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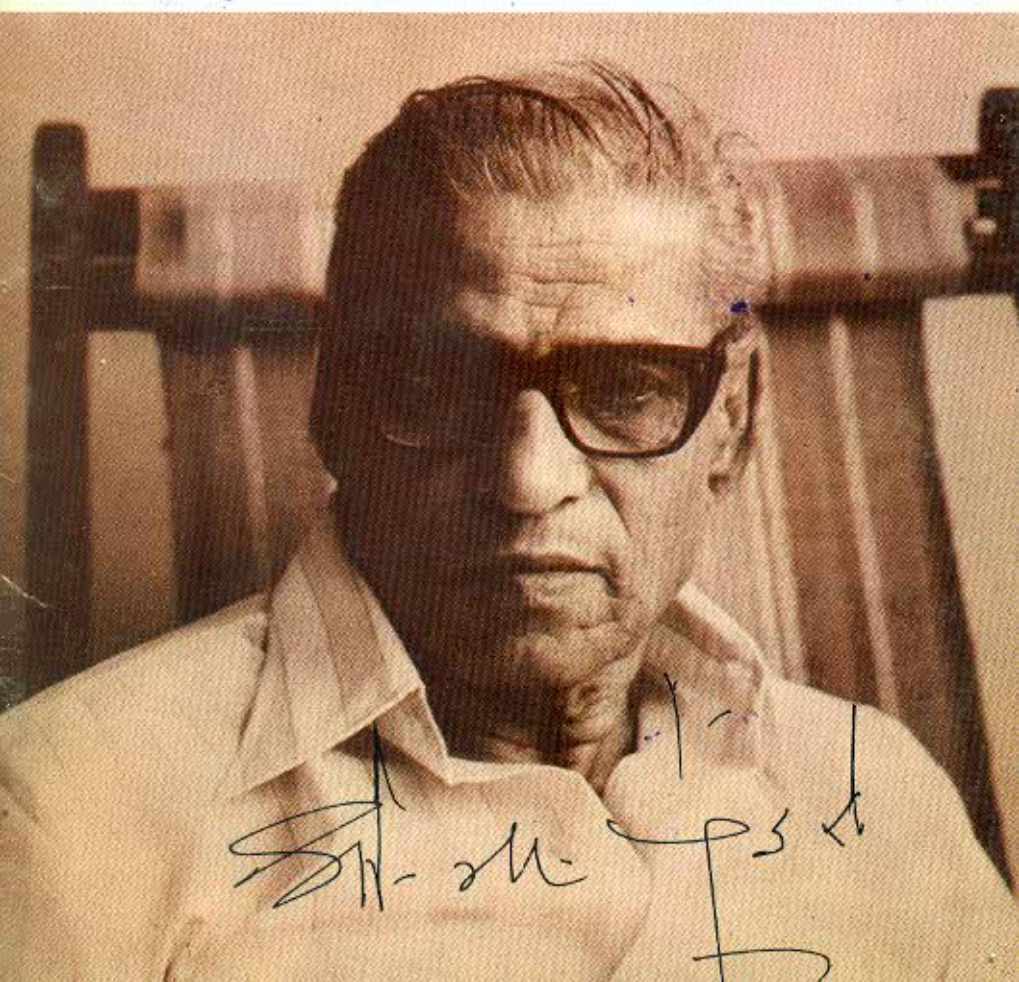


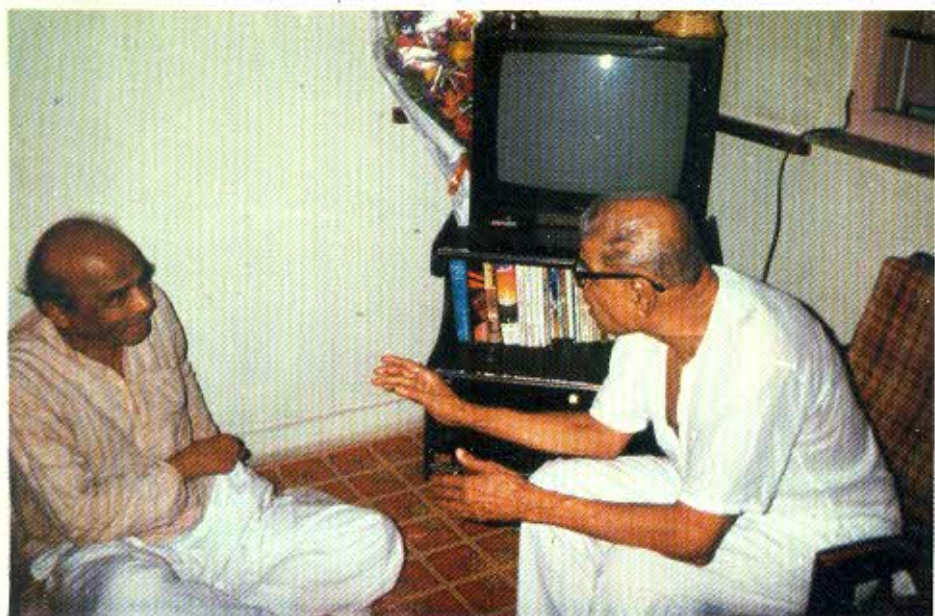
Sahitya Akademi

invites you to

meet the author

S.N. Pendse





With Vinda Karandikar

As a resident of Bombay for nearly seven decades, S.N.Pendse loves the cosmopolitan city and particularly the Dadar area where he has spent most of his educational and working life. Set his 'songs of experience' in Bombay in the initial years of his struggle for survival made him, time and again, nostalgic about his childhood days in the Konkan region of Maharashtra. His mental trips to that region in search of 'the songs of innocence' were, in later years, to present him to the Marathi knowing world as a pioneer of that genre of literature which later came to be called the 'provincial novel'.

A basic degree in science and a secure job in the Public Relations Department of the Bombay Electricity Supply and Transport Co. was enough for his survival, yet was not sufficient to satisfy his psychological needs.

Pendse had studied the French Language and at one time enjoyed reading classics from its rich literature. This came in handy for him to give tuition to earn additional income to fulfill unusually demanding family obligations. Apart from this, French Literature enhanced his interest in the process of literary creation, but

appears not to have had a substantive influence on him. His later literary works are resolute on his own local experiences and have no flavour of any far off land.

Pendse's is not a case of a duckling naturally taking to water. Hard lessons that he was learning in the school of life did not give him at least in the initial stages the leisure required for writing and getting published. He did not begin to address his audience till he reached 25, when his first short story was published in *Sahyadri*, a periodical that was known in those days for quality contributions from well-known literateurs.

Although his maiden attempt evoked favourable response and encouraged him to write more, Pendse was himself not happy about the progress he was making in literary pursuits. He, however, came out in 1949 with his first novel *Elgar* which ultimately brought to him the acclaim that he deserved. Events of the post-independence communal riots in India disturbed him deeply as they did every other sensitive Indian. A germ of Hindu-Muslim amity born in his mind developed into *Elgar*, a novel, which became a new path-fin-

der in Marathi Literature. Since then he has never looked back and has handled many literary forms – pen-portraits, novels, short stories, plays, histories. A couple of his plays have been performed over a thousand times. Several others have been performed over a hundred times. His real forte, however, has been the novel form and he is and perhaps will continue to be known as a novelist of par excellence.

If *Elgar* showed its writer as a bright new star on the literary firmament, Pendse's second novel *Haddapaar* projected him as a iconoclast, for this latter novel broke the typical mould into which Marathi novels were generally cast. A moving story of a primary school teacher, set in Konkan region, the narrative was and is widely appreciated for its realism and freshness.

Soon after *Haddapaar*, came another of his novels - *Garambicha Bapu* - which over the years has acquired the status of a modern classic in Marathi. In depicting a generation conflict between a rebellious village-boy whose integrity brings him in confrontation with a tradition bound world ready-to-be-exploited by the

village headman. Pendse's skill lies in his extra-ordinarily sensitive portraiture of both the generations. *Garambicha Bapu* was translated into English by Professor Ian Raeside of the University of London. On reading this translation the celebrated Tamil litterateur Ka.Na.Subramaniyan termed *Garambicha Bapu* as a 'timeless novel' and compared it with *Pather Panchali*. Narhar Kurundkar on reading the same novel, called him the greatest Marathi novelist of the Post-Independence era.

Every new novel of Pendse has thrown a new challenge before critics. For he has never stopped experimenting on the theme. Critics have reacted strongly against a new novel but in the end accepted that it is an advance over the earlier ones. As far as readers are concerned, they have welcomed Pendse's themes as well as style, both of which are different from those of his predecessors. Since World War II, literary taste has changed. A new generation of readers no longer enjoyed traditional plots. Earlier novels were, for them, either too romantic or too didactic. A new awareness of reality had pervaded other fields of Marathi litera-



Receiving Sahitya Akademi Award from Zakkir Hussain in 1964

ture, for instance, in poetry and the shortstory. The Marathi novel, however, was late in seeking a metamorphosis, and Pendse adapted his writing to fill the void. He was naturally hailed for freeing the novel from the fetters of conventional, romantic plot. With every new novel, Pendse strengthened the repertoire of a new genre, of which he was undoubtedly a pioneer in Marathi - a genre that came to be called at a later date the 'provincial novel'

Hattya, *Yashoda*, *Kalandar* followed and Pendse was slowly but surely on his way to consolidating his position as a trend-setting front-ranking contemporary novelist. In 1982, he published yet another classic - *Rathchakra* - which, according to him is his best creation so far. Professor Ian Raeside termed it as a classic of South Asia. It is an effective and convincing depiction of a lone battle fought by an inspired woman to educate her children. *Rathchakra* transcended the limits of regionalism, when it was serialised for the national television. *Lawhali*, a novel that followed *Rathchakra* was again cast in a different mould. It was in the form of diary-notes of a clerk written over a period of a decade. Critics this time raised their eyebrows questioning the propriety of calling *Lawhali* a novel. Discerning readers, however, welcomed the experiment. In *Octopus*, his next novel, Pendse departed from the beaten track and wrote about novoriche in Bombay. In 1979 followed *Aakant*, but it was only a prelude to a publication in 1983 of a magnum opus entitled *Tumbadche Khot*. This novel of gigantic proportions, spanning to nearly 125 years, with 150 characters, spilled over 1500 pages, created in Marathi, a history with its extra-ordinarily wide canvas. Pendse has proved wrong many a literary conventions and has remained at an enviable position for a long time with his integrity of artistic vision, industry and zeal to experiment.



With wife

A Select Bibliography

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HATTYA Bombay: Mauj Prakashan, 1954 284p. 21.5cm.

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Jayantilal Vithaldas Mehta, 1971
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With whitvar minister of Nebraska, U.S.A.



During 800th performance of his play 'Garambicha Bapu

A Chronology

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|---------|---|------|---|
| 1913 | Born, Murdi, Dist. Ratnagiri, Maharashtra | 1965 | 'Yashoda' staged by Experimental Theatre |
| 1931 | Matriculation | | 'Raje Master' and |
| 1938 | First Short story published | | 'Garambicha Bapu' staged by various professional troops |
| 1941 | First Collection of Portraits 'Khadkavaril Hirwal' published. | 1967 | 'Sambhusanchya Chalit' (Play) stood first in the state level Drama Competition and subsequently performed on professional stage |
| 1949 | First Novel 'Elgar' declared as the best of the year | 1968 | 'Sambhusanchya Chalit' again stood first in state level Drama Competition |
| 1955 | Rockfeller Foundation's Travelling Fellowship | 1970 | 'Chakravyuha' (Play) received State Government Award |
| 1955-56 | Travelled Worldwide. | | 'Asa Zala Ani Ujadala' appeared on stage |
| 1956 | 'Haddapaar' (Novel) Awarded by the Government of Maharashtra | 1974 | An Autobiography 'Shri. Na. Pendse : Manus Ani Lekhak' published |
| 1958 | Secretary, Annasaheb Karve Centenary Celebration Committee, Murud | 1975 | 'Rathchakra' (Play) performed on stage |
| | 'Hattya' (Novel) Awarded by the Government of Maharashtra | 1990 | Received 'Maharashtra Gaurav Puraskar' |
| 1960 | 'Kalandar' (Novel) Awarded by the Government of Maharashtra | | Inaugurated the Marathi Literary Conference at Ratnagiri |
| | First Play, 'Mahapoor' staged successfully | | |
| 1964 | Sahitya Akademi Award for 'Rathchakra' (Novel) | | |