CHAPTER XII

Punjabi Drama - Modern Phase
By this time the talking film had entered the
field against the stage and the commercial Urdu and Hindi
drama fell an easy casualty. Since Panjabi drama had not
as yet gone deep into the cultural life of the community,
what ever small hopes for its growth there were now
receded further and for a number of years no drama in this
language was played even in the colleges of the province.

Prof. Baldev Singh translated into Panjabi two
Persian plays, Vazir Khan Lankrar and Hakim Habatat in
1933. Another translation of a Persian play Hard-i-
Khassia has been done into Panjabi more recently by Dr.
Sher Singh under the name 'Panjees Thakdar'.

Mrs. Norah Richards has written in 1958-
*For many years in the Panjab there has been an
repourge in the countryside due to the impact of rural
reconstructors among whom was a handful with a creative
bent. Since the Indian Villager is pre-ordinately illit-
erate, the speediest way of enlightening him is by the
visual method, as it is called in educational parlance.
This enlightenment began with the magic lantern and
went on to the moving picture, until one of the five
*beneficent* departments of the old Panjab Government
had a bright idea which was to use the acted play to re-
force its endeavour which in this case was for co-operat-
on. Other beneficent departments followed suit and when,
eventually expert dramatic training was bro ht to bear on
I.Dr. Mohan Singh: 'Indian Drama' (Panjab Drama Pub,
Div. P.64.
their activities the seed of Rural Drama was sown."

Mrs. Norah Richards was deeply interested in any such development anywhere in the Punjab and herself worked a lot to impart what she has called 'expert dramatic training' to the novices. This propagandist move was led by the Punjab co-operative Department who took drama seriously. The co-operative players because semi-professional who according to Norah Richards were all co-operative inspector called from various districts of the Punjab she has written from personal knowledge that 'at drama courses they wrote in class-collaboration some out standing one-act plays and skits. One of the plays 'Granay's Awakening dealt with the 'better living' that was one of the planks of their plat form and another with the consolidation of holdings entitled 'Granby's Crown'. Two of the skits, she says, were 'The Turban' and 'Tootle. Tootle, Tootle' both on communalism. It is clear that a large number of plays were performed in the countryside and these were in Panjabi but this activity could not belong to the people and remained an affair of the co-operative department.

HARCHAN SINGH AND SOME CONTEMPORARIES.

A few years later Harcharan Singh, a young graduate with single minded devotion to drama, appeared on the scene with his maiden five-act homorous, romantic comedy, 'Kamia Kumaari' in 1937. The play was actual

3. Born in 1914 in a village of district Sheikhpura (Pakistan) Harcharan Singh is of peasant origin. He is at present reader in Panjabi at Delhi University.- G.S.
produced in the Temperance Hall of Amritsar city by S.S. Amol and the students of his G.R.D. College acted out the performance with pronounced success. The boys acted the female roles. 'Raja Paras' (1939) was his next five-act drama, with a patriotic theme but the play lacked dramatic economy and intensity and was loose of structure, each act sometimes carrying a dozen scenes.

Harcharan Singh now attended classes run by Norah Richards at Lahore. At this school he became a much better technician and very soon took to stage with his one-act plays and a full tragedy 'Anjor' (1941) followed by another equally good full length tragic play 'Desh' (1940) Two social comedies with reformist themes, 'Door Durade Shehron' and 'Khaden De Din Char' were also published and were found successful on the stage, especially the latter one. By 1947 Harcharan Singh had published three collections of one act plays, 'Jesla' 'Sapt Rishi' and 'Panj Gestra'. Some of these were staged by the college amateur clubs, mostly at Lahore.

History was made at Y.N.C.A. Hall, Lahore on 15th December, 1941 when Harcharan Singh produced under his i. Another Romantic comedy 'Preeto' by J.D.Kastana of the very Guru Nanak Das College, Amritsar was published near about this date. It is in three acts and a large number of scenes. 'Preeto' is written for the stage and in mixed Pansi romantic and modern realistic styles.

Thal and Sethi: Namak Sidhant to Punjabi Natyakar, p.192. 2. Raja Paras was produced by Harcharan Singh at Khalsa High School Kamalia (District Lyallpur, Pakistan) in 1939. Pritpal Singh: Harcharan Singh Di Nat Kala (1957) p.45. 3. 'Navan Chaman' and 'Greek Nivas' were produced at Sikh National College Lahore. 'Man Mian Man' which was played by an all women cast at Khalsa College for Women, Lahore. - G.S.
direction his 'Anjor' in which his wife executed the tragic role of the heroine. It was the first full length tragedy in Panjabi language ever to be staged and also perhaps the 1st play of the amateur stage in the province in which ladies from respectable families participated as actresses in a mixed cast.

Credit goes to Harcharan Singh and his 'Green-Sixes' courageous wife for breaking the time-honoured taboo and opening the way for mixed casts to take to the stage and in this way add immensely to the effectiveness and the charm of the realistic performances in the times to come. One year later, on 12th December, 1942 Harcharan Singh produced his reformist comedy 'Khadan De Din Char' in this very Y.M.C.A. hall of Lahore.

"Although Manda is the 1st to write a one-act play in the Panjabi, Dr. Mohan Singh gave us a collection of one-acters before anybody else but it is Harcharan Singh who wrote one-act plays packed with life, stage worthy and concerned with the feeling of the people," 'Anjor (Social tragedy) and 'Khadan De Din Char' (Social Comedy) are realistic creations and are considered to be master pieces belonging to his first creative phase.

After partition in 1947 Harcharan Singh left Lahore for Delhi where he pursued drama with utmost ardor.

Pritpal Singh: Harcharan Singh Di Nat Kala P.54.

Balwant Sargi: Rang Manch PP. 177-178.

interest. By now (1963) he has given us ten full length plays on romantic historical, social, psychological and political themes besides dozens of one act plays, most of which have been staged. From the stage point of view his full-length dramas as well as one-act plays are eminently suitable, being simple in construction and inexpensive in performance. Being very much experienced in the production craft, his plays have progressively acquired the quality of stagability and have been played again and again by amateur parties and college dramatic troupes.

'Cosh' was hailed as a compact drama, although with a rather shallow theme. Although published in 1946 it was staged at Jullundur, Patiala and other places some 1 years after the partition.

As an indication of his progress towards stage worthiness, his post-partition dramas were of 3 acts only. 'Tera Ghar So Mera Ghar' was the first play ever to be staged at Chandigarh, the new capital of Indian Panjab, on 14th and 15th March, 1954 in Government College Hall. The theme of the play was Hindu Sikh-harmony which was being threatened in those days due to certain post-independence developments in the Panjab. 'Purkye Da Chand' is a historical play which describes the sad conditions prevailing in the Panjab before the birth of Guru Nanak. As a concession to the Sikh prejudice against drama in which religious personalities may figure as characters, the playwright, while writing a drama about Guru Nanak, took care not to make him a star on the first produced at V.M.C.A. Hall New Delhi and was then repeatedly performed at many places in the Punjab.

The artistes of tfao's falling standards of dramatic art rose up and attained sudden heights. The artistes of the Panjab Act Theatre produced this drama at many places in the state and in Delhi city. The theme of the play is the peasant struggle for agrarian reform. The play approximates to the classical ideal of unity of time, place and action and is perhaps over solidly constructed.

"Sobha Shakti," a three act play (1961) which discusses the feminine question in the changed and changing context of post-independence Indian conditions is, after "Ratta Saaboo," another really good problem play of the school of socialist realism.

Besides the three collections of one-act plays contributed by him before partition, 'Rangh Pardhan', 'Murkhe Di Khushbo' and 'Mere Chonven Ikangi' (2 Parts) have appeared. 'Man Dian Man With' 'Roti Da Swal', 'Hartal', 'Chirian Da Narm', 'Chaudhry' 'Murkes Di Khushbo' and 'Harhian Di Pooja' are some of his more successful one-act plays.

Harsharan Singh is decidedly more successful in his full plays. These are full of outward action and conflict and in the organisation of his plots he has displayed good sense of the stage craft. His language is a sort of over-brief perha s lackl the livi ng. He was 1st stage a Deh in 1953 and ter r at Khalsa College Jullundur in 1955. Pritpal Singh, Harsharan Singh Di Nat Kala P.58.
to observe in the introduction to the text.

Preet Nagar founded by Gurubux Singh of Preet Lari
in 1938 soon developed into another point where Panjabi
amateur stage got established and where plays by Gurubux
Singh and Balvant Gargi was being staged. In these Gurubux
Singh also played some role. He acted in Preet Mukt. Here
mixed casts took the stage and received encouragement.

Monthly 'Golden Nights', with variety shows including
dramatic pieces, were held and drama festivals celebrated
once in a year. Here on the Preet Nagar stage 'Raj Kumari
Latika', a four act tragedy (1938), and 'Preet Mukt',
'the Mani' and 'Sadi Moni Da Lisshura' (one act play)
were all produced by the author, Gurubux Singh and some of
the artistes taking part in these performances were big
names in the years to come.

'Poorb Rachchham' was published along with
'Raj Kumari Latika' in 1944. But 'Preet Mukt' and 'Preet
Mani' one acts first appended to the full length dramas
appeared separately also after 1944, when 'Raj Kumari
Latika' appeared in its third edition.

Mohan Singh: Introduction to 'Raj Kumari Latika'
Phull and Sethi: Natak Sidhant to Panjabi Natakkar P.466.

Nadran Singh: Balvant Gargi(Language Department) 1959 P.13
4. Raj Kumari Latika' was written by Gurubux Singh for an
American Dramatic club in 1925 and was presented to a select
audience, during the author's sojourn in that country as a
student and 'Poorb Rachchham' a lighter one act play was also
first written in English in America.

Gurubux Singh: Foreward to ' Poorb Rachchham' P.3.
The year 1940 is quite important for the history of Punjabi one-act plays when four collections of these plays came out. Gurbux Singh, however, did not take to drama seriously enough and wrote only sporadically. "Jal Pati Da Vyah", "Da Ratan", "Kodri Di Roti", "Chatar Kamran", "William Tell", "Dil Rani", "Dodle Nashe Di", "Vichharian Milani Kursi" are his other plays published up to 1958. He is the greatest living prose writer of Punjabi but his love of drama writing lapsed after the shock of the partition which caused the downfall of Preet Nagar as the growing centre of Punjabi culture or its renaissance. What is important about Gurbux Singh as dramatist is the characteristic tone of his plays, distinct from all other contemporaries or predecessors and the theme of 'Love without Jealousy' which was expounded in all these plays. "Sadi Honi Da Lishkara" was an application of his cult of love to the social environments of the times as it discussed the problem of communal disharmony that menaced national integrity.

Sant Singh Sekhon

Sant Singh Sekhon, a writer of great intellectual sweep, started as a playwright with 'Mehatam' having a Marxist theme. He wrote for the Lahore Radio Station in 1941. Harharan Singh's first collection of one-act plays 'Ji Leela' came out 1939-40.


Preet Nagar, a new township was founded by Gurbux Singh in 1938 in the district of Amritsar in ideal rural settings with a view to realize his ideal of progressive community living. Partition left it on the Indian side almost on the border, with the result that for about a decade, the habitation was deserted and occupied by the army personnel. - G.S.
After Dr. Mohan Singh's 'Pankharian' (1925) his 'Chhe Ghar' (1941) was a very significant collection of Panjabi one-act plays. It contains his 'Mahatma', 'Puttar', 'Bhavi', 'Hartal', 'Ik Aitwar' and 'Baba Bohar' the last being the earliest known experiment in verse one-act play in Panjabi. Only one year before partition Sekhon published his 'Kalakar' (a comedy in four acts) in 1946. He added another act and two scenes in the 2nd edition of 'Kalakar' published only a few years back. The play has never seen the stage but has been prescribed a text book for M.A. Classes in Panjabi almost from the year the classes were instituted by the Panjab University in 1950 and has been the subject matter of tremendous discussion. The play purports to discuss the philosophy of nude painting as a socialist art and propounds a new theory of masculine jealousy against the back-ground of ancient Indian matrimonial and sex values. It has been discussed as a good example of bad drama with a most controversial theme content.

Three years after the partition Sekhon gave us his 2nd collection of one act plays 'Tapya Kion Khapya' in 1950, containing another set of six one-act plays. 'Chhe Ghar' had only one really good play 'Bhavi' dramatically intense with a rising suspense and a powerfully built up climax and apt resolution. This later collection is better wrought as a whole. In Nishat Bag and Vihare his art turns symbolic and 'Chor Bazaar' as one-act play (It also forms the 1st act of his full length drama 'Marki') is good drama with a really dramatic situation and dialogue. 'Visholi' is a satire couched in better verse than employed in 'Baba Bohar' 'Tapya Kion Khapya' is in support of Frisian conception of sexual reality.

Note: Art of Panjab Nat was 1922 as the year of publication. Q.1.
'Markhi' (1952) a powerful 5 act drama with a week ending, studies the working of corruption in the context of prevailing conditions and presents a convincing Marxist analysis of a number of related social phenomena. This was followed by 'Nat Sunehri' in the same year containing seven one-act plays. Baba Sehar which had appeared in Chhe Ghar appeared in this volume and the story of the fight for independence was brought to the date British Government left the country in 1947. The other six plays are 'Duja Wyn', 'Rain Basera', 'Jagirdar', 'Pita Purkhi', 'Tunar Janam' and 'Sanahi'.

In 1958 came four full plays by his pen 'Varis', 'Noyan Sar na Kai' (tragedy in 5 acts), 'Bhoodan' and 'Beda Bandh Na Sakkiye'. Except 'Bhoodan' three other plays are historical but with a difference. There is a startlingly novel approach to history and an attempt at re-interpretation which is Sekhon's distinctive characteristic. His latest original play is 'Damyanti' (1960) preceded by the verse translations into Panjabi of Macbeth by Shakespeare which he did in 1958 for Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, followed by another verse rendering of the Greek Classic 'Antigone' for Kendri Panjabi Lekhak Sabha, Jullundur in 1961.

Sekhon along with Duggal and Gargi is popular with A.I.R. and his 'Ikk Aitwar' and 'Doja Viyah' have been described as exemplary radio plays. 'Bhavi' and 'Ikk Aitwar' were produced by Panjab Nat Mandir, Amritsar at the local Khalsa College in the open air in 1950 and made a good impression. His historical tragedy 'Noyan Sar Na Kai' was proved to be stage worthy when it was enacted at the occasion of the annual conference of the Khendri Panjabi Lekhak Sabha at Ludhiana (1959).
But on the whole Sekhon has not been lucky on the stage. He is too disregardful of the merely conventional and is rather too much inclined to experiment with the form to make him confirm to the needs of the existing available stage. Another draw-back in his plays is the weak climaxes and their too obviously managed denouments with the result that his full plays fail to honour at the end, the promise they make at the start.

Sekhon is distinguished as the exponent of profound themes. He has something specially educative about him and is allergic to the obvious. His approach to question of great social import is scientific but his tragedy is the inordinate haste in which these are dramatically conceived by him.

Thus 'Bhoomi Pan' discusses the Bhoodian approach to the agrarian question in India but is a bad drama. 'Marki' is another example of tragic failure in the matter of according dramatic form to the problem of all pervasive corruption. 'Bera Bandh Na Sakkio' and 'Hoyan Sai Na Kai' as well as 'Baba Bokar' are very originally conceived attempts at historical interpretation but are rather loose or imbalanced structurally and do not satisfy as dramatic plays.

'Damyanti' is his latest and the boldest attempt at translating mythology in the modern non-mythological tone. The play has been conceived as an allegory depicting the classic struggle of man against forces of nature in the initial stages of human history and a parallel story to the old legend of Mai and Damyanti using the mythological figures in the modern sense has been invented. This very be
Although peasant born, the language of Sakhan has shown a developing tendency in favour of archaic expressions and thus he has forged a linguistic instrument characteristically apt for the characters of his historical plays pertaining to middle and ancient times. His invention regarding poetic dialogues employed in, 'Baba Bohar', 'Vichali' Macbeth' and 'Antigone' have not yet passed the test of time and it is no use speculating about them at this stage.

KARTAR SINGH DUGGAL

Kartar Singh Duggal is a champion radio playwright. Since early forties he has been in the A.I.R. service, first at Lahore Radio Station and later after partition at Jullundur and at many other places in the country. Upto 1947 or independence he was at Lahore Radio.

1. Kartar Singh Duggal was born in Pothohar area of eastern Punjab (now in Pakistan) in village Dhamial, District Rawalpindi on 1st March, 1917. His father Jiban Singh Duggal was an employee of the Rawalpindi municipal Committee. Matriculating in 1934 he joined G.K. College Rawalpindi and graduated in 1938. He passed his M.A. (English) from Forman Christian College, Lahore in 1940. He started writing one-act plays, features and dramas only after joining the radio service which he did a short time after taking his M.A. Degree. He is at present an officer in A.I.R. -- G.S.
It was here that he learnt his first lessons in the radio drama and feature technique and was able to master it. He published his first collection of radio plays and features 'Ik Sifar Sifar' in August, 1941, followed by 'Auh Gaye Sujjan Auh Gayo' in 1942. He did not add a third up to partition, after which he published his 'Tin Natak, (1951) 'Puranian Botlan'(1954) 'Sat Natak' (1955) and Miththa Pani'(1957), 'Kohkan' being his latest. Quantitatively, this production is not comparable with some of his more prolific contemporaries but does possess a certain distinctive quality characteristic of Kartar Singh Duggal. He is imaginative in plot-making, poetic in dialogues psycho analytical in characterisation and impressionistic in atmosphere building and theme depiction.

The beauty points of the dramatic art of Duggal as a radio playwright are his drawbacks as a stage artist. On the stage his plots are lean and suffer from lack of action. They are too imaginative to be realistic; his dialogues have an over-dose of poetry in them, are rather loose and repetitive, his characters are not often more than bolts or obstructive or talkative.

Kartar Singh Duggal writes:

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Panjabi Dunya, (May and June, 1962) P.12.
instruments. There is an enveloping sense of unreality and a catching element of fantasy even in plays dealing with contemporary social and national themes. All his characters are supersensitive, highly charged emotional beings and never behave as ordinary men and women.

His 'Tin Natak' (1951) containing '15 August' and 'Divya Bujh Gya' and 'Sharmarathi' as well as 'Sat Natak' (1955) are collections of one-act plays essentially suitable for radio broadcast 'Divya Bujh Gya' has been staged by a number of amateur clubs but was not as much success there as it is on the A.I.R. Its long drawn out dialogues poetic and emotional, do not fit in on the stage. He has written a number of monologues plays excellent creations for broadcast, they will be flat on the stage 'Amanat' and 'Uparli Manzil' are good examples of this genre. 'Alla Megh De' was produced on the radio by Surjit Singh Sethi with great success. The success depended largely on a number of sound effects which the radio technique can provide very easily enough. 'Mahani Awan Bani' might do better as a stage play.

His full length 'Puraniyan Betlan' a three -act, three -scene play, written for the stage has been tried as such once or twice. It has a very well wrought plot, solid and balanced, full of suspense, and a series of dramatic situations leading to the natural climax.

2. This was a short story converted into a play by Duggal himself--- G.S.
In this and some other plays Duggal has made copious use of the telephone which is a more realistic substitute for his monologues and may be taken for an excellent device. The play was staged in Delhi and broadcast from Jullundur and while it was gripping on the air, it did not go well on the stage. Duggal is so much air-minded that he fails to meet the demands of the stage even if he tries to do so.

After 1947 and upto 1955, Duggal achieved some progress in the art of writing plays. 'Sharmarthi 'Div Buh Cya', 'Kabari Kiven Bani', 'Amanat', 'UpparliNaNil', 'AllaKagh De' one-act plays and 'Puranian Botlans' belong to this period.

He offered two full-length plays after 1955, 'MiththaPani' and 'Kohkan', both concern plan propaganda more particularly the Bhakra Dam project of the Panjab. 'MiththaPani' is a play in three scenes. Here Duggal has discarded the conventional division of a drama into acts and sub-division into scenes and chosen to call his 'acts' only 'scenes', for they are nothing better. 'Kohkan' idealises an engineer who inspired by the romance of Shih Faribad works sacrificially for the execution of an irrigation project. But his propagandist motive is so obvious that in these dramas, he is more a government apologist than a real dramatic artist. Strangely enough Duggal lacks in local colour and is general in characterization as well as in description. He is more a dramatist of ideas than of living human beings.

Duggal is credited with the authorship of two more i.e 'Shor Te San et' and 'Buddham Sharmam Cenbhami. 
Garg i angl Mano . .
BADANT GARGI.

1. Balwant Gargi is the 3rd name to work prominently for the promotion of Panjabi stage J.C. Nanda and Harcharan Singh are the fore runners.

Gargi started writing plays in 1943 at Lahore.

He is possessed of the sense of the dramatic and knows the dramatic value of the small incident and casual remarks.

He can release a series of small incidents saturated with

Balwant Gargi was born in village Sehna / District Ludhiana on 4th December, 1916 in a Bania (Merchant) family. His father Shiv Chand was an employee of the irrigation department and Balwant Gargi passed his matriculation from Bhatinda where his father was staying in those days. He joined Mahin Dra College, Patiala and after about two years left for Lahore and graduated in 1936. In 1938 he took his first degree in M.A. (Political Science) from D.A.V. College Lahore. In 1941 he passed his second M.A. this time in English from P.U. College of the same place. By 1943 he started writing his one-act like Khari Teesi but soon took to original writing Lah-e Kut was published in 1944 and 'Sai Paththar' and 'Hanuman Duddh' in 1949 two years after partition. His collection of one-act plays 'Khari Teesi' came out in the year of Lah-e Kut. Biswad in 1948, Do Paise, the 3rd collection in the year of 'Sai Paththar Chuggi' was published in 1950 'Daswandi' is another collection of one-actors. 'Pathan Di Beri' bears the year 1951, 'Enero' (1952) and 'Hanak Di Balilf' 1954, 'Sohni Mehimal' (1956) are his latest full length plays. Gargi has travelled and studied the most advanced stage of the west. Of late he has turned a journalist and written some stories and sketches in Panjabi also which have a stylish beauty of their own - G.S.

2. Writing about himself in 'Rang Manch' Gargi says:

BALVANT GARGI: * RANG MANCH* p.100.
multisided conflicts and sharpened edges, leading to an appropriately built climax, in an emotionally surcharged atmosphere and is more successful in the dramatic construction of comic and tragic stories in the case of one-act than the full length plays, Gifted with an excellent sense of the dramatic and the comic in ordinary happenings, Gargi has the making of a really good dramatist but his grasp of reality was always shallow and superficial and his knowledge and understanding of people and things about whom he writes was never more than skin deep with the result that although he has created some really good drama, he has miserably failed to offer anything substantial or profound. He fails in his thought contents. In addition he cannot concive comprehensively and his vision is that of the small and the superficial, with the result that he has failed to give a single well organized full length play with the sole exception of Loha Kut, his maiden attempt. In this also he has been accused of adapting some western play, if not of direct plagiarism. He will be remembered for some small plays he has written that have excellent humour of situation. Small pieces like 'Bebe', 'Dr Palta' 'Pichobal Pari', 'Girjhan' have been successful on the stage. Play like 'Bomb Case' have provided good fun to peasant audiences while fantasies like 'Pattan Di Beri' (Which won All-India Radio competition in 1949) 'Tarkalan' and one-act plays with poetic dialogues of which type he has written many are quite successful with the radio.

Almost from the very beginning Gargi wrote as a progressive and was associated with the Panjab branch of
I.P.T.A. Thus he went back to the village, the peasant and peace movement. This offered a good opportunity to Gargi to keep himself close to life and guard himself from his inborn weakness for artificiality, which propensity mars a majority of his plays and constitutes his main defect, specially in his full length dramas.

1 Mogha 'Biswedar' and 'Bomb Case', (a farce) belong to this phase. 'Ghuggi' is an improvised creation in which 'Bomb Case', one-actor has been amalgamated with peace propaganda material to produce a mixture of the comic and the serious. But his small plays about the urban lower middle class and the intellectuals ring more true and are therefore more successful. 'Den Len', 'Swadili Call' 'De Paise', 'Kavi De Zavis' etc. belong to this category. 'Kavi' and 'Girjhan' are experimental attempts at writing symbolic and expressionistic plays, respectively.

His hold on life of the place of his birth was never strong but he has chosen to write full plays with this area as their locale 'Loha Kut' (three-act, three-scene play) 'Kesro' (social comedy in four scenes) 'Kanak Di Bueil' (four act, four scene tragedy of romantic love) and 'Nawan Madirh' and 'Ghuggi' all claim to depict the life of the Malwa region of the Punjab but accept to certain turns of phrases and expression nothing typical of this area is there in these plays. The stories of 'Kesro', 'Nawan Madirh' and 'Kanak Di Bueil' are more

Haurang Singh; Balwant Gargi (Languages Deptt. Pb. 1959)
imaginary than real and have no regional complexion or local colour about them. 'Kesro' was staged 1st of all, in Delhi D.A.T. (Delhi Art Theatre) in 1952 and 'Hanak Di Baal' seven years later in 1959. These plays, specially the former, is very popular with the college dramatic clubs in the Panjab. It is the element of querness in the use of language, characterization and the stories that constitute the main appeal of his pseudo-realistic dramas.

'Sail Pahitdhari' (three acts enclosing five scenes) has an urban setting and discusses the very subtle question of the function of art supported by an example from life. A sculptor is converted to the new view, that art is the expression of the aspirations of the masses. This happens when he causes the death of a starving girl when she was engaged to serve as the model of a famished girl. The play is tragi-comedy of the modern type. SOOMI is his latest experiment in integrating the Panjabi folk and the Western realistic traditions and is said to be more poetic than all his other plays. The play was staged in Moscow a few years back and has not been published in Panjabi so far.

Gargi started, as he did as a Radio play writer, took to the stage very early and never turned his back on it. His plays were 1st staged at Preet Nagar. Brief of speech himself, specially on a public platform, Gargi is possessed of enough talent of a competent stage director. He always had a good team of players to produce

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Gurbux Singh: 'Salwant Gargi' (Language Department Panjab 1959) P.S.
his plays all over the Panjab before rural as well as urban audiences. 'Dr.Palta', 'Lain Den' ‘Pichchal Pairi', 'Rai Da Pahar' and many other light plays of humour and satire have been staged by the college clubs on numerous occasions. At the university youth festivals he is popular alongwith Har Charan Singh and Gurdial Singh Phull his close rivals. It can be asserted that Gargi has been played more than any other Panjabi play-wright in the Panjab cities and country side and as such has contributed greatly towards the initiation of dramatic movement in the State. It is now evincing in a small ways signs of growing into a settled institution of the Land. The benefit from his extensive itinerary in the west from 1954 to 1968, to the Panjabi drama and stage are still being awaited.

GURDIAL SINGH PHULL

Gurdial Singh Phull has a flashing talent and is quick at literary creation. Play writing and producing is one of his pursuits amidst a host of others and even here he has been wielding a very prolific pen indeed.

Starting with 'Pita Pyar' quite early in preparation days, he wrote 'Collegiate' and a number of one-act plays before 1947.'Sathi' (1949) 'Jori' (1949), 'Adai Di

Gurdial Singh Phull was born in March, 1911, in Nangal Shama village near Jullundur. His father S. Bhagwan Singh died in his early childhood and he was brought up fatherless under conditions of suffering and hardship. After his B.A. from Khalsa College Amritsar, he joined service in the very institution as hostel Superintendent and started writing his dramas etc. while working in that capacity. He passed his M.A. in Panjabi and became a lecturer in Panjabi at this College. Gurdial Singh Phull acted in play when only seven years old, i.e. as early as 1916. Later on in 1936 he participated in Nanak Singh’s B.A. Pass' and in 1955 in his own play 'Collegiate'. He has acted in several of his own plays. ——— G.S.
Akal' 'Ajkal'(1954), 'Bank'(1955) are some of his full length plays while 'Kalyug Rath Agin Hain' is his latest to come. 'Raisa', 'Hauke', 'Doldi Lat', 'Narayan Jutan', 'Kala Haqq' are collections of one-actors.

Gurdial Singh Phull is fiercely individualistic in whatever he writes, in the sense that he does not imitate; at the same time he is inimitable. He re-acts with strong emotion to everything that happens around him and his experience is deep and varied. 'Pita Phirar' was penned with little sense of the dramatic form, while 'Collegiate' happens to be a little better attempt. 'Sathi' and 'Jori' are similar exercises in dramatic writing and do not merit much consideration. There is evidence of technical improvement in the construction of 'Admi Di Akal'. It is three-act play with four scenes but it is more a screen play than a stage drama. 'Ajkal' has a lean story built up into a powerful drama but urban life is not Phull's strong point. 'Bank' a realistic tragedy in three acts, having five scenes has a balanced structure, competent to bring out its important although simple looki theme. 'Kalai te Zindgi' is equally well constructed, with three acts containing 5 scenes similarly distributed, 'Oorak Sach Ran' (1960) and 'Jhutha Pasand' (1960) are other collections. In'Kambhe Dhaular' Krishna Hans legend is reinterpreted in a tragedy of four acts in which symbolic characters are used to show art and human compassion working in favour of labour in the developing labour-capital conflict.

'Kidhndar Jawan', a collection of 5 one-act plays was published in July 1961.

'Kalyug Rath Agin Hain'(1960) is a highly original play consisting of a series of three monologues by
three different personifications of ideas, each monologue constituting an act.

His themes are socially significant. He is an humanist and ruthless in exposing the evil in society. His one-act plays have acquired structural perfection as his experience in writing these has matured. There is lot of suspense, an element of surprise and the unexpected in them and they are eminently stage worthy.

Almost all his plays, full length as well as one actors, have been staged 'Bank' has been enacted more than 20 times, 'Collegiate' half a dozen times, 'Jori' about a dozen times and 'Adami Di Akal' twice. One-act plays 'Pahre Di Vahuti' 'Upprom', 'Mantar', 'Anokhi Bhenti' 'Rat Koi Goya' have been quite popular with the amateur dramatic clubs.

As a director producer Phull has invented a number of novel stage techniques and has made effective and significant use of sound and light effects.

With Phull we came to the end of modern major playwrights of Punjabi. There is a host of other writers who have written and published dramas and have some very excellent plays to their credit but since they have written only intermittently and are minor quantitatively speaking or otherwise, they are only beginners and new entrants in the arena of drama writing and stage production, one would like to give them only a summary treatment.

Amrik Singh

Dr. Amrik Singh is important because of 'Jivan Jhalak' (1951)'Rahan De Nikhor Te' (1953) Parchhavian Di Pak. Dr. Amrik Singh was born in North West Frontier Province (United India). He graduated from Khalsa College, Amritsar. At present he is a Ph.D. in English and was reader in English with Delhi University. He has recently joined Panjabi University, Patiala as head of English Department. - G.S.
(1954) 'Kam Ke Sharama' full length plays and 'Asan De Ambar' (1955) and 'Jiwan Jhalkhan' (1951) one act play collections.

Thus his creative period did not last longer than six years but he has left a mark in Panjabi drama because of his themes which are of lasting significance and their dramatic presentation which is technically sound. The future course and role of the middle class intellectual in the midst of growing labour-capital conflict in India is discussed with perfect aesthetic charm in 'Rohan De Nikher Te'. The play has three units and in a three act with three scenes at a single place, while 'Parchhawian Di Pakar' is a master experiment in presenting on the stage a socio-psychological theme visualising a stage innovation in which the thought processes of characters pertaining to the past are sought to be presented in the present, putting the electric switch to a very good advantage. His one act plays (eleven in number) are also considered eminently stagable and concern the depiction of the significant in the casual and the accidental in life. 'Asan De Ambar', 'Tash Di Bazi', 'Akh Age Khkh' 'Sharnarithi' 'Do Kot' are some of his more known one-act plays.

After 1955 Dr. Amrik Singh has published no drama, full length or one-act. Most of his dramatic creations have not seen the stage so far.

DR. ROshan LAL ABUJA

Dr. Roshan Lal Ahuja is another highly educated person but he started late as a writer of Panjabi drama. He was at Khalsa College, Amritsar when he wrote his first
wanted in realistic plays concerning contemporary life. Ahuja, however, is conspicuous as a thinker in his plays. He has the knack of building up stories to discuss subtle problems without having to come to grief as dramatist.

By 1956, Ahuja gave us three full-length plays 'Sahyog', 'Bhoomi Dan' and 'Talaq' and he added some more afterwards, 'Kalinga Da Dukhant' being one more important. He has written more than 3 dozen one-act plays, many of these of good construction.

'Sahyog' is a play in three acts, containing between themselves as many as eleven scenes. The number of acts in 'Bhoomi Dan' and 'Talaq' is the same i.e. three but the scenes are reduced to 6 in each case. Thus Ahuja has tried progressively to transcend his original deficiency of experience as a writer of drama. He has studied in 'Sahyog', 'Bhoomi Dan' and 'Talaq', three important questions about land cultivation, agrarian reform and divorce, in all cases as socio-economic problems and in each case his approach is scientific and balanced.

There is a suggestion of controlled passions and didacticism of a teacher in his dramatic writings, with the result that they are deficient in dramatic intensity. His sense of the stage-craft is not supported by practical experience. He has a ready talent of modernising stories from the fund of ancient fiction and legend and has given.
quite a large number of one-act plays in which he has successfully done the trick. He has a good sense of the historic past and can imaginatively recreate it in his plays. He attempts at writing problem plays suggesting solutions to current socio-economic problems but fails to convince, mainly because of the insufficiency of the linguistic instrument at his command and perhaps also due to the deficiency of personal experience of the life around. GURDIAL SINGH KHOGLA AND OTHERS.

Gurdial Singh Khoкла is a dramatist of the realistic school, confined to the urban middle class mainly. He is a producer-director, actor and writer combined in one and was originally connected with the “Little Theatre Group”, at Lahore. He is the author of ‘Buhe Baithi Dhi’ (1944) and another full length play ‘Har Mittan Vale’ a tragedy in three acts having Indian struggle for Independence for its theme. ‘Be Ghare’, ‘Juttian Da Jora’, ‘Har’, ‘Tin Dost’ ‘Baqi Fer’, ‘Murde Da Basian’, ‘Sone Di Chati’, ‘Khokha Waid’ and ‘Motor Di Sail’ are some of his one-act plays. Besides, he translated Galsworthy’s ‘Silver Box’ in Punjabi and called it ‘Chandi Da Dabba’. This was his first venture in the field of Panjabi drama actually undertaken many years before publication and remains perhaps the 1st literal translation in this language of a modern English play (Translation in Hindi under the Name ‘Chandi Ki Dibya’ was done earlier). The book is important as it contains an a valuable introduction on the subject of realistic drama, verify the 1st writing of its type in Panjabi.

He founded the famous Panjabi Theatre at Delhi in 1950 and most of his plays were staged by this theatrical group. Gurdial Singh Kho部落 participated as an actor in
these performances. 'Huhe Saithi Dhi' is a powerfully
built four scenes social comedy, concerning the contemporary
problem of matrimonially unsettled daughters of the Punjab
bourgeoisie. 'Har Kittan Vale' is another stage-tested
tragedy which takes into its scope the story of Indian
Independence in which the conflict of congress nationalism
and communal reaction has been portrayed with a tragic
finale. It is good drama but a myopic X-Ray of the freedom
story with a limited middle class range and point of view.

'Be Ghare', 'Juttian Da Jora', 'Har', 'Kurde Da
Rashan' etc., are situations from urban life in which the
contradictions of the middle class view of life and psycholo-
y under different circumstances has been subjected to
satirical treatment.

Harman Das Sehra translated into chaste Panjabi,
Hari Kishan Premi's Hindi historical play, 'Raksha Bandhan,
under the name 'Rakhri' in February 1947. This scene to be
the 1st Panjabi translation of any well known Hindi drama.

Balbir Singh is a prolific writer and has given
us more than half a dozen full length and a larger number
of collections of one-act plays. The number of one-act
plays by hispen exceeds five dozen but in all these creative
he fails to rise above the level of a mediocre playwright.
His art has refused to progress and his meagre sense of the
stage has not developed at all. He has not been staged
much as his plays are full of unnatural monologues and
aside; the stories are broken into numerous scenes and
have artificial sharp turns and coincidences. They develop
illogically and make poor climaxes and are generally flat
and of inconsistent characterisation. 'Supna tutt Gya'.
'Kuviraj' and 'Arvind' are some of his full length plays, while 'Bussi Roti' 'Satiyug ton Kaliyug', 'Sawan Thakur' 'Pooldan', 'Jogi' etc., are his typical one-act plays.