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| **Muktibodh, Gajanan Madhav (1917-1964)** |
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| Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh was a prominent poet for both modernism and Left-oriented progressive Hindi literature. His development of the imaginary, his generic innovation of the ‘*lambi kavita*’ (long poem), and his engagement with the confluence of aesthetics, politics, and ethics formed a new model for modernist Hindi poetry. He became a leading figure in *Nai Kavita* (new poetry) after his inclusion in the seminal 1943 poetry anthology *Tar Saptak* (The Higher Octave), and published individual poems, fiction, and criticism throughout his life, but it was his first volume of poems, *Chand ka Munh Teḍha Hai* (The Moon Wears a Crooked Smile)*,* published at his death, which had the greatest impact on his posthumous reputation. |
| Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh was a prominent poet for both modernism and Left-oriented progressive Hindi literature. His development of the imaginary, his generic innovation of the ‘*lambi kavita*’ (long poem), and his engagement with the confluence of aesthetics, politics, and ethics formed a new model for modernist Hindi poetry. He became a leading figure in *Nai Kavita* (new poetry) after his inclusion in the seminal 1943 poetry anthology *Tar Saptak* (The Higher Octave), and published individual poems, fiction, and criticism throughout his life, but it was his first volume of poems, *Chand ka Munh Teḍha Hai* (The Moon Wears a Crooked Smile)*,* published at his death, which had the greatest impact on his posthumous reputation.  Muktibodh was born within then-autonomous Gwalior State, in which his father was a police inspector. Muktibodh grew up speaking Marathi; his brother, Saratchandra, became a prominent Marathi poet, and Muktibodh maintained a life-long engagement with Marathi literature. Muktibodh began writing while still a student in Ujjain and Indore; his earliest poems show the influence of *Chhayavad* poetry, and in particular Makhanlal Chaturvedi and Jayshankar Prasad. While teaching secondary school he became associated with writers Nemichandra Jain and Prabhakar Machwe, which led to the creation of *Tar Saptak*; this anthology, edited by Satchidanand Vatsyayan 'Agyey’, was a signal moment in the shift in Hindi towards *Nai Kavita* and modernist experimentation. Muktibodh's own poetry in this collection, in its concern for science, political action, and imaginary landscapes, indicates the later direction of his work.  After years of financial struggle, Muktibodh was appointed in 1957 as lecturer of Hindi in a college in the small Chhattisgarh town of Rajnandgaon. The resulting stability coincided with the gradual increase of his reputation, and the writing of some of his most important work, in particular the long poem ‘Andhere Mein’ [In the Dark]. This poem follows its narrator through a night of fascist menace and political violence. Declining health in 1964 culminated in a stroke, coma, and finally his death. At this time his literary associates compiled his poetry into the collection *Chand ka Munh Teḍha Hai*.  His poetry is best known for its use of what Muktibodh himself defined as ‘fantasy’: an attempt to join the personal sensations of the poet with political and social circumstance, thus fusing together Romantic and Modernist forms of expression with the competing aesthetic model of Realism, then extremely prominent due to the cultural influence of Communism in Hindi. Related to his use of fantasy is his formal innovation; his ‘long poems’ stitch together a series of dreamlike visions and impressions, and are comparable to contemporary developments in the mural in painting or to montage in film.  Muktibodh's works are collected in his *Rachnavali,* currently six volumes, in addition to several other volumes of uncollected materials. Muktibodh has as yet been little translated into English; some of his poems are collected in Lucy Rosenstein's anthology *New Poetry in Hindi*, and ‘Andhere Mein’ has been translated into English by Krishna Baldev Vaid. List of Works *Tār Saptak* (1943) (Contributor)  *Kamāyanī: Ek Punarvicar* (1950; 2nd Edition 1961)  *Bhārat: Itihās aur Sandarbh* (1962)  *Naī Kavitā kā Ātmasaṁgharṣ tathā anya nibandh* (1964)  *Chānd kā Munh Teḍhā Hai* (1964)  *Bhūrī Bhūrī Khāk Dhūl* (1980)  *Racanāvalī* [Collected Works], 6 vols, edited by Nemicandra Jain, (1980; 2nd Ed. 1997)  *Jab Praśna-cinh baukhlā uṭhe* (2009)  *Śeṣ-āśeṣ* (2009) Selected Translations into English *New Poetry in Hindi* (Trans. Lucy Rosenstein: 2003)  *In the Dark* (Trans. Krishna Baldev Vaid: 2001) Timeline 1943 1957 1997  *Tar Saptak* Appointment as *Rachnavali*  (contributor)Lecturer in Hindi (6 vols)  | | | | | |  1917 1950 1964  Birth *Kamayani:*  Death  *Ek Punarvicar Chand ka Munh*  *Terha Hai* |
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