s place to investigate when Subbu is going to be married. Mr. Sharma, the minister anticipates some crisis and tries his best to prevent Subbu from being involved in the case. In the latter part of the play events like the sudden release of Anarkali, the marriage of Subbu, the appearance of Champa (the leader of the Hijras) on the occasion of the marriage of Subbu and the nervousness of Suresh accelerate the play to a dramatic end. Subbu commits suicide.
- There is a photograph of Kamala and Subbu with marriage garlands. To get this photograph, Mr. Sharma sends Salim, his servant to Champa to threaten them. But he is able to get that photograph only after the death of Subbu on his wedding day.
- The play begins in a dramatic way, and confuses the audience. The marriage mantras and terrible cries of Kamala burning all together create a tense environment. The ending comes as a surprise.

On a Muggy Night in Mumbai (1998)

- Kamlesh is a well-to-do fashion designer living in Mumbai where he is entertaining a few guests. He confesses that he is still in love with Prakash, a man who, on the other hand, has apparently moved on and 'gone straight.' Thus, he has called upon his 'gay' friends to help him in his crisis.
- The characters in Kamlesh's party represent the varied faces of the LGBTQ+ community:
  - Sharad, who is also Kamlesh's former paramour, is the flamboyant gay man who doesn't care about how the world views him
  - Bunny, his antithesis, is the clandestine homosexual man who plays a happily married father on a television sitcom as well as in real life
  - Ranjit, the diasporic gay man who is happy to be abroad rather than being in India
  - Dipali, the lesbian, who is the sensible woman.
- Later in the play, Kamlesh's sister Kiran come to visit, and there is a revelation – she is set to marry Prakash, Kamlesh's former lover
- Kamlesh is unable to reveal the truth about himself and Prakash to Kiran and end her happiness. The play's ending hinges on a chance happening – the sexually unambiguous photo of Ed (Prakash) and Kamlesh is discovered.
- This play was adapted to the movie Mango Souffle

This PPT is made by Kalyani Vallath

Stage Settings

- The stage setting divides the stage into three acting areas to depict in the multi-layered landscape in the urban setting
  - “The first is a small flat, beautifully done up in ‘ethnic chic’ fashion,” which belongs to Kamlesh and represents the private open world
  - The second area is “a completely non-realistic set comprising three levels [and] is black and expansive” and where “characters are immediately suspended in a ‘shoonya’ [void] where they are forced to confront their inner thoughts”
  - The third is Kamlesh’s bedroom which represents the private secret world
- Furthermore, the private space of the bedroom that serves a key role in the play “is hidden behind a gauze wall, giving it some mystery and secrecy”.

Stage Settings

- The window in Kamlesh's room is used, in a symbolic manner, as a portal through which the gay characters in the room view or gaze unto the outside world – of the heteronormative.
- They are often seen to be disgusted and concerned with the problems of their neighbour, the diamond merchant, when they see the wife indulge in extra-marital sexual acts with the milkman.

Thirty Days in September (2001)

- The play centres on a mother (Shanta) and her daughter (Mala) who was sexually molested by her uncle Vinay when she was young. The story is about the daughter’s recovery and survival and the keen sense of betrayal she feels towards her mother.
- Deepak, Mala's boyfriend, becomes the agent of change here. He dares to unmask the evil, even at the cost of his love.
- But when the mother discovers the truth about her daughter, which sets them both on a journey of self-discovery about their lives and their inextricably linked past.

The Plot

- The play Thirty Days in September, describes the traumatised childhood of a girl, Mala, the protagonist of the play, who is sexually abused by her own maternal uncle, Vinay. Mala was first abused when she was a small girl of six. Vinay starts raping her in her childhood and continues doing so until she is in her adolescence.
- Vinay not only plays with her body but also plays with her emotions, feelings and her mind. Mala trusts him, but he deceives her and breaks her trust and belief. Mala gets raped by her uncle continuously for years and she becomes obsessed with sex when she attains her adulthood.
- Mala tries to express her agony to her mother Shanta, but her mother Shanta doesn't pay any attention to her daughter. Shanta was also a victim of child sexual abuse and she was also raped by her own brother Vinay and she was aware of the fact that he is the rapist of her daughter as well. But despite knowing the truth, she doesn't deprive her brother of repeating the same crime and she also doesn't take any initiative to protect her daughter from him

The Plot

- Mala feels that her mother is responsible for the pain from which she suffers and to a good extent it is true.
- Shanta's husband left her because he felt that his wife is a frozen woman. Though her husband left her, he used to give money to his wife and daughter and the money was handed over by Vinay to Shanta. Despite Vinay's torchure, Mala's mother remains silent because she feels that Vinay is the only one who helps them if any help is needed. Mala feels bad and gets upset when she gets to know that her mother doesn't believe her.
- At first the women are unable to deal with their trauma. But towards the end of the play, with the help of Deepak, Mala's friend, who later becomes her husband, both the women open their mouths against the injustice done to them

Brief Candle (2009)

- Subtitled A Dance between Love and Death alludes to Macbeth's famous soliloquy beginning with "Tomorrow, tomorrow, and tomorrow"
  - Out, out, brief candle!
    Life is but a walking shadow, a poor player
    That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
    And then is heard no more.
    It is a tale
    Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
    Signifying nothing
- The play deals with the life of cancer patients. It is set in a hospital where cancer patients are about to stage a comic play to raise funds for their hospice. The patients like Shanti, Amarinder, the doctor Deepthi, etc are enacting the play-within-the-play written by another patient Vikas.
- The play-within-the-play is a farce containing explicit sexual overtones, jokes and funny dialogues.
- This farcical play-within-the-play heightens the tragedy as the audience knows that the actors enacting the play are cancer patients. Very soon their 'candle' of life will be extinguished. In using the play-within-the-play technique, Mahesh Dattani is also following a Shakespearean tradition

Brief Candle (2009)

- Mahesh Dattani uses cancer both in the literal and metaphorical sense.
- Cancer not only refers to the deadly disease that mutilates the human body and often leads to slow, agonising death but is also used as a metaphor for ugliness, abnormality and perversion of thought.
- The mask called ‘Face of Cancer’ is present on stage since the beginning of the play to make the audience aware of this truth of life. The ‘Face of Cancer’ is an “androgynous face that is melting. A face that is ravaged by the effects of chemotherapy and is now ready to give up the struggle” (7). In the play, both men and women admitted to the hospital are patients of cancer. The use of androgynous face is further symbolic as Shanti and Amarinder suffer from breast cancer and prostate cancer respectively.

Amarinder

- Amarinder recounts his story. It was during his first stay in the hospital that he discovered that he is suffering from prostate cancer. The disease had attacked his manhood. His sexuality was under threat and it made him feel afraid. The fear of losing his manhood is no less disturbing, psychologically shattering than the fear of approaching death. Faced with this threat to his manhood, he refused to perform the surgery choosing to eventually die because of the deadly disease. He preferred death over loss of masculinity.

Shanti

- Shanti, on the other hand, performed the breast removal surgery and is living with the trauma of losing her left breast, a symbol of her beauty and feminine sexuality. She may come across as more courageous when compared to Amarinder but she has her own mental demons that she must fight every single day in order to survive with her ugly, deformed body. Shanti too reveals that she was too ashamed to look at her own breasts in the mirror. “I hadn’t seen my own breast in the mirror. In the bathroom, I always took off my blouse when I was away from the mirror (32). As a young bride, she was quite uncomfortable with the intimate caresses of her husband. Shame, discomfort made her move away from his embrace. Then suddenly she was confronted with blood stains on her undergarment.
- SHANTI. I lay exposed to the technicians, my breast pushed against the X-ray plate. One of them marked my lumps, treating my breast as if it were already a piece of dead flesh...Their job was to invade my body and take out tumours, and they did. But they grew and came back till they took it all out. A part of me that I had barely felt. That I had never seen fully myself. Gone. (32)
- Shanti never loved her own body. And now when she wants to embrace her sexuality, love the curves of her body she has to accept the reality of living with ugliness and deformity.

Vikas

- Vikas, an AIDS patient who dies of cancer during the course of the play pin points the horror of living with one's sexuality under threat. It is a fear that is shattering, traumatising both for men and women. And living in constant fear of losing one's sexuality is no less damaging to the body, mind and soul than encountering the fear of death:
- VIKAS. It is the fear of losing something that you have and did not even think of the possibility of not having. But now when there is a real danger of losing it, you begin to understand its true worth. And then you are afraid you will have to live without it for the rest of your living moments (24).
- Vikas wants to spread the message of love, fulfilment, vitality and laughter. He is the ex-lover of Deepika, the doctor of the hospice and had spent his last days in the hospice. He is also the playwright who pens the play-within-the-play titled "Hotel Staylonger".

Vikas

- As a playwright, Vikas makes wonderful casting choices.
- In reality, Deepika is the doctor in charge of the hospital and Vikas, in his play-within-the-play, makes her the hotel manager who flirts with Mr Kulkarni played by the ward boy Mahesh. Mahesh was secretly in love with Deepika but could never express his feelings for her as his social status as the ward boy always came as barrier before his emotions. Vikas allows Mahesh to live his dreams although in few fleeting moments of performance.
- Casting Shanti as Miss Unnikrishnan, a symbol of beauty and object of desire for Mr Malhotra, played by Amarinder, suits both of them as in reality they are pained by their loss of sexuality. Thus, unlike the real world where death is a constant presence Vikas weaves a world full of laughter, love and sensuality.
- But, there are fissures in the script through which reality seeps in. Amol's credit card limit is about to end in the play. In reality, he has no money to fund his treatment and Shanti's pleasure trip to her world of fantasy and desire abruptly comes to an end during one of the rehearsals as her towel unintentionally slips exposing her hollowness and bodily deformity. Amarinder recoils in horror and Shanti is left in tears of shame, loss and disappointment.
- Life has failed to keep its promise and hope has turned into a "foul, deceitful thing" (phrase taken from speech of the Second Chorus in Jean Anouilh's Antigone). Repeated references to arrival and departure also remind the audience of man's journey from dust to dust (Ecclesiastes 3.20).

Other Playwrights

- Dharamvir Bharati (1926-1997)
  - Andha Yug (1953) is a Hindi verse play depicting the aftermath of the Mahabharata war: how it affected both the vanquished and the victors
- Datta Bhagat (b. 1945)
  - Marathi playwright, Ambedkarite scholar and a leader of the Dalit theatre movement in Marathi
  - Marathi play Avart (Whirlpool)
  - Set against the background of a pilgrimage to Pandharpur
  - Uses the traditional forms of dindi and tamasha to reflect on Dalit oppression

Vallath

Other Playwrights

- Jatinder Varma (b. 1954)
  - British theatre director of Indian origin
  - Co-founded the British Asian theatre company Tara Arts (1977)
- Anuvab Pal (b. 1976)
  - *Chaos Theory* (2012)
  - The Nation Wants To Know—standup comedy show
- Rana Bose (??)
  - Engineer born in Kolkata, now a playwright living in Canada and India
  - “The Death of Abbie Hoffman” (1999)—adapted from Michhil (Procession), the milestone play by Badal Sircar
  - “On the Double” (1999)
  - “The Sulpician Escarpment” (1999)

Vallath

Post-Independence Indian Fiction

Dr Kalyani Vallath

Features

- A positive kind of social awakening was attempted
- Indictment of the evils of western modernization
- Many novelists displayed secularism and poetic passions
- A progressive perspective prevalent from the 1960s
- Many valuable women writers emerged
- Diasporic writing prominent

Vallath

Features

- Quest for new values and national consciousness
- Exposure of social double-standards
- The partition, the communal riots after partition, the problem of casteism, the subjugation of women, the poverty of the illiterate masses became the focal points
- Realistic narration of the experiences of middle class women in India

Vallath

Three Great Novelists

- The Big Three
  - Mulk Raj Anand (Main theme: humanitarian compassion for the downtrodden)
  - RK Narayan (Main theme: idyllic rural life disturbed by foreign elements)
  - Raja Rao (Employed Gandhism, and wrote metaphysical comedies)
  - Founders of the Indian Novel in English
  - Their first novels were published in 1935, 1935 and 1938 respectively

Vallath

Mulk Raj Anand (1905-2004)

- One of the three greatest Indian novelists in English in the independence period
- Hailed from Punjab
- Edited the arts magazine MARG for more than 40 years
- He participated in the Indian Progressive Writer's Movement (1930s)
- Noted for his depiction of the underprivileged classes in traditional Indian society
- Called "India's Charles Dickens"
  - This epithet was given to Anand after the success of his first novel, The Untouchable (1935)
  - Both Dickens and Anand reflect with unflinching social realism the life and sufferings of the lowest classes in the society
- Awards
  - International Peace Prize - 1953
  - Padma Bhushan - 1968
  - Sahitya Akademi Award – 1971
- Saros Cowasjee is a major critic who has studied Anand

Vallath

The Untouchable (1935)

- Bakha, the Bhangi toilet-cleaner boy is the protagonist
- He is oppressed and exploited on account of his lower caste status
- Anand exposes the hypocrisy of the upper castes against which Bakha fights single-handedly
- Anand had made friends with EM Forster and the other members of the Bloomsbury Group in London
- EM Forster wrote the Introduction to The Untouchable, and said, ‘Avoiding rhetoric and circumlocution, it has gone straight to the heart of its subject and purified it.’

Vallath

The Plot

- The novel depicts a single day in Bakha’s life
  - He is slapped for ‘polluting’ an upper caste Hindu with an accidental touch
  - His sister Sohini is molested by a priest
  - He is blamed for an injury a younger boy received during a hockey match
  - He is driven out of his house by his father Lakha
- Bakha has 3 options: Christianity, Gandhism or a flush machine!

Vallath

More Characters

- Bakha attends a public meeting where Mahatma Gandhi says, “I regard untouchability as the greatest blot on Hinduism”
- Colonel Hutchinson is the Salvationist who tells him about Christianity
- Havildar Charat Singh gives Bakha a hockey stick
- Iqbal Nath Sarshar is a poet who tells Bakha that the flush system will bring about a revolution because when the scavengers change their profession, their caste will end

Coolie (1936)

- Munoo, an orphan, is the 14-year-old protagonist of Coolie
- In his small village, he is tortured by his aunt, so he is taken to Baboo Nathoo Ram's house as a servant, where he is abused by Bibiji
    - Everyone except Chota Babu (Baboo Nathoo Ram's brother) treats Munoo like a monkey
- He escapes from this hell, and works at Prabha Dayal's pickle factory in Bilaspur where he gets compassion
- Unfortunately, the pickle factory shuts down and Munoo becomes a coolie in the grain market

Vallath

Further Escapades

- An elephant-trainer in a circus takes him to Bombay where he works as a coolie in Sir George White Cotton Mills and lives in sub-human conditions in Cat Killers' lane in Daulatpur
- The mill closes down due to indefinite strike, and a communal clash breaks out
- Munoo tries to escape by running to the Malabar Hills, where he is run down by Mrs. Mainwaring's car
- He becomes Mrs. Mainwaring's servant, but later dies of consumption

Vallath

Two Leaves and a Bud (1937)

- A Punjabi labourer Gangu in an Assam tea plantation
- Tries to protect his daughter from a British soldier
- Is eventually killed by him
- Also presents the conflict between the British masters (represented by Reggie Hunt) and the Indian sycophants on the one side and the exploited coolies (represented by Gangu) on the other
    - Dr John de la Havre, an Englishman, fights for the labouring class

Vallath

Gangu’s Journey

- The novel begins with the journey of Gangu from Hoshiarpur to Assam
- The whole novel is metaphorically about the journey of Gangu: a journey into the unknown
- It ends with the journey of his life

The Title

- A complex symbol
- “Two leaves and a bud” symbolizes tea, and the life of the workers in a tea plantation
- It is a reference to the refrain of a song sung by the characters
    - The workers at the tea plantation sing: ‘I will make a good sheaf / Plucking, plucking, plucking / Two leaves and a bud / Two leaves and a bud’
- It may also mean the innocence and vulnerability of these poor workers who are brutally exploited, as well as the love and hope that will transform their life

Vallath

The Barbers' Trade Union (1944)

- Chandu is a barber boy, whom the narrator describes as "one of the makers of modern India"
- He is very active and mischievous, has the 'gift of gab' and a good memory
- But being lower-caste, he has no learning and is scolded
- Through Chandu, the anguish of lower-caste life is depicted
- The upper caste narrator, younger by a few years, envies Chandu's freedom, who is now working in the town as well
- Chandu procures a bicycle, and stops working for the villagers who are in trouble due to the non-availability of a barber
- He forms a Barbers' Trade Union, and the unity of the barbers brings the upper-caste villagers to their knees

Vallath

Private Life of an Indian Prince (1953)

- Victor Ashoke Kumar of Shampur is presented as one of the 600 Indian kings Sardar Patel is faced with at the time of India’s independence
- Victor is presented with all the vices of the pampered royalty
- He ill treats his wives. Sardar Patel, who is presented as a despot at last summons him to Delhi and makes him sign the Instrument of Accession
- But the administration of the state is rotten and Victor faces trouble, he leaves for U.K but is soon called back after being implicated in the murder of a rival in love
- On returning home, he becomes mad and is admitted to mental Asylum

Vallath

Lalu Trilogy

- Present the trials of boyhood, youth and early manhood of the central character Lalu, or Lal Singh, from Punjab
- This trilogy is a Marxist epic of pre-Second World War India
- The Village (1939)
- Across the Black Waters (1940; denounces war)
- The Sword and the Sickle (1942)

Other Novels

- Lament on the Death of a Master of Arts (1939)
- The Big Heart (1945)
- The Road (1961)
- Autobiographical narrative—Conversations in Bloomsbury (1981)

Anand’s Autobiography

- Anand planned his autobiography Seven Ages of Man in 7 volumes
- The title refers to Shakespeare’s “Seven ages of man” speech in As You Like It
- Punjabi lad Krishan Chander is the protagonist
- Four parts were completed:
  - Seven Summers
  - Morning Face—won Sahitya Academy Award in 1971
  - Confession of a Lover
  - The Bubble

Vallath

Anand as Novelist

- Assimilation of the best of Indian and Western techniques in his novels
- The first successful Indian novelist to use stream of consciousness technique
- Best use of the Indian setting and the sense of humanism
- Major themes
  - Caste-system, freedom movement, social justice, the conflict between tradition and modernity, the exploitation of the poor, the position of women in Hindu society
- His plots have a clear beginning, suspense ridden middle and a powerful end
- His language has a fine flavour of the Indian English, especially the Punjabi and Hindi idioms.

Vallath

R.K. Narayan (1906-2001)

- R.K. Narayan hailed from Tamilnadu and is best remembered for creating the fictional village of Malgudi
- Malgudi is a fictional village in South India situated on the banks of the river Sarayu
- R.K. Narayan was the first recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award for English literature
- Swami and Friends, The Bachelor of Arts and The English Teacher form R.K. Narayan’s trilogy of novels
- My Days: A Memoir (1974)
- The World of Nagaraj (1990) last novel

Vallath

Characteristics of Narayan's Works

- Gentle humour
- Story-telling talent
- Sharp attention on Indian middle class
- Abstention from preaching
- Indian sensibility
- His characters struggle to extricate themselves from the meaninglessness of the past
- Has shown the rise of individuality in woman

Vallath

Use of Myth

- Santhanu-Ganga legend in The Painter of Signs
- Savitri-Satyavan myth in The English Teacher
- Bhasmasura myth in The Man-Eater of Malgudi

Narayan’s Trilogy

- Narayan’s first novel, Swami and Friends, is based on his own childhood
    - It relates the adventures of a group of schoolboys in Malgudi, a fictional village in South India introduced here for the first time
- The Bachelor of Arts (1936) is loosely based on Narayan’s own college days
- The English Teacher (1945) is autobiographical and is based on the death of Narayan’s own wife, Rajam

Vallath

Swami and Friends (1935)

- Graham Greene found a publisher for this novel
- Swaminathan, a 10-year-old boy full of innocence, wonder and mischief, going to school and growing up in Malgudi
- He is a student at the British-established Albert Mission School, which gives importance to Christianity, English literature, and the value of education
- Life changes dramatically for Swami when Rajam, a symbol of colonial power, joins the school and becomes his close friend

Vallath

Rajam and Mani

- Swami is caught between the two worlds represented by Mani and Rajam
- Rajam
  - Police Superintendent’s son
  - The symbol of colonial power
  - Takes a major role in Swami’s growing up
  - Represents all that is stylish, sophisticated and unemotional
- The other end is Mani
  - Rough, untamed, naive, emotional and yet loyal
- The irony is that these two characters get along well
- Rajam leaves at the end when his father gets transferred to Trichinopoly, and it breaks Swami’s heart

Vallath

Other Characters

- Swami’s friend Somu is the self-important monitor
- Mani is called “the mighty good-for-nothing”
- Sankar is the most brilliant boy in the class
- Samuel is otherwise known as ‘pea’, the ordinary
- Some boys tease Swami as ‘The Tail’ of Rajam
- A Cricket Eleven is formed as M.C.C. (Malgudi Cricket Club) by Rajam

Vallath

The Bachelor of Arts (1937)

- Protagonist is Chandran, a young man of twenty one
- Chandran falls in love with Malthi whom he cannot marry because of opposition from his mother
- Frustrated and desperate, he embarks on a journey as an ascetic
- Later on he has a spiritual transformation and decides to return home
- He marries Susila, falls in love with her, and takes up a job as a newspaper correspondent, and then he becomes the chief agent of “The Daily Messenger”

Vallath

The Dark Room (1938)

- A lament on the disharmony of domestic life
- The central character of this novel is Savitri, a submissive housewife, who is married to Ramani, an employee of the Engladia Insurance Company
- They have three children, Kamala, Sumati and Babu
- Savitri is a typical housewife, very much dominated and neglected by her husband
- There is a dark room in their house where Savitri retires whenever her husband’s harshness seems unbearable to her

Vallath

The English Teacher (1945)

- R.K. Narayan’s third novel dealing with school and college life of India
- The novel tells the story of the emotional maturation of Krishnan when his wife dies and later he learns to communicate with her spirit
- Krishnan undertakes an emotional, intellectual and spiritual journey during the course of the novel
- The English Teacher employs the Satyavan-Savitri myth.
- The novel is dedicated to R.K. Narayan’s wife Rajam

Vallath

Plot

- Krishnan, an English teacher at Albert Mission College has led a monotonous life in the hostel.
- He gets up at eight daily, reads for the fiftieth time Milton, Carlyle and Shakespeare, looks through his composition books, swallows a meal, dresses up and rushes out of his hostel room as soon as the second bell rings at the college.
- During the four hours of work, he would make the boys mug up Shakespeare and Milton in order to secure high marks.
- Krishnan is fond of taking a walk by the side of the Sarayu river. The rumble of the river arouses his poetic feelings and inexplicable joy. The most unpleasant part of hostel life is its bath room which annoys Krishnan a great deal.
- His life undergoes a drastic change when his wife Susila and daughter Leela come to live with him
- Krishnan learns to become a proper husband and accepts responsibility
- However Susila contracts typhoid while visiting a dirty lavatory and is completely bedridden. Throughout her Krishna tries to keep an optimistic view but she passes away

Vallath

Plot

- Krishnan, destroyed by her loss, has suicidal thoughts but gives them up for the sake of Leela
- He receives a letter from a stranger that Susila has been in contact with him and she wants to communicate with Krishna
- This leads him on a journey in search of enlightenment.
- Leela, on the other hand, goes to a preschool where Krishna is influenced by the Principal who cares for the students and teaches them moral values through his own method.
- Krishnan eventually learns to communicate with Sushila on his own
- The story ends with the quote that he felt “a moment of rare immutable joy”
- The English Teacher employs the Satyavan-Savitri myth. Also full of Hindu sensibility and ideals. Narayan has frequently sketched the Indian myths of renunciation, incarnation, re-birth and the law of Karma in this novel as well as others.
- The novel is dedicated to R.K. Narayan’s wife Rajam

Vallath

The Financial Expert (1952)

- Margayya begins his career as a petty money-lender doing business under the banyan tree outside the Central Co-operative Land Mortgage Bank in Malgudi
- He helps the rustic shareholders of the bank to borrow money at a small interest and lend it to the needy at a higher interest
- The villagers do not really understand what Margayya is doing, but he makes money for himself.
- Balu, his spoiled son, throws his account book, containing all the entries into the gutter, and the cooperative bank secretary also throws him out of the compound. It becomes impossible for Margayya to do his business

Vallath

The Financial Expert (1952)

- An astrologer advises him to offer puja to Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. He agrees and does the pooja for 40 days
- An eccentric man called Dr. Pal who claims to be a sociologist sells him the manuscript of a book on Bed Life for Rs 25. Dr. Pal is sure it will sell like hot cakes if he could find a publisher
- Madan Lal agrees to print it and they publish it under the title “Domestic Harmony”. Margayya gets money from the publisher, and becomes very rich.

Vallath

The Financial Expert (1952)

- Balu, meanwhile is admitted to a big school but he is not good at studies despite having a private tutor. He could not clear his S.S.L.C (Secondary School Leaving Certificate). He seized his certificate book, tore it into pieces and threw it in the same gutter and then ran away from home

- A few days later, he received a letter from Madras that his son was dead. He went to Madras and found out that he wasn't dead, traced him and brought him back home.

- He wanted Balu to marry Brinda. When a pundit told them that their horoscopes didn't match, but they found another pundit who gave in writing that their horoscopes matched

- Brinda's father was the owner of a tea estate and soon Margayya became rich again

Vallath

The Financial Expert (1952)

- One day when he visited his son, he was told by Brinda about Balu's bad company. Balu also asked his father for his share of the family wealth. Margayya is further shocked to find Balu with Dr. Pal and a couple of girls. He got enraged and beat Dr. Pal

- Next day Dr. Pal takes revenge by spreading a rumor that things were not going well with Margayya. As a result of this people force Margayya to return their deposits

- All his accumulated wealth was disbursed. Still, people were not satisfied

- At last Margayya filed an insolvency petition. He advised his son to take place under the banyan tree. When Balu hesitated, Margayya himself decides to take his original position under the banyan tree. He will now have to start from the beginning.

Vallath

Waiting for the Mahatma (1955)

- R.K. Narayan’s only political novel
- A love story of Sriram and a patriotic young girl Bharati
- The novel exhibits the enormous impact of Gandhian movement of “Quit India Resolution”
- The novel ends with the assassination of Gandhiji at the Birla House
- Jagadish, a photographer and a strong follower of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, is a very important character

Vallath

The Guide (1958)

- ‘Railway Raju’, son of a small shopkeeper, grows up beside the railway in Malgudi
- He becomes a shop-keeper and then, being resourceful and talkative, becomes a tourist guide
- As a tourist guide, he is unprincipled, and self-indulgent, resorting to short-cuts to make money
- He meets Rosie, falls in love with her, but she is blind to his love
- He spends money on her lavishly, loses his own shop and everything, and makes her famous as a dancer
- Raju is then imprisoned for 2 years for forging Rosie’s signature, and upon release from prison, a villager Velan mistakes him for a holy man
- He lives as a swami, and sacrifices his life selflessly in a 12-day fast in order to bring rains to the village

Vallath

Rosie

- Rosie is renamed Nalini when she becomes a dancer
- Her husband ignores her and disregards her feelings and ambition, but she loves him like a traditional Indian wife
- She does get intimate with Raju, but is emotionally bound to her husband
- Rosie’s life is dedicated to dance and she does not discriminate between people
- Even after she comes to know of Raju’s deceit, she helps him

The Title

- The transformation of Raju from a tourist guide to a spiritual guide is the central theme of the novel
- Thus the title, “The Guide,” has double meaning
- Raju, also, is a double character
  - He is both sinner and saint, though he is never truly a sinner, and never truly a saint

Vallath

The Man-Eater of Malgudi (1961)

- Vasu, a taxidermist, persuades Nataraj to rent him a room which he later refuses to vacate as it is quite convenient for his poaching activities
- All this disturbs the peace of Malgudi and the narrator calls Vasu ‘the man-eater of Malgudi’
- Vasu hits a mosquito on his temple and accidentally kills himself
- In the Preface the author says that rakshasas will destroy themselves (Bhasmasura Myth)
- This is an allegory for colonialism.

Vallath

The Vendor of Sweets (1967)

- Life of K.V. Jagan, a fictional character who is a sweet vendor in Malgudi
- He is a successful businessman, follower of Mahatma Gandhi, honest, hardworking and humble, he tries to follow Bhagavad Gita and wears hand spun clothes
- In his early days Ambika, his wife died from a brain tumor and leaves him to care for his only son Mali
- Mali is spoiled by Jagan and decides that he would be a writer and later decides to leave for America to study Creative Writing using Jagan’s money without informing him
- Jagan accepts this diversion and treasures every letter he receives

Vallath

The Vendor of Sweets (1967)

- A few years later Mali returns with a half-American, half-Korean girl, Grace whom he claims as wife

- Jagan realizes that his relationship with Mali has further eroded. Soon Mali announces that he intends to start a story-writing machine factory in which he wants his father to invest

- He is unwilling to provide the finance needed. He comes across the ‘bearded man’ who makes Jagan contemplate about his life and he decides to have renunciation from life

- Mali is sent to prison for drunken driving. Jagan thinks he’ll learn from his mistake. However he writes a cheque to a cousin to pay Mali's bail and asks to inform him if Grace wanted to go back to her motherland

Vallath

The Painter of Signs (1977)

- Raman, a painter takes the art of calligraphy quite seriously and thinks that his perfectly made signboard is better than his rival's (Jairaj)
- He lives with his aunt, a conservative woman
- Daisy, a woman involved with family planning hires Raman to make a signboard for her office.
- Raman is attracted towards her and finds that his resolve to stay unmarried is weakening
- He accompanies Daisy on a three weak campaign in the nearby villages to paint signs (Hum do Hamare do) and other relevant messages on population control
- Daisy is attracted to him too

Vallath

The Painter of Signs (1977)

- They start spending nights together and decided to get married in the Gandharva style. However Daisy asserts that she would not change her last name or keep house for him.
- His aunt asks him to arrange for a one way trip to Benaras for her
- On the morning Daisy decides to move into Raman’s house on Ellaman Street, she changes her mind and decides to leave Malgudi for a three year family planning initiative in villages all over India.
- A confused Raman at first tries to persuade her to stay
    - Then assures her that his house will always be open for her whenever she decides to return

Vallath

The Talkative Man (1986)

- Based upon a man’s life in his struggle to make his reputation as a renowned journalist in Malgudi
- The story is narrated by the Talkative Man (TM) of Kabir Street, who aspires to be a journalist
- Dr. Rann, a man from an unknown land called ‘Timbuctoo’, arrives in Malgudi
- Dr. Rann is given accommodation in TM’s house and turns out to be a wicked womanizer

Vallath

Other Works

- Short Story Collections
  - Lawley Road (1956)
  - A Horse and Two Goats and Other Stories (1970)
  - Under the Banyan Tree and Other Stories (1985)
  - The Grandmother’s Tale (1993, last book)
- Memoirs: My Days, Dateless Diary
- Prose abridgement of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata

Vallath

The River Sarayu

- The river Sarayu is almost like a character in Narayan’s novels
- In Swami and Friends, Swami and his closest friends Mani and Rajam spend most of their evenings playing or chatting by the river
- In The Guide, the holy man Raju fasts on the banks of the dry river Sarayu, praying for the rains to come
- When Mahatma Gandhi visits Malgudi, the meetings and speeches are held on the banks of the river Sarayu

Vallath

Raja Rao (1908-2006)

- One of the three greatest Indian English novelists
- Born to a Brahmin family from Mysore
- His upbringing and education combine a blend of Indian and European influences
- Philosopher whose works are deeply rooted in Hinduism
- Left for France to undertake a study of Western philosophy
- From then on, he lived in France and the United States

Vallath

Major Works

- Kanthapura (1938) is Raja Rao's first novel
- Over 20 years later, the massive novel The Serpent and the Rope (1960) was published
- Srinivasa Iyengar says, 'If Kanthapura is Raja Rao's Ramayana, then The Serpent and the Rope is his Mahabharata"
- The Cat and Shakespeare, a smaller novel, followed in 1965
- Iyengar calls them purana (Gandhi purana), epic (like Mahabharata) and an upanishad respectively
- They focus on karma, jnana and bhakti-prapatti respectively

Vallath

Kanthapura (1938)

- Well-known for its classic foreword, which reads like a manifesto of Indian writing in English
- Kanthapura follows the oral tradition of Indian sthala-purana, or legendary history
- The novel, which brings together all the characters in the village, is told by a grandmother, Achakka to a group of female listeners whom she addresses as ‘sisters’
- Raja Rao explains in his foreword that there is no village in India that does not have a rich legendary history of its own, in which some famous figure of myth or history has not made an appearance
    - The storyteller, who commemorates the past, keeps a native audience in touch with its lore and thereby allows the past to mingle with the present

Vallath

The Village

- This village is a microcosm of the traditional Indian society
- Caste hierarchy is deeply entrenched in this society
- In Kanthapura there are Brahmins, Sudras and Pariahs live separately
- However, the villagers depend on one another in various economic and social functions which maintain social harmony
- The village shows a resolve to resist external crises
- The relationship of the villagers to history gives a sense of unity and continuity between the present and past generations
- The village also has a rich cycle of ceremonies, rituals, and festivals

Vallath

Achakka

- She has survived the turbulence of social and political change which was induced by Gandhi’s passive resistance against the British government
- She expresses a distinctively feminine viewpoint
- Achakka provides a detailed picture of the rural setting
  - Establishes the ambience of the novel
  - Creates a faithful image of an Indian way of life, traditional and indebted to its deities
  - The village is protected by Kenchamma who is invoked in every chapter

Vallath

The Opening of the Novel

- The year is 1930
- Gandhi marches with his followers to the salt pans of Dandi and in open defiance of the government, salt is manufactured
- With this, the entire country is engaged in passive resistance against the alien authority
- Following this, Moorthy and his followers enact their own satyagraha in the village of Kanthapura

Vallath

Moorthy

- Moorthy, the Brahmin follower of Gandhi, is able to arouse the villagers of Kanthapura to non-violent civil disobedience against the British
- Moorthy is allegorically presented as an avatar of Gandhi, and Gandhi is treated like an invisible god
- The satyagrahis are the Devas; the British rulers and their supporters (the Red-men) are the Asuras

Vallath

The Harikatha Tradition

- Moorthy brings about cultural awakening among the villagers by organizing Harikathas by Jayaramachar
- Jayaramachar turned the religious stories into an allegory of India’s struggle for freedom wherein the Gandhian saga was inscribed
- Jayaramachar was arrested for his propagandist Harikathas

Vallath

Skeffington Coffee Estate

- The Estate is owned by a ruthless white Sahib
- The current sahib is a womaniser
- The Estate symbolizes the impact of industrialization on the traditional community life of the village
- It also symbolizes British authority
- Bade Khan, the police officer who is sent to watch the activities of the villagers of Kanthapura, takes refuge in the coffee estate
- Moorthy tries to convert the coffee workers on the estate; is arrested and imprisoned, but freed after 3 months

Vallath

Some Characters

- Bhatta
  - The symbol of usury (lending money at high rates), false orthodoxy and low cunning
  - Sneers at “Gandhi vagabondage”
  - Revealed as a traitor
- Patel Range Gowda
  - The revenue collector who is symbol of sense and solidity
  - Moorthy gets his help to start a Congress group and the authorities dismiss him from his hereditary office as village executive chief

Vallath

Rangamma

- When Moorthy is arrested and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for three months, Rangamma becomes active in Kanthapura
- She forms a women's volunteer group, or sevika sangha, and inspires the village women with stories of Rani Lakshmi Bai, Sarojini Naidu, etc
- She also teaches them popular science: 'of the plants that weep, of the monkeys that were the men we have become…'

The Women’s Struggle

- The women support Moorthy
- The police attack the village and destroy much of it
- The women march against the soldiers
  - This denotes a profound change in the social and political nature of the country
- The women burn the rest of the village
- Moorthy, their husbands, sisters, and children have perished in the struggle
- The villagers move to another village
- The prisoners are eventually released, but only Patel Range Gowda returns to Kanthapura
- There is an eager anticipation of independence

Vallath

Ratna

- Ratna is a widow who has seen her husband only once, when she was 10 years old
- She questions the society's ostracization of widows
- She refuses to cut her hair, break her bangles, wear only white, and remain indoors
- She entertains some romantic hopes in her association with Moorthy
- Her behaviour makes her an eyesore in the village, and her mother is exasperated with her
- Ratna's mother attributes her rebellion to her school education, which is of course the result of colonialism

Vallath

The Serpent and the Rope (1960)

- The title means illusion and reality
- A semi-autobiographical account of the marriage between two intellectuals, Ramaswamy (Rama, a South Indian Brahmin) and Madeleine (a French teacher of history five years senior to him), and how their marriage is destroyed by philosophical and cultural discord
- Shift from Gandhism of Kanthapura to Vedanta

Rama, a Holy Vagabond

- Rama, the protagonist, has a life of diverse influences
  - He is a South Indian Brahmin, eldest son of a professor of mathematics, a Vedantin, who can speak various languages, goes to France, marries a French teacher of history, travels widely across India… for Rama, ‘life is a pilgrimage’. He himself says, ‘I wandered my life away, and became a holy vagabond’
  - In the novel, Rama visits India in 1951 when his father dies; he revisits India the next year for his sister Saroja’s wedding; and then in 1954, towards the end of the novel, he plans to return to India to work out his salvation

Vallath

Madeleine

- Madeleine fails to be a true wife to Rama, fails to be the feminine principle by which his masculine principle will attain fulfillment:
  - She experiences the glory and agony of love, marriage and motherhood
  - Drifts away from Rama towards Buddhism in search of selfhood and forces external to herself, and eventually to near-sainthood
  - Rama’s Brahmanism convinces him that true fulfillment is within oneself

Savithri

- Rama is described in the novel as a pseudo-Satyavan, Tristan as well as Krishna
- He achieves self-realization through his Platonic love for Savithri, the true feminine principle, who is the mythical Savitri, Iseult and Radha
- Rama and Savithri do not have each other or leave each other
    - Rama makes her go back to domesticity, fulfillment in marriage and motherhood

The Cat and Shakespeare (1965)

- Subtitled “A Tale of Modern India”
- Both The Serpent and the Rope and The Cat and Shakespeare can be called ‘metaphysical’ or ‘philosophical’ comedies
- The Cat and Shakespeare is considered a sequel to The Serpent and the Rope
- The narrator is Ramakrishna Pai, a clerk who lives away from his wife, and has a liaison with the school mistress Shantha
- Govindan Nair, Pai’s spiritual guru, works in a ration shop
- Hero changes from an earnest seeker (Rama) to a comic devotee (Pai)

Vallath

A Three-Storeyed House

- When Shantha gets pregnant, Pai fulfils his duty towards his son by purchasing a house to which he adds second storey, and the third storey yet to be built

- In Hindu philosophy, human body is likened to a house

- The three storeys stand for the three stages of consciousness – Jagratha, Swapna and Sushupti – which in turn symbolize the three-fold path – Karmayoga, Jnanayoga and Bhaktiyoga

Vallath

The Title

- The cat is the central symbol of the novel
- The cat stands for marjara kishora nyaya—like a kitten is protected by its mother, the Lord protects us
    - Markata kishora nyaya—like a baby monkey holds on to its mother even when the mother is indifferent, we should hold on to the Lord
- ‘Shakespeare’ denotes the Shakespearian ambience that interpenetrates the novel
    - Govindan Nair says Shakespeare knew every mystery of the ration shop. “Here however we haven’t to murder a brother to marry his wife. Here we marry whom we like. The ration card marries. You are married even when there is no wife. You are married without looking at horoscopes. The dead are not buried in ration shops. . .”

Vallath

“The Cow of the Barricades”

- Gauri the cow is the protagonist
- She showers mother-love and infinite compassion
- A scene in the freedom struggle is presented when the military is on one side of the barricades, ready to fire, and the people are on the other side
- The ‘Master’, the leader of the people goes into meditation, and Gauri tearfully walks up the barricade
- Seeing her, the people shouted ‘Vande mataram!’ and the military joined in
- The chief of the military fired a shot and the cow fell dead
- But Gauri was venerated as a goddess

Vallath

Comrade Kirillov (1976)

- The novel is influenced by Dostoevsky’s The Possessed
- In The Possessed, Stravogin and Shatov believe in the liberating energies of the imminent Russian revolution
- Like Shatov, the protagonist in Comrade Kirillov, Padmanabha Iyer, also known as Kirillov, pins his faith in the revolutionary zeal of Russia

The Chessmaster and His Moves (1988)

- Relentlessly philosophical
- At one level, this is a tale of doomed love between Sivarama Sastri, an Indian mathematician based in Paris, and a married woman
- The obstacles in their way become a means of introspection and spiritual regeneration

Vallath

Bhabani Bhattacharya (1906-1988)

- Indian writer of Bengali origin
- He was born in Bhagalpur, part of the Bengal Presidency in British India
- Was strongly influenced by Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi
- Social realism, with a social purpose, marks Bhattacharya's work, showing its affinity with the work of Mulk Raj Anand

Vallath

Works

- Some Memorable Yesterdays (1941)
- So Many Hungers! (1947)
- Indian Cavalcade (1948)
- He Who Rides a Tiger (1955)
- The Golden Boat (1956)
- Towards Universal Man (1961)
- Music for Mohini (1964)
- Shadow from Ladakh (1966)
- A Goddess Named Gold (1967)
- Steel Hawk and Other Stories (1968)
- Gandhi the Writer (1969)
- A Dream in Hawaii (1978)
- Socio-Political Currents in Bengal: A Nineteenth Century Perspective (1980)

So Many Hungers! (1947)

- Deals with the exploitation and greed set against the background of the Independence Movement and the Bengal famine of the early 1940s
- The ‘hungers’ of the title are seen through the eyes of Kajoli, a destitute village girl

Vallath

He Who Rides a Tiger (1952)

- In He Who Rides a Tiger (1952), a poor blacksmith, Kalo, is jailed for stealing a bunch of bananas and vows revenge on society

- Posing as a holy brahmin who has had a miraculous vision, Kalo thrives on the fraud until he discovers that he cannot dismount the ‘tiger’, which he has created, without ruining himself

GV Desani (1909-2000)

- Govindas Vishnoodas Desani or G.V. Desani, was a Kenyan-born, British-educated Indian writer and Buddhist philosopher
- Raised in India, moved to England, where he wrote and published All About H. Hatterr in 1948
  - Widely reviewed and even sold well
  - Desani never wrote another novel

Vallath

All About H. Hatterr (1948)

- Chronicles the adventures of an Anglo-Malay man in search of wisdom and enlightenment
- The H. Hatterr in the title stands for Hindustanwallah Hatterr
  - A pseudonym of a fifty-five-year-old man
  - The orphaned son of European seaman and non-Christian woman from Malaya
- The novel is the comic record of the life of Hatterr who is constantly threatened, robbed and bullied in life

Vallath

Hatterr

- Hatter’s search for both self and the philosophy of life
- He is barely one year old when his father dies
- An Indian-based Scotsman adopts him
- Being a rootless orphan, he suffers from the sense of insecurity
- His real education begins when he runs away from school at the age of fourteen

Vallath

Hatterr’s Odyssey

- His main educators are five Indian sages, three women and a South Indian loanshark
  - The fake sages rob him of his clothes and money
- Women too contribute a lot to his education
  - He owes money to a washerwoman of sixty
  - When she makes advances to him, he tries to please her with a kiss or two
  - As she demands much more than kisses, he runs away
- His second female educator is Mrs Rosy, the wife of circus owner
- He marries his third female educator
  - His marriage proves to be a shattering experience
- He at last realises that human life consists of truth and untruth, justice and injustice, yet we have to carry on like a genuine sportsman
- He ultimately realizes that appearance is not reality

Hali (1991)

- A poetic play
- Story of `Hali, who loves Rooh
- Her death plunges Hali into grief and a mystical journey

Vallath

Attia Hosain (1913-1998)

- British-Indian novelist, author, writer, broadcaster, journalist and actor.
- Attia Hosain was born in Lucknow in 1913
- First woman to graduate from amongst the feudal ‘Taluqdari’ families into which she was born
- Later she became a journalist, broadcaster and writer of short stories
- By the 1930’s she was influenced by the nationalist movement and the Progressive Writers’ Group in India
- Her works revolve around the themes such as Partition and gender.
- She was inspired by the radical writers of her time and became associated with the Progressive Writers’ Association

Vallath

Works

- Phoenix Field
  - First collection of short stories
  - "Phoenix Field”
  - “After the Storm”
  - “The Daughter-in-Law”

Vallath

Sunlight on a Broken Column (1961)

- The title of the novel is taken from T.S. Eliot’s poem The Hollow Men (1925)
  Eyes I dare not meet in dreams
  In death's dream kingdom
  These do not appear:
  There, the eyes are
  Sunlight on a broken column
- Set in Lucknow during the pre-Independence days
- An autobiographical account by a fictional character called Laila, who is a fifteen-year-old orphaned daughter of a rich Muslim family of Taluqdars
- Raised on western ideals according to her late father’s wishes, Laila is caught between her traditional family and the rapidly changing values of the society
- She finally chooses to leave her family behind in order to marry a poor Muslim man named Ameer
- At the end, Laila returns, after a period of 14 years, to her ancestral house in Lucknow that is soon to be sold
- Themes include unprecedented violence and blood-shed in the wake of partition in 1947

Vallath

Manohar Malgonkar (1913-2010)

- Born into a Maharashtrian royal family
- Served as Lieutenant Colonel in Maratha Light Infantry
- Was also a big game hunter, civil servant, etc
- His novels are realistic and seek to entertain
- Distant Drum (1960)
- A Combat of Shadows (1962)
- The Princes (1963)
- A Bend in the Ganges (1964)
- The Devil’s Wind (1972)

Vallath

Distant Drum (1960)

- Based on the author’s experiences as a colonel
- Creates a realistic picture of the Indian Army through the experiences of a Satpura officer, Col. Kiran Garud
  - At a time of transition from British Army to Indian Army (considered an epitaph for the British Army)
  - Dawn of Independence
  - II World War
  - Kashmir issue

Vallath

A Bend in the Ganges (1964)

- On the theme of the Partition and the traumas after it
- Starts with Civil Disobedience Movement of Mahatma Gandhi
  - With the slogans “Boycott British goods” and “Bharat Mata Ki Jai”
- Ends with the Partition riots
- The focus is on the transformation of three young men—Gian Talwar, Debi Dayal and Shafi Usman
  - Gian, believes in non-violence whereas Shafi and Debi, members of a terrorist outfit called the “Freedom Fighters”, believe in violence
  - These freedom fighters form the Hanuman Club and condemn Gandhi

Vallath

The Epigraph

- The novel begins with a quote from Gandhi which presents non-violence as an experiment:

  - This non-violence, there seems to be due mainly to our helplessness. It almost appears as if we are nursing in our bosoms the desire to take revenge the first time we get the opportunity. Can true, voluntary non-violence come out of this seeming forced non-violence of the weak? It is not a futile experiment I am conducting? What if, when the fury bursts, not a man, woman, or child is safe and every man's hand is raised against his neighbour?

Khushwant Singh (1915-2014)

- Author, lawyer, diplomat, journalist and politician
- Experienced partition in 1947 which inspired him to write
  - Train to Pakistan (1956)
  - Made into a flim in 1998
- Also worked in All India Radio and Dept. of Mass Communication which encouraged him to pursue a literary career
- Was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1974 which he returned in 1984 in protest against Operation Blue Star
- He founded and edited Yojana,1951-53
- The Illustrated Weekly of India, a newsweekly and The National Herald
- He was also appointed as editor of The Hindustan Times on Indira Gandhi’s personal recommendation

Vallath

Works

- The Mark of Vishnu and Other Stories (short stories, 1950)
- Train to Pakistan (1956)
- I Shall not hear the Nightingale (1959)
- Delhi: A Novel (1990)
  - Truth, Love and a little Malice: An Autobiography (2002)
  - It deals in depth with his relations with political dignitaries
  - The title has been drawn from a famous column that he wrote forss the Hindustan Times with the title “With malice towards one and all

Vallath

Train to Pakistan (1956)

- Set in Mano Majra it recounts the partition of India through the perspective of the common villagers who are unaware of the happenings outside the village outskirts
- This fictional village predominantly has Muslims and Sikhs who love each other and live in harmony
- One day, they learn that the government is planning to transport Muslims from Mano Majra to Pakistan
- Juggut Singh, a local sikh youth, has a muslim lover Nooran
  - Leaves for a refugee camp from where they'll eventually leave for Pakistan
- On the other hand, some Muslim haters attempt to mass murder the Muslims on train
- Juggat, knowing Nooran is on the train acts on instinct and sacrifices his life to save Nooran
- Iqbal Singh and Hukum Chand are two other important characters

Vallath

Rama Mehta (1923–1978)

- An Indian sociologist
- Wrote about the the position of women in tradition-bound but rapidly changing India
- Major (last) work Inside the Haveli (1977)
  - Won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1979 posthumously
  - Protagonist Geetha is a young, vivacious, college-educated girl of Bombay
  - She marries the son of an ex-prime minister of the former princely state of Mewar and comes to her husband's traditional haveli in Udaipur.
  - The moment she steps out of the train, her face is covered by her women relatives and maid-servants who take complete charge of her
  - She is trapped in a pattern of life which is totally alien to her modern upbringing in Bombay.
  - The men and women live in different parts of the huge haveli, without any contact with each other.
  - For the women, there is no life outside the haveli's high walls.
  - Geeta fights to maintain her modem values and carve out an identity for herself

Vallath

Other Works

- Earlier works
  - Ramu, A Story of India (1966)
  - The Life of Keshaw (1969)
  - Both emphasize the importance of education for boys.
- Critical essays
  - The Western Educated Hindu Woman (1970)
  - The Hindu Divorced Woman (1975)
    - The disadvantages of a woman's acceptance of divorce

Vallath

Kamala Markandaya (1924-2004)

- One of the major first generation Indian woman novelists
- Preoccupied with the social realities and the emergent national consciousness
- Kamala Markandaya was a pseudonym used by Kamala Purnaiya Taylor
- A native of Mysore
- Writing career spans almost four decades from 1950s to 1980s

Vallath

Major Themes

- East-West encounter
- Confrontation between tradition and modernity
- The clash of values
- Critical of illiteracy, poverty, economic backwardness, and population growth

Nectar in a Sieve (1954)

- The title of the novel is taken from the 1825 poem “Work Without Hope”, by ST Coleridge
- Subtitled “A Novel of Rural India”
- Has been compared with Pearl S. Buck’s The Good Earth
- Set in India during a period of intense urban development
- It is a fictional history of a marriage between Rukmani, youngest daughter of a village headman, and Nathan, a tenant farmer
- Rukmani tells the story in the first person, from her arranged marriage to Nathan at the age of twelve to his death many years later

Vallath

Plot

- Rukmani and Nathan love each other and their married life begins in relative peace and plenty
- A large tannery is built in the neighbouring village
  - The tannery is a metonymy for industrialization and is antithetical to the land which sustains them
  - It marks the destruction of their lives
  - The growth of the tannery parallels the struggles of Rukmani and Nathan to feed their children and to pay the rent on the land that gives them life
- They quietly resign themselves to ever-increasing hardships
  - Flood, famine, even death
  - Cling to their hopes for a better future
- Dr. Kennington, or “Kenny”, an itinerant English doctor, is an important presence in the novel
- Although Rukmani's fatalistic attitude toward hardship exasperates him, he feels compassion for her and helps her when he can
- At the end, Rukmani goes to live with her youngest son, now a doctor at the hospital Kenny has built

Vallath

Two Virgins

- Saroja lives in a village with her parents, aunt and beautiful elder sister Lalitha
- Saroja's life is uncomplicated
  - Simple things give her joy like the birth of a calf or a taste of one of Chingleput's sweets
- Lalitha, on the other hand, believes she is too good for the village
  - Ambitious and spoilt, she has dreams of being a movie star that are fulfilled when a film-maker casts her in his documentary on village life

Fame and Its Consequences

- Overnight Lalitha becomes famous
- Her latent sexuality manifests itself and she uses her elevated status to her advantage
- Basking in Lalitha’s reflected glory, Saroja tries to imitate her womanly wiles, which results in confused ideas about sexuality and ambition
- But when the family is faced with a scandal, Saroja emerges with a practical outlook on life

Vallath

Possession (1963)

- The novel is about the possession of a South Indian boy, Valmiki, a promising painter by a rich aristocratic English woman Lady Caroline Bell
- The contact destroys the inner self of Valmiki
- All ‘possession’ is a slavery or precariousness
- The scene shifts from India to England and America and again back to India
- The real theme of the novel is the sustaining power of Art
- His transformation into his British patron’s false image of the Indian and Lady Bell’s possessiveness stand for India’s historic possession and hence distortion of her national psyche by the British

Vallath

A Handful of Rice (1966)

- Set a decade after independence and depicts the frustrations of the adolescent psyche of Ravishankar in his search of identity
- The novel begins and ends with the protagonist Ravi's struggles with hunger
    - At the opening of the novel, Ravi forces his entry into a tailor's house, crying desperately for food, "I'm hungry. I want a meal."

Vallath

Nayantara Sahgal (b. 1927)

- Indian journalist and novelist born in Allahabad
- Well acquainted with Indian aristocracy—her uncle was Jawaharlal Nehru, her cousin Indira Gandhi, and her mother Vijayalakshmi Pandit was a freedom fighter and an ambassador to the United Nations
- Her works have been critiqued and evaluated from different perspectives
    - As a feminist, as a political writer, as a writer of social documentary and as an advocate of Gandhian ideologies
- She was awarded the 1986 Sahitya Akademi Award for English for her novel Rich Like Us (1985)

Vallath

Major Themes

- The contrast between the idealism at the beginning of India’s independence and the moral decline of post-Nehru India
- Exposes the civil disorder, corruption and oppression
- Novels are usually set in colonial India
- Presents the need to strike a balance between goodness and passivity on the one hand and ruthlessness and efficiency on the other
- Explores the personal crises of India’s elite amid settings of political upheaval
- Strong feminist thrust in the works

Vallath

Major Works

- Prison and Chocolate Cake (1954)
- A Time to Be Happy (1958)
- This Time of Morning (1966)
- The Day in Shadow (1971)
- Rich Like Us (1985)
- Plans for Departure (1986)
- Mistaken Identity (1989)
- The Promising Young Woman (1959)
- The Golden Afternoon (1959)
- The Trials of Siru (1967)
- The Girl in the Bookshop (1973)

Vallath

Mistaken Identity (1988)

- On a train journey home to north India after long months of travel abroad, the playboy Bhushan Singh, son of the Raja of Vijaygarh, is arrested and thrown into jail
- Charged with treason, Bhushan finds himself in a filthy prison cell surrounded by elderly trade unionists as innocent of any political crime as himself
- The year is 1929, the country is torn by strikes, and the government sees sedition everywhere
- As the months awaiting trial stretch into years, the apolitical Bhushan entertains his communist cellmates with tales of his world
  - Of his veiled mother
  - Of his very modern Parsee girl friend
  - Of the American flapper who taught him the Turkey Trot
  - Of his forbidden boyhood affair which ignited two murderous Hindu-Muslim riots and led to his banishment abroad
- A complex work, this is at once a family saga, a romance and a richly nuanced historical novel

Vallath

Rich Like Us (1985)

- Historical and political novel
- Set in New Delhi during the chaotic time between 1932 and the mid-1970s
- Two upper-class female protagonists, Rose and Sonali
  - Their struggle to live in a time of political upheaval and social re-organization

Vallath

Rose

- Rose, a British immigrant and wife of powerful native businessman Ram and Sonali, a highly educated young civil servant
- Rose struggles to find a sense of home in this foreign society, filled with ancient customs, including the sati, and exotic social standards
- She is unhappy in her marriage due to her second-wife status
- Rose struggles to understand Indian culture, and its effect on the female spirit
- As Ram’s health deteriorates, she realizes her rights as his wife are in question
- Dev, Ram’s son from his other wife, Mona, schemes to take all Ram’s assets by disposing of Rose
- In fear, Rose turns to Sonali, her friend and niece

Vallath

Sonali

- Sonali is an anomaly to the average Indian aristocratic woman
- She lives and works in New Delhi during the political upheaval of the Emergency
- Is divided between two worlds, one representing her ideals and longing for progression and the other that embodies her upper-class, conservative culture
- From these two characters branch off numerous other tales
- At the root of these stories lies the complex role of women in the dynamic, chaotic, new India of the mid 20th century

Vallath

Chaman Nahal (1927-2013)

- Nahal was born in Sialkot, in pre- independence India, a province in the present day Pakistan
- Educated at the University of Delhi and the University of Nottingham
- Major themes include freedom struggle, socio-political discontent, horrors of partition etc
- My True Faces (1973) is his first novel
- His novel Azadi won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1977

Vallath

Gandhi Quartet

- Nahal’s Gandhi Quartet comprises of four works
- Azadi (1975)
  - Azadi tells the story of the family of Lala Kanshi Ram of Sialkot
  - The story of the novel covers the period from the announcement of the Cabinet Mission Plan on June 3,1947 upto the period after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi on January 30, 1948
- The Crown and the Loincloth (1981)
  - Set in the period from 1915 to 1922
  - Deals with many historical events such as Gandhi's return to India in 1915 and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre
- The Salt of Life (1990)
  - Centers on Gandhi’s Salt Satyagraha of 1930
- The Triumph of the Tricolour (1992)
  - Deals with the Quit India movement of 1942

Other Works

- Into Another Dawn (1977)
  - An East-West love story set chiefly in the USA
- Sunrise in Fiji (1978)
  - A psychological study of Harivansh, an architect in his forties, who finds his personal life empty and meaningless
  - The novel centers on his life in Fiji to bid for a building contract and uses the break from the routine to do much needed soul-searching
- The English Queens (1979)
  - Hard hitting satire against the elitism of the English-speaking groups in India such as the officers of the defense forces, the noveau riche etc

Vallath

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala (1927-2013)

- German-born British and American Booker Prize-winning novelist, short story writer and two-time Academy Award-winning screenwriter
- Married to an Indian
- She is perhaps best-known for her long collaboration with Merchant Ivory Productions, made up of director James Ivory and the late producer Ismail Merchant
- Jhabvala wrote a dozen novels, 23 screenplays and eight collections of short stories
- She is the only person to have won both a Booker Prize and an Oscar

Vallath

Works

- To Whom She Will (1955, first novel)
- The Nature of Passion (1956)
- Esmond in India (1958)
- The Householder (1960)
- A Backward Place (1965)
- A Stronger Climate (1968)
- An Experience of India (1971)
- A New Dominion (1972; published in the United States as Travelers)
- Heat and Dust (1975)
- How I Became a Holy Mother and Other Stories (1976)
- In Search of Love and Beauty (1983)
- Out of India (1986)
- Three Continents (1987)
- My Nine Lives (2004)

Vallath

Heat and Dust (1975)

- The initial stages of the novel are told in the first person, from the narrative voice of an unnamed woman who travels to India, to find out more about her step-grandmother, Olivia

- She has various letters written by Olivia, and through these, and learning from her own experiences in India, she uncovers the truth about Olivia and her life during the British Raj in the 1920s

- Through the use of flashback the reader experiences the story from Olivia's point of view

Vallath

Nawab

- We discover that Olivia, although at first glance seems simply to be a proper English woman, is actually suffocated by the rigid British social restrictions, and longs for excitement
- She meets the Nawab, who instantly charms her, and gradually lets her into his life bit by bit
- He slowly gains control over her, as he does with other characters such as Harry
- Harry is portrayed as weak, due to his homosexuality and inability to withstand the Indian climate and food

Vallath

Women’s Inferiority

- Olivia eventually is pregnant with the Nawab’s baby, and out of fear decides to abort the child
- This causes a scandal in the town of Satipur
- She then resides in an unnamed town (“Town X”) for her remaining years
- The novel ends with the present-day narrator also getting pregnant, deciding to spend her years in Town X, just as Olivia did.

Other Works

- Development as Freedom (1999)
- Rationality and Freedom (2002)
  - A discussion of social choice theory
- The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture, and Identity (2005)
- AIDS Sutra: Untold Stories from India (2008)
  - A collection of essays on the AIDS crisis in India
- The Idea of Justice (2009)
  - A critique of existing theories of social justice.

Ved Mehta (1934-2021)

- Indian-born writer who lived and worked mainly in the United States
- Went blind at the age of three
- Wife is a descendant of James Fenimore Cooper
- Mehta is best known for an autobiography published in instalments from 1972 to 2004
- He wrote for The New Yorker for many years.

Vallath

Works

- Face to Face: An Autobiography (1957)
  - First book
  - Autobiographical
- Delinquent Chacha (1991)
  - First novel serialized in New Yorker
- Daddyji (1972), first volume of his 12-volume autobiography
- Mamaji (1979)
- Acclaimed books on India’s turbulent political history
  - The New India (1978), an account of post-Emergency India
  - A Family Affair: India Under Three Prime Ministers (1982)
- Volumes of reportage on India
  - Walking the Indian Streets (1960)
  - Portrait of India (1970)
  - Mahatma Gandhi and His Apostles (1977)

Ruskin Bond (b.1934)

- Has authored ore than 500 short stories, essays and novels which include69 books for children
- He was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award in 1992 for Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra
- He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1999 and Padma Bhushan in 2014
- He wrote one of his first short stories, “Untouchable”, at the age of 16
- His first novel, Room on the Roof was published in 1956 and he also received the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize in 1957
- For over 50 years Bond has experimented with different genres including fiction, short stories, novellas, autobiographies, non-fiction, romance and books for children
- Rusty is a popular fictional character created by him appears in many of his novels and short stories

Vallath

Works

- The Room on the Roof
- A Flight of Pigeons
- The Sensualist
- Angry River
- The Panther’s Moon
- All Roads Lead to Ganga
- Tales of Fosterganj
- Happy Birthday, World! (non-fiction)

Vallath

Shashi Deshpande (b. 1938)

- Born in Karnataka and educated at Bombay and Bangalore
- Daughter of famous Kannada dramatist and writer Sriranga
- Won the Sahitya Akademi Award for the novel That Long Silence in 1990 and the Padma Shri award in 2009
- She deals with the situation of women in urban, middle-class society in her fiction

Vallath

Works

- The Dark Holds No Terrors (1980, first novel)
- If I Die Today (1982)
- Come Up and Be Dead (1983)
- Roots and Shadows (1983)
- That Long Silence (1989)
- A Matter of Time (1996)
- Small Remedies (2000)
- The Binding Vine (2002)
- Moving On (2004)
- In the Country of Deceit (2008)
- Shadow Play (2009)

Vallath

The Dark Holds No Terrors (1980)

- Saritha is a successful lady doctor
- In her married life, she is a trapped animal in the hands of her husband, Manohar, an English teacher and a sadist
- The novel begins with Saritha returning after fifteen years to her father's house
- She had once proclaimed that she would never come back to her father's place
- She had a strained relationship with her now-dead mother
- Saru was ignored by her parents in favour of her brother Dhruva, in her childhood
- A turning point in her life was the accidental death of Dhruva by drowning for which her mother always blamed her
- The rest of the novel is about Saru's memories and a brief confession to her father about her trauma
- Her stay in her father's house gives Saritha a chance to review her relationship with her father, husband and her dead mother
- At the end, she has a better understanding of herself and others

Vallath

Roots and Shadows (1983)

- Shashi Deshpande’s first full-length novel
- Indu returns to her ancestral home after 11 years, on the occasion of her cousin Mini’s marriage
- She had left home at the age of 18 to marry the man she loves
- She now returns on being summoned by Akka, the domineering matriarch, who is on her deathbed
- Akka has made her sole heiress to her property which the others resent
- The novel offers a self-analysis of Indu

Vallath

That Long Silence (1989)

- The title of the novel implies that women do not raise their voice against suppression
- The central character Jaya is born in a middle class society. She is clever, curious and possesses all ladylike qualities. She was named so by her father because it meant victory, but victory never came to her life
- Her grandmother encourages her to act conventionally, so that she can get a husband when she grows up. She also tells Jaya to be more accommodating and keep quiet even if she disagrees
- Eventually Jaya learns to be subservient and quiet even if she disagrees

Vallath

That Long Silence (1989)

- Jaya tries to be a writer but fails at it, and is haunted by memories of the past
- Differences with her husband,Mohan, frustrations in their seventeen-year-old marriage, disappointment in her two teenage children, the claustrophobia of her childhood—all begin to surface
- In her small suburban Bombay flat, Jaya grapples with these and other truths about herself—among them her failure at writing and her fear of anger
- Jaya refers to this stifling of herself and her ideas as “the long silence” since it stretches across her life from childhood to middle age
- She tries to erase a ‘long silence’ begun in childhood

Vallath

Small Remedies (2000)

- A biography within a biography
- The protagonist Madhu Saptarishi is an urban, middle-aged, educated woman who has been commissioned by a publisher to write a biography on a famous classical singer, Savtribai Indorekar, doyenne of Gwalior Gharana
- Madhu has been asked to present Savitribai as a heroine
    - But she realizes that Savitribai had been a victim of gender discrimination; that she was a rebel who rejected the conventions of her times, a feminist who lived her life at her terms, a woman who gave up everything — a comfortable home, a husband and a family — for love

Vallath

The Binding Vine (2002)

- A woman-centred story
- Urmila, an educated middle-class wife, is grieving over the death of her one-year-old daughter Anu
    - In her grief, she becomes sensitive towards the sufferings of others as well
- The stories of three women are told
    - Urmi
    - Shakuntala, mother of Kalpana, a rape-victim
    - Urmi's mother-in-law, Mira, a victim of marital rape

Vallath

Shakuntala

- Shakutai is in agony, anger, helplessness and fear over Kalpana’s rape
- The rapist is Prabhakar, Shakutai’s sister’s husband
- Does not want the rape to be reported
- Urmi fights a lonely battle to bring justice to Kalpana

Vallath

Mira

- Urmi discovers her mother-in-law Mira’s poems and diary
- Mira had aversion to physical intimacy with her husband and still she has to put up with his lust
- She gives voice to her inner self in her poems
- She died giving birth to her son at the age of 22

Vallath

Anita Desai (b. 1937)

- Indian novelist and the Emeritus John E. Burchard Professor of Humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- As a writer she has been shortlisted for the Booker Prize three times
- Received a Sahitya Akademi Award in 1978 for her novel Fire on the Mountain
- She won the British Guardian Prize for The Village by the Sea

Vallath

Works

- Cry, The Peacock (1963, first novel)
- Voices in the City (1965)
- Bye-bye Blackbird (1971)
- The Peacock Garden (1974)
- Where Shall We Go This Summer? (1975)
- Cat on a Houseboat (1976)
- Fire on the Mountain (1977)
- Games at Twilight (1978)
- Clear Light of Day (1980)
- The Village by the Sea (1982)
- In Custody (1984)
- Baumgartner's Bombay (1988)
- Journey to Ithaca (1995)
- Fasting, Feasting (1999)
- Diamond Dust and Other Stories (2000)
- The Zigzag Way (2004)
- The Artist of Disappearance (2011)

Vallath

Cry, The Peacock (1963)

- Anita Desai’s first novel
- The cries of Peacock in the novel represent Maya’s cries for love.
- The cry of the peacock implies intense act of love making and its tryst with life and death. Peacocks are believed to have involved in the dance of life in the end of which they die
- Portrays the mental turmoil of a young and sensitive woman Maya who is haunted by a childhood prophecy of a fatal disaster

Vallath

Cry, The Peacock (1963)

- Maya is unable to have a meaningful relationship with the members of the family as well as with her husband Gautama
- She is attached to her father and seeks a father-figure in her husband
- But he is too rigid to understand her zest for life and ignores her
- Finally, in a fit of madness she pushes Gautama over the parapet who falls down to death
- She giggles in her newfound freedom and jumps out of the open balcony to meet the same end as Gautama

Vallath

Two Early Works

- Voices in the City (1965)
- Bye-bye Blackbird (1971)

Bye, Bye, Blackbird (1971)

- A Third-World immigrant novel focusing on the lives of Dev and Adit, two Indians in Britain
- Blackbird in the title refers to the immigrant to whom London says goodbye
- Divided into three parts—Arrival, Discovery and Recognition
- The novel opens with the story of Adit Sen, an Indian Bengali immigrant, his English wife Sarah and his friend Dev who arrive in England to study
- The novel also throws light on the emotional upheaval and chaotic sentiments experienced by the characters due to their uncertainty of existence in an alien land

Vallath

Fire on the Mountain (1977)

- Brief and uncomplicated plot
- The action is mostly psychological and the novel employs symbolic imagery
- The story of two elderly women, Nanda Kaul and Ila Das, and a young girl Raka

Vallath

Nanda Kaul

- Nanda Kaul is an elegant old widow
- She retires in her old age to Carignano, the hill station resort of Kasauli
- She seems to have found a place of her own for which she has craved all her life
- She does not want to have any connection with her friends and relatives living in the plains below
- She does not even like the arrival of the postman for delivering letters
- But her peace gets disturbed when she receives a letter from her daughter Asha regarding the arrival of Raka, the great grand daughter of Nanda

Vallath

Raka’s Arrival

- Raka is a strange, isolated child whose own wish for solitude is as intense as the old woman's
- Raka is affected by typhoid and she is pale and weak
- Though initially Nanda Kaul is annoyed at the thought of fresh responsibilities and loss of privacy, she increasingly realizes day by day her own affinity with the child
- In order to amuse the child and keep her within doors during a spell of bad weather, Nanda Kaul starts spinning stories about her own past
- But she finds that Raka is not interested in listening to her stories and she senses something wrong with the child

Vallath

Ila Das

- Ila, Nanda Kaul’s childhood friend visits Carignano
- She was a lecturer in Punjab University where Kaul’s husband was the Vice-Chancellor
- Now Ila is working as an officer in the Social Welfare Department fighting against child marriage
  - She has made many enemies in the course of the work
  - One among them is Preet Singh who tries to marry off his daughter for some land and a few goats
  - Ila's attempt to stop the marriage enrages Preet Singh
- One day Preet Singh follows Ila on her way home, abducts her, rapes and murders her
- Nanda Kaul collapses and dies after hearing about Ila's death
- Raka, not aware that the old woman has died, rushes in shouting that she has set fire on the mountain
- The fire symbolically smoldering within the characters has literally blazes at the end

Vallath

Clear Light of Day (1980)

- The novel is split into four sections covering the Das family from the children’s perspective in this order: adulthood, adolescence and early adulthood, childhood, and a final return to an adult perspective in the final chapter.
- The members the Das family, who have grown apart with adulthood
- It starts with Tara, whose husband Bakul is India’s ambassador to the USA, visiting her sister Bimla (Bim), who lives in the family's Old Delhi home, teaching history and taking care of their autistic brother Baba
- Their conversation eventually comes to Raja, their brother who lives in Hyderabad
- Bim, not wanting to go to the wedding of Raja’s daughter, shows Tara an old letter from when Raja became her landlord, in which he unintentionally insulted her after the death of his father-in-law, the previous landlord
- The section closes with the two sisters visiting the neighbours, the Misras.

Vallath

Adolescence

- In part Two, the setting switches to partition-era India, when the characters are adolescents in the house
- Raja is severely ill with tuberculosis and is left to Bim's ministrations
- Aunt Mira ("Mira-masi"), their supposed caretaker after the death of the children's often absent parents, dies of alcoholism
- Earlier, Raja's fascination with Urdu attracts the attention of the family's Muslim landlord, Hyder Ali, whom Raja idolizes
- After recovering from TB, Raja follows Hyder Ali to Hyderabad
- Tara escapes from the situation through her marriage to Bakul, leaving Bim to provide for Baba alone, in the midst of the partition and the death of Gandhi.

Vallath

Childhood

- In part three Bim, Raja and Tara are depicted awaiting the birth of their brother Baba in pre-partition India
- Aunt Mira, widowed and mistreated by her in-laws, is brought in to help with Baba, who is autistic, and to raise the children
- Raja is fascinated with poetry
- He shares a close bond with Bim, the head girl at school, although they often exclude Tara
- Tara wants to be a mother, although this fact brings ridicule from Raja and Bim, who want to be heroes

Vallath

Return to Adulthood

- The final section returns to modern India and shows Tara confronting Bim over Raja's daughter's wedding and Bim's broken relationship with Raja
- This climaxes when Bim explodes at Baba
- After her anger fades, she decides that family love is irreplaceable and can cover all wrongs
- After Tara leaves, she goes to her neighbours the Misras for a concert, where she is touched by the unbreakable relationship they seem to have
- She tells Tara to come back from the wedding with Raja and forgives him

Vallath

In Custody (1984)

- Deven earns a living by teaching Hindi literature to uninterested college students
- As his true interests lie in Urdu poetry, he jumps at the chance to meet the great Urdu poet, Nur
- Under the advice of his friend Murad, an editor of a periodical devoted to Urdu literature, Deven procures a secondhand tape recorder so that he can help transcribe Nur's early poetry, as well as conduct an interview or even write the memoirs of Nur
- However, Deven is completely disillusioned when he meets Nur

Vallath

Fasting, Feasting (1999)

- A novel of intricate family relations set in two countries, India and the United States
- The core characters comprise a family living in a small town in India, where provincial customs and attitudes dictate the future of all children: girls are to be married off and boys are to become as educated as possible
- The story contrasts the life of the unmarried main character, Uma, the family's elder daughter, with Arun, the boy and baby of the family
- Uma spends her life in subservience to her older demanding parents, while massive effort and energy is expended to ensure Arun's education and placement in a university in Massachusetts

Vallath

Arun Joshi (1939-1993)

- Themes
  - Different types of alienation
  - Existential dilemmas
  - The problems of post-Independence Indian society
  - The implications of the East-West encounter
- Novels
  - The Foreigner (1969)
  - The Strange Case of Billy Biswas (1971)
  - The Apprentice (1974)
  - The Last Labyrinth (1981, Won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1982)
  - The City and the River (1976)
  - The Survivor (collection of short stories)

Vallath

The Foreigner (1969)

- The novel deals with the themes of alienation and existentialism
- Sindi Oberoi, the protagonist is an Indian by origin, having been brought up in Kenya educated in London has been living in America for six years
- His stubborn disinclination to attach himself to anybody leads to the death of his friend Khemka and his sweetheart June Blyth
- But eventually he discovers himself and a purpose in life by involving himself in the joys and sufferings of others

Vallath

The Strange Case of Billy Biswas (1971)

- The novel is a satire on modern civilization
- Billy Biswas, Meena Mukherjee, Rima Kaul and Bilasia are leading characters in the novel
- It is narrated in first person by his close friend Romesh
- The novel portrays the story of Billy Biswas, a young, rich, American educated Indian,deeply interested in Anthropology who ends up in the wilderness of Central India seeking for the meaning of life

Vallath

The Last Labyrinth (1981)

- The novel explores the Jungian and Sartrean struggle of Som Bhaskar for an authentic mode of life
- The dichotomy in the character of protagonist is apparent through his name itself, which means Moon-Sun
- It is set in a world of mystery and darkness of human emotions and deals with the theme of modern India’s existential predicament
- Som Bhaskar, the hero of the novel is a rich and western educated man completely absorbed in acquiring other people’s wealth
- He suffers from insomnia and a call of “I want,I want”
- In order to overtake Aftab’s business he goes to the spiritual land of Benaras and comes in contact with Aftab, his beloved Anuradha and the spiritual guide Gargi
- He realizes that Ganga is not only a river rather a spiritual soother and a desire of “I want,I want is not for worldly pursuits rather for spiritual needs

Vallath

Gita Mehta (b. 1943)

- Indian writer and was born in Delhi in the well-known Odia family of Biju Patnaik
- Works
  - Karma Cola (1979)
  - Raj (1989)
  - A River Sutra (1993)
  - Snakes and Ladders: Glimpses of Modern India
  - Eternal Ganesha

Vallath

Karma Cola (1979)

- Non-fiction book
- It is set in the 60s where thousands of westerners have come to India to find the magic and mystery that was missing from their lives .
- It describes the tradition of an ancient and long –lived society being turned into commodity and sold to those who don’t understand them

Vallath

Other Works

- Raj (1989)
  - Jaya Singh, the princess of Balmer is torn between the tradition of her upbringing and the ideals of the Mahatma
- Snakes and Ladders: Glimpses of Modern India
  - In "Snakes and Ladders," she gives a loving but unflinching assessment of India today, entertaining, informative, and wholly personal.
- Eternal Ganesha
  - In the first popular book on the subject, Gita explores the rich religious and cultural meanings of the beloved figure.

Vallath

A River Sutra (1993)

- Collection of short stories by Gita Mehta
- It is considered to be an accurate representation of Indian Culture, as it covers much of the culture of India.
- The story is set in mid-to-late 20th century around the Narmada River
- Through these stories ,the major themes of love, desire, lust and religion are explored.

Vallath

Salman Rushdie (b. 1947)

- British Indian novelist and essayist
- Born in Bombay in 1947, just months before the Partition of British India
- Left India at the age of fourteen to attend Rugby School in England, while his family left India for Pakistan
- Then studied history at King's College, Cambridge, and after graduation, he earned a living working in advertising while writing his first novel Grimus (1975)
- Most of his fiction set in Indian sub-continent, focusing on the outrages of history and particularly of religions

Vallath

Grimus (1975)

- Science fiction novel
- Flapping Eagle, an immortal Axona Indian searches an alternate dimension known as Calf Island for his missing sister, Bird-Dog.
- He receives the gift of immortality after drinking a magic fluid
- He wanders the earth for 777 years 7 months and 7 days (sailing the seas with the blessing–and ultimately the burden–of living forever), searching for his immortal sister and exploring identities; then (while attempting suicide) falls through a hole in the Mediterranean Sea
- He arrives in a parallel world at the mystical Calf Island (to regain his mortality)
- There he meets other immortals obsessed with their own stasis and reluctant to give up their immortality

Grimus (1975)

- He then sets out (with Virgil Jones—an exiled associate of Grimus, the dimensions creator) to scale the island's peak, from which the mysterious and corrosive Grimus Effect emits. This effect of dimensional distortions consists of a "Whine" that pervades the mountain and drives people mad who succumb to it for too long a time.
- They hope to find the mysterious Grimus, uncover the secret of his sister's disappearance, and locate the source of Calf Island's shifting dimensions—the Stone Rose, an ancient instrument of imagination that controls dimensional space.
- At the top of Calf Mountain sits the town of "K", in which live people who deal with the effect by obsessing over various things. Here flapping Eagle and Virgil part ways.
- In K, Flapping Eagle is a guest in the house of Ignatius Quasimodo Gribb, a rationalist philosopher who has convinced the town's inhabitants that Grimus and the Stone Rose are meaningless myths.
    - Gribb is the author of "The All-Purpose Quotable Philosophy," a book of clichés designed to spread his ideas among the people of K.
- While living with Gribb and his wife, Elfrida, Flapping Eagle also meets the town's leader, Count Alexsandr Cherkassov, a Russian aristocrat, and his wife, Irina. Both of the beautiful wives are mysteriously attracted to Flapping Eagle, but despite an affair with Irina Cherkassova, he falls in love with the more faithful Elfrida, who soon tells her husband that she loves the handsome Amerindian.
- His illusions about his marriage shattered, Gribb immediately loses his ability to conceptualize a rational world and dies as a result.

Vallath

Grimus (1975)

- As the town's illusions begin to collapse and people begin to die, Bird-Dog appears and escorts Flapping Eagle to Grimus house on the summit of Calf Mountain.
- There, Flapping Eagle discovers that he and Grimus resemble each other and that Grimus has lured him to the mountain to take his place as caretaker of the Stone Rose.
- Grimus—whose name is an anagram for Simurg, a mythical phoenix—may in fact already be a part of Flapping Eagle, a version of the Amerindian's self that has created all reality.
- To convince Flapping Eagle to comply with his wishes, Grimus enters the Axona's mind; the two meld into a single split consciousness in which the I-Grimus and the I-Eagle fight to control the mind's imagination.
- The struggle continues until the I-Eagle realizes the secret of conceptualizing a new dimension. He quickly re-creates Calf Island in his mind, but without the Stone Rose.
- At the same moment, the angry townspeople, deprived of their belief in a rational world, ransack the house and kill Grimus. With the destruction of the Stone Rose, however, all the island's inhabitants and the island itself begin to dissolve into unshaped conceptual energy.
- Central concern is: Does reality exist beyond the individual's imagination?

Midnight’s Children (1981)

- Set against India’s transition from British colonialism to independence and the Partition of India and the Emergency
- Semi-autobiographical story of a family
- Employs magic realism and postcolonial themes
- Won Booker Prize in 1981 and Booker of Bookers Prize and the best all-time prize winners in 1993 and 2008
- The novel is divided into three books
- 62 years (1915 to 1977)
- 3 countries: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh
- Has a multitude of characters
- Narrator is Saleem Sinai, and listening to his story is Padma, his lover
- Indira Gandhi sued Rushdie and Rushdie had to remove a sentence
    - "It has often been said that Mrs. Gandhi's younger son Sanjay accused his mother of being responsible, through her neglect, for his father's death; and that this gave him an unbreakable hold over her, so that she became incapable of denying him anything.”

Timeline

- 28 July 1914: World War I
  - One year before Aadam Aziz returned home from Germany
  - Started the long list of battles that parallel Saleem's family history.
- March 1919: Rowlatt Act And Satyagraha
  - Growing anger culminating in India's independence, and Saleem's birth.
- 13 April 1919: Jallianwala Bagh Massacre
  - Aadam Aziz comes home covered in blood.
  - English rule began crumbling.
- 1939 – August 1942: WWII, The Quit India Movement
  - Mian Abdullah is against Partition
  - In 1939 the British Governor General brought India into World War II. While most people were against it, the Muslim league supported the war.
- 16 August 1946: Direct Action Day/ The Great Calcutta Killings /The Week Of The Long Knives
  - Massive riots that began in Calcutta and spread throughout India
  - Hindus and Muslims began fighting. Lifafa Das‘ gets caught in it. Amina bravely stands her ground.

- 15 August 1947: Indian Independence And Partition Of India
  - Instead of celebrations, there were more riots: India split into Pakistan and the Republic of India.
  - Saleem is born at the stroke of midnight. His story is the story of the new India.
- 30 January 1948: The Assassination Of Gandhi
  - Gandhi was walking to a prayer meeting when Nathuram Godse, a Hindu nationalist, shot him in the chest three times with a Beretta M 1934.
  - Gandhi's death marked a new beginning for independent India, and the rise of Indian National Congress
  - Gandhi's assassination is announced right in the middle of Hanif's new film. Hanif succumbs to the fantastic in the end, like India would.
- 1958: Pakistani Coup D'état
  - As funny as it seems, it is part of a huge historical moment that Saleem and his cousin witness though they don't realize it
- 1962: The Sino-Indian War
  - The next fifteen years were not a good time for India: they were marked by warfare and bloodshed. It all started in the Sino Indian war and it ended when Indira Gandhi declared the State of Emergency.
  - Saleem uses the start of the Sino Indian War to mark the end of the Midnight's Children, which also marks the end of Saleem's comfortable childhood and India's peaceful independence.

Vallath

- 1965: Indo-Pakistani War Of 1965/ Second Kashmir War
  - This is the war that kills Saleem's family. Kashmir, the region that Saleem's family is from, was in the middle of the war: the five-week war ended with thousands of casualties on both sides.
- 26 March 1971: Bangladesh Liberation War and Indo-Pakistani War of 1971
  - The Bangladesh Liberation War took up the first part of the year, and the Indo Pakistani war finished the last thirteen days of December
  - Saleem's friends think they are going to fight Indians, but they end up fighting their fellow Pakistanis (meaning future Bangladeshis, since before independence Bangladesh was called East Pakistan) in the Bangladesh Liberation war.
  - Rushdie describes the atrocities of these wars in a powerfully surrealistic manner
- 1975-1977: The Emergency
  - The Emergency was a twenty-one-month period where Indira Gandhi ruled India absolutely. Elections and civil liberties were suspended; people were arrested for protesting or being part of certain political organizations; the Constitution of India was changed, and people were forced to be sterilized.
  - The Emergency was the death of hope and liberty.
  - The beginning of the Emergency it is also the birthday of Saleem's son Aadam. Just as his father became tied to a newly independent India, Aadam is tied to a post-Emergency India.

Vallath

Saleem is born

- Saleem begins his life story
  - He was born at the exact moment of independence
  - Mysteriously handcuffed to history
  - As he turns thirty-one, Saleem believes that his body is beginning to crack and fall apart, like India herself is
  - This makes him anxious to tell his life story to Padma, his devoted caretaker and future wife
  - Her name is repeated throughout the novel as the listener
  - Later on, he says, “Please believe that I am falling apart . . . . This is why I have resolved to confide in paper, before I forget.”

Saleem’s Grandfather

- His story goes back to 1915, 30 years before his birth
  - His grandfather Aadam Aziz returned to Kashmir after becoming a doctor in Germany
  - The boatman Tai takes him to treat Naseem Ghani, a landowner’s daughter
  - He can only see one part of her body through a 7 inch hole in a sheet
  - Ghani had made such strict rules only to get the doctor to marry his daughter
  - He sees his future wife’s face for the first time on the day World War I ends, in 1918

Vallath

The Grandparents

- After marriage, they settle in Agra where Naseem becomes known as Reverend Mother, because of her religious devotion
- Dr. Aziz however had rejected religion forever after injuring his huge nose when doing namaz
    - His trip to Germany had changed him and he was “trapped between belief and disbelief”
- Dr. Aziz grows mentally weak, while Reverend Mother becomes strong and stubborn with the birth of every child

Mian Abdullah and Nadir

- In 1942, Dr. Aziz has become a follower of Mian Abdullah
  - He was called Hummingbird because he hummed a lot
    - When he hummed at a low pitch, he gave people toothache, and when he hummed at a high pitch, men got erection
  - He is an optimist and activist, and the founder of the Free Islam Convocation, an organization dedicated to resisting the partition of India along religious lines
  - The Rani of Cooch Nahin sponsors his political campaign
- His personal assistant is Nadir Khan, a bad poet who writes rhymeless poetry
  - Nadir escapes and hides in Aziz's basement
- Naseem is furious
  - She won't allow a man to hide in the house with her three daughters
  - By this time, she has started to refer to things as "whatsitsname"
  - Dr. Aziz gives her some of his famous anger and shuts her up
  - She takes a vow of silence that lasts for 3 years

The Aziz Family

- Dr. Aziz and Naseem have three daughters and two sons
  - Fat Alia, dark Mumtaz, Mustapha, Hanif and pretty Emerald
- One day he threw out their religious tutor
  - He had been teaching the kids to hate other religions
  - Naseem is angry
- No photo of Naseem exists
  - She once broke the camera over the photographer’s head for trying to take her picture
- Mumtaz falls in love with Nadir
  - They have a private marriage and live in the basement (which Nadir calls Taj Mahal), playing the game hit-the-spittoon
- Mumtaz becomes ill and her father examines her
  - He finds that she is still a virgin even after two years of marriage
- Emerald tells her fiancé Major Zulfikar, an officer in the Pakistani army, about Nadir hiding in the house
- Nadir runs away, pronouncing talaq on Mumtaz in a letter

Vallath

Two Pregnant Women

- Mumtaz and Ahmed Sinai (a leather-cloth merchant) fall in love
  - He had been courting her sister, Alia
  - The two get married and go to Old Delhi
  - Ahmed changes Mumtaz's name to Amina
  - Mumtaz can't forget Nadir but falls in love with Ahmed part by part
- Mumtaz is pregnant with Saleem
  - Once she saves a street performer Lifafa Das from communal violence and his cousin Shri Ramram Seth tells her unborn child's fortune
  - He says that the boy will never be older or younger than his country
  - He also claims that he sees two heads, knees and a nose

Vallath

Two Pregnant Women

- Ahmed and Amina move to Bombay
  - This was after a radical anti-Muslim organization named Ravana burnt down Ahmed's warehouse
- They buy a house called Buckingham Villa in William Methwold's estate
  - He is an Englishman leaving the country
  - He insists on his tenants following English customs and the leaving the estate as it is until India's independence (like Bhabha's Mimicry)
  - Methwold's Estate is a symbol of British colonial power
- Wee Willie Winky and his wife Vanita entertain them with songs
  - Without her husband's knowledge, Vanita had an affair with Methwold
  - She is now bearing his child

Two Births

- The last chapter of Book One, “Tick, tock”
  - Methwold always says “Sab kuch ticktock hai”
- Amina and Vanita both deliver a son at midnight on 15 Aug 1947
  - Saleem and Shiva are born (like India and Pakistan)
  - Saleem is delivered by Doctor Bose
  - Just before Saleem’s birth, in Delhi, Dr. Aziz got out of bed and was dismayed to find the perforated sheet in an abandoned trunk, all moth-eaten
  - Ahmed Sinai breaks his toe
  - The next day, Times of India reports Saleem’s birth as hugely significant

Mary Pereira

- A midwife at Doctor Narlikar’s nursing home
- To please her radical socialist lover, Joseph D’Costa, she switches the nametags of the two babies
- Thus, the poor baby would get a life of privilege and the rich baby a life of poverty
- Jo is shot by the police when he tried to blow up a clock-tower
- Later, driven by guilt, she becomes an ayah to Saleem
- She makes grasshopper-coloured green chutney

Vallath

Baby Saleem

- Saleem gets a letter from Nehru
  - Congratulating him on his birth.
  - It says the government will be watching over his life
- Raised by two mothers, Saleem is not beautiful
  - Huge face with birth marks on it
  - A huge nose
  - Drinks so much milk that his mother and wet nurse are both dried up
  - He doesn't cry or blink
- Wee Willie Winkie is deteriorating
  - Shiva grows up as an angry child
  - One day he blinds their neighbour Eyeslice with a rock and disappears
- Saleem is able to read other people’s thoughts
  - He telepathically connects with Toxy Catrack, Homi Catrack's mentally disabled daughter

The Freeze

- Ahmed Sinai starts drinking and flirting with women
  - Amina doesn’t care and is renewing her love for Nadir
- Ahmed Sinai invests in Doctor Narlikar’s project
  - To make tetrapods in order to reclaim land from the sea
  - Soon after this unlucky venture, the State froze all of Ahmed Sinai’s assets
  - This is an anti-Muslim strike
  - He becomes cold and irritable after this and lives a secluded life
- The day after the Freeze
  - Amina had conceived
  - Later, Saleem’s sister Jamila Singer (Brass Monkey) is born
- Joseph D’Costa is shot dead by the police
  - Soon, Mary starts seeing his ghost
- Meanwhile, in real time, Padma has left Saleem and gone

Snakes

- The Sinais rent a room to Dr. Schaapsteker, an old man who works with snake venom
  - He cures Saleem’s typhoid with cobra venom
  - While trying to stand, baby Saleem bows his legs permanently
- Aadam Aziz and the Reverend Mother come to live with them in Bombay
  - Reverend Mother makes food and Mary Pereira makes chutneys and pickles
- Amina starts gambling at the horse races and pays a lawyer to run a case against the Freeze
- Saleem tells us about his favorite board game, Snakes and Ladders, which is a metaphor for life
- Uncle Hanif is a movie director in Bombay, married to a beautiful actress named Pia
  - The day Amina and Ahmed go to see his first movie, Mahatma Gandhi is shot dead
  - They are relieved that the assassin isn't a Muslim

Voices in the Head

- Brass Monkey is very naughty
  - Saleem is regarded the good boy and is expected to turn out to be a genius
- Saleem hides in the laundry basket
  - Saleem sees his mom fantasizing Nadir Khan and sees her black bottom as she is about to pee
  - Amina finds him out when he sneezes and punishes him to a day of silence
- That day Saleem hears the voices of midnight's children in his head
  - No one believes him
  - Ahmed Sinai slaps him and he loses hearing in one ear
  - Saleem begins to read other people's thoughts: fantasies, frustrations.. he feels he is the cause of these troubles

Vallath

- Dr Narlikar’s tetrapods are phallic and women worship them
  - Being the opponent of fertility, he pushes the women to stop them and is killed by “language marchers”
- Saleem makes a passing statement that the cuckold Wee Willie Winkie also died at that time
- At the age of 10, Saleem loves one girl Evelyn Burns, Evie loves Sonny Ibrahim, Sonny loves Monkey
  - He tries to impress Evie with bicycle riding, but doesn’t know how to, eventually learns
  - He enters Evie’s mind, she pushes him out
- Mary’s sister Alice becomes Ahmed Sinai’s secretary
- Padma returns and brings some herbs for Saleem’s impotence
  - He goes into a coma temporarily

Vallath

The Midnight’s Children

- On his 10th birthday (1958)
  - Saleem calls midnight’s children conference in his head
  - 581 out of 1001 are remaining and all have super powers
  - Only Saleem can organize them
  - He talks to them every midnight
- Saleem has fever and gets a nightmare
  - Everything is green and black, and a Widow is hurting the midnight’s children
- Saleem spies on his mother at Pioneer’s Café, a Communist hangout
  - She meets Nadir and gives him the indirect kiss
- Shiva wants to lead the children, but Saleem is chosen as leader
  - They try to discuss politics and other big issues
  - These 10-year-olds can’t discuss anything productively

Mutilation

- The geography teacher Mr. Zagallo pulls out a tuft of Saleem’s hair
  - Saleem becomes Baldy
- Two boys, friends of the girl Masha Miovic, tease Saleem about his being bald
  - Saleem loses the tip of his middle finger
- At the Breach Candy hospital, doctor tells Ahmed and Amina
  - That Saleem is not their son because his blood type is different

Exile at Uncle Hanif's

- Saleem is sent to the house of Uncle Hanif and Pia
  - Hanif's realistic movies about India do not sell
  - Saleem is sexually attracted to Pia
- Pia has an affair with Homi Catrack, Hanif's financier
  - Through a letter he gives her through Saleem, he breaks up with Pia
  - Homi now sees Lila Sabarmati, which Saleem informs Commander Sabarmati through an anonymous letter
  - Sabarmati shoots Homi Catrack and Lila Sabarmati
  - When he tries to surrender to the traffic policeman, the latter runs away and Sabarmati directs traffic for 10 mts
  - Deprived of his income, Hanif commits suicide
- Everyone except the Sinais leave Methwold Estate
  - "Narlikar Women" start demolishing all houses except theirs

Mary’s Secret Revealed

- Lord Khusro
  - A child guru, who is actually Cyrus, son of Dubash, nuclear physicist who died choking on orange pips
  - Mrs Dubash made Cyrus a guru and he became rich and famous
  - Lord Khusro owned his own plane but later drowned
  - Saleem is not rich or famous, neither will he be
- Old Adam Aziz thinks he saw God
  - He does not want to go to Pakistan with his wife; goes to Kashmir instead and dies there on a mountain
  - On the day Aadam dies, Nehru also dies
- Mary tells her secret
  - That she switched Shiva and Saleem
  - Mary leaves the family forever

Vallath

The Coup

- Saleem and the rest of the family move to Pakistan
  - Ahmed and Alice stay behind
- Saleem lives with aunt Emerald and uncle Zulfikar in Rawalpindi
  - Their son Zafar is disciplined and tormented by Zulfikar
  - At a party of government officials, cousin Zafar pees in his pants
  - Saleem uses pepper pots and bowls of chutney to help map out a revolution
  - Pakistan’s first coup takes place at midnight
- Years later, on Monkey’s 14th birthday
  - Emerald asks Monkey to sing and she turns out to be a great singer (becomes Jamila Singer)

Vallath

End of powers

- Indo-China War is taking place
- Ahmed has a heart attack
  - The family return to India and Amina nurses him back to health
- Saleem has not been calling the midnight’s children
  - He wants to hide from them, esp Shiva, Mary’s secret
  - The group seem to be coming to an end
- Sinai forces Saleem to have a sinus surgery
  - Saleem’s superhuman powers are gone
  - For the first time, he can smell, even love and hatred, sadness and joy, intelligence and stupidity

Vallath

Unfulfilled love in Karachi

- The family moves back to Pakistan (Karachi)
  - A pickled umbilical cord is planted and a new house built
  - Ahmed Sinai starts Amina towels
- Major Latif (Uncle Puffs) helps Jamila become Pakistan's Nightingale
  - Behind another perforated sheet, with the story that she is disfigured
- Saleem meets Taibibi
  - The oldest prostitute in the world who can mimic smells
- There is a Prince with a Rolls Royce
  - His son Mutasim loves Jamila but she cannot love anyone
  - His daughter is engaged to cousin Zaphar but she breaks it off when she learns that he pees in his pants
- Saleem tells Jamila he loves her
  - She will never speak to him again

Vallath

Jamila’s Songs

- Jamila embodies loneliness
  - She has inherited their great-grandfather’s (Dr. Aziz’s father) gift of talking to birds
  - After a stroke, he had gone out of his mind and lived a lonely life, talking to birds
  - When the birds left, he had passed away
- The sorrows upon which Jamila Singer’s voice draws are familial
  - Failures in love and business, depression and alcoholism, destroyed political hopes, religious confusions, migrations from Kashmir south to Bombay then north to Karachi
  - All these are a prelude to the death of the family members in the 1965 war

Vallath

Annihilation

- The 1st Indo-Pak War is taking place (1965)
- Reverend Mother and Pia run a gas station
- Spinster Alia is jealous and casts a bad spell everyone with her delicious cooking
- Amina is aghast to find herself pregnant after 17 yrs
  - She suffers and grows afraid of her child
- Zafar leads troops to the Rann of Kuch
  - Troops are tormented by ghosts who turn out to be smugglers working for Zulfikar
  - Zafar kills his father Zulfikar
- The entire Sinai family is wiped out in bombings
- Saleem loses memory
  - When hit in the head by the silver spittoon

Vallath

Erased of Memory

- Here begins Book 3
- In the Sundarban forest Pak army camp, Saleem comes to be called the buddha
  - He works as man-dog, sniffing out enemies for Canine Unit for Tracking and Intelligence Activities, or, C.U.T.I.A.
  - He still has the spittoon
  - Ayooba, Shaheed and Farooq are his friends
  - All three meet with violent deaths
- The forest offers a surreal experience
  - This reflects the inhuman trauma of the war
  - Famous image: Pyramid of live flesh (Eyeslice, Hairoil and Sonny)
- After a snakebite
  - Gets back memory
  - Meets Parvati-the-witch who gives him back his name

Vallath

Dacca and Delhi

- In 1971 in Dacca, the capital of free Bangladesh
  - Saleem meets Parvati with her basket of invisibility
  - She is with Picture Singh and a group of magicians who have come from Kutputli Road in Delhi
- Saleem’s dream is to alter India’s history
- He reaches Delhi in Parvati’s basket, with his spittoon
- He visits uncle Mustapha and aunt Sonia
  - 400-day mourning for the family
  - Parvati visits him there
- Back in the ghetto, Saleem can’t make love to Parvati
  - Gets a hallucination of rotting Jamila
  - Lies that he is impotent

Vallath

Two Births Again

- India does its 1st nuclear test in Rajasthan in 1974
  - At this time, pouting Parvati summons Shiva by magic
  - He is a Major and national hero
  - They live together and Parvati is pregnant
  - Shiva has his whores (including Roshanara Shetty) and begets innumerable children
- In late 1974, JP and Morarji are fighting against Indira
- After the Republic Day in 1975
  - Pregnant Parvati becomes Laylah; marries Saleem
- She goes into labour
  - On 12 June when Indira was found guilty of election malpractice
- After a prolonged labour of 13 days, she gives birth on 25 June
  - This is the day Emergency is declared in the country

Emergency

- Aadam Sinai is a parallel of Saleem
  - In his birth the story comes full circle
  - Big ears instead of big nose; belly button sticks out
  - His father is not his father
  - Won’t speak or cry; gets tuberculosis
  - He is like India under Emergency (Saleem says, while Emergency lasts, he won’t get well.
- Atrocities of the Emergency (Midnight)
  - Indira was getting equated with India
  - The magicians’ ghetto is raided and destroyed
  - Parvati gets killed
  - The spittoon is bulldozed
  - Saleem is captured by Shiva and transported to Widows’ Hostel on the shores of the Ganges in Benares

The End of Emergency

- Two interlocutors grill Saleem for the details of midnight's children
  - Their multiplicity and diverse powers are a threat to the autocratic Widow
  - Saleem betrays them
  - Then he speaks a long apology to them
- The midnight's children are all sterilized violently
  - Worse still, sperectomy is done on them, which is the draining out of all hope
  - Shiva is shot by Roshanara Shetty, later Saleem says he lied about it and does not know where he is
- Indira lost elections and Janata Party comes to power

Vallath

Shame (1983)

- Magic realist novel set in Pakistan-Afghanistan border
- It portrays the lives of and rivalry between Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (Iskander Harrapa) and General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq (General Raza Hyder)
- Rushdie goes beyond this rivalry to highlight the tragic fortunes of Sufiya Zinobia, daughter of Hyder, and wife of Shakil
- A brainsick girl since infancy, Sufiya is preternaturally aware of the shameful deeds being committed all around her by the men of her country
- She is ultimately metamorphosed into a beast of shame, a violent agent of retribution, and she becomes a savage killer, beheading her sexist and voyeuristic husband Omar Khayyam

Vallath

Sufiya

- The central symbolic figure is the simpleminded Sufiya (a name meaning “wisdom”).
    - Her father, General Raza Hyder, a rapidly rising army officer, is ashamed because his firstborn child is a girl.
    - Her mother sees Sufiya’s simplemindedness (the result of a fever in infancy) as a sign of her own shame, retribution for an extramarital affair.
- Sufiya, a congenital blusher, becomes a sponge who soaks up the shame of those around her and of those who feel no shame but should.
    - Shame accumulates in the simple mind of the Beauty who is gradually transformed into the Beast of violence.

Vallath

Beast of Shame

- The Beast first breaks through when twelve-year-old Sufiya bites off the heads of 218 turkeys.
- Episodes of violence are followed by a rebellion of the body's immune system, which leaves her mortally ill.
- Dr. Omar Khayyam Shakil, a famous immunologist (and notorious womaniser), saves her and falls in love with the ungainly, slow-witted girl. After some years, they marry, but the marriage is not consummated.
- The struggle within her body continues, and four young men are found beheaded and covered with semen stains.
- Dr. Shakil realizes what is happening and approaches Sufiya's father, General Raza Hyder, who is now President.
- They agree to keep her sedated in an attic room, from which she eventually escapes.
- Rumors of a white panther circulate throughout the countryside.
- Sufiya's end comes when she seeks out Omar in his childhood home, where he has fled with her father and mother after a coup. Beheading him, Sufiya, the Beast of Shame, explodes into a fireball.

Vallath

Political Rivalry

- However, the main part of the narrative is the complex relationship between the Hyder and Harrapa families.
- The sophisticated future Prime Minister, Iskander Harrapa, is a cousin by marriage to the Muslim-fundamentalist future President Hyder. As able young men in a new country, both rise rapidly.
  - Although they help each other's careers, there is strong rivalry between them—sexual, political and religious
- Harrapa is the more successful and makes Hyder his commander-in-chief and Talvar Ulhaq, Hyder's son-in-law, head of his political police.
- Harrapa, styling himself "Chairman" like Mao Tse-tung, becomes increasingly demagogic and humiliates Hyder (among others).
- Harrapa is overthrown by an army group reluctantly headed by General Hyder (aided by Ulhaq) and hanged.
- President Hyder, who rules by fundamentalist Muslim law, eventually becomes so unpopular that he must seek refuge in Omar's childhood home.
  - Here he is killed by Omar's family in vengeance for his long-ago murder of Omar's brother, a member of a rebel tribal group.

The Wives

- Bilquos Hyder and Rani Harrapa are equally important characters
- Bilquos
  - The daughter of a Delhi film theater manager, sees her father blown to bits before she becomes a refugee during the events surrounding the postwar partition of India and Pakistan.
  - The trauma eventually leads her into madness.
- Rani
  - Sent to the Harrapa family estate in virtual exile (both before and after her husband's death)
  - There she weaves the ugly history of her husband's rise and reign into a series of eighteen shawls.
  - Harrapa's daughter, Arjumand, who becomes her father's assistant, sternly represses her femininity to act in a male-dominated society.

Vallath

Themes and Style of Shame

- The novel discusses the idea that violence is born out of shame
- The concepts of ‘shame’ and ‘shamelessness’ are explored through all of the characters
- As in an Elizabethan revenge play, the stage is littered with corpses in the final scenes as men who had pursued power in immoral ways face horrible deaths
- Other women join Sufiya in becoming instruments of vengeance

Vallath

The Satanic Verses (1988)

- Magic realist novel based partly on the life of Prophet Muhammad
- The novel has a frame narrative and a series of sub-plots that are narrated as dream visions of Gabriel Farishta. The chapter divisions are eccentric with the dream visions falling in the even numbered chapters. It is one of the dream visions that became insulting to conservative Muslims.
- The frame narrative, like many other stories by Rushdie, involves Indian expatriates in contemporary England—Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha, both Indian Muslim actors.
    - Farishta is a Bollywood superstar who specialises in playing Hindu deities.
    - Chamcha is an emigrant who has given up his Indian identity and works as a voiceover artist in England.
- 1988 Booker finalist
- The phrase refers to the "satanic suggestion" which the Islamic prophet Muhammad is alleged to have mistaken for divine revelation.
- The novel became controversial when conservative Muslims accused it of blasphemy and of mocking their faith
- A fatwā, calling for Rushdie’s death, was issued by Ayatollah Khomeini, then Supreme Leader of Iran, on 14 February 1989

The Plot

- The novel begins when both are trapped in a hijacked plane (captured by Sikh terrorists) flying from India to Britain. The plane explodes over the English Channel and they miraculously survive falling from the jet.
- Upon landing, Gibreel has been given a halo and Saladin Chamcha has started to transform into a devil. Chamcha is arrested and passes through an ordeal of police abuse as a suspected illegal immigrant. Farishta's transformation can partly be read on a realistic level as the symptom of the protagonist's developing schizophrenia.
- Both characters struggle to piece their lives back together.
- Farishta seeks and finds his lost love, the English mountaineer Allie Cone, but their relationship is overshadowed by his mental illness. Chamcha, having miraculously regained his human shape, wants to take revenge on Farishta for having forsaken him after their common fall from the hijacked plane. He does so by fostering Farishta's pathological jealousy at a party and thus leading Allie to break up with him. In another moment of crisis, Farishta realises what Chamcha has done, but forgives him and even saves his life.
- Chamcha finds that his wife, Pamela, is pregnant with the child of another man, Jumpy. Pamela and Jumpy are killed in a fire, and Saladin returns to India. A deranged Farishta visits Chamcha and shoots himself.

Vallath

Themes

- Relion as insanity, not rational
- Good and evil as ambiguous
- Immigration as traumatic and leading to insanity and death

Vallath

The Moor’s Last Sigh (1995)

- The Moor's Last Sigh, which Rushdie spent five years writing, follows the life of Moraes ("Moor") Zogoiby from his birth in 1957 to the "present" in the mid–1990s
- Set in Bombay and Cochin
- The narrator is Moraes Zogoiby (called Moor by his mother), son of Abraham Zogoiby and Aurora da Gama. The Moor’s physical body ages twice as fast as a normal person’s does; he also has a deformed hand
- The novel traces four generations of the narrator’s spice-trading family and the ultimate effects upon the narrator
- It is preceded by what J. M. Coetzee calls "a dynastic prelude" reaching back to the birth of Moraes's great–grandfather, Francisco da Gama

Vallath

The Moor’s Last Sigh (1995)

- Da Gama in the 19th century began the spice trade in the province of Cochin that led to the family's rise to moderate affluence. He is a social progressive and Indian nationalist whose differences with his traditionalist wife Epifania Menezesa (described as believing in "England, God, philistinism, the old ways”) sets the terms of a schism that eventually splits the family and which parallels the divisions in the country at large.
- Francisco da Gama and Epifania have a son Camoens. He has a vision of an independent India which he hopes will be "above religion because secular, above class because socialist, above caste because enlightened." Rushdie does not share this idealistic conception, but Rushdie's social vision includes, as Moraes puts it in describing some of the paintings of his mother Aurora Da Gama, "a romantic myth of the plural, hybrid nation."
- The story that Moraes tells of his family's origins and circumstances before his birth, and then of his own upbringing and eventual estrangement from the family, is designed to parallel and comment on the course of the history of the Indian subcontinent and to illustrate how difficult it has been to actualize this romantic myth.
- Living as a Muslim and Jew (from his father Abraham Zogoiby) in a country with a Hindu majority, and as an Indian citizen in a land recently part of the British Empire, Moraes has the historical perspective of a marginalized semi–outcast. He feels he must challenge and subvert the official voice of authority and the official version of the history with his own narrative.
- The title is taken from the story of Boabdil, the last Moorish king of Granada, who is also mentioned frequently in the book

Vallath

The Ground Beneath Her Feet (1999)

- Presents a variation on the Orpheus/Eurydice myth with rock music replacing Orpheus’ lyre
- Presents the love of two men, Ormus Cama and Umeed “Rai” Merchant (the narrator), for the same woman, Vina Apsara
- Also provides a background and alternate history to the entire 1950s–1990s period of the growth of rock music
- The title is taken from a song in the novel, composed by Ormus Cama after Vina's death

Vallath

The Plot

- The love affair of Ormus Cama and Vina Apsara is modelled on the Orpheus-Eurydice myth (with Vina swallowed up in an earthquake)
- Postwar history is cast in terms of the history of rock music.
- Ormus Cama, the son of a rich Anglophile Parsi
  - Haunted by the stillbirth of a twin brother
  - Has the gifts of precognition (which takes the hilarious form of composing songs long before they become hits recorded—or stolen—by Western singers), and of double vision (which gives him access to an alternative reality and a groupie named Maria determined to seduce him)
- One day the 19-year-old Ormus
  - Hears a recording of Jesse Garon Parker (Elvis Presley) singing “Heartbreak Hotel”
  - Falls in love with Vina, seven years his junior, and his vision is wedded to her voice.

The Plot

- Vina is a poor girl, abandoned, orphaned, abused, but determined nonetheless. She has a celestial voice
- Born Nissa Shetty in rural Virginia to a Greek American mother and a small-time Indian lawyer turned gay butcher
- One day she finds her mother and goat-obsessed stepfather, John Poe, murdered (goats and mysterious murders recur throughout the novel)
- After a brief stint with relatives in upstate New York, she is shipped off to India where she soon declares her independence and becomes Vina Apsara (“vina” is the Indian lyre, “apsara” is Indian nymph).
- Because of her disastrous family experiences, Vina rejects Ormus’s several proposals of marriage and, nymphlike, leads him on a years-long global chase

The Plot

- The narrator is Rai (meaning “prince”, whose name is Umeed “Hope” Merchant).
- The son of an amateur archaeologist father and a real estate developer mother
- He is a photojournalist by profession (“photography is my way of understanding the world”)
- The physically tall but “psychically small” Rai’s fear is not of cracking up (like Saleem Sinai) but of being bitten by insects
- The character of Ormus Cama may be inspired by John Lennon and Elvis Presley. Lennon appears in the book as a separate character.
- Rushdie re-introduces characters from his previous novels, including Homi Catrack and William Methwold from Midnight's Children (1981), S.S. Sisodia from The Satanic Verses (1988), and Aurora Zogoiby from The Moor's Last Sigh (1995), as well as settings such as Warden Road and Everest Villas.
- The title is taken from a song in the novel, composed by Ormus Cama after Vina's death.
- The novel is set in a parallel universe, as revealed in the second half of the book. Therefore Rushdie has distorted various aspects of history.
- The novel has been turned into a major performance work combining music and film.

Vallath

Fury (2001)

- Malik Solanka, a Cambridge-educated millionaire from Bombay, escapes from his academic life by immersing himself into a world of miniatures
- He eventually creating a puppet called ‘Little Brain” and leaving the academy for television
- Dissatisfaction with the rising popularity of “Little Brain” rouses deeper demons within Solanka’s life, resulting in the narrowly avoided murder of his wife and child
- Solanka travels to New York, hopeful he can lose himself and his demons in America, only to find that he is forced to confront himself

Vallath

The Plot

- Malik Solanka seeks refuge in New York City, the mecca of immigrants.
- He has been a university professor in Britain and a historian of ideas, who has rejected the narrowness and sectarianism of academic life.
- Always fascinated by dolls, he becomes a dollmaker and conceives a character, Little Brain, who captivates the public.
- When his work becomes popular entertainment, Solanka rejects his second career, feeling he has lost control over his creation.
- He also leaves his wife Eleanor, a beautiful, shrewd, and patient woman he met through contacts in the publishing world. She has given birth to a charming young boy who longs for his father to return to New York.
- Eleanor wants Solanka to return to her, butt he cannot settle down to a married, steady life. He is restless and angry.
- Solanka knows that to others, including his best friends in London, he seems irresponsible, yet he cannot overcome either his wanderlust or his uncompromising dissatisfaction with the status quo. He does not defend his actions; he simply cannot bring himself to behave otherwise.
- Solanka’s fury is directed both at himself and at the world, and his companions tend to be similarly displaced people, raging and seeking unsatisfactory ways of assimilating themselves into the mainstream.

Vallath

Shalimar the Clown (2005)

- Title derives from one of several Mughal Gardens, Shalimar Gardens, near Srinagar
- Shalimar is the name of one of the characters featured in the novel
- The novel opens in Los Angeles, and is partly set in an imaginary village in Kashmir
- The protagonist is, India, an illegitimate child of a former United States ambassador to India, Maximilian Ophuls, “one of the architects of the postwar world” and a larger than life former hero of the French Resistance in World War II. On the second page readers learn that “the ambassador was slaughtered on [India’s] doorstep like a halal chicken dinner, bleeding to death from a deep neck wound caused by a single slash of the assassin’s blade.” Over the next 394 pages readers learn why, how, and by whom.
- India’s mother is Boonyi, the beautiful young Kashmiri dancer Max seduces and abandons, who returns to her village in disgrace
- Noman Sher Noman (alias Shalimar), Boonyi’s childhood sweetheart and husband, who is transformed from a popular entertainer into a terrorist and murderer
- India is raised by Max and his wife and is living in Los Angeles when the story begins.
- The typically rich and eccentric supporting characters include Olga Volga (“the last surviving descendant of the legendary potato witches of Astrakhan”), Firdaus Begum Noman (Shalimar’s mother, a snake sorceress), the “Iron Mullah” (a Muslim terrorist leader), Colonel Kachhwaha (leader of the Indian armed forces in Kashmir), a Gujar prophetess, a Filipino terrorist leader, and an Indian film star.

The Enchantress of Florence (2008)

- The novel's focus is the visit of a European to the Mughal emperor Akbar's court and his claim that he is a long lost relative of Akbar, born of an exiled Indian princess and an Italian from Florence

- The enchantress in the title is a mysterious woman, a great beauty believed to possess the powers of enchantment and sorcery, attempting to command her own destiny in a man's world

Vallath

Joseph Anton (2012)

- An autobiographical work

- Rushdie used "Joseph Anton" as a pseudonym while in hiding following the fatwa that had been issued by Ayatollah Khomeini, the spiritual and political leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in the midst of criticism by some Muslims and a widespread controversy over Rushdie's novel The Satanic Verses (1988). He chose the name to honor the writers Joseph Conrad and Anton Chekhov. Rushdie was annoyed when police officers called him by the more casual nickname, "Joe." The memoir is an account of his life under the ongoing fatwa.

Two Years Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights (2015)

- A fantasy novel
- Title relates to Arabian Nights
- Set in New York City in the near future
- Deals with jinns, and recounts the story of a jinnia princess and her offspring during the "strangenesses". After a great storm, slits between the world of jinns and the world of men are opened and strange phenomena emerge as dark jinnis invade the Earth. The jinnia princess and her children thus need to fight to defend the Earth and the humans from them, the Grand Ifrits. All the while, the Great Philosopher Averroes (Ibn Rushd) and the famous theologian Al-Ghazali pursue a philosophical debate about reason and God.

Vallath

The Golden House (2017)

- Salman Rushdie’s twelfth novel
- Set in the United States during the presidency of Barack Obama, The Golden House follows the fortunes of a real-estate developer from India as he and his sons relocate to Manhattan.
- The novel covers a period of about nine years, from January 2009 to late 2017
- A wealthy real-estate developer in Mumbai, having lost his wife in the terrorist attacks of November 2008, decides to take his family to the United States and to establish a new identity for himself. Classically educated under the British raj, he renames himself after one of the Caesars—Nero Julius Golden
- He buys a large house in lower Manhattan in the MacDougal-Sullivan Gardens, so called because a whole block of houses looks in on a central garden.
- The family moves in on the day of President Obama’s inauguration; once established, they get to know the narrator, René, a film-school graduate whose parents have recently died in a freak automobile accident. They take him in while he prepares his house for sale, and he becomes increasingly involved with the family and especially with Nero, whom he starts to see as the model character for a breakthrough film.
- In the central chapter, he agrees to father the child of Nero’s new wife, a beautiful Russian immigrant who wants a child but knows her new husband is neither capable of begetting offspring—a fact revealed by recent medical testing—nor able to handle the news of his incapacity. At this point, René knowingly crosses the line between journalistic observer and participant.
- The novel has numerous subplots, as usual

The Golden House

- By the end of the novel, René has finished his first film (also titled The Golden House), has entered it in a film festival, and is now preparing the filmscript for publication.
- The novel documents the rise and fall of the dynasty, or house, that Nero Golden created and hoped would continue with his heirs.
- As Nero enters his eighties, his mind slips back from recent events to those of long ago and far away. He remembers the mafia boss who controlled business in Bombay, and he agrees to a visit from a retired policeman who once pursued them both. Before the visit, he feels the need to tell Riya, his surrogate daughter, about his past business with the mafia boss.
- On the day of the 2016 US Presidential election, René confesses his own secret to Nero: his parentage of the youngest Golden. The act leads to his absolute estrangement from both the Goldens and Suchitra (his girl friend and filmmaker), during which time he gets down to serious work on his documentary about the house of Golden.
- About a year into this estrangement, he begins meeting with Riya, who helps him realize that “America’s secret identity wasn’t a superhero. Turns out it was a supervillain. We’re in the Bizarro universe and we have to engage with Bizarro-America to grasp its nature and to learn how to destroy it all over again. . . . And we have to engage with ourselves and understand how we became so f— — weak and apathetic and how to retool and dive back into the battle.”
- After he subsequently reconciles with Suchitra, he embraces a larger vision, telling her that even then, “more than a year since the Joker’s conquest of America . . . we were all still in shock and going through the stages of grief but now we needed to come together and set love and beauty and solidarity and friendship against the monstrous forces that faced us.” She tells him to shut up and pulls him closer, and they end on a hopeful note.

Manju Kapur (b. 1948)

- Born in Amritsar
- Major works
  - Difficult Daughters (1998; won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize)
  - A Married Woman (2003)
  - Home (2006)
  - The Immigrant (2008)
  - Custody (2011)

Vallath

Difficult Daughters (1998)

- First novel by Manju Kapur
- Set against the backdrop of India of 1940s, the time of Partition
- Presents the problems of an upper middle class urban Arya Samaj Punjabi family in Amritsar with the focus on the “New Woman”, Virmati
- Virmati’s history is reconstructed in retrospect by her daughter Ida
- Inspired by her cousin Shakuntala, Virmati went to study in Lahore rejecting the confinement of her mother Kasturi’s world which revolved around domesticity, marriage and child bearing
- While India is in the throes of freedom struggle, Virmati gets sexually involved with her Oxford-returned married professor Harish, gets pregnant, and ultimately marries him
- She suffers a lot and regrets being trapped in her own selfishness while the nation is burning
- She is rejected by her parents; her married life is a disaster and she dies an insignificant death
- Virmati challenged Kasturi’s principles, Ida could not accept Virmati’s

Vallath

Allan Sealy (b. 1951)

- Irvin Allan Sealy is born in 1951 in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh
- Won a number of awards for his writing including the Commonwealth Best Book Award in 1989, Sahitya Akademi Award in 1991 and the Crossword Book Award in 1998
- Sealy's first novel, The Trotter-Nama: A Chronicle, is a tale of seven generations of an Anglo-Indian family
  - It starts with Justin Aloysius, a French soldier of fortune who offered his services to the ruler of Avadh from whom he acquired a large estate.
  - Like other nawabs, he takes four wives. Three were Muslim and one was part-Dutch known as Jarman (German).
  - When he died, the widows married his retainers and produced more trotters
  - The next in line Mik (Micheal) served the company as well as the Indian Prince. And like his father, left legitimate and illegitimate children.

Vallath

Other Works

- Hero: A Fable (1991)
- From Yukon to Yukatan: A Western Journey (1994)
- The Everest Hotel: A Calendar (1998)
- Shortlisted for the 1998 Booker Prize
- The Brainfever Bird (2003)
- Red: An Alphabet (2006)

Vallath

Meena Alexander (1951-2018)

- An internationally acclaimed poet, scholar, and writer
- Born in Allahabad, India, and raised in India and Sudan, Alexander lives and works in New York City
- She is the author of numerous collections of poetry, literary memoirs, essays, and works of fiction and literary criticism.
- Poetry - House of a Thousand Doors, Night-Scene: The Garden, Illiterate Heart, Raw Silk
- Autobiography - Fault Lines
- Novels - Nampally Road, Manhattan Music
- Criticism - Women in Romanticism: Mary Wollstonecraft, Dorothy Wordsworth and Mary Shelley, The Poetic Self: Towards a Phenomenology of Romanticism

Vallath

Works

- Nampally Road
  - After four years as a student in England, Mira Kannadical returns to India to teach and write, hoping to write poetry
  - But the India that Mira finds, teems with confusion and unrest.
  - Haunting and lyrical, the novel vividly portrays contemporary India and one woman’s struggle to piece together her past
  - At the heart of this novel, is the gang rape of Rameeza Be by the police
  - The towns people rise up and burn the police station
- Manhattan Music
  - Sandhya Rosenblum, an immigrant from India married to an American Jewish man, tries to make sense of her life in a time of turbulence
  - Set in Manhattan and India, Alexander lyrically and poignantly explores crossing borders, the Indian diaspora, fanaticism, ethnic intolerance, interracial affairs and marriages, and what it means to be an American today

Vallath

Vikram Seth (b. 1952)

- Vikram Seth was born in Calcutta
- Indian poet, novelist, travel writer, librettist, children's writer, biographer and memoirist
- Major novels:
  - The Golden Gate (1986)
  - A Suitable Boy (1993)
  - An Equal Music (1999)
  - A Suitable Girl (2016)

Vallath

Poetry

- Seth’s poetry is influenced by Philip Larkin
- He mocks experimental literature and extreme attitudes towards life in his poetry
- His poetry collections include:
  - Mappings (1980)
  - The Humble Administrator's Garden (1985)
  - All You Who Sleep Tonight (1990)
  - Beastly Tales (1991)
  - Three Chinese Poets (1992)
  - At Evening (1993)
  - The Frog and the Nightingale (1994)
  - A Doctor's Journal Entry
  - Summer Requiem: A Book of Poems (2012)
  - The Eagle and The Beetle

Vallath

Other Works

- Seth has authored a travel book, From Heaven Lake: Travels through Sin kiang and Tibet (1983), an account of a journey through Tibet, China and Nepal.
- Beastly Tales from Here and There (1991) is a book of children's literature
- Two Lives (2005) is a non- fiction family memoir by Vikram Seth

Vallath

The Golden Gate (1986)

- Title taken from Donne
- Written in 590 Onegin stanzas
- It was inspired by Charles Johnston’s translation of Pushkin’s Eugene Onegin
- Set in the 1980s
- Follows a group of California yuppies in San Francisco
- The protagonist John Brown, at the advice of his friend Janet Hayakawa, places an amorous advertisement of himself in the newspaper
- It is answered, at length, by trial-lawyer Elisabeth (‘Liz’) Dorati
- Seth introduces and develops a variety of characters united in part by their interest in self-actualization (often in the form of agriculture) and in part by closeness to Liz or John
- Thereafter is depicted the progress of their marriage de facto until its dissolution, which results in the legal marriage of Liz to John’s friend Phil Weiss, and the birth of their son
- Following his rejection of Liz, John finds a second lover in Janet, until Janet and two other friends die in an automobile collision; and is himself invited to stand godfather to Liz’s son

Vallath

An Equal Music (1999)

- Set in London and all the characters are Europeans
- It is an intimate and internalized story of love and music
- The novel's central theme is suggested by its title which is drawn from a sermon by the seventeenth century English poet John Donne
- Donne's description of a state of being where there shall be
- "no cloud nor sun, no darkness nor dazzling but on equal light, no noise nor silence, but an equal music."

Vallath

Plot

- The story is narrated by Michael Holme, a professional violinist about his deep and profound love towards Julia Nicholl, a pianist
- He finds the love he lost ten years earlier , the now married Julia
- They had been madly in love when they were both studying in Vienna
- They begin a secret affair and she is torn between her family and Michael
- Their musical careers are affected by this affair and the knowledge that Julia is going deaf.

Vallath

A Suitable Boy (1993)

- A Suitable Boy is set in a newly post-independence, post-partition India
- The novel follows the story of four families over a period of 18 months, and centres on Mrs. Rupa Mehra's efforts to arrange the marriage of her younger daughter, Lata, to a "suitable boy“
- Lata is a 19-year-old university student who refuses to be influenced by her dominating mother or opinionated brother, Arun. Her story revolves around the choice she is forced to make between her suitors Kabir, Haresh, and Amit
- The novel is divided into 19 parts with, generally, each part focusing on a different subplot. Each part is described in rhyming couplet form on the contents page.

Vallath

The Four Families

- Four family trees are provided in the beginning of the novel to help readers keep track of the complicated interwoven family networks.
- The four main families in the novel are:
- The Mehras
  - Mrs. Rupa Mehra, a mother searching for a suitable boy for her youngest daughter.
  - Arun, Mrs. Mehra's oldest son, married to Meenakshi Chatterji
  - Varun
  - Savita, married to Pran Kapoor
  - Lata, whose arranged marriage forms the basis of the main plot.
- The Kapoors
- The Khans
- The Chatterjis

Vallath

Githa Hariharan (b. 1954)

- Indian author and editor based in New Delhi
- Her literary career began with her winning the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for her first work, The Thousand Faces of Night, in 1993
- Her work belongs to the renaissance of Indo-English literature which began with the appearance of Salman Rushdie's novel Midnight Children in the early 80s
- Her prose is subtle, humorous and tender
- Though she does not see herself as a feminist author, her prose has become a key part of post-modern women´s literature in India

Vallath

A Court Case

- In 1995 she tried to open an account at a bank for her son, then eleven years old, but was told that she could do only with her husband´s signature
- The rule was based on the Hindu law, which at the time was still in force, that a mother has a right of guardianship over her children only when the father is dead
- Together with her husband she decided to take it to court against the Reserve Bank and she won the case
- The fact that the Indian court changed the constitution in favour of women in 1999, saying that a mother “is undoubtedly a child´s natural guardian”, now counts as a milestone in the history of women´s liberation in India

Vallath

Works

- The Thousand Faces of Night (1992; won Commonwealth Writers' Prize)
- The Art of Dying (1993)
- The Ghosts of Vasu Master (1994)—20 stories of contemporary Indian life
- When Dreams Travel (1999)
- In Times of Siege (2003)
- The Winning Team (2004)
- Fugitive Histories (2009)
- Almost Home: Cities and Other Places (2014)
  - Collection of essays
- I Have Become the Tide (2019)

Vallath

The Thousand Faces of Night (1992)

- The saga of Indian womanhood caught in the 200-year-old customs and traditions
- The novel is woven around three generations of women—Devi, Sita and Mayamma
- The novel brings forth the idea that despite the education and independence Indian women might acquire, their fate is to fall back into the century old customs at least to a small extent
- The Indian society demands at least a pretension from their women that they are obeying the centuries old routines

Vallath

Devi Returns Home

- When Devi returns from her education at America, tradition and the old order of things are ready to reclaim her into an arranged marriage
- As she gets exasperated with her pompous husband Mahesh, she learns the vital duty of any Indian wife- pretend to be a good wife; pretend to love entertaining your husband's family and friends, pretend that you are never sick or angry
- Devi learns the vital duty from her old family retainer Mayamma, who got married when she was still a girl to a drunken husband and abused by mother-in-law, husband as well as her own son
- She advises Devi that the key to marriage is the ability to endure—and go on
- Devi's mother Sita follows this theory well in her life
- All through her life, she fulfills the role of a dutiful daughter, dutiful wife and dutiful mother

Vallath

The Ghosts of Vasu Master (1994)

- Vasu Master, recently retired from his job in a local school, allows himself to revisit the past and imaginatively rediscover the nature of teaching.
- This process of self-discovery is speeded up by the arrival of Mani, who cannot or will not speak.
- Vasu Master tells the reticent child one fantastic story after the other as he faces up to the biggest challenge of his life: can he teach (or heal) Mani?
- Vasu Master has no immediate success with Mani, but finds out that stories interest him
- Vasu Master doesn’t only live in the present, the past also haunts him
- The Ghost of Vasu Master is concerned with well being on all levels the body, the soul and the mind
- The novel is interspersed with many stories Vasu master recounts, focused mainly on those of Grey Mouse, who also learns through experience along the way

Vallath

In Times of Siege (2003)

- Fourth novel, In Times of Siege (2003)
- Set in the academic and literary circles of Delhi, a world with which Hariharan is personally familiar
- Protagonist is Shiv Murthy, a professor of history at Kasturba Gandhi Central University
- He has two problems

Vallath

Shiv’s Problems

- He has to take care of Meena, a girl who has fractured her knee
- He has prepared a controversial lecture about Basavanna, a 12th century poet and social reformer critical of the caste system
- Certain that the lecture will do the great poet’s reputation no good, fundamentalist colleagues call for it to be banned on the grounds that it does not take the traditional Hindu view of holiness into account and hurts religious feelings
- Hariharan’s choice of Basavanna as a victim of censorship was due to the fact that an attempt had just been made to ban a play by the author H.S. Shivaprakash for similar reasons

Vallath

Shashi Tharoor (b. 1956)

- Indian politician, writer and former diplomat
- Had a long career at the United Nations
- Has written 3 novels, a short story collection as well as non-fiction

Vallath

Works

- Reasons of State (1982), non-fiction
- The Great Indian Novel (1989)
- The Five Dollar Smile and Other Stories (1990)
- Show Business (1992)
  - Made into the movie “Bollywood”
- Riot (2001)
  - Hindu-Muslim violence in contemporary India

Vallath

Works

- India: From Midnight to Millennium (1997)
  - It discusses a wide range of topics like Caste, democracy in India, Indira Gandhi,the Partition of India
  - Tharoor argues that India stands at the intersection of the most significant questions facing the world at the end of the 20th century
- Bookless in Baghdad (2005)
  - A collection of previously published articles, book reviews and columns on writers, books and literary musings
  - In the title story he writes about his experience when he visits Bhagdad on a UN initative soon after the Gulf War
  - The book contains five parts: Inspirations, Reconsiderations, The literary life, Appropriations and Interrogations

Vallath

Works

- The Elephant, the Tiger, and the Cellphone (2007)
- Pax Indica: India and the World of the 21st Century (2012)
- India: The Future is Now (2013)
- An Era of Darkness (2017)

The Great Indian Novel (1989)

- A satirical novel that takes the story of the Mahabharata and recasts it in the context of the Indian Independence Movement and the post-independence period up to the Emergency period
- Figures from Indian history are transformed into mythological characters, and the mythical story of India is retold as a history of Indian independence and subsequent history, up through the 1980s
- The cantankerous narrator takes an irreverent tone towards heroic figures such as Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru
- The phrase “great Indian novel” is an allusion to the long-standing idea of the “Great American Novel” and is also a pun, roughly meaning Mahabharata

Vallath

Riot: A Love Story (2001)

- The novel begins with the death of twenty-four-year-old Priscilla Hart during the communal riots in the wake of the Babri Masjid agitation
- The year is 1989
- Priscilla Hart, a young idealistic American student, travels to India to volunteer with a female population-control awareness program
- In the course of her work in the small town of Zalilgarh, Priscilla meets an attractive, but very married, government official
- An instant affinity is felt by both of them and a passionate, clandestine love affair ensues
- While both are conflicted by their feelings for each other, neither wants to end the relationship
- Priscilla's estranged parents and a newspaper reporter visit Zalilgarh in an attempt to find out exactly what happened to her
- Through interviews with the police, government officials, and co-workers of Priscilla, we learn of the Muslim-Hindu conflict that is brewing in northern India
- The conflict turns into a riot which results in the death of eight people in this small town including Priscilla

Vallath

Style

- The novel is written in a postmodern style narrative
- The story unfolds through newspaper clippings, diary entries, interviews, transcripts, journals, scrapbooks, even poems written by the characters
    - Using different voices, different stylistic forms, for different fragments of the story

Amitav Ghosh (b. 1956)

- Amitav Ghosh was born in Calcutta as the son of a diplomat and grew up in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka
- Educated at the Universities of Delhi and Oxford
- After working as an editor and reporter at The Indian Express, he won a scholarship to Oxford University.
- PhD in social anthropology (for which he lived for a year in a village in the Nile Delta in Egypt). He said about it: ''They had absolutely no clue who I was, what I was or where I had come from. They were doing a study of me rather than the other way around. It was wonderful.''
- He taught at universities in India, Egypt and New York
- Explores issues related to national and personal identity, especially of the people of India and Southeast Asia
- Novels employ complex narrative strategies

Vallath

Novels

- The Circle of Reason (his 1986 debut novel)
- The Shadow Lines (1988)
- The Calcutta Chromosome (1995)
- The Glass Palace (2000)
- The Hungry Tide (2004)
- The Ibis trilogy
  - Sea of Poppies (2008)
  - River of Smoke (2011)
  - Flood of Fire (2015)
- Gun Island (2019)
- Jungle Nama (2021)

Non-fiction

- In An Antique Land (1992)
- Dancing in Cambodia and at Large in Burma (1998; Essays)
- Countdown (1999)
- The Imam and the Indian (2002)—essays
- Incendiary Circumstances (2006)—essays
- The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable (2016)
- The Nutmeg's Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis (2021)

The Circle of Reason (1986)

- A picaresque episodic magic realist novel that follows an Indian protagonist who, suspected of being a terrorist, leaves India for northern Africa and the Middle East. “There is nothing fantastical in my book,” Ghosh said. It is all real.
- Three parts:
  - The first part is about Alu’s uncle, Balaram, a rationalist.
  - The second part of the novel tells another tale. An earthly, practical and zestful trader called Zindi tries to bring together the community of Indians in the Middle East. But again these efforts prove to be unrealistic.
  - The third part is the story of Mrs. Verma, who out-rightly rejects rational thinking. She again tries her hand at creating Indian model of community life in the desert. However Alu, Zindi and Jyoti Das, who is a police officer leave Mrs. Verma and her experiments in the desert. At the end of the novel, these three are in search of newer horizons, unformed hopes and ideas. Hope is their only asset.
- The story begins when an eight-year-old orphan Nachiketa Bose comes from Kolkata to live with his uncle Balaram Bose in Lalpukar. Nachiketa’s big head looks intriguing and seductive to his uncle, Balaram.
- “...it was an extraordinary head—huge, several times too large for an eight-year-old and curiously uneven, bulging all over with knots and bumps.” Nachiketa Bose comes to be known as Alu because of his head and his original name is almost forgotten. He looks neither ugly nor handsome; neither short not tall, not even dark or fair. Alu displays an amazing ability to pickup various languages, yet, paradoxically, he cannot speak properly.

The Circle of Reason (1986)

- Balaram Bose had been a brilliant student, but his obsession with rationalism has declined into a fanatical study of phrenology. After measuring Alu's lumpy head, he has him apprenticed as a weaver Shombhu Debnath, where he soon surpasses even his master.
- The novelist gives a historical and postcolonial perspective to the skill of weaving
- The loom recognizes no continents and no countries. It has tied the world together with its bloody ironies from the beginning of human time. Human beings have woven and traded in cloth from the time they built their first houses and cities. Indian cloth was found in the graves of the pharaohs. Indian soil is strewn with cloth from China. The whole of the ancient world hummed with the cloth trade. The silk route from China, running through Central Asia and Persia to the ports of the Mediterranean and from there to the markets of Africa and Europe, bound continents together for more centuries than we can count.
- When the history of the world broke, cotton and cloth were behind it; the machine had driven men mad. Millions of Africans and half of America were enslaved by cotton. And then weaving changed mechanical man again with the computer. In the mid-nineteenth century when Charles Babbage built his first calculating machine, using the principles of storing information on punched cards, he took his idea not from systems of writing or from mathematics, but from the draw-loom. The Chinese have used punched cards to discriminate between warp threads in the weaving of silk since 1000 B.C.

The Circle of Reason (1986)

- Balaram teaches Alu to love and appreciate modern Western science through the book The Life of Pasteur. Pasteur becomes his ideal; logic his God and Rational thinking his only goal in life. Balaram cannot look beyond reason. According to Balaram, theories come first followed by truth.
- Balaram's interest in reason results in establishing a school called "School of Practical Reason and Pure Reason." He also establishes a third division called "March of Reason," believing in the command that every act of life has got a purpose.
- Ghosh describes him thus: ..... He had a thin, ascetic face, with clean lines, a sharp ridge of a nose and wide, dreamy eyes. His high, broad forehead rose to a majestic dome, crowned with a thick, unruly pile of silver hair. It was an astonishing forehead: it shone; it glowed; it was like a lampshade for his bulging Higher Faculties – Language, Form, Number, the lot.
- Meanwhile, Budhadeb Roy quickly becomes a political browbeat in the remote village, though hiring thugs to implement his policies at the school and elsewhere. The two men become rivals competing for the minds and hearts of the villagers.
- Balaram's wife, unable to tolerate his behavior, puts his books on fire. Alu at last was able to save just one book 'Life of Pasteur.'

The Circle of Reason (1986)

- Balaram's obsession with the study of skulls leads to his obsession with cleanliness when the village of Lalpukur starts receiving Bangladeshi refugees.
- Balaram gets involved in a local feud, which ultimately results in the bombing of his home. Balaram attacks his neighbor Bhudeb Roy with carbolic acid and dies in confrontation with the police.
- Alu, the only survivor and a suspect in the bombing, flees, closely followed by a young Indian policeman, Jyoti Das who loves birds. Taking ship Mariamma across the Arabian Sea, Alu arrives at the small, oil-rich state of al-Ghazira, where he moves into the home of Zindi at-Tiffaha, an enormously fat madam.
- Al-Ghazira is a place well known for trading and earning loads of money. Zindi takes care of Alu and lets him stay at her place and work. Zindi is someone who is known for sheltering the lower-waged people under her roof. But she has her own intentions for helping these people.
- Alu, for quite some time takes part in earning and he quietly remembers the Life of Pasteur. An idealist like his uncle, he wants to kill those germs i.e. the money-minded people. He considers them as inferior as the germs and dirt. Amitav Ghosh brings the storyline of Pasteur, where he discovered the germ. But unfortunately he couldn't kill the germ. He died defeated. In the end Alu finds out who the real germ is: "The answer is money"
- At Al-Ghazira, Alu ends up getting stuck for days under the rubble of a building that collapses while he was working because the construction company has mixed too much sand with the cement. He is saved by two sewing machines that support the weight of the debris. While stuck under the rubble, Alu has a vision worthy of his uncle--the people of the Indian quarter will wage war on germs and money. This bizarre social experiment almost succeeds, until the local government brutally ends it.

This PPT is made by Kalyani Vallath

The Circle of Reason (1986)

- Alu flees again with Zindi, the prostitute Kulfi and a baby called Boss, still closely pursued by Das. Finally, after wandering in the Algerian desert and over much of North Africa (here he faces the death of a friend during a theatrical rehearsal), they reach a small Saharan village called El-Oued.
- Here the fugitives come across two Indian doctors (Dr Mishra and Mrs Verma, a microbiologist) who have taken up jobs in the Algerian desert.
- In Algeria, Zindi has Alu and Kulfi pretend to be married, and they call themselves Mr. and Mrs. Bose.
- Mrs. Verma is pleased to see the fugitives, because Kulfi appears to be just the woman she wanted to transmit as the heroine of her production of the dance drama 'Chitrangada' of Rabindranath Tagore. Kulfi, who is ill, dies while acting Chitrangada. Dr Mishra and Mrs Verma debate over whether she should be cremated or buried.
- In the desert town of El-Oued The Circle of Reason is completed, without reaching a conclusion and without having taught us anything. Mrs. Verma, hurried and nonsensical, manages to disillusion Alu of the dream of a world purified by coherent methods
- Jyoti Das and Alu finally meet accidentally in the village. The novel ends when Alu, Zindi and Boss await at Tangiers a ship that will take them home. Thus the major characters recommence their travel again, disburdened of false dreams. Zindi and Alu head for “home” via Tangiers. Das joins them as he moves forward for a migrant’s life in Germany. He will accompany Alu and Zindi till Tangiers, where migrating birds fill the sky as they make their annual flights.

This PPT is made by Kalyani Vallath

The Circle of Reason (1986)

- Complicated narrative with many plots and subplots
- Alu's journey is analogous to the diasporic experience
- Combines elements of fable and picaresque fiction
- Postcolonial elements: marginalization of Europe and subversion of Western ideas of reason and science. The three parts of the novel are named after the three guṇas —Sattva: Reason," "Rajas: Passion," and "Tamas: Death (one of the main theories presented in the Upaniṣads and the Bhagavad-gītā), references to Hindu philosophy such as Nachiketa, the main character of the Kaṭha Upaniṣad and the concept of māyā in the depiction of characters. Experience as collective memory.
- Postmodern structure: nonlinear structure and intertextuality
- The title: the characters think they are walking a straight line, but they are going round, powered by hope, in that nonproductive circle that life too often imposes on the poor.

The Shadow Lines (1988)

- Two parts: 'Going Away' and 'Coming Home', meaning going away from the self and coming back to the self
- The novel follows the life of a young boy growing up in Calcutta, educated in Delhi and his experiences in London
  - The narrative is based on the memories of the main characters
  - The narrator travels across time through the fragments of the tales of those around him, unmindful of physical and political borders
  - Denotes his search for self-identity
  - The story is told in layers, in a mixture of private and public events including riots, violence and killing, and Hindu-Muslim relationship
- Set in Calcutta, London and Dhaka
- Written after the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984, which resulted in riots
  - The theme of political vendetta is predominant in the novel

Vallath

The Plot

- The novel follows the Dattachaudharis, Indian family of the unnamed narrator and an English family, the Prices, in the transitional days of the 1960s
- The Dattachaudharis and the Prices are linked by the friendship between their patriarchs – Justice Dattachaudhari and Lionel Tresawsen
- The personal stories of these families are narrated against sweeping historical events
  - The freedom movement and the rise of insurgency in Bengal
  - England’s war against Germany
  - The Chinese aggression and the Indo-Pak war,
  - The desecration of the Hazratbal Shrine in Srinagar in 1963
  - The communal riots in Khulna and Calcutta in 1964

Vallath

Tridib

- Opening line: “In 1939, thirteen years before I was born, my father’s aunt, Mayadebi, went to England with her husband and her son, Tridib.”
- The narrator adores Tridib, his uncle in Calcutta
- He has tremendous knowledge (of snakes, circumcision rights, etc)
- Has a unique perspective of incidents and places though he hasn’t visited most of them
- Is very imaginative and is an entertainer; local lads from Gole bazaar adda admire him
- Doing PhD in ancient Indian history
- He is the narrator’s mentor and alter-ego
- Tha’mma, his grandmother, is critical of Tridib and thinks he is a loafer
- Tridib is in love with May Price whom he had met in England, the daughter of Tresawsen, and sacrifices his life to rescue her from mobs in the communal riots of 1963-64 in Dhaka
    - In this riot, Tribid’s throat is cut from ear to ear. Robi, the narrator’s uncle witnessed the riot that left him with PTSD

Vallath

Tha’mma

- Having grown up in Dhaka during the Indian National Movement, she is deeply nationalist
- Has a dreadful past and wants to reunite her family and goes to Dhaka to bring back her 90-year-old uncle Jethmoshi
- A strong-willed woman whose life is characterized by dislocation, travelling to different neighbouring countries due to her husband’s job and finally settling down in Calcutta
- She has retired as a Principal of a school
- Disapproves of Tridib’s wasting time and of Ila, the grand daughter of her rich sister Maya Debi

Vallath

Ila

- A very modern girl in looks and thinking; does not bother about past or future; is
- Like Tha’mma, she has lived in many places
- Unlike Tridib, she has travelled a lot but experienced nothing; has no sense of belonging
- Tha’mma thinks she is a whore
- The narrator is sexually attracted to his cousin Ila but his feelings are passive
- However, one day he involuntarily shows his feelings when she undresses in front of him
- She feels sorry for him but immediately abandons him to visit Nick Price’s bedroom. They marry but their marriage ends in disaster
- She leaves the stifling Calcutta and goes to London because she wants freedom, but that freedom is rather shallow

Vallath

The Title

- The title refers to the main theme: borders that divide people should be done away with
  - The characters are divided by the shadow lines of borders but united by experience and memory
  - The divisions between people, especially Hindu-Muslims, is illusory
  - Robi says, “…why don’t they draw thousands of little lines through the subcontinent and give every little place a new name? What would it change? It’s a mirage; the whole thing is a mirage. How can anyone divide a memory?”
- This theme is related to another: the negative effects of nationalism that leads to separatist tendencies
- Like borders, time and distance are also shadows; there is no real separation between past, present and future

Vallath

In An Antique Land (1992)

- An ethnographic text written by Amitav Ghosh in the form of fiction
- Two sections:
  - First, an anthropological narrative, revolving around two visits made by Ghosh to two villages in the Nile Delta, while he was writing his doctoral dissertation
  - Second, the history of a 12th century Jewish merchant, Abraham Ben Yiju, and his slaves Ashu and Bomma, reconstructed using documents from the “Cairo Geniza”, Jewish manuscript fragments

In An Antique Land (1992)

- In the 1980's, while enrolled as a graduate student in cultural anthropology at the University of Alexandria, Ghosh learned of the discovery in a Cairo synagogue of a cache of ancient manuscripts, some of them dating from the 12th century AD.
- The collection included letters from a Jewish trader who owned an Indian slave—a fact both intriguing and unsettling. Ghosh became first interested, then obsessed, with this minor historical mystery, and in his search for answers found himself drawn into the daily lives of two other outsiders, the Jewish merchant and his Indian slave in medieval Muslim Egypt.
- At the same time, and with equal mixture of mystery and fascination, Ghosh attempts to understand, and be understood by, the residents of Lataifa, who remain, in many ways, inhabitants of that other country, the past.

The Calcutta Chromosome (1995)

- Subtitled “A Novel of Fevers, Delirium and Discovery”
- A postcolonial dystopian novel on the disturbing effects of the internet on people’s lives
- Antar is an Egyptian and a low-level computer programmer at the ominous LifeWatch organization, which tracks the world’s water supplies
- When Antar discovers the battered I.D. card of a long-lost acquaintance, he is suddenly drawn into a spellbinding adventure across centuries and around the globe, into the strange life of L. Murugan, a man obsessed with the medical history of malaria
- The plot is highly complicated with a mixed up chronology

Vallath

The Plot

- Murugan has asked to be transferred to Calcutta because of his fascination with the life of Sir Ronald Ross, the British army officer who discovered how malaria spreads
- Antar comes to know through his research into old documents that Murugan had systematically unearthed an underground movement that sought to grant eternal life
- The disciples of this movement can transfer their chromosomes into another, and gradually become that person or take over that person
- In the novel, Ronald Ross did not discover the mysteries of the malaria parasite; it was a group of natives of India, underground practitioners of a mystical “science,” who helped to guide Ross to the conclusions for which he is famous
- As Antar and Murugan hunt for the centre of the maze, the centre of the maze is also hunting them
- Almost every sentence in the book turns out to be a clue to the overall scheme, like lines in a computer program or lines of genetic material in a human chromosome

Vallath

The Glass Palace (2000)

- A family saga spanning three generations
- The novel examines the political and social issues of Burma, Malaya, and India during tumultuous times
- The novel opens in 1885, when the British defeat the Burmese in the war in Mandalay
- The “glass palace” refers to the fragile honour of the Burmese royal family who are exiled to India
- The declining fortunes of the royal family are juxtaposed with the increasing fortunes of the eleven-year-old Burmese orphan boy Rajkumar. In 1942, Rajkumar’s family also has to flee to India
- Rajkumar grows up, prospers, and marries the former queen’s maid Dolly
- The novel is about the the different ways in which people are affected by politics and social change

The Glass Palace (2000)

- King Thebaw, portrayed as a compassionate ruler though somewhat lacking as a military leader, owes much of his success to his wife, Queen Supayalat. It was the queen who arranged the execution of anyone in line for the throne, and after seventy-nine princes of various ages were killed, it appeared that the Konbuang dynasty would rule unchallenged, an assumption proved false by the British a mere seven years after Thebaw became king. The Glass Palace of the royal family ransacked, the humiliated King Thebaw and his family are escorted to a ship and ultimately sent to India.
- During the looting of the royal palace, Rajkumar meets Dolly, one of the queen's handmaidens. He sees her standing to the side as the queen tries unsuccessfully to save various royal treasures. Rajkumar presents Dolly with a jeweled box, learns her name, and falls in love. He watches Dolly leave with the royal family the next day, a loyal servant following them into exile. Twenty years will pass before he sees her again.

The Glass Palace (2000)

- Rajkumar is no stranger to hardship. His Indian parents moved to Burma after a family quarrel and lived in the village of Akyab until a fever killed his father and siblings. His mother attempted to flee the sickness and left with Rajkumar on a sampan up the Irrawaddy River. She succumbed to the fever during their journey. Left alone, Rajkumar finds work at a food stall in the market of Mandalay. It is through Ma Cho, the woman for whom he works, that Rajkumar meets Saya John.
- A contractor for the Burmese teak camps, John Martins (called Saya John) becomes a teacher and mentor to young Rajkumar. It is in the teak camps that Rajkumar learns to work with timber and through timber that he ultimately finds wealth and success. Although he speaks many languages, Rajkumar is almost illiterate—his accomplishments result from hard work and taking risks. As an orphan, he is driven to maintain contact with those people who matter to him; thus, Saya John becomes his business partner, and after he makes his fortune he seeks Dolly.

The Glass Palace (2000)

- While Rajkumar is making his fortune, the Burmese royal family is slowly losing theirs. Exiled by the British, the royal family moves to India, first to Madras, then to Ratnagiri. They live in Outram House, a shabby bungalow inside a walled garden above the town. Mildewed walls, flaking plaster—it is a residence far removed from the glittering palace they left behind. It haunts the king that his reign ended the golden age of Burma. Throughout his exile he does not quite seem to grasp that the British will not let him return to Burma, that they will do everything in their power to make the world forget him. Because the queen has killed off any other potential claimants to the throne, if the British keep the king exiled, the opportunity for revolt is minimized.
- The queen wears their poverty as a badge of honor; she is anxious for others to see how the British have treated them. “Yes, we who ruled the richest land in Asia are now reduced to this. . . . In our golden Burma, where no one ever went hungry and no one was too poor to write and read, all that will remain is destitution and ignorance, famine and despair.”

The Glass Palace (2000)

- As one of the few remaining servants of the royal family, Dolly takes on greater responsibilities in Outram House. Through her service to the queen she meets Uma Dey, the wife of Collector Dey of Ratnagiri. The collector is an Indian holding a British post, and dealing with the Burmese queen he asks himself, “But what could they possibly know of love, of any of the finer sentiments, these bloodthirsty aristocrats, these semi-illiterates who had never read a book in all their lives, never looked with pleasure upon a painting?” He chooses not to see that this is the way in which many of the British view the people in his country.
- Uma Dey and Dolly become close friends, and Uma is responsible for Rajkumar and Dolly eventually meeting again and getting married. Introduced as the perfect wife of a government official, Uma determines that she is unhappy. She returns to Calcutta upon her husband’s death, and resents performing the rituals expected of an Indian widow (wearing white, shaving her head, eating no meat or fish). She decides to visit Dolly and Rajkumar in Rangoon and from there departs to Europe and America.

The Glass Palace (2000)

- Saya John buys land in Malaya for his son, Matthew, who has married an American. They return to Malaya and begin running a rubber plantation named Morningside. Uma returns in 1929 from her travels and spends time with her friends' families in Malaya. She meets her friends' children and learns that Rajkumar has an illegitimate son living at Morningside. She swears to keep this secret but relations between her and Rajkumar are strained.
- Uma has become politically active during her time in America, and upon her return to Malaya she is recognized (to the surprise of her friends) as a leader in the Indian Independence League. She believes that India is heading for disaster, with 60 percent of the government budget going towards the military when the emphasis globally is on education and literacy. Of greater concern to her is that the Indian military supports British campaigns and the work of the British in subjugating people of other countries. A former officer who joined the Indian Independence League explains it to her: "We were told we were freeing those people. . . . It took us a long time to understand that in their eyes freedom exists wherever they rule."

The Glass Palace (2000)

- Initially Uma believes in a rebellion of the people, a glorious uprising against the oppressors. After she sees the horrifying repercussions of the Burmese Saya San rebellion in 1930, however, she sees “that a popular insurrection, inspired by legend and myth, stood no chance of prevailing against a force such as the Empire—so skillful and ruthless in its overwhelming power; so expert in the management of opinion.” Uma embraces the ideals of Gandhi and joins his movement of peaceful protest.
- As a postcolonial writer, Ghosh presents political and social turmoil in Burma, India, and Mandalay from a variety of perspectives. It is at this point in his novel that fortunes begin to change, and characters are driven more by political circumstance and outside influence than previously. Uma’s nephew Arjun joins the Indian military, where he trains to become an officer. As the first group of Indian officers leading Indian soldiers in the British military, “They had to prove, to themselves as well as to their superiors, that they were eligible to be rulers, to qualify as members of an elite; that they had vision enough to rise above the ties of their soil, to overcome the responses instilled in them by their upbringing.” Once again, British training works toward separating Indians from their culture and belief systems, enticing them to “greater achievements” and success as measured by Imperial Britain. As the world gets caught up in World War II, members of the Indian military begin to question their role in following the British and many leave to join an Indian National Army.

The Glass Palace (2000)

- Rajkumar's business begins to fail, and the family must leave Rangoon in 1942 after bombs start falling. His son Neel dies, and Dolly, Rajkumar, their daughter-in-law Manju, and granddaughter Jaya flee to India. They live with Uma, and one day Dolly leaves to seek their other son, Dinu. Morningside is caught up in the war as well, and Japanese soldiers kill friends trapped in Malaya.
- When Jaya grows up she seeks her uncle Dinu, as the family never heard from him after he left for Morningside during the war. After much searching, she learns that he lives in Yangon (Rangoon) in Myanmar (Burma). She learns of life in Myanmar following the coup of General Ne Win. The military gained power and created censorship laws based on those of the previous imperial government, and keep themselves and their people imprisoned by imperial beliefs. The novel ends with another image of golden Mandalay, replaced by a city living under harsh rules and regulations. A fitting ending to a story that examines the many ways in which people are driven and marked by politics and social change.

The Title

- The term “glass palace,” introduced early in the novel, refers initially to a hall in the royal residence in Mandalay. Dolly describes the walls of mirrors and the ornaments of gold and crystal to Uma, and confesses that this hall is one of her most vivid memories of Burma. When Rajkumar travels to Ratnagiri to woo Dolly, he tells of first seeing her in the palace. “She was like the palace itself, a thing of glass, inside which you could see everything of which your imagination was capable.” Dolly becomes Rajkumar’s muse through their years of separation, inspiring him to a level of success unexpected for an orphan. Their son Dinu, most comfortable viewing the world through the lens of a camera, names his studio in Yangon the Glass Palace. He explains that this was a favorite phrase of his mother’s.

The Hungry Tide (2004)

- The Hungry Tide is the fifth English-language novel by Amitav Ghosh and, like his earlier works, it reflects the author's expertise as a sociologist with a Ph.D. from Oxford University, his broad general knowledge, and his insight into the colonial past. English and American writers would find it difficult to surpass Ghosh's elegant style. Although in his early works he has sometimes lost control of the narrative, he handles the intricate structure of The Hungry Tide as effectively as he does the book's various themes.
- As one of Ghosh's recurring themes is the presence of the past, it follows that the action in his novels typically takes place over long periods of time. In The Shadow Lines (1988), he follows two families through three generations and more than half a century. His novel The Glass Palace (2000) spans 115 years. By contrast, The Hungry Tide involves just a few weeks in the lives of a few characters. The time frame is greatly expanded, however, through accounts of past events, sometimes presented by the characters and at other times by the narrator through a journal written thirty years before and through a myth which originated in a far distant past.

The Hungry Tide (2004)

- At the beginning of the novel, Kanai Dutt, a middle-aged businessman from New Delhi, encounters Piyali Roy, or Piya, a young marine biologist from Seattle. They are on a train to Canning, in southeastern India, from where they will go by boat to the Sundarban Islands, an archipelago in the Ganges Delta made up of a number of small, mangrove-covered islands. Piya has a grant to study a rare species of river dolphin, while Kanai has been asked by his aunt to peruse a notebook left by his uncle Nirmal Bose, who died under mysterious circumstances during a rebellion thirty years earlier. Before they separate at Canning, Kanai politely invites Piya to visit his aunt at her home on Lusibari, one of the Sundarbans' most remote islands.
- Piya makes arrangements for her studies, hiring the required forest guides and a boat, and heads out. However, almost immediately she begins to have misgivings, and after falling into the water and being rescued by a fisherman named Fokir, she decides to stay with him on his small boat rather than return to the guides, who seem excessively interested in her money and her equipment. Her decision proves to be a wise one. Although Fokir speaks no English and cannot read or write, he is so intelligent that Piya has no difficulty communicating with him. She has only to show him her equipment and several pictures of dolphins for him to grasp her reason for being in the Sundarbans and to understand that she wishes to hire him and his boat. Fokir and his young son Tutul make room for Piya on their boat, and they proceed.

The Hungry Tide (2004)

- While Piya explores the present, Kanai ventures into the area's past. First his aunt, Nilima Bose, delivers a lecture about the early history of the Sundarbans, and then Kanai begins reading the notebook of Nirmal, his late uncle. From that point on, the narrator will periodically insert into the story a separate, italicized chapter representing a section of the notebook. Kanai will not read the final entry until about two-thirds of the way through the novel.
- Fokir knows the area so well that he is soon finding dolphins for Piya to study. He also makes sure that, in her enthusiasm, she does not forget that they are in crocodile-infested waters and that there are tigers in the mangroves. The narrative now begins switching back and forth, with one chapter devoted to the adventures of Piya and Fokir in the fishing boat and the next to Kanai on Lusibari, and the past. Some of the Lusibari chapters are notebook entries. In other chapters, the narration offers background information. For example, in a chapter titled "Nirmal and Nilima," the reader learns that the couple came to the Sundarbans in 1950, less than a year after they were married, because Nirmal's political activities had attracted the attention of the authorities and he needed to "disappear" for a while. His notebook was written in 1979, at the time of the Morichjhapi rebellion, and it reveals the fact that Nirmal never changed; he was just as idealistic at the end of his life as he had been in the beginning. Kanai begins to suspect exactly what Nilima would rather not know: that her husband's idealism may indeed have cost him his life.

The Hungry Tide (2004)

- In other chapters, Kanai relives an earlier period when, having been suspended from school, he was sent to Lusibari to contemplate his misdeeds and prepare himself for reentry into the educational system. He remembers his first meeting with a strong-willed teenager named Kusum, with whom he was halfway in love. At a performance honoring Bon Bibi, the legendary protectress of the island people, Kusum had told Kanai about watching her father being dragged off by a tiger and her own sense of betrayal when Bon Bibi ignored her calls for help. After the play, Kanai saw Kusum being spirited away so that she would be safe from the villainous man who sold her mother into prostitution and had been pursuing the daughter ever since. Kanai never saw Kusum again. However, during this visit he learns about her later life, which ended in martyrdom at Morichjhapi. Kusum, as it turns out, is Fokir's mother.
- In the first part of The Hungry Tide, Ghosh maintains the interest of his readers by exploring the past and sustains suspense by keeping Piya in dangerous waters. However, the primary purpose of that section is to prepare for the more dramatic second part of the book. The first section is titled "The Ebb: Bhata"; it is followed, inevitably in tidal waters, by "The Flood: Jowar," which is the title of the book's second section. Although the work builds toward a cyclone, or hurricane, which floods the mangrove islands, "The Flood" also describes the human condition, for as Ghosh demonstrates, people can be as overwhelmed by internal conflicts as they are by governmental tyranny or by the destructive power of nature.

The Hungry Tide (2004)

- For example, by the time Piya, Fokir, and Tutul return to Lusibari, Piya knows that she has developed a crush on Fokir. Though Fokir seems unaware of her interest, his wife, Moyna, is not; as a result, she is not as friendly toward Piya as she would ordinarily be toward a guest on the island. Piya, in turn, is unaware of Kanai's interest in her. Although, as Kanai admits, he has never been without women, he takes more than a casual interest in Piya. Evidently she is the first woman since Kusum who has touched his heart.
- Nirmal's notebook describes another kind of internal conflict, the struggle between love and duty. When government forces decided to evict a group of squatters from Morichjhapi, which had been declared a nature refuge, Nirmal felt it was his duty to support the squatters. However, he knew that in doing so, he would probably be forfeiting his life, thus deserting the wife who loved him. Kusum, too, had to balance love and duty, for her death left her son an orphan.
- Although the barbaric action of the government forces at Morichjhapi was indefensible, Ghosh makes it clear that the issue involved was not a simple one. To Piya, for example, the claims of the environment should come before the needs of people. She makes her position clear when she comes upon villagers torturing a man-eating tiger they have captured. Realizing that they intend to burn it alive, Piya attempts to intervene, and Fokir has to drag her away, explaining that after all, it had killed human beings. His mother, Kusum, would have seconded his comments, for as a nurse trainee, she had been taught that human life, not nature, is of paramount importance.

Sea of Poppies (2008)

- In Amitav Ghosh's novel Sea of Poppies, Deeti lives in a village four hundred miles from the Indian coast. She has never seen the sea or a ship, and she has never left her home district. One day she has a vision of a sailing ship and she knows that it is a sign, although she is not yet certain what it portends. Deeti's life is neither happy nor unhappy; it is a ceaseless round of back-breaking work. She does not love her husband, Hukam, who was injured in battle and now, disabled, works in an opium-processing factory. He has become an opium addict. Their daughter, Kabutri, was in fact fathered by his brother, Chandan, after Deeti was drugged and raped with the family's connivance. Deeti has unexamined feelings for Kalua, a member of the leather workers' caste, whom she rescued, without his apparent knowledge, from a beating. However, when Deeti's husband dies, and she determines to commit sati (throw herself on Hukam's funeral pyre) rather than marry Chandan, it is Kalua who rescues her from the fire and then leaves the village with Deeti, determined to find sanctuary elsewhere. Eventually, they find their way to Calcutta and, aware that Deeti's in-laws are still searching for her, determine to leave for Mauritius to become indentured laborers.

Sea of Poppies (2008)

- The ship in Deeti's vision is later identified as the Ibis, a former slave ship, in poor condition, that has been sold to Benjamin Burnham and is now being taken to Calcutta for refitting. Zachary Reid, a mulatto freedman from Baltimore, has signed on as ship's carpenter because he cannot find employment in his home town. The voyage to India is little short of disastrous, thanks to the ship's condition. Illness breaks out, and Reid finds himself inadvertently rising to become, at one point, the ship's de facto captain. He is helped by a group of lascar sailors, led by the mysterious Serang Ali, who effectively run the ship and who clearly have plans for the newly minted Zakri Malun. They make over Reid's wardrobe so that he can play the part of a gentleman, and he learns their language and their various ways, coming to appreciate their food as well. What Serang Ali's plans are for Reid remain unclear throughout the novel.
- Having brought the ship safely to Calcutta, Reid finds himself among a colorful collection of "old India hands," who represent themselves as understanding the ways of the Indians and the lascars but whose apprehension of local ways is quite different from Reid's. In turn, they look askance at him because he seems able to engage with all segments of the population on apparently equal terms. As a result, they view him with the deepest suspicion. Eventually, the new first mate of the Ibis, Mr. Crowle, discovers that when Reid first joined the Ibis he had been described on the manifest as "black" and so seeks to blackmail him.

Sea of Poppies (2008)

- Raja Neel Rattan Halder has, by contrast, led a life of almost complete indolence, governed by intricate custom and practice, which is vitally necessary that he maintain in order to preserve his position as zemindar of Rashkali, for his own sake as well as for the sake of the people who look to him for guidance. However, he is well aware that his world will disintegrate because he is in financial difficulties. When he is wrongly found guilt of forgery, Neel finds himself imprisoned and sentenced to be transported to Mauritius on the Ibis. Neel shares his imprisonment with an opium addict, Ah Fatt, and almost his first task, having accepted that his life has changed irrevocably, is to nurse Ah Fatt through an enforced withdrawal from the drug. Through this, the two men form an uneasy bond as they await transportation.
- Though this disparate group of protagonists provides a microcosm of India in the early nineteenth century, Ghosh presents the reader with an intricate portrait of a multilayered society

Sea of Poppies (2008)

- As the group sails to Mauritius on the Ibis, various of its members are beset by danger, most particularly by the fear that they will be revealed to be something other than they have pretended to be. Despite their different backgrounds, the passengers and prisoners gradually form a community, mirroring that of the lascar seamen, and the ship gradually comes to stand for a new India, in which the poor and helpless fight for their rights when they are badly treated by the mostly white officers. Eventually, during a long night of brutality and revelation, the senior officers lose control of the ship, and some are killed. The community is broken asunder, with Serang Ali, Jodu, Neel, Ah Fatt, and Kalua fleeing the ship in a small boat and leaving behind Paulette and Deeti.
- At this point, the novel draws to a close.

River of Smoke (2011)

- In 1838, three ships are caught in a raging storm in Andaman Sea. The Anahita, owned by Bahram Moddie, the Redruth and the Ibis

- The convicts Neel Rattan, a Bengali zamindar and Ah Fatt, a criminal from Canton are the main characters

Flood of Fire (2015)

- It concerns with the 19th century opium trade between India and China
- Following the storyline of the previous parts, the story continues in 1839.
- The first Opium War has commenced and the characters find themselves in midst of it

Vallath

Gun Island (2019)

- Gun Island is written in the first person, the narrator a rare book dealer from Brooklyn named Dinanath Datta, Deen or Dino for short. Dinanath comes to Kolkata annually and he is looking for female companionship. He is knowledgeable about Bengali myths and has researched on one of them associated with the Sundarbans, involving the snake goddess Manasa Devi and a merchant Chand Sadagar, who the goddess tried to make her devotee.
- Dinanath has only two days left before returning to Brooklyn when he receives a summons from an aged female relative Nilima Bose who runs a trust in the Sundarbans.
- Nilima has a younger friend Piyali Roy, a marine biologist who teaches in Oregon staying with her, and it is the prospect of meeting Piyali that persuades Dinanath to visit Nilima. Piyali is a character we recognise from The Hungry Tide in which she is investigating the Gangetic dolphin, and she is still on the subject of dolphins here. But Nilima (also with Piyali's assistance) is interested in investigating a new legend, that of the 'Bonduki Sadagar' or the 'Gun Merchant'.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni (b. 1956)

- Indian-American author
- Divakaruni's works are largely set in India and the United States, and often focus on the experiences of South Asian immigrants
- Major Novels – The Mistress of Spices, Sister of My Heart, The Vine of Desire, Queen of Dreams, One Amazing Thing, Palace of Illusions and Oleander Girl
- The Conch Bearer (2003) (Book 1 of the brotherhood of Conch)
- The mirror of fire and dreaming (2005) (Book 2 of the brotherhood of conch)
- Before We Visit the Goddess: A Novel (2016)
- Poetry collection: Black candle
- Poetry Collection: Leaving Yuba City
- Short story collection, Arranged Marriage
- A fantasy series: Brotherhood of the Conch series
- Has also written much poetry
- The Palace of Illusions is a re-telling of the Mahabharata from Draupadi’s perspective.
- The Forest of Enchantments is a retelling of Ramayana

Vallath

The Mistress of Spices (1997)

- The Mistress of Spices (1997), set in contemporary Oakland, California.
- Tilo, the titular character, is a shopkeeper and an immigrant from India who helps customers satisfy their needs and desires with the spices’ mystical properties
- Her life changes when she falls for an American man named Doug
- Unfortunately, her blooming romance results in the spices inflicting punishment on her and those she cares about
- To save Doug from being another victim of the spices' powerful magic, she spends one last night with him where they make love
- Afterwards, she dedicates her whole being to the spices, which results in the store being destroyed
- Doug helps Tilo rebuild, and the two reconcile on the beach

Vallath

Sister of My Heart (1999)

- First published in 1999, this novel was followed in 2002 by a sequel The Vine of Desire
- A story about family, friendship, and the bond between sisters, Anju and Sudha
    - The girls narrate the story of their lives
- Although some of the characters immigrate to the United States, most of the story is set in India.

Vallath

The Plot

- Book 1: Princess in the Palace of Snakes follows Anju and Sudha till their marriage
- Sudha is a storyteller and dreams of designing clothes and having a baby while Anju has a fierce spirit and longs to study literature in college
- The girls are caught skipping school and also due to a health scare changes the plans of college to the plans of marriage
- Book 1 ends with both the girls getting married.Sudhe moves with her husband while Anju plans to join her husband in U.S after getting a visa
- In Book 2 The Queen of Swords Sudha and Anju face a lot of upheavals. After many years ,the sisters are united, but future obstacles still loom.

Vallath

One Amazing Thing (2009)

- Published in 2010
- The novel is about a group of 9 people who are trapped in a visa office at an Indian Consulate after a massive earthquake hits in an American city and about how they try surviving in the dark place with no way out of the debris surrounding them
- Amongst them are two visa officers on the verge of an adulterous affair; Jiang, a Chinese-India woman in her last years; her gifted teenage granddaughter Lily; Cameron, an ex-soldier haunted by guilt; Uma, an Indian-American girl bewildered by her parent's decision to return to Kolkata after 20 years; Tariq, a young Muslim man angry with the new America; and an enraged and bitter elderly white couple
- As they wait to be rescued they begin to tell each other stories of their lives
- Their tales are tragic and life-affirming, revealing what it means to be human and the incredible power of story telling

Vallath

Namita Gokhale (b. 1956)

- Writer, editor and publisher
- Co-founder and co-director of the Jaipur Literature Festival
- Her debut novel, Paro: Dreams of passion was released in 1984
- The Book of Shadows, 1999
- Shakuntala: The Play of Memory
- Most famous work
  - Things to Leave Behind (2016)
    - Won Sahitya Academi Award (2021)

Vallath

Mukul Kesavan (b. 1957)

- Indian historian, novelist and political and social essayist
- He is distinct from other writers as his prose is a sparkling, accessible, aphoristic, and elegantly serious thinking and comedy
- Looking Through Glass
- Men in White: A Book of Cricket
  - Men in White is an armchair view of test cricket.
  - Mukul Kesavan describes the experience of living with a game - cricket - in a country where the sport occupies mind space like nothing else can

Vallath

Looking Through Glass (1994)

- The nameless narrator of this novel, is a modern young photographer on route to deposit his grandmother's ashes in the Ganges when he falls from the Mail Train and lands in 1942
- Pretending amnesia, he is taken in by a Muslim family
- The family comprises three members that includes a young revolutionary, Masroor, his sister Asharfi and Ammi
- Ammi is their mother who is waiting for her husband who disappeared some years before on a Haj
- At first terrified, our narrator refuses to stir from the house, in fear he may change history, until finally he is impelled out of doors by the discovery that he has head lice

Vallath

The Narrator Goes Out

- It’s the day of the Quit India Resolution, voted by the new Indian Congress; a result that Masroor has feared because he believes it will lead to partition of the country between Hindus and Muslims

- Taken by Masroor to a barber, the hapless narrator is immediately embroiled in Indian politics when he is the only witness to Masroor's disappearance - into the recruiting poster on the side of an army truck

- The author beautifully combines magic realism and outright farce in an energetic, even frantic, story of the displaced narrator's life in a time not his own

The Narrator’s Engagement with History

- At first the narrator feels only the unusefulness of political effort
- But at once he is caught up in life and starts earning a living as a waiter, developing attachments, saving a young, unwedded pregnant actress from the grip of a pornographer
- He also meets his grandmother, doing his best to manipulate the lives of his friends for their own good

Vallath

David Davidar (b. 1958)

- Born in Nagercoil, Kanyakumari district in Tamil Nadu
- He is the co-founder of Aleph Book Company, a literary publishing firm based in New Delhi
- Works
  - The House of Blue Mangoes (2002)
  - The Solitude of Emperors (2007)
  - Ithaca (2011)

Vallath

The House of Blue Mangoes: A Novel (2002)

- The novel spans nearly half a century and chronicles the life of three generations of the Dorai family
- They struggle to preserve tradition and rise to the challenge of change. The Dorai family's livelihood comes from their groves of mango trees bearing a rare variety of the succulent fruit
- The novel offers a stark indictment of colonialism and reflects with great poignancy on the inexorable social transformations of the subcontinent.

Vallath

Other Works

- The Solitude of Emperors (2007)
    - Based on his experiences as a journalist, and the outrage he felt at the communal riots that took place in India in the 1990s
- Ithaca (2011)
    - Set in the world of International publishing
    - The protagonist is Zachariah Thomas, who, is a rising star in international publishing. Suddenly, his life in London is stagnant in an uncertain plateau—estranged wife, struggling company, and the absence of that history-shifting manuscript—when an author comes to his rescue, or damnation.

Vallath

Upamanyu Chatterjee (b. 1959)

- Born in Patna, Bihar
- He is an Indian civil servant
- He based his novels on the Indian Administrative System, which he depicted with hilarious sarcasm
- Most of his novels focus on the life of a young westernized diplomat who is posted in a non-descript town
- His novels have a wry sense of humour, amazing language and an eye to portray the life of middle-class Indians
- His novels are written in a humorous style and are intended to go beyond the basic concept of comedy
- Through his works, he dared to match the sensibility which one uncovers only in modern European novels

Vallath

Works

- A bureaucrat by profession, Upamanyu Chatterjee penned two short stories and five novels
- The short stories include
  - “The Assassination of Indira Gandhi‘”
  - “Watching Them”
- Novels include
- English, August: An Indian Story (1988)
- The Last Burden (1993)
- The Mammaries of the Welfare State (2000)
  - Sequel to English, August
- Weight Loss (2006)
- Way to Go (2010)
  - Sequel to The Last Burden

Vallath

English, August: An Indian Story (1988)

- The story of Agastya Sen, a westernized Indian whose thoughts are dominated by women, literature and soft drugs
- Through the novel, he portrays some serious issues that revolve around the urban educated youth and pictures the class of westernized people
- The book chronicles one year in the life of a trainee civil servant, Agastya Sen, on his first posting-cum-training session to Madna, a small town
- The book very well depicts the realities of grass root administration of a welfare state, that is India, the comedy of errors
- The protagonist of this novel is surely out of place, but in due course of time, though reluctantly, fits in with the scheme of things, initiating him in the vast community of 'brown sahibs' who rule India

Vallath

The Last Burden (1993)

- Portrays life in an Indian middle-class family
- Depicts the lives of different people constituting a joint family, expertly portraying their emotions, needs and desires
- This is a portrayal of the financial, social and emotional problems that make people favour an atomic family in contrast to a joint family as was the predominant practise in India
- The author uses somewhat strong language
- It elegantly portrays the decisions and sacrifices made by different people in a family and the frictions and the frustrations thereby
- Portrays the struggle of the newer generation in order to move into an atomic family structure from a strictly hierarchical joint family structure where even the elders have an even more elderly person who dictate the terms
- The main characters Jamun, a work less young man and his old father, Shyamanand, his dying mother, Urmila
- The novel opens at the death bed of Urmila and takes you through the story of this middle-class family

Vallath

Jeet Thayil (b. 1959)

- Jeet Thayil was born in Kerala, India in 1959 and educated in Hong Kong, New York and Bombay.
- He is an Indian poet, novelist, librettist and musician.
- He has introduced new areas of feelings and emotions to Indian literature, and has often concerned himself with the pleasures and pains of drugs and alcohol, sex and death – emblematic of Keats and Baudelaire.
- These Errors are Correct (2008)

Vallath

Narcopolis (2014)

- Debut novel
- Traces the evolution of a great and broken city of narcotics across three decades.
- The story opens in Rashid’s opium house on Shuklaji Street sometime in the 1970s
- Gently, we are drawn in to the languid world of the characters
- We slide in and out of their lives, emerging occasionally inside a vivid drug-induced recollection
- As the city disintegrates into communal riots, murder and mayhem, the epic tragedy of the fall of their lives is unravelled

Vallath

Poetry

- Jemini (1992)
- Apocalypso (1997)
- English (2004)
- These Errors are Correct (2008)
- Collected Poems (2015)

Vikas Swarup (b. 1961)

- Retired Indian diplomat and writer
- Q & A (2005)
  - Debut novel
  - Tells the story of how a Mumbai waiter becomes the winner of a big quiz show
  - Adapted into the movie titled Slumdog Millionaire, directed by Danny Boyle
- Six Suspects (2008)
- The Accidental Apprentice (2013)

Vallath

Vikram Chandra (b. 1961)

- Vikram Chandra is an Indian-American writer.
- Red Earth and Pouring Rain
  - His first novel
  - Won the 1996 Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book
  - Inspired by the autobiography of James Skinner, a legendary nineteenth-century Anglo-Indian soldier
  - A tale told by a young Indian student and a typing monkey, and also a novel about exile, about Indians abroad and foreigners in India, about the processes of national and cultural and personal redefinitions implicit in these juxtapositions

Vallath

Arundhati Roy (b. 1961)

- Suzanna Arundhati Roy was born in Shillong on 24th November 1961, the child of a marriage between a Christian woman from Kerala and a Bengali Hindu tea planter

- She spent her crucial childhood years in Ayemenem (the story of her novel The God of Small Things revolves around this village)

- At the age of eighteen, she left to New Delhi for higher education and since she was asked not to return to Kerala, she had to make her living by selling empty beer bottles

- Arundhati worked as a Research Assistant at the National Institute of Urban Affairs after getting the degree of architecture

Vallath

- Film director Pradeep Krishen (whom she married later) once spotted her and she was offered a small role in the film “Massey Saab”
- She wrote and acted in the film In Which Annie Gives It to Those Ones (1989) and later wrote scripts for the film Electric Moon (1992)
- Roy began her first novel The God of Small Things in 1992 and completed it in 1996
- It won the Booker Prize for Fiction in 1997 and sold over six million copies worldwide
- She has also written several non-fiction books:
  - The Cost of Living (1999)
    - An attack on the Indian government for the handling of Narmada Valley dam project and its nuclear testing programme
  - Power Politics (2001) – Essays
  - The Algebra of Infinite Justice, a collection of journalism, etc.
- The Ministry of Utmost Happiness, her recent novel, was published in 2017
- AZADI: Freedom. Fascism. Fiction. is her latest essay, published in 2020

Vallath

As an Activist

- Spokesperson of the anti-globalization/alter-globalization movement
- She raised her voice for the Maoists and Naxalite insurgency groups
- She supported Kashmir’s independence from India
- Along with Medha Patkar, Roy worked against the Narmada Dam project and spent her Booker prize money for Narmada Bachao Andolan
- She criticised U.S foreign policy
- She marked opinion against India’s nuclear policies
- Arundhati Roy reacted against Muthanga incident

Vallath

Works

- Fiction
- The God of Small Things (1997)
- The Ministry of Utmost Happiness (2017)
- Non-Fiction
- The End of Imagination (1998)
- The Algebra of Infinite Justice (2002)
- Power Politics (2002)
- Public Power in the Age of Empire (2004)
- The Shape of the Beast: Conversations with Arundhati Roy (2008)
- Listening to Grasshoppers: Field Notes on Democracy (2010)
- Broken Republic: Three Essays (2011)
- Kashmir: The Case for Freedom (2011)
- My Seditious Heart (2019)
- Azadi: Freedom, Fascism, Fiction (2020) etc.

Awards

- 1989 – National Film Award for Best Screenplay (In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones) {Returned it in 2015}
- 1997 – Booker Prize (The God of Small Things)
- 2004 – Sydney Peace Prize
- 2006 – Sahitya Akademi Award (The Algebra of Infinite Justice; Declined)
- 2011 – Norman Mailer Prize for Distinguished Writing

Vallath

The God of Small Things (1997)

- The God of Small Things is the debut novel of Arundhati Roy
- Published in 1997, the novel quickly skyrocketed Arundhati Roy to worldwide critical and popular acclaim
- The novel won the 1997 Booker Prize, one of the most prestigious awards in the English-language literary world
- It is semi-autobiographical in that it incorporates, embellishes, and greatly supplements events from her family's history
- The novel takes place in Aymenem, a village in the southwestern Indian state of Kerala, mostly in 1969 and 1993

Vallath

The Narrative Style

- The narrative shifts back and forth in time in a series of flashbacks, memories, and foreshadowing of what's ahead
- The novel's constantly changing perspective, its nonlinear progression of narrative, its lush, almost extravagant, sometimes capitalized or contracted diction, and its confounding of fantasy and reality also connect the novel with the style of "hysterical realism"
- The plot centers on Estha and Rahel, fraternal boy and girl twins living with their divorced mother, Ammu, and her family
- Narrated largely from 7-year-old Rahel’s perspective, the novel is a satire on religion, caste/class, communism, urbanization leading to globalisation and at large the hypocrisies of the adults

Vallath

Historical Context

- The God of Small Things takes place mostly in 1969 and 1993, in Ayemenem (Aymanam), in the district of Kerala
- Marxist ideas grew popular in Kerala soon after India's liberation from British colonial rule, and in 1967 the Naxalite party split off as a more radical Communist group than the mainstream
- The growing social unrest from these labor movements affects the action in the novel
- The ancient Hindu caste system (dividing Untouchables from Touchables, among other rules) was abolished around 1950, but many Indians still clung to old traditions and the class divide
- Some of the characters in the novel are also Syrian Christians, an ancient community in Kerala originating with St. Thomas

Vallath

Structure

- Arundhati Roy does not present a sequential narrative in The God of Small Things
- Rather, the chapters move about in time and place, reflecting memories, reactions to current happenings, and thoughts about the future, often from different viewpoints, some childlike and some adult
- This is how people mentally process life's events, after all, with memories of the past influencing the response to the present—and both creating ideas about the future
- There are two general time frames in which the major events occur: the past and the present
- The past is December 1969. The present is 1993
- In the past the twins Rahel and Estha are seven years old and experience many traumatic events, ending with their separation
- In the present they are both alive and together again, engaged in an incestuous relationship
- In both the past and the present, they are based at the family home in Ayemenem
- Generally, the chapters alternate between the past and the present

Vallath

The Epigraph

- Never again will a single story be told as though it’s the only one.
    - Quote from John Berger, the author of the classic book Ways of Seeing
- Roy’s book constructs new ways of seeing, of re-interpreting and deconstructing power

Vallath

The Opening

- May in Ayemenem is a hot, brooding month. The days are long and humid. The river shrinks and black crows gorge on bright mangoes in still, dustgreen trees. Red bananas ripen. Jackfruits burst. Dissolute blue bottles hum vacuously in the fruity air. Then they stun themselves against clear windowpanes and die, fatly baffled in the sun.

- The nights are clear but suffused with sloth and sullen expectation.

The Plot Structure

INTRODUCTION

1. Ammu moves back to Ayemenem with twins Rahel and Estha

RISING ACTION

2. Sophie Mol and Margaret Kochamma arrive in Ayemenem.

3. Ammu and Velutha begin having an illicit love affair.

4. The affair is discovered.

5. Ammu is locked in her room.

6. Velutha is told to leave forever.

7. Ammu screams at the twins that they should leave.

8. Sophie Mol and the twins try to cross the river.

CLIMAX

9. Sophie Mol drowns

FALLING ACTION

10. Kottayam police find Velutha and beat him to death.

11. Chacko throws Ammu out, and Estha is sent to Baba

RESOLUTION

12. Rahel and Estha reunite in Ayemenem 23 years later

Vallath

The Plot

- Set in Ayemenem, a town in Kerala, India
- In 1969, seven-year-old twins Estha and Rahel live with their divorced mother Ammu
  - Their grandmother is Mammachi, their uncle Chacko, and their great-aunt Baby Kochamma
- Before 1969
  - Mammachi was married to Pappachi, an Imperial Entomologist
  - He beat her cruelly for small reasons
- In 1969
  - Pappachi is dead and Mammachi is blind
  - Beside her house is the Meenachal River
  - Chacko starts for Mammachi pickle factory called Paradise Pickles & Preserves
  - Baby Kochamma is a Western-educated, bitter, jealous woman who has a one-way love for an Irish missionary Father Mulligan

The Plot

- Chacko
  - Went to Oxford
  - Married a British waitress Margaret Kochamma
  - They had a daughter, Sophie Mol
  - Margaret left Chacko for a man named Joe
  - Chacko returned to Ayemenem
- Ammu
  - Wanted to escape Ayemenem
  - Married Baba who turned out to be an abusive drunkard
  - The twins are born and Ammu returned to Ayemenem
- Meanwhile, the Communist Party is gaining power in Kerala and fighting against landlords such as the Ipes
- Near the middle class locality in Ayemenem, there are Untouchables like Velutha
- Velutha is a talented young man who works for Chacko and is loved by the twins.

Vallath

The Plot

- Joe dies in an accident
- Margaret Kochamma visits Chacko at Ayemenem
- Estha, Rahel, Ammu, Chacko, and Baby Kochamma make a trip to the airport
  - On the way they see a Communist march in which Velutha takes part
  - The family then goes to Abhilash Talkies to see The Sound of Music
  - At the theatre, Estha is sexually molested by the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man, a vendor, and he never recovers from that horrible memory
  - The next day they take Sophie and Margaret to Ayemenem.

Vallath

The Plot

- Estha and Rahel take a boat and row over to the “History House”
- This is the abandoned home of an Englishman called Kari Sayippu who “went native.”
- Ammu is attracted to Velutha, and they meet by the river and have sex. They continue to meet every night for the next two weeks.
- Velutha’s father Vellya Paapen confesses to Mammachi his son’s relationship with Ammu
  - Mammachi and Baby Kochamma lock Ammu in her room
  - Ammu scolds the twins and they decide to run away to the History House; Sophie Mol goes with them. Their boat capsizes and Sophie Mol drowns in the Meenachal.
- The twins are terrified and manage to reach the History House grounds, where they fall asleep. Velutha was hiding there too.
- They are caught bye the police. Baby Kochamma tells Inspector Thomas Mathew that Velutha kidnapped the children and tried to rape Ammu. She also manipulates Estha to support her story, telling him that it is necessary to “save Ammu”. Estha thus betrays Velutha and he feels guilty forever.

Vallath

The Plot

- Baby Kochamma makes Chacko to throw Ammu out of the house
- Ammu is then forced to “return” Estha to Baba
- The inseparable twins do not meet each for 23 years
- When they are 31, Estha is “re-returned” to Ayemenem
- By then, the twins and their mother were completely destroyed
  - Estha had stopped speaking to anyone
  - Ammu had died when they were 11
  - Rahel was thrown out of schools; married an American, divorced and returns to Ayemenem

Vallath

The Plot

- In 1993
  - The twins are reunited
  - Mammachi had died and Baby Kochamma and the cook, Kochu Maria, spend all day watching TV
  - The house was falling apart
  - The History House had become a five-star hotel
  - Rahel and Estha pick up the shards of the past and their m memories
  - They reaffirm their loneliness as well as closeness by having sex.

Vallath

The Small Things

- The small things of the novel's title are those things that make up the fabric of day-to-day life
- Love, the beauty of nature, the proper use of one's gifts and talents are the small things that make life meaningful to each person
- In the novel, the Ipe family is obsessed with the big things like politics, culture, class divisions, status and money
- But it is the small things which lead them into the Terror or tragedy
- The title The God of Small Things represents Velutha
  - He can enjoy the tiny things of beauty in the nature
  - He can perfectly craft tiny things
  - He can spend joyful hours with the children

Vallath

The Symbol of Pickles

- The family factory is much more than a building where products are made
- It is a place where things are preserved, put into a state that cannot be changed
- Just like the family, which wishes to keep its standing and status unchanged, the factory ensures that its products will remain stable for the foreseeable future
- As the family freezes at the time of Sophie Mol's death, so the factory will stand unchanged for years and years after closing, a kind of museum of the past.

Vallath

The Symbol of Pickles

- At the same time, the factory is the center of unrest among its workers
- They are interested in the promises of the Communist Party
- Yet the workers are also frozen in time when it comes to their acceptance of Velutha
- They resent that an Untouchable is given special recognition and privileges
- Chacko tries to use his modern education to smooth things over, but he also remains interested in preserving the family in their leadership position
- The fact that the factory cannot survive the changes of the modern era is linked to the family's inability to move forward as well
- For example, the banana jam that the factory discontinued because it could not be properly classified compares with the family who is unable to give up the classifications of the caste system

Vallath

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness (2017)

- Set against the most violent, dark events of modern Indian history
  - Poor farmers dispossessed due to land reform since 1951
  - Bhopal gas tragedy in December 1984
  - Train burning in Godhra in 2002
  - Kashmir insurgency since 1989
- The story centres on
  - Anjum, an intersex woman (hijra)
  - Tilottama or Tilo, a rebellious architect
  - Biplab Dasgupta, her landlord who is a supervisor in the intelligence service

Vallath

Arundhati Roy as a Non-Fiction Writer

- Her non-fiction works are scathing criticism of globalization, neo-imperialism, neo-liberalism, environmental issues, challenges to democracy, inequality etc. to name a few.

- As a means to articulate the issues faced by common people around the world, she argues that writers should use their skills, imagination and art "to re-create the rhythms of the endless crisis of normality, and in doing so, expose the policies and processes that make ordinary things—food, water, shelter, and dignity—such a distant dream for ordinary people" (An Ordinary Person's Guide 106-107).

- She unapologetically questions the power structures in society but often criticised for her “blanket condemnations” and accusatory approach.

Vallath

Significant issues discussed in her non-fiction works:

- The politics behind dam constructions and their environmental impact, specifically about the Sardar Sarovar Project.
- India’s nuclear weapon testing—she wrote articles about the testing of nuclear weapons in Pokhran, Rajasthan.
- Maoist issue in India and the government’s role in it.
- The U.S. military invasion of Afghanistan.
- Criticism of the Srilankan government for their approach to the Tamils in Srilanka.
- The Kashmir issue

Vallath

The End of Imagination (1998)

- In the work, Roy criticises the the testing of nuclear bombs at Pokhran in 1998, conducted by the BJP-led Central Government.
- She argued that the way the government portrayed the testing as a singular national achievement was a fascist and totalitarian attitude.
- For her, such show of national might was fallacious and ridiculous.

Vallath

The Greater Common Good (1999)

- Along with the article “The Road to Harsud” (2004), the work exposes the capitalist motives behind the construction of big dams in India.
- She argues that often these projects are presented in the garb of development.
- But in reality, these are exploitative policies that dispossess, dislocate, and repress the marginalised sections in society, particularly the Dalits and Adivasis.
- Often, such constructions displace people without proper rehabilitation and compensation.
- She criticises the Government of India for endorsing the capitalist intentions behind such constructions.
- She also calls out the Supreme Court of India and the World Bank for their assistance and support.
- She applauds resistance movements like Medha Patkar’s Narmada Bachao Andolan.

Vallath

The Cost of Living (1999)

- Essays like “The Ladies Have Feelings, So Shall We Leave It to the Experts?” discuss the politics behind climate change.

The Algebra of Infinite Justice (2001)

- It is a continuation of discussions on issues like India's nuclear policy, the environmental cost of public policies and projects and the influence of foreign multinational corporations on the decision-making in poorer countries.

- The essay "The greater common good" deals with the Sardar Sarovar Dam project in Narmada Valley.

- The essay "Power politics" explore the human cost of the privatization of India's power supply and the construction of monumental dams in India.

Vallath

An Ordinary Person's Guide To Empire (2004)

- The collection is about U. S.’s neo-imperial policies in Iraq.
- The essays like “Instant-Mix Imperial Democracy (buy one, get one free)”, “Peace and the New Corporate Liberation Theology” etc. show how American neo-liberalization and neo-colonization destroyed the ancient civilization of Iraq.

Walking with the Comrades (2011)

- It deals with the time Roy spent with the Maoists in the forests of Dantewada.
- By focusing on the plight of the tribals, she is discussing the condition of the colonized subjects under the neo-colonial state.
- Though she criticises the Maoist movement for its exploitation of the tribals, she holds the government responsible for people's support of the movement.
- The Maoist movement assists people in their struggle for existence, when they are deprived of the basic elements of life like safe drinking water, electricity, education, healthcare etc.
- Contrary to this, the government is exploiting people through policies that support capitalist ideologies.

Vallath

The Doctor and the Saint (2017)

- First published as an introduction to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Annihilation of Caste: The Annotated Critical Edition (2014), the work discusses Gandhi's casteist approach to Dalits, then Untouchables in India.

- Often praised for his coinage of 'harijan' and sympathetic approach to the Dalits, Roy exposes Gandhi's attitude as patronising efforts by a casteist patriarch.

- The work is an addition to the popular Gandhi-Ambedkar debate.

Vallath

My Seditious Heart: Collected Non-Fiction (2019)

- It is a continuation of her previous discussions.
- She discusses issues like corporate greed, American imperialism, and the politics behind institutions like the World Bank.
- She argues against the Hindu supremacists in India who have divised pogroms and divided the people further with their “Hindu nation” rhetoric.

Azadi: Freedom, Fascism, Fiction (2020)

- Roy discusses the Kashmir issue, the covid pandemic, protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the National Register for Citizens (NRC) etc. in the text.
- Some of the essays in the text are:
  - “In what language does Rain Fall over the tormented cities?”
  - “The Graveyard Talks back”
  - “Election Season in a Dangerous Democracy”
  - “Intimation of an Ending”
  - “The Pandemic is a Portal”

Vallath

Other Important Works

- Power Politics (2002)
- Public Power in the Age of Empire (2004)
- Listening to Grasshoppers: Field Notes on Democracy (2010)
- Kashmir: The Case for Freedom (2011)
- Capitalism: A Ghost Story (2014)

Vallath

Jaishree Misra (b. 1961)

- Grand niece of Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, Malayalam novelist and Jnanpith-recipient
- Her first novel Ancient Promises (2000) was a best-seller
- Over a dozen novels have followed
- Also edited an anthology on motherhood

Vallath

Ancient Promises (2000)

- Janaki, a girl from a Keralite army family grows up in Delhi
- She falls in love as a teenager, but was directed into an arranged marriage into an illustrious family in Kerala
- The marriage was a disaster, and a mentally handicapped daughter was born
- Seeing the prejudice her child faced, she determined to move to a more sympathetic environment for her daughter, and applied for scholarships abroad
- In the UK, she came into contact with her childhood sweetheart, who had never married
- Eventually she filed for divorce, and after a bitter battle gained custody of her child, and remarried
- While living in London, she wrote Ancient Promises, a thinly fictionalized account of her own life

Vallath

Other Novels

- Accidents Like Love and Marriage (2001)
- Afterwords (2004)
  - Story similar to that of Ancient Promises
  - Maya leaves an unhappy Keralite marriage to elope with Rahul Tiwari, and dies in an accident in London
- Rani (2007)
  - A fictionalized biography of the demi-goddess Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi
  - Shows the transformation of the beautiful and intelligent daughter of Moropant Tambe into the fiery queen of Jhansi, widow of Raja Gangadhar Rao
  - Banned in Uttar Pradesh
  - Mahasweta Devi has also written a fictionalized biography of the queen
- Secrets and Lies (2009)
- Secrets and Sins (2010)
- A Scandalous Secret (2011)
- A Love Story for My Sister (2015)

Amit Chaudhuri (b. 1962)

- An Indian English author and academic
- Awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award, in 2002 for his novel A New World.
- His study of D.H. Lawrence’s poetry, D.H. Lawrence and 'Difference': Postcoloniality and the Poetry of the Present, was called 'truly groundbreaking' by Terry Eagleton in the London Review of Books.
- A collection of poems entitled St. Cyril Road and Other Poems appeared in 2005
- On 18 March 2008, he was included in the panel for the Man Booker International Prize 2008
- He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.
- Novels - A Strange and Sublime Address, Afternoon Raag, Freedom Song, A New World, The Immortals

Vallath

A New World (2000)

- A year after his divorce, Jayojit Chatterjee, an economics professor in the American Midwest, travels to his native Calcutta with his young son, Bonny, to spend the summer holidays with his parents.

- Jayojit is no more accustomed to spending time alone with Bonny–who lives with his mother in California–than he is with the Admiral and his wife, whose daily rhythms have become so synchronized as to become completely foreign to their son.

- Together, the unlikely foursome struggles to pass the protracted hours of summer, each in his or her own way mourning Jayojit's failed marriage.

- And as Jayojit walks the bustling streets of Calcutta, he finds himself not only caught between clashing memories of India and America, but also between different versions of his life, revisiting lost opportunity, realized potential, and lingering desire.

Vallath

The Immortals (2009)

- Set in 1980s Bombay
- Shyam Lal is a highly regarded voice teacher.
- Sixteen-year-old Nirmalya Sengupta is the romantically rebellious scion of an affluent family who wants only to study Indian classical music.
- With a little push from Nirmalya's mother, Shyam agrees to accept Nirmalya as his student, entering into a relationship that will have unexpected and lasting consequences in both their lives.
- As the novel unfolds, we see how their two families come to challenge and change each other, and how student and teacher slowly mesh their differing visions of the world, and what place music holds in it.

Vallath

Odysseus Abroad (2015)

- Unfolding over the course of a single warm July day in London in 1985, the book follows a young Indian man, Ananda, in his early 20s, as he wakes up in his rented room in Warren Street,.
- He is desultorily reading for a BA in English Literature – in UCL at midday
- Then goes to see his uncle, Rangamama, in the older man's basement bedsit in Belsize Park.
- Uncle and nephew walk south for a bit, take the tube to Ananda's, buying some Indian sweets en route, then go out to dinner at a curry house, after which they saunter back to Ananda's room.

Vallath

Tarun Tejpal (b. 1963)

- An Indian journalist, publisher, novelist and former editor-in-chief of Tehelka magazine.
- He founded a publishing company, India Ink, which published Arundhati Roy's Booker Prize winning novel The God of Small Things in 1998.
- Novels - The Alchemy of Desire (2006), Story of my Assassins (2010), The Valley of Masks (2011)

Vallath

Works

- The Alchemy of Desire (2005)
  - Set against the backdrop of India at the turn of the millennium, this novel tells the story of a young couple, penniless but gloriously in love.
  - Obsessed with each other, they move from a small town to the big city, where the narrator who dreams of being a writer works feverishly on a novel, stopping only to feed his ceaseless desire for his beautiful wife.
- The Story of My Assassins (2009)
  - Based on actual events, the novel tells the story of a journalist who learns that the police have captured five hitmen on their way to kill him.
  - Landing like a bombshell on his comfortable life, just as he's started a steamy affair with a brilliant woman, the news prompts him to launch an urgent investigation into the lives of his aspiring murderers and their mastermind
  - Paatal lok is an Indian Hindi Language crime thriller web series loosely based on The Story of My Assassins

Vallath

Suketu Mehta (b.1963)

- He was born in Kolkatta, raised in Mumbai and moved to New York Area in 1977
- He is Assosiate Professor of journalism at New York University and lives in Manhatten
- Mehta is a cancer survivor
- His important works include
  - Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found (2004)
    - Was finalist for 2005 Pulitzer Prize
    - This works explores the underbelly of the city
  - He has also written screenplays for films including New York, I love You (2008) and Mission Kashmir With Vikram Chandra
  - His latest book This Land is Our Land: An Immigrant's Manifesto (2019)

Vallath

Anita Nair (b. 1966)

- Born near Shornur in Palakkad district of Kerala
- Novels
  - The Better Man (2000)
  - Ladies Coupé (2001)
  - Mistress (2005)
  - Lessons In Forgetting (2010)
  - Cut Like Wound (2012)
  - Idris Keeper of the Light (2014)

Vallath

Major Novels

- Ladies Coupé (2001)
  - The journey of a middle-aged Indian woman named Akhila
  - She travels to Kanyakumari in her search for independence
  - On the train's ladies coupe, exchanges stories with 5 different women who inspire her to live her own life
- Cut Like Wound (2012)
  - A detective novel set in the city of Bengaluru
  - To bring out the true functioning of a police establishment in India, the author interacted in real life with the officials in a police station
  - Borei Gowda is the detective protagonist

Major Novels

- Lessons In Forgetting (2010)
  - Through a series of coincidences, Meera and JAK find their lives turning and twisting together, with the unpredictability and sheer inevitability of a cyclone
  - And as the days pass, fresh beginnings appear where there seemed to be only endings
- Mistress (2005)
  - When travel writer Christopher Stewart arrives at a riverside resort in Kerala to meet Koman, Radha's uncle and a famous kathakali dancer, he enters a world of masks and hidden emotions
  - From their first meeting, both Radha and her uncle are drawn to the enigmatic young man
  - The triangle quickly excludes Shyam, Radha's husband, who can only watch helplessly as Radha embraces Chris passionately, something that he has never been able to draw from her
  - Also playing the role of observer-participant is Koman

Vallath

Jerry Pinto (b. 1966)

- Jerry Pinto is a Mumbai based Indian writer of poetry, prose and children's fiction in English, as well as a journalist
- A Roman Catholic of Goan origin
- He writes widely and engagingly on a range of subjects, from language to the city, from books to popular culture

Vallath

Works

- The Life and Times of an H-Bomb (2007), life story of actress Helen
- Asylum and Other Poems (2003), collection of poems
- Co-edited Confronting Love (2005), a book of contemporary Indian love poetry in English
- Co-authored Leela: A Portrait with Leela Naidu (2009)
  - A semi-biographical book of anecdotes and photos from Leela Naidu's life.
- Em and the Big Hoom (2012)
  - First novel
- Bombay, meri jaan: Writings on Mumbai (2003)
- Edited Reflected in Water: Writings on Goa (2006)
- A Book of Light: When a Loved One Has a Different Mind (2016)
  - It is a collection of stories from people who recount their experiences of living with loved ones with a mental illnessss

Em and the Big Hoom

- Em and The Big Hoom is the story of a boy growing up in Mumbai with a mentally afflicted mother (she is the ‘Em’ of the title; ‘The Big Hoom’ is the father).

- It also gives us vivid glimpses of rarely-seen facets of Mumbai life: the world of Goan Catholics; of the city’s institutions for the mentally ill; of children who read Adorno and Brendan Behan while coping with a suicidal parent

Vallath

Jhumpa Lahiri (b. 1967)

- Nilanjana Sudheshna Lahiri, known by the name Jhumpa Lahiri, was born on July 11, 1967, in London
- English-born American novelist and short-story writer
- Daughter of Indian immigrants from West Bengal
- She earned three literary master's degree and PhD in renaissance studies from Boston university
- She collected some of her stories, published in The Newyorker, in her debut collection Interpreter of Maladies (1999)
- Her 2003 novel The Namesake was adapted into a 2007 film by Mira Nair

Vallath

Major Works

- Interpreter of Maladies (1999, short stories)
- Unaccustomed Earth (2008, short stories)
- The Namesake (2003)
- The Lowland (2013)
- Dove mi trovo (Italian; 2018)

Vallath

The Namesake (2003)

- Two generations of the Gangulis, Indian immigrants in the US
- Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli are living in a small apartment in Cambridge, Mass., about to have their first child
- They had an arranged marriage in Calcutta
- Ashoke had barely survived a terrible train accident in India a few years ago and liked to live abroad
- He was discovered by the rescue party because of the blowing pages of the book he had been reading when the train derailed—a copy of the collected stories of Nikolai Gogol
- Ashima feels lonely and homesick in America, finding solace in letters from home and her Indian cooking
- They call their son Gogol, which the boy begins to hate
- His sister Sonali (Sonia) is also born, and they grow up as American kids, foreigners to India

Vallath

The Namesake (2003)

- Unsuccessfully trying to escape the world of “Gogol”, he changes his name to Nikhil when he goes to Yale
- First he is with his girl friend Ruth for two years, then with another girl, a sophisticated young art historian names Maxine Ratcliff, and he moves in with her wealthy family
- When his father dies of a heart attack, Gogol is back with his family and starts to follow Bengali traditions that he once despised
- He meets a Bengali girl Moushumi whom he marries but they divorce when Moushumi values her independence more than her marriage and reconnects with a former boy friend
- Gogol is back with his sister (who is with her fiancé Ben) and mother (who has decided to live in Calcutta for six months every year)
- Gogol realizes that the link to his past is weakening
- He finds a book in his room—a copy of The Collected Stories of Nikolai Gogol that his father had presented him on a birthday
- Now there will soon be no one left to call him by that name, he settles down on his childhood bed and reads his father’s favourite story

Vallath

Radhika Jha (b.1970)

- Was awarded the French Prix Guerlain award in 2002 for her first novel Smell
- The Elephant and the Maruti: Stories (2003)
- Lanterns on their Horns (2009)
- My Beautiful Shadow (2014)

Vallath

Kiran Desai (b. 1971)

- Indian writer in English, daughter of Anita Desai
- Works
  - Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard (1998)
  - The Inheritance of Loss (2006)
- Her novel The Inheritance of Loss won the 2006 Man Booker Prize

Vallath

Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard (1998)

- Published in 1998; her first book
- It is set in the Indian village of Shahkot (state of Punjab) and follows the exploits of a young man, Sampath Chawla, trying to avoid the responsibilities of adult life
- Fed up with his life in Shahkot, Sampath goes to a guava orchard and settles himself in a guava tree, where he uses the gossip he learned while working at the post office to convince people he is clairvoyant and soon becomes a popular “holy man”
- Kiran Desai based this book on a real-life story in which a man, Kapila Pradhan, who lived up a tree for 15 years

Vallath

The Inheritance of Loss (2006)

- The Inheritance of Loss is the second novel by Kiran Desai
- first published in 2006
- Won 2006 Man Booker Prize
- main themes are migration, living between two worlds, and between past and present.
- The story is centered on two main characters: Biju and Sai.
- Biju is an illegal Indian immigrant living in the United States, son of a cook who works for Sai's grandfather.
- Sai is a girl living in mountainous Kalimpong with her maternal grandfather Jemubhai, the cook and a dog named Mutt.
- Desai switches the narration between both points of view.
- The action of the novel takes place in 1986.

Vallath

Anuradha Roy (b. 1967)

- Novelist, journalist and editor
- Novels
  - An Atlas of Impossible Longing (2008)
  - The Folded Earth (2011)
  - Sleeping on Jupiter (2015)
    - Won the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature
  - All the Lives We Never Lived (2018)
    - Won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2022
  - The Earthspinner (2021)

Vallath

Anjana Appachana (b. 1972)

- Born in India of Coorg (Karnataka)
- Major works
  - Incantations and Other Stories (1991)
  - Listening Now (1997; set in Bangalore, Delhi and Lucknow)

Vallath

Aravind Adiga (b. 1974)

- Born in Chennai, Adiga is an Indian-Australian writer and journalist.
- His debut novel, The White Tiger, won the 2008 Man Booker Prize.
- He is the fourth Indian-born author to win the prize, after Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai.
- Other works - Between the Assassinations, Last Man in Tower

Vallath

The White Tiger (2008)

- Won the 40th Man Booker Prize
- The protagonist Balram, who comes from crushing rural poverty is set against India's rise as a modern global economy
- Examines issues of religion, caste, loyalty, corruption and poverty in India
- Employs dark humor
- Balram Halwai narrates his life of entrepreneurship in a letter, written in seven consecutive nights and addressed to the Chinese Premier, Wen Jiabao
    - China is the economic competitor of India but does not have a tradition of entrepreneurship
- In his letter, Balram explains how he, the son of a rickshawpuller, escaped a life of servitude to become a successful businessman, describing himself as an entrepreneur

Vallath

Balram’s Life

- Balram was born in the rural village of Laxmangarh, where he lived with his extended family
- After learning how to drive, Balram works as the driver of Ashok, the son of a rich landlord
- Balram moves to New Delhi with Ashok and his wife Pinky Madam
- Throughout their time in Delhi, Balram is exposed to extensive corruption, especially in the government
- Ashok becomes increasingly involved in bribing government officials for the benefit of the family coal business
- Balram strikes Ashok dead with a bottle, steals a large bribe, and moves to Bangalore, where he bribes the police in order to help start his own taxi business
- And thus ends the letter-to-Jibao, narrating the "rooster-coop" trap of life

Vallath

The Title

- Balram earns the nickname “white tiger” when he impresses a school inspector with his intelligence
- The title “white tiger” denotes the uniqueness and rare talent of the protagonist in his ability to transcend his surroundings
- The white tiger is also a symbol of power

Vallath

Between the Assassinations (2008)

- Between the Assassinations is the second book published by Aravind Adiga
- It is a collection of short stories.
- The title refers to the period between the assassinations of Indira Gandhi in 1984 and her son, Rajiv Gandhi, in 1991.
- While it reveals the beauty of the rural, coastal south where it is set, its subject is the pathos, injustices and ironies of Indian life.
- The stories take place in the fictitious town of Kittur in Southwest India.
- The stories revolve around different classes, castes and religions in India.

Vallath

Last Man In Tower (2011)

- Published in 2011
- It tells the story of a struggle for a slice of shining Mumbai real estate.
- The protagonist of the novel is a retired schoolteacher named Yogesh A. Murthy, who is affectionately known as Masterji.
- A prominent builder offers to buy out the entire apartment block.
- All of the occupants agree, except for Masterji.
- This creates problem for the builder and the other residents.

Vallath

Advaita Kala (b. 1970)

- Author, screenwriter and columnist
- Almost Single (2007)
- Almost There (2013)

Vallath

Siddhant Dhanvant Shanghvi (b. 1977)

- Shanghvi has been compared to Salman Rushdie and Vikram Seth in his writing styles, especially for using settings of magical realism, and themes such as karma, love and sexuality extensively in The Last Song of Dusk

- The Last Song of Dusk (2004)

  - Debut novel

  - Set in 1920s Bombay

  - The story of four extraordinary lives—the beautiful singer Anuradha Gandharva; her husband, Vardhmaan, struggling with secret losses; Nandini, a devious artist; and Shloka, the Gandharvas' silent child

Vallath

Other Works

- The Lost Flamingoes of Bombay (2009)
  - Second novel
  - Shortlisted for Man Asian Literary Prize
- The Rabbit & The Squirrel (2018)
  - His third book
  - Illustrations by Stina Wirsen and described by the Hindustan Times as an 'instant classic’
- Loss, non-fiction work
  - A collection of essays about death, grief and healing

Vallath

Popular Fiction

Sudha Murty (b. 1950)

- Author and philanthropist who writes in in Kannada and English
- Chairperson of the Infosys Foundation
- Major Works in English
  - How I Taught My Grandmother to Read and Other Stories (2004)
  - Dollar Bahu (2007), also television series
  - The Mother I Never Knew: Two Novellas (2014)
  - Three Thousand Stitches: Ordinary People, Extraordinary Lives (2017)

Vallath

Chetan Bhagat (b. 1974)

- Author, columnist, screenwriter, television personality and motivational speaker, known for his English-language novels about young urban middle-class Indians
- Born in Delhi in a Punjabi family
- An alumnus of Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi and Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad
- Most of the protagonists in his novels are named after Lord Krishna such as Shyam, Krishna, Hari and Govind
- All his novels have a number associated with each of them: 5 in the first novel, 1 in the second one, 3 in the third, 2 in the fourth and 2020 in the fifth novel

Vallath

Works

- Novels
  - Five Point Someone (2004)
  - One Night @ the Call Center (2005)
  - The 3 Mistakes of My Life (2008)
  - 2 States (2009)
  - Revolution 2020 (2011)
  - Half Girlfriend (2014)
- Non-fiction
  - What Young India Wants (2012)
  - Making India Awesome (2015)

Five Point Someone: What not to do at IIT! (2004)

- The movie 3 idiots is based on this book
- The book is narrated by Hari, with some small passages by his friends Ryan and Alok, as well as a letter by Hari's girlfriend Neha Cherian
- It deals with the lives of the three friends, whose elation on making it to one of the best engineering colleges in India is quickly deflated by the rigor and monotony of the academic work
- Much of the book deals with the numerous attempts by the trio to cope with and/or beat the system as well as Hari’s fling with Neha who happens to be the daughter of Prof. Cherian, the domineering head of the Mechanical Engineering Department of their college
- Uninspiring teaching and numerous assignments add to their woes, though the boys do find a sympathizer in Prof. Veera, the new fluid mechanics professor.

Half Girlfriend

- Half Girlfriend is a coming-of-age, young adult romance novel
- Set in rural Bihar, New Delhi, Patna and New York
- The story of a Bihari Boy in quest of winning over the girl he loves
- Dedicated to “non English-types”, the book divulges the sentiments and linguistic struggles of a backward rural Bhojpuri-laced Hindi speaking boy from Bihar as he enrolls himself at the prestigious English-medium St. Stephen’s College, New Delhi, and falls in love with a “high class English speaking rich Delhi girl”
- The girl, not really interested in a relationship, agrees to be his “half girlfriend”

Vallath

Revolution 2020: Love, Corruption, Ambition (2011)

- Concerned with a love triangle, corruption and a journey of self-discovery
- Addresses the issue of how private coaching institutions for courses like IIT JEE exploit aspiring engineering students
- While a handful accomplishes their dreams others sink into disaster
- The book unearths the stark reality of this coaching industry which stands on scams, corruption and all kinds of criminal activities

Vallath

Amish Tripathi (b. 1974)

- Author who gave up his banking job to be a writer
- Novels interweaving fiction with philosophy, religion, karma, history and myth
- The Shiva Trilogy
  - The Immortals of Meluha (2010)
  - The Secret of the Nagas (2011)
  - The Oath of the Vayuputras (2013)
- The trilogy is a fantasy, re-imagining the Indian god Shiva’s life and adventures

Vallath

The Immortals of Meluha (2010)

- The story is set in the land of Meluha and starts with the arrival of the Tibetan tribal Shiva
- The Meluhans believe that Shiva is their fabled saviour Neelkanth. Shiva decides to help the Meluhans in their war against the Chandravanshis, who have joined forces with a cursed group called Nagas
- In his journey and the resulting fight that ensues, Shiva learns how his choices actually reflected who he aspires to be and how it led to dire consequences

Vallath

The Secret of the Nagas (2011)

- The story is about how the inhabitants of Meluha are saved from their wars by a nomad named Shiva
- It begins from where The Immortals of Meluha, left off, with Shiva trying to save Sati from the invading Naga
- Later Shiva takes his troop of soldiers and travels far east to the land of Branga, where he wishes to find a clue to reach the Naga people
- His journey ultimately leads him to the Naga capital of Panchavati

Vallath

The Oath of the Vayuputras (2013)

- Shiva discovers that Somras is the true evil in The Oath of the Vayuputras
- Shiva then declares a holy war on those who seek to continue to use it, mainly the Emperors Daksha and Dilipa, who are being controlled by the sage Bhrigu
- The battle rages on and Shiva travels to the land of Pariha to consult with Vayuputras, a legendary tribe
- By the time he returns, the war has ended with Sati, his wife, being murdered
- An enraged Shiva destroys the capital of Meluha and Somras is wiped out of history
- The story concludes with Shiva and his associates being popularized as Gods for their deeds and accomplishments

Vallath

Scion of Ikshvaku (2015)

- The story begins with King Dashrath of Ayodhya being defeated in a war by Lankan trader Raavan, and the birth of his son Ram
- It follows through Ram's childhood and tutelage, along with the politics surrounding his ascension to the throne, and ultimately his 14-year exile, accompanied by wife Sita and brother Lakshman

Vallath

Durjoy Dutta (b.1987)

- Author and screenwriter
- Studied in India and Germany
- Popular writer of romance fiction
- His first novel Of Course I Love You! (co-authored with Maanvi Ahuja, 2008)
- Now That You’re Rich! (2009)
- She Broke Up, I Didn’t!…. I Just Kissed Someone Else! (2010)
- Ohh Yes, I Am Single! And So is My Girlfriend! (2010) was co-written with Neeti Rustagi.
- Since then he has written many novels and television shows
- He has co-authored books with Maanvi Ahuja, Neeti Rustagi, Orvana Ghai also
- He was listed among young achievers in Media and Communications by Whistling Woods International in 2011
- The English Teacher and Shades of Love were his short stories

Vallath

Other Writers

- Amrit Shetty
  - Famous for his book Love over Coffee (2010)
- Anuja Chauhan
  - From Meerut in U.P
  - An author, advertiser and screenwriter
  - Known for The Zoya Factor (2008), Battle for Bittora (2010)

Indian Writers in Translation

Geetanjali Shree (b. 1957)

- Born in Uttar Pradesh
- Hindi-language novelist and short-story writer
- Also known as Geetanjali Pandey
- First story, "Bel Patra" (1987), was published in the literary magazine Hans
  - Hans is one of the oldest and most prestigious literary magazines, in Hindi language
- Written critical works on Premchand
  - Between Two Worlds: An Intellectual Biography of Premchand
  - "Premchand and Industrialism: A Study in Attitudinal Ambivalence"
  - "Premchand and the Peasantry: Constrained Radicalism"

Vallath

Novels

- Mai (2000)
  - Shortlisted for the Crossword Book Award 2001
  - Translated to English by Nita Kumar
  - The story of three generations
- Khali Jagah (2006)
  - Translated as The Empty Space by Nivedita Menon

Ret Samadhi (2018)

- Hindi-language novel
- Translated into English by Daisy Rockwell as Tomb of Sand
- Became the first novel translated from an Indian language to win the International Booker Prize
- In 2022, translated as Tomb of Sand by Daisy Rockwell
- Set in North India
- Family saga that focuses on the life of an 80-year-old woman
- The protagonist battles depression after the demise of her husband but fights back and gets a new lease of life
- Becomes friends with a trans woman
- Travels to Pakistan to revisit and resolve the emotional trauma of the experiences of Partition

Other Indian writers in translation

- Ismat Chughtai (1915-1991)
  - Urdu novelist, short story writer, liberal humanist and filmmaker
  - Most famous short stories - “Lihaf” and “Tedhi Lakeer”
- Amrita Pritam (1919-2005)
  - Wrote in Punjabi and Hindi
  - Pinjar (1950)
    - Translated into English as The Skeleton
    - Set during the partition of India
    - The story of a Hindu girl, Puro, abducted by a Muslim man, Rashid
    - Adapted into film of the same name

Vallath

Other Indian writers in translation

- O V Vijayan (1931-2005)
  - Important figure in modern Malayalam language literature
  - Novels
    - The Legends of Khasak
    - The Saga of Dharmapuri
    - The Infinity of Grace
    - Generations

Vallath

Other Indian writers in translation

- Perumal Murugan (b. 1966)
  - Writes in Tamil
  - Major workd
    - Madhurobhagan (2010)
      - Translated as One Part Woman
      - Story of a childless couple with a strong desire of having a child
    - Pookkuzhi (2013)
      - Translated as Pyre
    - Poonachi: Or the Story of a Black Goat (2017)
      - Story of the tragic life of a goat in the hands of a poor old couple
    - Mayanathil Nitkum Maram (2017)

Vallath

Fiction in Translation

- Khwairakpam Chaoba Singh—Chhatra Macha (1923, Manipur)
- Bhai Vir Singh—Satwant Kaur (1905, Punjabi), Sundri (1898, Punjabi)
- Bhisham Sahni (1915-2003)—Tamas (Hindi)
- U.R. Ananthamurthy—Samskara (Kannada)
- Shivaram Karanth—Chomana Dudi (Kannada)
- Ramatirtha Thammal—Mohani Rajani (Tamil)
- Vaikom Muhammed Basheer—Balyakala Sakhi (Malayalam)
- Srinivasa Das—Pariksha Guru (Hindi)
- Premchand—Sevasadan (Hindi)
- Bankim Chandra Chatterjee—Kapalkundala (Bengali)
- Perumal Murugan—Madhorubagan (One Part Woman, Tamil)
- Sarat Chandra chattopadhyay—Parineeta (Bengali)
- Hazari Prasad Dwivedi—Punarnava (Hindi)
- O.V. Vijayan—Khasakkinte Itihasam (Malayalam)

Philosophers / Social Workers / Activists

- Medha Patkar
- S.N. Dasgupta
- Romila Thapar
- Gopal Guru
- Ramachandra Guha

Vallath

Kashmiri Writers

- Kalahana’s Rajatarangini (1148-50)
- Patanjali, Panini, Abhinavagupta, Anandavardhana
- Lal Ded (Lalleshwari, 1320-92)
- Saadat Hasan Manto (1912–55)—short story writer
- Gauri Shankar Raina (1924-91)
- Mohammad Amin Kamil (1924–2014)—Progressive movement Ghazal writer
- Agha Shahid Ali (1949-2001)
- Novelists: Akhtar Mohiuddin, Mirza Waheed, Asif Tariq Bhat, Siddhartha Gigoo, Shahnaz Bashir, Baby Halder

Vallath

Dalit Literature

History of Dalit Literature

- Madara Chennaih
- Dohara Kakkaiah
- Chokhamela
- Ghasidas
- Namdeo Dhasal
- Ravidas

Vallath

Pioneers

- Mulk Raj Anand
- Mahasweta Devi
- Namdeo Dhasal
- Basudev Sunani
- Bama
- Sharankumar Limbale
- Lakshman Gaikwad
- Sivakami
- Poomani
- Om Prakash Valmiki
- Marku
- Paul Chirakkarode
- Arundhati Roy

Vallath

Research Books in Dalit Studies

- We Also Made History: Women in the Ambedkarite Movement by Meenakshi Moon and Urmila Pawar (1989). Translated to English by Wandana Sonalkar (Zubaan, 2008)
- Writing Caste/Writing Gender: Narrating Dalit Women's Testimonies (2006) by Sharmila Rege
- The Exercise of Freedom: An Introduction to Dalit Writings (2013) by K Satyanarayana and Susie Tharu
- Defying the Odds: The Rise of Dalit Entrepreneurs (2014) by Chandra Bhan Prasad, Devesh Kapur, D. Shyam Babu
- Dalits: Pasts, Presents, Future (2016) by Anand Teltumbde

Vallath

Research Books in Dalit Studies

- Dalit Studies. Edited by Ramnarayan S. Rawat & K. Satyanarayana (Duke UP, 2016)
- Dalits and the Making of Modern India (2017) by Chinnaiah Jangam
- Dalit Panthers: An Authoritative History (2017) by JV Pawar
- Critical Writings of Dalit Literature (2020) by Dasari Manohar
- Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents by Isabel Wilkerson (Random House, 2020)
- Dalit Literatures in India. Ed by Joshil K Abraham & Judith Misrahi-Barak

Vallath

Dr BR Ambedkar (1891-1956)

- Former Law and Justice minister
- Headed the committee drafting the Constitution of India
- Was an economist, professor, and lawyer
- Inspired the Dalit Buddhist movement
- The salutation Jai Bhim was used by followers to honour him
- Weeklies
  - Mook Nayak
  - Janta

Vallath

Major Works

- Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development
- The Problem of the Rupee: its origin and its solution
- Bahishkrut Bharat (India Ostracized)—newspaper
- The Annihilation of Caste
- Federation Versus Freedom
- Thoughts on Pakistan
- Waiting for Visa (autobiography)

Vallath

Baburao Bagul (1930-2008)

- Jevha Mi Jat Chorali (When I had Concealed My Caste), translated by Jerry Pinto—collection of stories
- Maran Swasta Hot Ahe (Death is Getting Cheaper)—collection of short stories
- Ambedkar Bharat (Ambedkar India), Akar (Shape)—poetry collections

Vallath

Vasant Moon (b. 1932)

- Was a civil servant
- Scholar on Ambedkar
- Autobiography—Growing Up Untouchable in India
- Daya Pawar or Dagdu Maruti Pawar (1935-1996)
- His autobiography Baluta, written as a story told by Dagdu Pawar to the more literate Daya Pawar. It was translated by Jerry Pinto.
- Introduced autobiographical writing to Dalit Literature.
- Kondvada—his poetry collection & Vittal, a short story collection.
- He wrote the screenplay for Jabbar Patel's film Dr. Ambedkar.

Vallath

Namdeo Dhasal (1949-2014)

- Founded Dalit Panther movement in 1972 with Arjun Dangle, Raja Dhale and J.V. Pawar.
- Works
- Golpitha—his first poetry collection.
- Tujhi Iyatta Kanchi? (How Educated Are You?)—inspired by Maoist thoughts.
- Poet of the Underworld
- Priya Darshini, about Indira Gandhi.
- Two novels—Andhale Shatak (Century of Blindness) and Ambedkari Chalwal (Ambedkarite Movement).
- His poetry was translated by Dilip Chitre.

Vallath

Arjun Dangle (b. 1945)

- Edited Poisoned Bread, the first Anthology of Dalit writing in English.
- He did psychoanalytical study of Dalit men.

Vallath

Om Prakash Valmiki (1950-2013)

- His autobiography, Joothan, is a milestone in the Dalit Literature, was translated by Arun Prabha Mukherjee.
- Collections of Poetry
  - Sadiyon Ka Santaap (1989), Bas! Bahut Ho Chuka (1997), and Ab Aur Nahin (2009).
- Collections of short stories
  - Salaam and Ghuspethiye
- Also wrote Dalit Sahitya Ka Saundaryshaastra and a history of the Valmiki community, Safai Devata.

Vallath

Narendra Jadhav (b. 1953)

- Academician, was VC of Pune University, Member of Rajya Sabha
- Scholar on Ambedkar; many books
- Three autobiographies including Outcaste (2002) and Untouchables (2005)

Vallath

Sharankumar Limbale (b. 1956)

- Autobiography—Akkarmashi or The Outcaste (1984)
- Towards an Aesthetics of Dalit Literature (2004)
  - Subtitle: “History, Controversies, Considerations”
  - Originally written in Marathi in 1996 as Dalit Sahityache Saundaryasastra
  - Translated by Alok Mukherjee
  - First critical work by an eminent Dalit writer to appear in English
  - Provocative account of the debates on how Dalit literature should be read

Vallath

Professors who contributed Dalit literature

- Arun Prabha Mukherjee
- Eleanor Zelliot
- Gail Omvedt

Vallath

Dalit Women

Women in Dalit Literature

- They faced triple discrimination—by colonial rulers, by upper caste people and by their own Dalit men.
- Mohini Chamarin was the first Dalit woman writer. She wrote a short story named Thieves of the Subordinated published in a Hindi magazine named Kavya Manoranjan.

Vallath

Shantabai Kamble (1923-2023)

- First Dalit woman to become a teacher
- Wrote the first female Dalit autobiography
- Marathi writer and Dalit activist
- Wrote her own autobiography Mazhya Jalmachi Chittarkatha (The Kaleidoscopic Story of My Life)

Vallath

Baby Kamble (1929-2012)

- Known for autobiography Jina Amucha (Our Life)
- It was translated into English by Maya Pandit as The Prisons We Broke.

Vallath

Kumud Pawade (b. 1938)

- First Ambedkarite scholar of Sanskrit
- Antahspot—her autobiography, tells about the exploitation on Dalit women.

Vallath

Urmila Pawar (b. 1945)

- Aaydaan is Urmila Pawar’s drama about Dalit women in India. There are many incidents from her personal life included in this play.
- She was introduced to the women's organisation, 'Matrini' through her friend, Heera Bansode. This experience helped her to see women as persons, as human beings.
- AIDAN (Weave)—her autobiography translated into English by Maya Pandit as The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman’s Memoir.

Vallath

Bama Faustina Soosairaj or Bama (b. 1958)

- Tamil Dalit Feminist
- Karukku—her autobiographical novel, depicts joys and sorrows experienced by Dalit Christian women in Tamil Nadu.
- Translated into English by Lakshmi Holmstrom.
- Other novels—Sangati, Vanmam.
- Short story collections—Kusumbukkaran, Kandattam etc.
- She wrote an essay on being a single professional Dalit woman in Single By Choice: happily unmarried women!- a collection of 13 essays by unmarried women in India talking about their singlehood.

Vallath

Meena Kandasamy (b. 1984)

- Indian poet, fiction writer and translator and activist from Chennai, Tamilnadu.
- She edited The Dalit, a bi-monthly alternative English magazine of the Dalit Media Network from 2001-2002
- Wrote columns for magazines like, ‘Outlook India’ and ‘The Hindu
- Her famous works include Touch, Ms. Militancy, The Gypsy Goddess, etc.
- Most famous for A Portrait of a Writer as a Young Wife or When I Hit You.

Vallath

Kandasamy's Writings

- Uses language as a powerful tool to defend as well as attack
- Mainly writes for Dalit women
- The first book of poetry is "Touch" (2006) – with the foreword by Kamala Das
- The second and most famous volume of poetry is "Ms. Militancy" (2010) – a feminist retelling of Tamil and Hindu myths
- Won the first prize in all India Poetry Competition for the poems "Mascara" and "My Lover Speaks for Rape"
- Themes like the caste system, issues in feminism, untouchability, male violence and linguistic identity are tackled

Vallath

Kandasamy's Writings

- Co-authored Ayyankali: A Dalit Leader of Organic Protest (2008), a biography, along with M. Nisar
- Debut novel - The Gypsy Goddess (2014)
  - About the 1968 Kilvenmani massacre
  - Influenced by the figure of Kurathi Amman, the 'ancestral goddess'
  - The novel was longlisted for the Dylan Thomas Prize
- Later works
  - "When I Hit You: Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife" (2017)
- Women's prize shortlisted novel
  - "Exquisite Cadavers" (2019)

Vallath

Other Major Dalit Books

- Coming out as a Dalit (2019) by Yashika Dutt
- Ooru Keri by Siddalingaiah (1996). Translated from Kannada by SR Ramakrishna, as A Word With You, World: The Autobiography of a Poet (Navayana, 2013)
- Strike A Blow to Change the World by Eknath Awad (2012). Translated by Jerry Pinto (Speaking Tiger, 2018)
- Unclaimed Terrain by Ajay Navaria (translated by Laura Brueck) (Navayana, 2013)
- Love After Babel and Other Poems by Chandramohan S (Daraja Press, 2020)

Vallath

Other Major Dalit Books

- Writing Caste/Writing Gender: Narrating Dalit Women's Testimonios (2006) by Sharmila Rege
- Why I am not a Hindu: A Sudra Critique of Hindutva Philosophy, Culture and Political Economy by Kancha Ilaiah
- Buffalo Nationalism: A Critique of Spiritual Fascism by Kancha Ilaiah
- The Taming of Women by Sivakami
- Father May Be an Elephant and Mother Only a Small Basket, But… by Gogu Shyamala
- Imaan by Manoranjan Byapari
- The Doctor and the Saint: The Ambedkar–Gandhi Debate: Caste, Race, and Annihilation of Caste (2019) by Arundhati Roy
- Nalini Jameela
  - From Thrissur in Kerala
  - The Autobiography of a Sex-worker (2005)
  - Romantic Encounters of a Sex Worker (2018)
- Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar
  - He’s a Santhal (Adivasi Group) writer
  - The Mysterious Ailment of Rupi Baskey (2014)
    - Debut novel

Vallath

Major Books on Tribal Literature

- Devy, G N. Painted Words: An Anthology of Tribal Literature. New Delhi: Penguin India, 2003.
- Dakshin Bajarange
  - Award winning filmmaker, playwright, director and an activist from the Chhara De-notified Tribes of Ahmedabad
  - Artistic director of Budhan Theatre
- Santhali was officially declared a Scheduled Language, Jadumani Besra's collection of poems Bhabna became the first Santhali work to win the Sahitya Akademi Award.
- Sant Sevalal (famous poet of Banjara community), Jaipal Singh Munda, Alice Ekka, Motiram Kangali, Ram Dayal Munda, Tek Singh Netam and Rose Kerketta
- Jaipal Singh Munda (3 January 1903 – 20 March 1970)
- Grace Kujur
- Dayamani Barla
- Anuj Lugun
- Haldhar Nag
- Sushila Samad
- Sadhu Ramchand Murmu
- Sarada Prasad Kisku

Vallath

Folklore Studies

- The word 'folklore' was first used by the English antiquarian William J. Thoms in a letter published by the London Journal Athenaeum in 1846
- The academic and usually ethnographic study of folklore is called folkloristics.
- Folkloristics is especially relevant in the context of North East India, as the culture and folklore of this region is predominantly oral in character.
- Pioneers of Folkloristics and Evolutionism
  - Charles Darwin, E.B. Tylor, J.G. Frazer, Wayland D. H., E. S. Hartland, Vladimir Propp
  - Reinhold Kohler, Charles G. Leland, Yuri Sokolov, Ake Hultkrantz
  - Grimm Brothers, Kaarle Krohne, Martha Warren Beckwith, Mary Alicia Owen, C.W. Von-Sydow, A.K.Ramanujan, Elias Lonrot, Stith Thompson, Vladimir Propp, folklore scholars from the Prague School

Vallath

Major Books on Folklore Studies

- Ramanujan's A Flowering Tree & Other Oral Tales from India.
- Stuart Blackburn and A.K. Ramanujan. 1986. Another Harmony: New Essays on Folklore of India. Berkeley and Loss Angels: University of California Press.
- Riddles of Amir Khusro.
- Alan Dundes
- Indian Folklore. Indira Goswami and Prakash Pattanaik. ed.
- Folkloristics and Indian Folklore. Peter J. Claus and Frank J. Korom. 1991.
- Elwin, Verrier. 1991. Myths of Middle India. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Jawaharlal Handoo. 1998. Folklore in Modern India. Mysore: CIIL
- Kamal Narayan Chowdhury. 2001. Folklore in North-Eastern India.
- Birendranath Datta, Nabin Chandra Sarma and Prabin Chandra Das (ed.). 1994. A Handbook of Folklore Material of North-East India.

Vallath

Folklore Theories

- Psychoanalysis Approach to Folklore and Feminist Approach to Folklore
- Monogenesis and Polygenesis Theory
- Finnish Method, Solar- Mythology Theory
- Contextual Theory, Functionalism Theory
- Structuralism
- Semiotics
- Performance Theory
- Poststructuralism

Vallath

Indian Feminisms

Three Phases

- First Phase (1850-1915)
- Second Phase (1915-1947)
- Third Phase (1947-Present)

First Phase (1850-1915)

- Part of the social reform movements in the 19th century.
- Western ideas
- Anti-colonial struggle
- Counter-cultural subjugation

Vallath

What did they do?

- Tried to create a new society, a modern India.
- Opposed polytheism, polygamy, casteism, sati, child marriage, illiteracy.
- Still succumbed to patriarchy.
- Women were seen merely as assisting the struggle of men.

Vallath

Major Reformers

- Raja Ram Mohan Roy
- Keshab Chandra Sen
- Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar
- Jyotiba Phule
- Savitribai Phule
- B. R. Ambedkar
- Pandita Ramabai
- Tarabai Shinde

Vallath

Major Organisations

- Sharda Sadan (1892) in Poona—Pandita Rama Bai
- Shri Mahipatram Rupram Ashram (1892) in Ahmedabad
- Bhagini Samaj (1916) in Poona

Vallath

Second Phase (1915-1947)

- Characterised by the emergence of organisations like:
- Women’s Indian Association (1917)
- The National Council of Women in India (1920)
- All India Women’s Conference (1926) —organised 12 women’s conferences till 1937.
- Increased women’s public participation in freedom movement.
- In Punjab, a procession of 5000 women at Lahore in 1930.
- Durga Bai Deshmukh organised the women in Madras.

Vallath

Third Phase (1947-Present)

- It is further divided into:
- The Period of Accommodation (1947-1960s)
- The Marriage Act of 1954; The Hindu Code Bill of 1955-1956
- Marriage age for men and women fixed; child marriage criminalised
- ii) The Hindu Succession Act, 1956
- iii) The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956
- iv) The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- v) The Maternity Benefits Act, 1961
- The National Federation of Indian women (1954)
- The Period of Crisis (1960s-1975)
- 1975-to Date

Vallath

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (b. 1942)

- Indian literary theorist and feminist critic.
- Her works focus on Marxism, deconstruction, feminism, and post-colonialism.
- Works:
- In other worlds (1987)
- Can the Subaltern Speak? (1988)
- Outside in the Teaching Machine (1993) etc.

Vallath

Urmila Pawar (b. 1945)

- Dalit feminist.
- Speaks about the triple oppression faced by women due to caste, class, and gender.
- An important figure in Dalit feminist historiography.
- Works:
- The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs (2008)
- We Also Made History (2008; co-authored with Meenakshi Moon) etc.

Vallath

Kamla Bhasin (1946-2021)

- A developmental feminist and poet.
- Bhasin co-founded Jagori, a women's group in 1984.
- Sangat, a South Asian feminist network.
- Works:
- Azadi (1991)
- What is Patriarchy (1993)
- Understanding Gender (2000)
- Exploring Masculinity (2004) etc.

Vallath

Urvashi Butalia (b.1952)

- She has extensively written on gender, media, communalism and fundamentalism.
- Kali for Women and Zubaan Books.
- Works:
- In Other Words: New Writing by Indian Women (1992; co-authored with Ritu Menon)
- Making a Difference: Feminist Publishing in the South (1995; co-authored with Ritu Menon)
- The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India (1998) etc.

Vallath

Vandana Shiva (b. 1952)

- Indian ecofeminist and environmental activist.
- Her writings and activism are about intellectual property rights, biodiversity, biotechnology, bioethics, and genetic engineering.
- Works:
- Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development (1988)
- Ecofeminism (1993; co-authored with Maria Mies)
- Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace (2005) etc.

Vallath

Ruth Vanita (b. 1955)

- Indian academic and feminist
- Focuses on Indian history with a specific reference to gender and sexuality.
- Co-founded Manushi: A Journal about Women and Society.
- Works:
  - Same-Sex Love in India: Readings from Literature and History (2000; co-edited with Saleem Kidwai)
  - Love’s Rite: Same-Sex Marriages in Modern India (2005)
  - Gender, Sex and the City: Urdu Rekhti Poetry in India 1780-1870 (2012) etc.

Vallath

Chandra Talpade Mohanty (b. 1955)

- A postcolonial and transnational feminist scholar
- Her works focus on transnational feminist theory, anti-capitalist feminist praxis, anti-racist education, and the politics of knowledge.
- Works:
  - “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses” (1988)
  - Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism (1991; co-edited)
  - Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity (2003), etc.

Vallath

Other Important Works

- Women Writing in India: 600 B.C. to the Early Twentieth Century (1991)—Susie J. Tharu and K. Lalita
- Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History (1989)—Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid
- From Myths to Markets: Essays on Gender (1999)—Uma Chakravarti
- Mobilizing India: Women, Music, and Migration Between India and Trinidad (2006)—Tejaswini Niranjana

Vallath

LGBTIQ+ Writers

Suniti Namjoshi (b.1941)

- Poet and fabulist
- Poetry Collections
  - Cyclone In Pakistan (1971)
  - The Jackass and the Lady (1980)
- Feminist Fables (1981)
    - Subversions of well known fairy tales, Greek and Indian myths
- Sycorax: New Fables and Poems (2006)

Vallath

R. Raj Rao (b. 1955)

- Writer, poet, and professor
- Novel The Boyfriend is one of the first gay novels in India
- His BOMGaY collection were the basis of the film Bomgay (1996).
- Founded the Queer Studies Circle at Pune University.
- One of the first to offer a course on LGBTQ+ literature at the university level in India.

Vallath

Rituparno Ghosh (1963-2013)

- Film director, actor, writer and lyricist
- One of the openly homosexual personalities in Indian cinema
- Major films
  - Utsab (2000)
  - Raincoat (2004)
  - The Last Lear (2007)
  - Abohomaan (2009)

Vallath

Devdutt Pattanaik (b. 1970)

- Openly gay, bestselling Indian mythologist, illustrator, and author
- Numerous works on Indian myth
- Sita: An Illustrated Retelling of the Ramayana (2013)
- Also writes about Business and Politics
- Devlok with Devdutt Pattanaik is a TV show

Vallath

Gazal Dhaliwal (b. 1982)

- Screenwriter known for writing the screenplay and dialogues for Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga
- Gazal has also worked on Lipstick Under My Burkha as the dialogue writer.
- She also co-wrote the screenplay and the dialogues for Qarib Qarib Singlle.
- Gazal has openly spoken about being a transgender woman

Vallath

Vijayarajamallika (b. 1985)

- Transgender poet in Malayalam
- She is a writer, teacher, social worker, inspirational speaker, and activist
- Daivathinte Makal (Daughter of God)
  - Her first collection of poetry
  - Includes the poem “Maranantharam”
- Her autobiography Mallikavasantham is the first transgender autobiography in Malayalam

Vallath

A. Revathi (b. ?)

- Transgender writer and activist from Bangalore, born in Tamilnadu
- First book was in Tamil—Unarvum Uruvamum (Our Lives, Our Words, 2004)
  - Real life stories of trans women
- The Truth about Me: A Hijra Life Story (2010)
  - Written in Tamil
  - Translated by V. Geetha
  - Initially released the book in English

Vallath

Sanskrit Poetics

Ancient India

- Major literary works were written in Sanskrit
- Literary criticism mainly confined to Sanskrit
- Sanskrit poetics also called *Alankarasastra*, *Sahityasastra* or *Sahityamimamsa*
- Origin of all lore/ learning ascribed to Vedas
- *Rig Vedic* hymn: “a word well-conceived and correctly used is capable of realizing any wish in this world and the other.”

Vallath

Sanskrit Poetics

Theoreticians confronted questions like:

- What is poetry?
- What is the soul or the most important factor of poetry?
- What is the nature of enjoyment provided by poetry?
- What is the purpose of poetry?

Vallath

8 Schools of Poetics

Based on the perceived importance of factors that make good poetry:

- *Rasa* (sentiment)
- *Alankara* (figure of speech)
- *Guna* (poetic merit)
- *Riti* (style, diction)
- *Dhvani* (suggestion)
- *Vakrokti* (roundabout way of speech)
- *Aucitya* (propriety)
- *Anumiti* (inference)

Vallath

Rasa school

- Propounded by Bharata
- 5 *prayojanas* (purposes) of poetry as per Sanskrit rhetoricians:
  - *Yasas* (fame)
  - *Artha* (wealth)
  - *Vyavaharajnana* (knowledge of worldly affairs)
  - *Sivetarakshati* (destruction of inauspiciousness)
  - *Sadyah paranirvriti* (attaining instant Supreme bliss)

Supreme bliss is the result of *rasanubhuti* (relish of sentiment)

Vallath

Natyasatra

- The most ancient text available in Sanskrit poetics, written by Bharata, believed to have lived in 1st Century BC.
- Deals with the various aspects of dramatic composition
- Contains about 6,000 verses divided into 36 Chapters.
- 6th Chapter discusses Nature of *Rasa* (sentiment) and its realization
- All the writers in Sanskrit poetics have accepted the importance of *Rasa* (sentiment) in poetry

Vallath

Rasas *Sthayibhavas*

(latent/ dormant emotion)

Eight as per Bharata	***Sthayibhava*** **for each Rasa**
Sringara (erotic)	***Rati*** (love)
Vira (heroic)	***Utsaha*** (enthusiasm, energy)
Karuna (pathetic)	***Soka*** (grief)
Hasya (comic)	***Hasa*** (laughter)
Raudra (ferocious)	***Krodha*** (anger)
Bhayanaka (fearful)	***Bhaya*** (fear)
Bibhatsa (loathsome)	***Jugupsa*** (disgust)
Adbhuta (wonderful)	***Vismaya*** (wonder)

Vibhavas & Anubhavas

- *Vibhavas* (stimulants) are of two kinds:
  - *Alambanavibhava*—characters depending upon whom the emotion develops.
  - *Uddipanavibhava*—elemental factors like spring season, moonlight, scent of flowers, gentle breeze etc. instrumental in kindling the emotion with respect of *shringara*.
- *Anubhavas* are physical states that result from an emotion.
- For e.g., If love is the latent emotion, sweet words, sidelong glances etc.

Rasa is manifested through the combination of *Vibhava* (stimulant), *Anubhava* (physical effects) and *Vyabhicharibhava* (mental effects).

Vallath

Vyabhicaribhavas

- Transitory mental states which help the development of latent emotion into *Rasa*:
  - *Nirveda* (detachment)
  - *Glani* (weakness)
  - *Chapalata* (inconsistency)
  - *Vrida* (bashfulness) etc. (30 in all)

Vallath

Rasa formation

- Emotion which is dormant (*Sthayibhava*) in the minds of spectators or readers manifests into *Rasa* (sentiment or aesthetic emotion) due to the combination of *Vibhavas*, *Anubhavas* and *Vyabhicaribhavas*.
- The transformation of *Sthayibhava* into *Rasa* is like milk turning into curd, i.e., the latent emotion takes a totally different form.

Rasa Theory

- *Rasanubhuti* (relish of the sentiment) is the purpose of poetry par excellence.
- *Rasa* is the central part of poetry
- A good composition has a principal sentiment (*Angi rasa*)
- Other rasas not opposed to it serve as subsidiary sentiments (*Anga rasas*)
- Abhinavagupta, commentator of *Natyasastra* and *Dhvanyaloka* says:
  - *Rasa* is only one
  - Final delight experienced in a play or poetry is one and the same.
  - Some of the latent emotions of *rasas* like *jugupsa* (disgust), *bhaya* (fear), etc. are not pleasurable. But they become pleasurable or comfortable, when they are transformed into *rasa*.

Vallath

Sadharanikarana

- Universalisation strips the *vibhavas*, *anubhavas* and *vybhicaribhavas* of their individual and personal aspects—termed *sadharanikarana*
- Comparable to Catharsis
- Bhavabhuti, author of *Uttara Ramacarita*: “pathos is the only one sentiment”
- Bhoja in *Sringara Prakasa*: sringara is the only one rasa

Vallath

Dhvani Theory

- Propounded by Anandavardhana (9th century AD) in *Dhvanyaloka.*
  - Held that poetry is worth its name only if it contains *Dhvani* (suggested sense)
  - *Dhvani* is the soul of poetry.
- Later proponents
  - Abhinavagupta (author of *Locana* and *Abhinavabharati*)
  - Mammatabhatta (author of *Kavyaprakasa*)
  - Visvanatha (author of *Sahityadarpana*)

Three *Vyaparas*

- Dhvani rhetoricians acknowledge three *vyaparas* or functions of words
  - *Abhidha* (primary expression or denotation)
  - *Laksana* (indication)
  - *Vyanjana* (suggestion)

An Example

- Example: *Gangayam khoshah* (Village on the Ganges)
  - Primary meaning (*Abidheyartha*): *Gangapravaha* (Ganga is the stream)
  - Secondary meaning (*Lakshanartha*): *Gangatheera* (the banks of the Ganges)
- There are two conditions to attribute *Lakshana*:
  - The word should be current in that meaning.
  - There should be some purpose for attributing that meaning.
- Central idea of *Dhvani*: A sense over and above the expressed sense should flash on the *Sahrdaya*

Another Example

- From *Dhvanyaloka*:
  - Oh, righteous man! Go forward with confidence. That dog which frightened you earlier has been killed by the proud lion that has settled down on the banks of Godavari.
    - Expressed meaning: The man may go forward with confidence.
    - Suggested meaning: He should not go that way as there is a lion on the way.

Anandavardhana's Principles

- Defines *Dhvanikavya* thus:
  - Where sound and sense make the expressed sense secondary and suggest an idea over and above the expressed one, it is *dhvanikavya* or good poetry.
- Beautiful ideas in poetry are of two kinds:
  - *Vacya* (literal)
  - *Pratiyamana* (implied)
  - *Pratiyamanartha* is like the *Lavanya* (charm) in young women which is distinct from the beauty of the ornamented limbs. Thus, implied sense is above the literal meaning, and depends on the whole poem and not merely its parts.

Dhvani and Rasa

- *Dhvani* theory is an extension of *Rasa* theory.
- According to Bharata, the main **objective** of a dramatic work is to **arouse a *rasa*** or aesthetic emotion in the audience.
- Anandavardhana extends this theory to poetry.
- Aesthetic emotion (*rasa*) cannot be directly expressed in words. It can only be conveyed through suggestion (*vyanjana*).
- Thus *Dhvani* theory stresses **the method of treatment** whereas *Rasa* theory deals with **the ultimate effect**.

Sphota

- *Dhvani* is based on the grammarian's theory of *Sphota*.
- Individual sounds do not convey any meaning. Together, the individual sounds manifest an eternal or imperceptible element called *Sphota*.
- The relation between *Dhvani* and *Sphota*:
  - Like *Sphota*, *Dhvani* postulates that different constituent elements of a poetic composition, when taken together, reveal a deeper meaning not conveyed or expressed by any of its individual parts.

Three Kinds of *Dhvani*

- There are many categorisations of *Dhvani*.
- Anandavardhana divides *Dhvani* into three kinds:
  - *Vasthu* (idea or fact is implied)
  - *Alankara* (figure of speech is implied)
  - *Rasa* (*Rasa* is evoked)
    - Always conveyed through *vyangyartha*
    - According to Abhinava Gupta, this alone is genuine *dhvani.* Both *Vasthudhvani* and *Alankaradhvani* merge into *Rasadhvani.*
- Abhinava Gupta has listed 35 varieties of *Dhvani*.

Gunibhootavyangya

- In poetry, when the expressed sense is more appealing than the suggested idea OR if the suggested meaning or *vyangyartha* is made inferior to the literal meaning, it is called *Gunibhootavyangya*.

- Example: The twilight in red hue is like a woman in love. Her lover, the day, is always moving in front of her, and hence their union does not occur.

    - Here the expressed meaning (of twilight and day) is more appealing than the *vyangyartha* or suggested meaning, which is that lovers are not united.

Two Kinds of *Dhvani*

- Two kinds of *Dhvani* discussed in *Dhvanyaloka*
  - On the basis of differences of the suggestive elements (or factors that stress on the literal meaning)
  - *Avivakshitavacya* — Where the expressed meaning is not intended
    - *Arthantharasankramitam* (passing on to a different meaning)
    - *Athyanthathiraskrtham* (where literal meaning is totally denied)
  - *Vivakshitanyaparavacya* — Where an idea over and above the expressed sense is conveyed

Two More Kinds of *Dhvani*

- From the point of view of the suggestive element
  - *Abhidhamooladhvani* — Where the suggestive element is the expressed sense
    - *Samlaksyakrama* (where the sequence between the understanding of the expressed sense and the realisation of the suggested idea is perceivable)
    - *Asamlaksyakrama* (where the sequence between the understanding of the expressed sense and the realisation of the suggested ideas not perceivable)
      - *Rasadhvani* comes within the scope of *Asamlaksyakrama.*
  - *Laksanamooladhvani* — Where an idea over and above the expressed sense is conveyed

Criticism against *Dhvani*

Bhattanayaka

- Bhattanayaka (commentator on *Natyasastra* and author of *Hrdayadarpana*) opposed the *Dhvani* theory.
  - Put forward the principles of *Bhavakatva* and *Bhojakatva*, two functions of the word
  - *Bhavakatva* — the idea of “generalization” (*sadharanikarana*) that essentially rids the spectator from the consciousness of their individuality and universalizes the experiences of the character
  - *Bhojakatva* — the experience of the audience savouring the generalized *rasa* in a mind frame that is entirely separate from the regular cognitive processes and one that leads to pure joy

Mimamsa School

- *Dhvani* is not a separate entity. It can be included in *Arthapatti* (a type of inference or *Anumiti*)
  - Example: The fat boy does not eat during day time.—Here the inference is that he eats at night.

Other Critics

- Followers of Nyaya (Logic) School of Philosophy, like Jayantabhatta (author of *Nyayamanjari*) & Mahimabhatta (author of *Vyaktiviveka*)
  - Argued that suggested sense (*vyangyartha*) can be arrived at through inference (*Anumiti*)
- Mukulabhatta (author of *Abhidhavrtti mathrka*)
  - *Dhvani* can be included in *laksana*
- Dhananjaya (author of *Dasarupaka*) and Dhanika, its commentator
  - *Dhvani* comes under *tatparyavrtti* (a function of the sentence to explain the literal meaning)
- Kuntaka (author of *Vakroktijeevitha*)
  - Denied the independent existence of *Dhvani* and included it under *Vakrokti* (a peculiar mode of expression in poetry)