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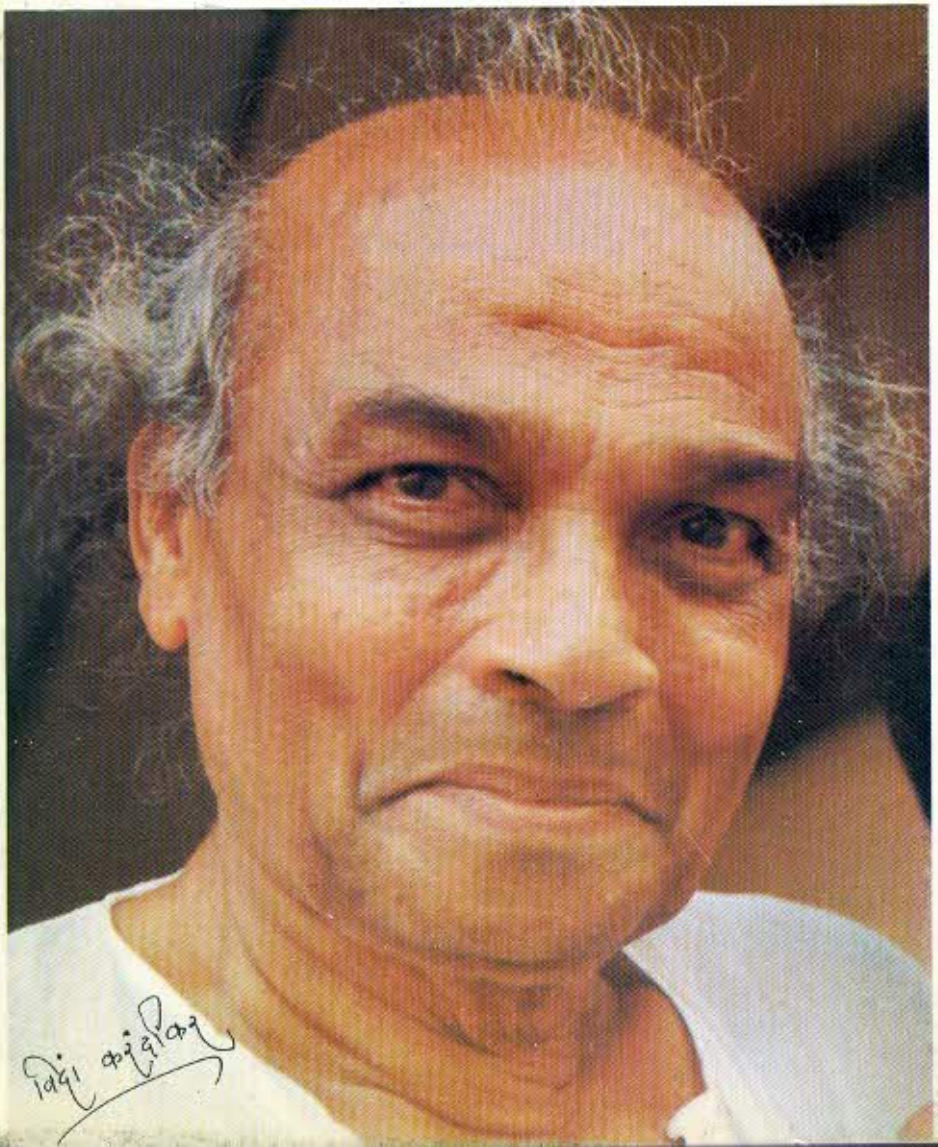


India International Centre

invite you to

meet the author

Vinda Karandikar

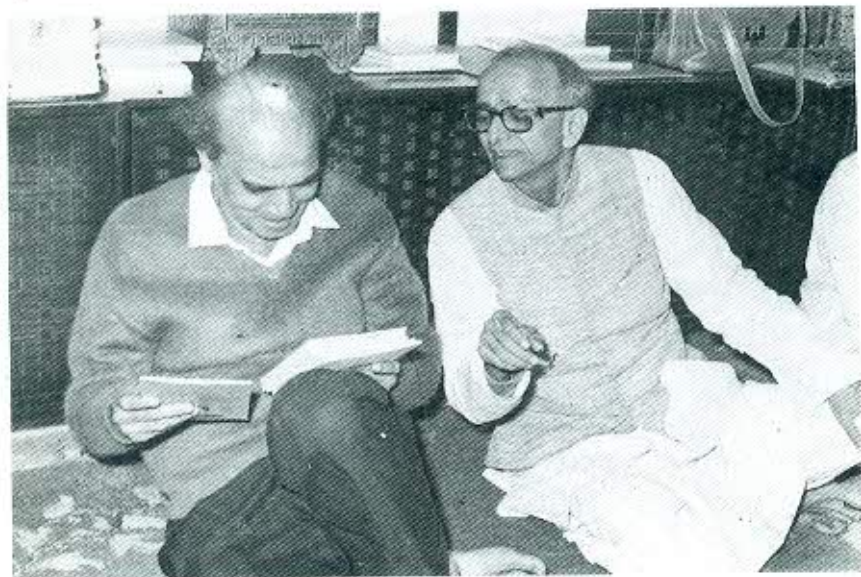


Vinda Karandikar (Govind Vinayak Karandikar) is a towering figure in modern Marathi poetry. Prof. Vasant Bapat has described him as 'the poet of poets' and Dr. Sudhir Rasal has qualified him as 'the poet who spans the entire sky of poetry'. Vinda is perhaps the most experimental and the most comprehensive of all modern Marathi poets and his poetry has finally won academic acclaim as well as popular applause. As an essayist, critic and translator also he has very significant achievement to his credit. A long creative life, full of worldly struggles and ceaseless in its search for aesthetic perfection, is at the back of this achievement.

Vinda was born on the 23 August 1918 at Dhalawal in the Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra. His father was a poor farmer and Vinda's edu-

cation would have stopped at the primary stage. But a family friend, a cook by profession, took the boy with him to Kolhapur in 1931, arranged for his meals with seven different families for seven days of the week, and enabled him to get higher education. Such was the humble beginning of Vinda's distinguished academic and literary career!

Vinda matriculated from New School in 1935 and joined Rajaram College, where he came under the influence of Madhav Julian who was one of his professors and the foremost Marathi poet of the period. Madhav Julian sustained his faith in poetry and scholarship. Vinda specialized in English Literature and his study of Browning, Hopkins and Eliot began to influence his poetry, which was rather romantic in the beginning. His study of Charles Lamb roused



Sri Vinda Karandikar with Sri Umashankar Joshi releasing Gangotri Trust's translations.

his interest in the personal essay. He graduated with honours in English in 1939.

However, even before the result was out, he courted arrest as a 'Satyagrahi' in the Hyderabad Movement (1939). He was released after four months of rigorous imprisonment. Meanwhile, he had won the Candy Memorial Prize and the Tutorship in his college. But on account of an accident that fractured his hand, Vinda could not appear for his M.A. Examinations till 1946.

The intervening period of six years (1939-1945) was a period of stress, trouble and turmoil in Vinda's life; but in a sense it was also a period of emotional, intellectual and literary development. In 1940, he entered into an improvident love marriage with Miss Yesu Gokhale, but she died after a couple of years. From 1942 to 1945, he had to work as a high school teacher at Tasgaon in Satara district and on that meagre income he had to maintain himself, his two sisters and a younger brother who had become a T.B. patient. In search of peace, for a brief period he embraced Gandhism and wore self-spun Khadi, developed his interest in Hindustani classical music and tried to learn the *tabla*. But the impact of the Quit India Movement would not allow him to rest and he carried on propaganda against enlistment in the army in the neighbouring villages.

It was in 1943 that Vinda seriously turned to the study of Marxism and that resulted in a major intellectual crisis in his life. But he was saved from Marxist dogmatism by his study of Bertrand Russell and Freud. Some of the poems written during this period 'Swedaganga', 'Keertan', and 'Rakta Samadhi'—show his originality of content, form, style and rhythm and reveal his anti-romantic attitude. But no publisher was prepared to publish these poems.

Determined to get his M.A. degree, Vinda came to Bombay in 1945. He secured the temporary job of a rationing inspector, studied in the University library, and got his M.A. in English with a high second class in 1946. From 1946 to 1976 he worked in various colleges belonging to Karnataka, Poona and Bombay Universities. In 1976, he retired voluntarily from the S.I.E.S. College (Bombay) as the Head of the English Department.

In 1947 Vinda married Mrs. Jyotsna Sane who was a widow and a high school teacher. Mrs. Karandikar's arrival on the scene is significant, because in 1949 she herself published *Swedaganga*—the first collection of Vinda's poetry. The book at once placed Vinda among the leading young poets, and critics like V.S. Khandekar and Prof. W.L. Kulkarni recognised him as a



With Sri S.H. Vatsyayan 'Agyeya'

new force in the modernist revolution.

Vinda's academic work as a professor of English Literature, his in-depth study of Western literature and criticism enabled him to enrich Marathi language with ideal translations of Western classics like Aristotle's *Poetics*, Goethe's *Faust*, and Shakespeare's *King Lear*. The excellence of his academic work, brought him the Senior Fulbright Award in 1967. During his stay in the USA he had the opportunity to discuss literary problems with thinkers like Richard Mckee, Rene Welleck and Kenneth Burke and to cooperate with A.K. Ramanujan in translating his own Marathi poems into English. His contribution to literary criticism is significant because it combines scholarship with originality of approach.

As a recipient of the Soviet Land Nehru Literary Award Vinda visited the USSR and participated in the Pushkin Festival. He had poetry-reading programmes both in the USA and the USSR. Vinda strongly believes in the necessity and cultural significance of translations and public poetry-reading programmes.

The personal essay in Marathi was facing stagnation when Vinda entered the field. Vinda breathed new life into it by making it more pliant, more sensitive and more responsive to life.

It is not easy to sum up Vinda's varied contribution to poetry. His ceaseless experimentation has given rise to new forms of free verse, the *talachitras*, the Free Sonnets and the *virupikas*. The gamut of his poetry includes realism and fantasy, satirical outbursts and mystical probings. Vinda

believes in 'an open view of poetry'. As a result, he made the modernist movement more comprehensive in its scope, more responsive to contemporary ethos, and more expressive of several unfamiliar moods. Impelled by the neurotic sickness of his younger son, Vinda turned to children's verse, which ushered in a new era in that field.

It is, however, wrong to believe that it was always smooth-sailing for his poetry. He had his share of adverse criticism; for his *virupika* on Ganapati, he had to face threats of legal action and physical assault! Even after being established, Vinda never belonged to

'the establishment'. On the whole, however, his career marched from success to success. Now he is a happy family man with one daughter, two sons, four grand-children, and a wife who is more than a wife. He has been the recipient of some twenty prizes and awards. These include Keshavsut Prize (1968), Soviet and Nehru Literary Award (1970), Kumaran Asan Award (1982) and finally, Kabir Samman (1991) which crowns a long, devoted and fruitful poetic career.

"Vinda is one of those creative writers," says Umashankar Joshi, "by whose literary work the language becomes a great social achievement."

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With Smt. Karandikar and Prof. A.K. Ramanujan.