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| Ananthamurthy, U. R. (1932-2014) |
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| Udupi Rajagopalacharya Ananthamurthy is a major figure of the modernist literary movement in Kannada, a professor of English, a literary critic, and a leading public intellectual in Karnataka.  His interactions with socialists Ram Manohar Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan, and Shantaveri Gopalagowda during his student days, and his close association in Mysore with Gopalakrishna Adiga and a group of writers who identified themselves with the Navya literary movement in Kannada became formative influences in his literary career. Ananthamurthy wrote his first published novel, *Samskara* (1965), in England where he had gone to pursue his Ph.D. on a Commonwealth Fellowship. In *Samskara*, a death in a Brahmin agrahara gives rise to incisive scrutiny of the caste order and a journey of ruthless introspection for the protagonist, Praneshacharya. The novel, and the film version that followed in 1970, became controversial and were criticised for their peceived attack on the Brahminical order. Over the years, however, *Samskara* has achieved iconic status and has been widely discussed in academia, both in India and abroad. The novel has been translated into many Indian languages, as well as English, Russian, French, German, Hungarian, and Swedish languages. |
| File: ananthamurthyimage1.jpg  Udupi Rajagopalacharya Ananthamurthy is a major figure of the modernist literary movement in Kannada, a professor of English, a literary critic, and a leading public intellectual in Karnataka.  His interactions with socialists Ram Manohar Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan, and Shantaveri Gopalagowda during his student days, and his close association in Mysore with Gopalakrishna Adiga and a group of writers who identified themselves with the Navya literary movement in Kannada became formative influences in his literary career. Ananthamurthy wrote his first published novel, *Samskara* (1965), in England where he had gone to pursue his Ph.D. on a Commonwealth Fellowship. In *Samskara*, a death in a Brahmin agrahara gives rise to incisive scrutiny of the caste order and a journey of ruthless introspection for the protagonist, Praneshacharya. The novel, and the film version that followed in 1970, became controversial and were criticised for their peceived attack on the Brahminical order. Over the years, however, *Samskara* has achieved iconic status and has been widely discussed in academia, both in India and abroad. The novel has been translated into many Indian languages, as well as English, Russian, French, German, Hungarian, and Swedish languages.  File: ananthamurthyimage2.jpg  Figure 1 Cover page of the English translation of *Samskara.*  Ananthamurthy’s second novel, *Bharathipura* (1973), follows the trajectory of *Samskara* and delineates the consequences of an attempt by the Brahmin protagonist, Jagannatha, to hit at the caste order of purity and pollution by symbolically getting those called Holeyas (untouchables) to touch the sacred worship-stone in the Brahmin household and to secure their entry into the local temple. Critic D. R. Nagaraj sees these two novels, along with Ananthamurthy’s short story collections *Prashne* [*Question*] (1962) and *Mauni* [*Silent One*] (1972) and such essays in cultural criticism as *Pragne mattu Parisara* [*Consciousness and Milieu*] (1974), as belonging to the radical phase of Ananthamurthy’s writing career. His second self-reflexive phase includes the short story collection *Suryana Kudure* [*Stallion of the Sun*] (1979), the essay collection *Purvapara* [*For the Past*] (1989), and the novel *Bhava* [*Existence*] (1994). His novel *Awasthe* [*The Condition*] (1994) is loosely based on the life of a socialist peasant leader. His most recent novel is *Preethi Mruthyu Bhaya* [*Love Death Fear*] (2012).  In his essays, time and again, Ananthamurthy has famously employed the spatial metaphor of ‘frontyard’ and ‘backyard’ to mark out the hierarchies and differences prevalent in the use of different languages in India. While the ‘frontyard’ is the zone of Sanskrit (and now English), high classicism and scholarship, men and their matters, and the world of authority, the ‘backyard’ is the arena of the folk, the everyday, of women and their secrets, of intimacy and friendship, all transacted in the *bhashas*, the performative dimension of non-Sanskritic Indian languages.  Ananthamurthy has been a professor of English at Mysore University and visiting professor in a number of other Indian and foreign universities. He has held important positions, such as chancellor of Central University of Karnataka, vice chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi University in Kottayam, Kerala, chairman of the National Book Trust, president of Sahitya Akademi, and chairman of the Film and Television Institute of India. He has been feted with the Jnanapith and Padma Bhushan Awards for his accomplishments.  File: ananthamurthyimage4.jpg  Figure 2 The unusual cover page of Ananthamurthy's latest novel, *Preeti Mruthyu Bhaya* (2012). Timeline of life and career 1932 – Born  1956 – Is appointed Lecturer of English  1966 – Earns a PhD from the University of Birmingham, U.K.  1992 – Is appointed Chairman of the National Book Trust of India  1993 – Is appointed President of the Sahitya Academy  1994 – Wins the Jnanapith Award  1998 – Wins the Padma Bhushan Award Selected List of Works: Samskara (1965)  Bharathipura (1973)  Pragne mattu Parisara (1974)  Suryana Kudure (1979)  Purvapara (1989)  Bhava and Awasthe (1994)  Preethi Mruthyu Bhaya (2012) |
| Further reading:  (Balasubrahmanya)  (Baral and al.)  (Nagaraj)  (Ananthamurthy)  (Ananthamurthy, Awasthe: The Condition)  (Ananthamurthy, Stallion of the Sun and Other Stories)  (Ananthamurthy, U. R. Ananthamurthy Omnibus)  (Ananthamurthy, Bharathipura) |