



South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/csas20>

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To cite this article: Francesca Orsini (2022): The Post-Colonial Magazine Archive, South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies, DOI: [10.1080/00856401.2022.2038484](https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2022.2038484)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2022.2038484>



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Published online: 14 Mar 2022.



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The Post-Colonial Magazine Archive

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ABSTRACT

Indian magazines and print culture in general have been studied more thoroughly for the colonial period, but the 1950s–1970s have rightly been called the golden age of magazine culture. In Hindi literary lore, magazines loom large as the main platform for literature, where poets and fiction writers found readers and recognition and critics debated aesthetics and ideology. To borrow Amit Chaudhuri's phrase, magazines were sites of intense 'literary activism': an activism by editors on behalf of literature to champion new writers and encourage readers' tastes, but also a constant critical interrogation on the value and function of literature. Despite their ephemeral nature—particularly in the Hindi context where old books and periodicals tend to be sold in bulk as scrap paper—magazines embody, and capture for us eager after-readers, a lively community of readers and writers. This essay explores the multilingual 'ecology' of Hindi and English literary and middlebrow magazines, including *Kahānī*, *Kalpanā*, *Sārikā*, *Sarītā* and *Caravan*.

KEYWORDS

Literary activism;
magazines; multilingual
print ecology; short story

Everyday my sister-in-law and I quarrel. She says she'll read it, and I say I will. Mother gets very angry at these quarrels. She says, don't bring books that cause quarrels into the house.

—Letter to *Sarītā* (January 1950)

I learnt about many modern comforts from newspapers and advertisements. To the point that I knew what air hostesses are like from their pictures. This was necessary to be modern at no expense. It was what I wanted for my wife, too. That is, modern comforts were something one needed to know about.

—Vinod Kumar Shukla, in *Naukar kī Kamīz*, p. 17

Indian magazines in the 1950s and 1960s were many things to many different people: to some, like the sisters-in-law in this Mumbai household, they were a *taimpas* (time-pass) and an object of desire.¹ To writers, they were a lifeline and their main avenue

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1. Quoted in Aakriti Mandhwani, 'Sarītā and the 1950s Hindi Middlebrow Reader', in *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 53, no. 6 (2017), pp. 1797–1815 [1797], DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000890>; see also her pathbreaking PhD work, 'Everyday Reading: Commercial Magazines and Book Publishing in Post-Independence India', unpublished PhD dissertation, SOAS University of London, London, UK, 2018, p. 33.

for publication, but also their entry into a wide ‘family’ of writers, readers and critics. To very low-middle-class provincial readers like the clerk Santu Babu and his wife in Vinod Kumar Shukla’s novel, *Naukar kī Kamīz* (*The Servant’s Shirt*; see also Vikrant Dadawala in this issue), magazines were, alongside newspapers and cinema, windows into a larger world and into ‘being modern’, their glossy items and advertisements proxies for consumption in which they could not indulge (‘knitting a sweater was too expensive’), but about which they still wanted to know.²

That new Hindi writing first appeared in magazines is of course well known to Hindi readers and scholars. Editors and critics have focused on debates and camps within the literary field of the time, polarised between the Progressives and Experimentalists, while literary scholars have tended to extract stories, poems and essays without much dwelling on magazines as a site and an archive. Meanwhile, scholarship on magazines has tended to focus on colonial periodicals, or else on counter-cultural ‘little magazines’ (see Laetitia Zecchini in this issue).³ In fact, scholarship on literary magazines worldwide equates them with non-commercial and avant-garde ‘little magazines’.⁴ Yet, although 1950s Hindi and English magazines look quite different from the serious and hefty miscellanies that were their colonial and nationalist forebears, many were by no means small. With impressive circulation figures, and some highly illustrated, these magazines were entrepreneurial in their ‘literary activism’ and consciously sought to provide quality and affordable reading material.⁵ Editors actively solicited new texts and promoted new writers, invested in translations, kicked off debates, and sought to actively engage readers through essay and story competitions.⁶ Magazines, this essay argues, provided a much wider literary education than that of the school curriculum. They helped create a concrete and shared sense of Indian literature, and tied literature to contemporary political internationalisms, greatly widening their readers’ horizons in the process. The magazines’ temporality was oriented

2. Vinod Kumar Shukla, *Naukar kī Kamīz* (Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashan, 1979), p. 17. All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated. Mandhwani argues that ‘the post-1947 commercial magazine marks the emergence of the reader as a burgeoning consumer’: Mandhwani, ‘*Sarītā* and the 1950s Hindi Middlebrow Reader’, p. 1798.

3. For colonial magazines, see Vasudha Dalmia, *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions: Bhāratendu Hariścandra and Nineteenth-Century Banaras* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996); Francesca Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002); Shobna Nijhawan, *Women and Girls in the Hindi Public Sphere: Periodical Literature in Colonial North India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011); C. Ryan Perkins, ‘Partitioning History: The Creation of an *Islāmī Pablik* in Late Colonial India, c. 1880–1920’, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA, 2011; Jennifer Dubrow, ‘From Newspaper Sketch to “Novel”: The Writing and Reception of “Fasana-e Azad” in North India, 1878–1880’, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA, 2011; and Maryam Sikandar, ‘Oudh Punch (1877–1915): Satire and Parody in the Colonial Contact Zone’, unpublished PhD dissertation, SOAS University of London, London, UK, 2021. For ‘little magazines’, see Anjali Nerlekar, *Bombay Modern: Arun Kolatkar and Bilingual Literary Culture* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2016); Anjali Nerlekar, ‘“Melted Out of Circulation”: Little Magazines and Bombay Poetry in the ‘60s and ‘70s’, in Rosinka Chaudhuri (ed.), *History of Indian Poetry in English* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 190–202; and Laetitia Zecchini, ‘Archives of Minority: “Little” Publications and the Politics of Friendship in Post-Colonial Bombay’, in this issue.

4. Eric Bulson, *Little Magazine, World Form* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).

5. Figures from the Audit Bureau of Circulations (a voluntary publishers’ body formed in 1948) are hard to come by: according to Mandhwani, in 1960, *Sarītā* had a print run of 30,000 copies, and in 1964, BCCL’s Hindi *Dharmayug* had 107,000 subscribers, while its English *Illustrated Weekly of India* had 100,000: Mandhwani, ‘Everyday Reading’, p. 117.

6. Hindi magazines in the 1950s and 1960s, particularly invested in new writers, functioned ‘at a level below or prior to (or outside of) consecration’, to use Helgesson’s terms: Stefan Helgesson, ‘Literary Distance in Southern African Journals: The Case of *Charrua*’, webinar, 29 Sept. 2020 [<http://mulosige.soas.ac.uk/literary-distance-southern-african-journals>], accessed 16 Feb. 2022].

towards the present and the future, making their far-flung readers feel that they were in step with the new times.⁷

This essay engages with some of the conceptual and methodological issues arising from the post-colonial Indian (and particularly Hindi and English) magazine archive. Not only were magazines highly aware of each other, quoting each other's pieces and debates, writers regularly contributed to several periodicals, and editors moved from one magazine to another. Moreover, while work on 'little magazines' underscores their high literary status and consciously anti-commercial ethos, working with other magazines shows the magazine field as comprising both literary and commercial middlebrow magazines.⁸ Thinking through the ecology of magazines allows us to look beyond ideological differences and acknowledge other aspects of magazine activism, including their interconnections and their remarkable investment in translations and in special issues. Magazine ecology gives us a fresh perspective on the relationship between English and Hindi and other Indian languages: while the hierarchies between English and Hindi and between Hindi and other Indian languages remained firmly in place in education and public life, magazines show that in the *literary* domain, the position of Indian English writing was not hegemonic. Not only do magazines reveal the largely overlooked domain of local 'middlebrow English', they also show Hindi editors as supremely confident and English editors as comparatively defensive. Moreover, many Hindi editors, and some readers, clearly read in English and used English as a medium to access world literature. In turn, English editors actively acknowledged and sought out literature in Indian languages. For all these reasons, rather than thinking of English and Hindi magazines as belonging to two completely separate (and competitive) linguistic and literary fields, it is better to acknowledge but also bracket the language debates and consider the magazine field as a multilingual ecology.⁹

The paradoxes of the magazine archive

When working with the rich archive of post-colonial magazines, we are immediately faced with two paradoxes. First, magazines are an abundant archive that offers an excess of information, sensory inputs (covers, advertisements) and interesting juxtapositions. Reading about the visit of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser and his meeting with Bombay film stars next to an article about Hindi paperbacks (Figure 1) gives us an immediate sense of the breadth of the readers' horizon and provides clues about *what* was reputed interesting and *how* readers were supposed to take in information or entertainment. Nasser's article brings Non-Aligned internationalism home and makes it both glamorous and familiar, while the article on Hindi paperbacks signals the emergence of a new, serious Hindi reading

7. See Megan Robb's excellent discussion of the temporality of magazines and their ambition to bring even provincial readers in step with the changing times or *raftār-e zamāna*: Megan Eaton Robb, *Print and the Urdu Public: Muslims, Newspapers, & Urban Life in Colonial India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021).

8. See Mandhwani, 'Everyday Reading'.

9. This is what Nerlekar says about little magazines like Ashok Shahane's *Aso* and Raja Dhale's *Atta* in Marathi and Nissim Ezekiel's *Poetry India* in English: 'Another important feature of *Poetry India* is the easy housing of English poetry next to poetry from other regional languages. ... [W]hen the original English poems of R. Parthasarathy and Gieve Patel appear next to the translations from Marathi and Tamil in English by Chitre and Ramanujan (both of whom were poets in English as well as writers in Marathi and Tamil, respectively), the reader is left with a set of poems that deliberately erased the difference between the supposed nativism of Marathi and the purported foreignness of English': Nerlekar, *Bombay Modern*, p. 109.



Figure 1. (a) Articles on 'Pocketbooks in Hindi' and (b) 'Nasser and the Stars' on nearby pages in *Dharmyug* (24 April 1960). Source: Author's photographs, courtesy of the Regenstein Library, University of Chicago.

public. Visual clues signal literary seriousness in the case of Pasternak's obituary and exotic tradition in the translation of an African folktale (Figure 2).

At the same time, lore about editors and publishers has remained largely oral, and most Hindi magazines come with no publishers' archives, no minutes of editorial meetings and editorial decisions and no accounts of payments and sales.¹⁰ The correspondence of a few editors has been published, though not in a systematic fashion.¹¹ Even in the case of the revered Hindi monthly, *Sarasvatī* (1900–75), the vast godown and offices of the Indian Press contained no editorial papers when Mushtaq Ali undertook his ground-breaking study.¹² Shripat Rai, the editor of *Kahānī*, burnt all his papers when he closed down the magazine, and only a sack of random letters and invoices remained in his daughter's keep. Other Hindi publishers may well have kept their papers in their almirahs, but they are yet to come to light. As a result, and by large, we only have the magazines' texts—the 'open archive', to use Deepika Bahri's useful phrase (in this issue)—to infer and, frankly, guess why items were chosen and arranged the way they were: whether certain juxtapositions

10. The three volumes of Neelabh's *Hindī Sāhitya kā Maukhiḥ Itihās* (An Oral Literary of Hindi Literature) (Wardha/ New Delhi: Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtri Vishvavidyalaya, 2004), arranged anecdotally, are the result of an oral history project. The two volumes of Kamleshwar's autobiography, *Yadon ke Chiragh* (Delhi: Rajpal & Sons, 2007) and *Adharsilāen* (Delhi: Rajpal & Sons, 2008), are eloquent about magazines and literary debates in the 1950s and 1960s but are largely silent about Kamleshwar's own work as magazine editor.

11. For example, Baijnath Singh Vinod, *Dvivedī-Patrāvalī* (Kashi: Bharatiya Jnanpith, 1954).

12. Published as Mushtaq Ali, *Indiyan Pres Monograph* (Allahabad Museum, 2007).

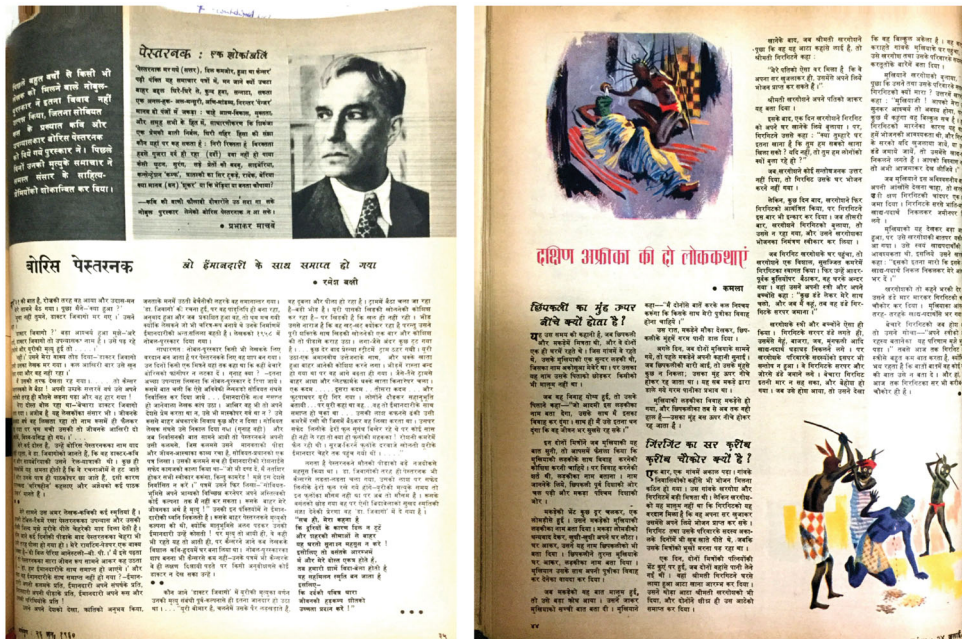


Figure 2. (a) Article on Boris Pasternak in *Dharmyug*, 26 May 1960, p. 35, and (b) 'Two South African Folktales' in *Dharmyug*, 24 July 1960, p. 44. Source: Author's photographs, courtesy of the Regenstein Library, University of Chicago.

(like between Nasser and Hindi paperbacks) were planned or random, and who the translators who enabled the intense magazine internationalism of this period were.

The other paradox has to do with the magazines' ephemerality versus their historical importance. For little magazines, it is a paradox between their very limited, non-commercial and often short-lived circulation—and the difficulty in sourcing or finding them (especially entire runs)—and their lasting historic significance, to the extent that the talented group of writers and artists assembled around a little magazine may lend its name to a generation—such was the case with *Vrishchik* (*Scorpion*, 1969–73) in Vadodra, India, *Souffle/Anfas* in Rabat, Morocco (1966–72) and *Charrua* (1984–86) in Maputo, Mozambique.¹³ But even for mainstream magazines like *Kahani*, *Sarika*, *Nai Kahaniyan*, *Sarita* and *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, the importance they held in people's lives—as the epigraphs show—and their efforts in producing 'durable literature' (*sthāyī sahitya* in Hindi) and very substantial, collectible special issues, starkly contrast with the readers' disregard for their preservation. Though some readers may have bound and preserved their files, and a few public libraries and publishers hold them, in most cases, magazines once read became *raddi*, paper to be sold by weight to itinerant waste collectors alongside empty bottles and jars.

13. For *Vrishchik*, see Nerlekar and Zecchini, 'World of Bombay Poets'; Olivia C. Harrison and Teresa Villa-Ignacio (ed.), *Souffles-Anfas: A Critical Anthology from the Moroccan Journal of Culture and Politics* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016); for *Charrua*, see Helgesson, 'Literary Distance in Southern African Journals'.

Magazine activism

Laetitia Zecchini has highlighted the ‘literary activism’ of 1960s Indian little magazines set up by avant-garde artists and poets who published, reviewed and translated each other while cultivating a resolute marginality as their preferred form of ex-centric cosmopolitanism.¹⁴ The literary activism of Hindi magazines, particularly story magazines and commercial, middlebrow magazines, was of a different kind. These magazines aimed at developing a new generation of Hindi readers and writers and broadening their horizons. Middlebrow magazines like *Sarītā* and the English *Caravan*, both published by the Delhi Press and edited by Vishvanath, were digests that catered to the whole family and promoted both information and consumption.¹⁵ Story magazines embraced literature as a democratic idea, and aimed at providing plentiful, good and affordable reading material that would help form readers’ character and refine their tastes. *Kahānī* (*Story*, edited by Shripat Rai and Bhairavprasad Gupta, 1954), for example, boasted of publishing ‘good stories at a good price’ and offering ‘750 pages at Rs3 per annum’; it also encouraged readers and young writers to come together and form *Kahānī Clubs* to exchange views on the stories published.¹⁶ Progressive writer and *Hans* editor Amrit Rai’s letter to *Kahānī*’s editor (his younger brother) captures the aim of the magazine and of the short story:

I hope that *Kahānī* will free Hindi readers from the clutches of *Māyā* and *Manohar Kahānīyām* [low-brow story magazines]. Helping to pass the time on a railway journey is not the only goal of a story. A story helps understand the map of life; it prepares one to respond to every turn in life; it enters one’s heart and slowly begins to shape one’s mind in a new mould, which is the mould of a better, more compassionate, human, and sensitive person. A story takes up all aspects of life, all sides. It contains all kinds of characters, all kinds of circumstances in life, sweet and bitter truths. Readers educated through good stories find themselves stronger and better equipped to face life.¹⁷

Amrit Rai’s programmatic suggestions for *Kahānī* capture what the magazine in fact was doing already:

1. Publish translations of the world masters (*ustād*) of the story: Tolstoy, Chekhov, Turgenev, Gorky, Maupassant, Balzac, O. Henry, Jack London, etc. Their literature has been hardly translated into Hindi, and often very badly.

14. Laetitia Zecchini, ‘Translation as Literary Activism: On Invisibility and Exposure, Arun Kolatkar and the Little Magazine Conspiracy’, in Amit Chaudhuri (ed.), *Literary Activism: A Symposium* (Norwich: Boiler House Press, 2017), pp. 27–55.

15. Middlebrow is here not a dismissive term but rather refers to literature appealing to ‘general’ and ‘generalist’ readers: see Janice Radway, *A Feeling for Books: The Book-of-the-Month Club, Literary Taste, and Middle Class Desire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), quoted in Mandhwani, ‘*Sarītā* and the 1950s Hindi Middlebrow Reader’, p. 1800.

16. ‘We are launching a *Kahānī Club* in order to promote closeness (*ghaṇiṣṭhā*) among readers, writers, critics and editors. In this club, we’ll discuss together stories published in *Kahānī* and in other magazines, short story literature, the art of the story and all other related matters’: *Kahānī* (Mar. 1954), p. 23. The following year, the editor boasted that ‘For Rs3 readers get 752 pages, 125 stories and 12 *Pustakālay* [‘Library’ columns]. If you calculate in terms of *annas* [i.e. 1/16th of a rupee], you get 12 pages (or 24 book-size pages) per *anna*, i.e. two excellent stories and one *Pustakālay* [column] *Kahānī* costs half of any other magazine and one fourth of a book’: Editorial, *Kahānī* (Jan. 1955), p. 23. The annual price rose to Rs5½ in 1956, still little more than half that of *Caravan* and *Sarītā* (Rs10 per annum).

17. Amrit Rai, letter, *Kahānī* (May 1954), pp. 52–3.

2. Translate the best stories from Indian languages: not just Urdu and Bengali, but also Marathi, Telugu, Tamil. Publish an Urdu and Bengali story in every issue. Not at random, but choosing the best ones.
3. Don't fall for the temptation of older/established writers in Hindi—look for new talent.
4. Publish humorous stories, one per issue. There is a strong tradition in Bengali, Urdu, English, yet hardly in Hindi.¹⁸

In other words, stories should not be just for 'taimpas' but must be original and 'unforgettable', challenging readers and budding writers without descending into obscurity or opacity. *Nāī Kahānīyān* and *Sārikā* encouraged discussions of the story as a genre by publishing readers' letters in response to particular stories or issues: these often involved affective responses and 'making the story one's own' (in Hindi, *apnānā*) by retelling its plot.¹⁹ A long-running topic of the *Kahānī Club* pages was, 'Is entertainment the aim of the story?', with respondents overwhelmingly writing that entertainment was important but could not be the *only* aim.²⁰ *Sārikā* included columns like 'X: In Their Own Eyes', and its story quizzes rewarded attentive readers.²¹ Kamleshwar's short editorials emphasised the role of the story as running parallel (*samānāntar*) to readers' lives—not a reflection but an attempt to express the language of their dreams, aspirations, concerns and desires; he called writers 'fellow travellers' (*sahyātrī*) in the readers' struggles as 'ordinary people' (*sāmānya jan*).²²

Magazines like *Kahānī*, *Jñānoday*, *Kalpanā*, *Nāī Kahānīyān*, *Dharmyug* and *Sārikā* seriously invested in young talent, and their table of contents, particularly of their bulky special issues, read like a *Who's Who* of the new generation of Hindi writers—from Nirmal Varma and Ramkumar to Mohan Rakesh, Mannu Bhandari, Rajendra Yadav, Kamleshwar himself, Krishna Sobti, Dharmavir Bharati, Phanishwar Nath Renu, Shrilal Shukla, Raghuvir Sahay, and so on.²³ Competitions for the best story in *Kahānī* and *Sarītā* encouraged and highlighted new talent, while the *Sarītā* column 'Naye Añkur' ('New Shoots', from June 1952) invited readers to submit their own stories.²⁴

Translations were key to the activism of several magazines and to their project of broadening the horizon of readers and writers.²⁵ They were also key to literary nation-building. In the context of the new multilingual nation, Indian literature was an *ideal*

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 53–4.

19. Other running themes were: 'an unforgettable story' and 'my favorite story and writer'. Readers often expressed their reactions in affective terms ('I was stunned', 'I was completely absorbed', 'I was moved', 'I laughed out loud') and retold their favourite story in their own words.

20. See *Kahānī* (Sept. 1956), pp. 70–3.

21. For an example of the story quiz, see *Sārikā*, 'Kathā-Pahelī' ('Story Quiz') (Jan. 1970), p. 4.

22. '*Sāmānya jan aur sahyātrī lekha*' was Kamleshwar's formula for *Sārikā* (*Starling*): see, for example, the June 1973 issue.

23. The January 1955 special issue of *Kahānī* includes such modern classics as Krishna Sobti's 'Bādalōn ke Ghērē' ('Gathering Clouds'), Mannu Bhandari's 'Śmaśān' ('Cremation Ground'), Kamleshwar's 'Kasbe kā Admī' ('Small-Town Man') and Agyeya's 'Kalākār ki Mukti' ('Artist's Deliverance').

24. For story competitions, see *Kahānī* (Jan. 1956): the second prize winners in that issue were Amarkant with 'Diptī Kalaktarī', pp. 41–52, and Kamleshwar with 'Rājā Nirbamsiyā', pp. 98–113; and *Sarītā* (April 1959), p. 82, for example. For essay competitions, see *Caravan*: 'Should Students Take Part in Politics?' (Feb. 1950), p. 30, for example. For 'Naye Añkur', see Mandhwani, 'Everyday Reading', p. 49. An article by J.L. Srivastava encouraged and instructed readers on how to become writers: 'Lekha Baniye', *Sarītā* (Dec. 1959), pp. 47–9.

25. Not all magazines invested in translations. For example, the focus of *Kalpanā* (Hyderabad, 1949, edited by Aryendra Sharma) was firmly on the Hindi literary world, and it published all the established and emerging writers across the ideological spectrum. Its book reviews and critical articles carried particular weight.

rather than an existing corpus of texts or literary concepts, Preetha Mani has recently argued.²⁶ But regular translations from Indian languages helped make visible creativity in other languages and forge a sense of Indian literature as a shared enterprise in the making. And even before the official Indian academy of letters, the Sahitya Akademi, established English and Hindi magazines called *Indian Literature* (1957) and *Samkālīn Bhāratīy Sāhitya* (*Contemporary Indian Literature*, 1980), Hindi monthly magazines were assembling a corpus of contemporary Indian literature for their Hindi readers.²⁷ In fact, only half of every issue of *Kahānī* was dedicated to Hindi stories; the other half contained stories from other Indian languages. Each issue of the magazine carried at least one Bangla and one Urdu story, and regular stories from Punjabi, Marathi and Gujarati, and less regularly from Kashmiri, Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, Kannada, and even Sindhi. New stories by Urdu writers such as Manto, Chughtai (‘Ismat āpā’, or elder sister), Razia Sajjad Zaheer (‘Razia āpā’), Khadija Mastur and Hajra Masrur, Krishan Chander, K.A. Abbas, Rajinder Singh Bedi, and Ahmad Nadeem Qazmi were published with great fanfare (‘Razia āpā writes very little ...’). Particularly in the case of Saadat Hasan Manto, Ismat Chughtai and Krishan Chander, their stories seem to have been published in Hindi at the same time as they appeared in Urdu.²⁸ Stories by Manto, Chughtai and Ahmad Nadim Qasimi in Urdu; Parashuram, Nabendu Ghosh, Narendranath Mitra and Samaresh Basu in Bengali; Karttar Singh Duggal, Santokh Singh Sekhon and Gurvel Singh in Punjabi; Nadim in Kashmiri; and Akilan in Tamil appeared often enough in *Kahānī* that the editor could refer to them with familiarity: ‘Gurvel Singh, the author of “Our Village”, is prominent among young Punjabi writers. You must certainly remember his story “Ga-Ge-Gi”’.²⁹ The ‘*Bhāratīy Kahānī Viśeṣāṅk*’ (‘Indian Story Special Issue’), edited by Kamleshwar for the magazine *Nāī Kahānīyān* (*New Short Stories*, November 1964), included stories from seven Indian languages, while *Sārikā* was the first Hindi mainstream magazine to introduce Marathi Dalit writers to Hindi readers (April 1975).

Translations were also a means—as Amrit Rai had suggested—to teach readers and budding writers the art of the story. Consistent with this pedagogical impulse, *Kahānī* translated older stories by recognised ‘masters of the craft’ like Guy de Maupassant, Anton Chekhov, O. Henry, William Saroyan, Jack London, Arthur Schnitzler, Theodor Storm and W. Somerset Maugham. *Sārikā* did the same, and compounded translations with a column of critical reflections on ‘*Kahānī Kyā Hai: Ustādon kī Dr̥ṣṭi Se*’ (‘What Is a Story? From the Masters’ Point of View’). These included older authors like Fyodor Dostoevsky, Anton Chekhov and Gustave Flaubert, as well as contemporary authors and critics like Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, Aldous Huxley (‘a short story is like science’), D.H. Lawrence, William Faulkner, Jack Kerouac, Norman Mailer and

26. Preetha Mani, *The Idea of Indian Literature: Gender, Genre, and Comparative Method* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2022).

27. When it was—for a short time—the organ of the Indian Literary Council (Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad) on the eve of Independence, before it became a Progressive organ, the monthly *Hans* (founded by Premchand and taken over by Amrit Rai) invested heavily in translations from Indian languages, experimenting also with transliterated texts as well as translations.

28. For example, Manto’s ‘*Tobā Tek Sinh*’, written in 1954, appeared in Hindi in *Kahānī* (Jan. 1955) and was published in Urdu in his 1955 collection, *Phundne*: see Ayesha Jalal, *The Pity of Partition: Manto’s Life, Times, and Work across the India-Pakistan Divide* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), p. 122.

29. Editorial, *Kahānī* (April 1955), p. 4.

Colin Wilson.³⁰ The then middlebrow English magazine *Caravan* offered condensed European classics (from Eugene Sue's *Mysteries of Paris* to Charles Dickens' *The Old Curiosity Shop*) and a regular 'Story from around the World' slot, which combined the aim to systematically cover the world with a random choice of writers and pieces.³¹

Magazines thus chose different strategies to make the world, and world literature, visible to their readers: essays, translations, snippets of news and brief paratexts. If *Kahānī* published translations of model stories, the literary magazine *Yugchetnā* (1955), whose mission was to 'introduce Hindi writers and readers to the developed level of world literature', did so indirectly through critical articles that largely reproduced the Anglo- and Eurocentric bias of its academic editors.³² *Kalpanā* published only a few foreign stories a year (by Ernesto Palacio Valdes, William Saroyan, Romain Rolland and Lu Xun), but it translated detailed and dense survey articles of recent foreign writings, originally published in the US magazine, *Books Abroad*. By contrast, most foreign stories published in *Kahānī* were from China, Eastern Europe and Russia, while European modernist stories by the likes of Franz Kafka, James Joyce, and so on, were notably absent. *Kahānī* also translated Jomo Kenyatta's fable, 'Gentlemen of the Jungle' (May 1955), as an example of anti-colonial writing, possibly the first African story to appear in an Indian magazine.³³

In this era of Cold War and decolonisation, which parts of the world were made visible and which foreign literatures and authors were featured also correlated with different political internationalisms.³⁴ In *Nāi Kahānīyān* and then *Sārikā*, Kamleshwar used the form of what I call the 'spectacular special issue' to greatly enhance the visibility of Latin American, African, Middle Eastern and South-East and East Asian literatures. Already in the *Videśī Kahānī Viśeṣāṅk* ('Foreign Story Special Issue') of *Nāi Kahānīyān* in 1964, only three out of thirteen stories were by European writers, and only one each from Western Europe and North America; the other stories were all from Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. The same is true of *Sārikā*'s *Viśvakahānī Viśeṣāṅk* ('World Story Special Issue', January 1969): only two stories were by contemporary Western European writers (Heinrich Böll and Alain Robbe-Grillet), another was by a North American author (Henry Slazer), and two each by writers from the Soviet Union (Viktor Kutetski and the minority writer Vladimir Sangi) and Eastern Europe (Milovan Djilas and Judith Fenekal); the other 23 were by writers from Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America, including stalwarts like Joaõ Guimaraes Rosa, Mario Benedetti, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (then James Ngugi),

30. For Camus' views about the short story, see *Sārikā* (Feb. 1965), pp. 57–8, 83.

31. For instance, the Chinese story was by the Greek-Irish Lafcadio Hearn (*Caravan*, Sept. 1950), the Arabian one by Romanian-American Konrad Bercovici (*Caravan*, Nov. 1950), and the Turkish one by the Canadian Charles Roberts (*Caravan*, May 1951).

32. The first issue of *Yugchetnā* (Lucknow, Jan. 1955, edited by Dr. Devraj, Rs8 per annum) included an article on 'China's cultural tradition' and another on Henry James, while the editorial quoted Toynbee and Spengler. Later issues featured articles on ancient Greek theatre, Sappho, modern Chinese poetry, Dante, Disraeli, Benjamin Constant, E.M. Forster on the novel *Existentialism*, Herbert Read, T.S. Eliot, Andre Gide, etc.

33. Between 1954 and 1957, *Kahānī* published nine Chinese, eight Russian stories (four by Anton Chekhov) and six stories from Eastern Europe. I am still unsure why the editorial column '*Kahānī kī Bāt*' ('About the Story') carefully introduced each Indian story and its writer but did not do so with foreign stories and authors, with the exception of Lu Xun, Maxim Gorky and Jomo Kenyatta.

34. I discuss this topic in greater detail in 'Literary Activism: The Short Story, the Magazine, and the World', in F. Orsini et al. (eds), *The Form of Ideology and the Ideology of Form: Cold War, Decolonization and Third World Print Cultures* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, forthcoming).

Mohammad Hejazi, Mochtar Lubis, Abioseh Nicol and Mahmud Taymur.³⁵ While the political emphasis on decolonisation and on literatures from the ‘Global South’ (*Dakṣiṇ Golārddh*) and the Third World (*Tīsri Duniyā*) is evident in Kamleshwar’s editorial in this issue and in the *Tīsri Duniyā Viśeṣāṅk* (‘Third World Special Issue’) of January 1973, the stories by Guimarães Rosa, Jorge Luis Borges and Mohammad Hejazi, among others, bely a simple alignment with Leftist internationalism.³⁶ Rather, Kamleshwar’s editorial for the 1969 special issue, ‘*Donon Taṭon se Ūbkar*’ (‘Tired of Both Shores’), started from the experience of colonisation and underdevelopment in ‘the whole southern half of the globe’, which had produced a ‘struggle for economic freedom’ in which human beings had ‘become prey to disintegration (*vighaṭan*), despondency (*badhavāsi*), lack of values (*mūlyahīntā*), and cold cruelty’. But these, he continued, were ‘superficial and bi-dimensional matters’. There was ‘a third dimension, extremely delicate and abstract. And very concrete and deep, like the “third bank of the river” in Rosa’s story in this issue. This is the common fundamental voice of all the stories. The voice of the fate of living midstream, tired of both shores’.³⁷ Here Kamleshwar, who in the context of Hindi literary debates was loosely aligned with the Progressives but critical of their ideological stranglehold, combined a post-colonial reading of the Cold War and the Third World with a vindication of the autonomy and literature and its critical insight.

Not that all special issues of *Nāi Kahānīyān* and *Sārikā* were as political.³⁸ Other issues presented ‘Love Stories’ (*Nāi Kahānīyān*, December 1963), ‘War Stories’ (*Sārikā*, January 1970), ‘Stories from Neighbouring Countries’ (*Sārikā*, August 1973), ‘The World’s Very Short Story’ (*Laghukathā*, *Sārikā*, October 1973), ‘The Courtesan in World Literature’ (*Sārikā*, November 1973), and so on. The issue ‘*Viśvakahānī kī Khoj*’ (‘In Search of the World Story’, *Sārikā*, January 1970) provided a bold historical panorama of the story from its origins in Mesopotamia, Egypt, India and China through to Renaissance and the early modern tales and to modern and contemporary stories, including Kafka and Joyce. It also included an ambitious historical essay by Kamleshwar and as many as 86 stories and very short stories (*laghukathā*).³⁹ ‘India in World Literature’ (*Sārikā*, January 1971) was another ambitious effort that collected essays, travelogues and stories about India from authors as diverse as (in this order) Hermann Hesse (*Siddhartha*), Leo Tolstoy, Thomas Mann, Mark Twain, Ryunosuke Akutagawa, E.M. Forster, Guy de Maupassant, Christopher Isherwood, V.S. Naipaul, Rudyard Kipling, Jack Kerouac, Aldous Huxley, Voltaire, Paul Gauguin, Elia Kazan, *Alif Laila*, John Masters, Niccolò Manucci, Afanasev Nikitin, Abdurazzaq Samarkandi, Ibn Battuta, Firdawsī, Shiva Naipaul, Sir Richard Burton and Stefan Zweig.⁴⁰ The rag-tag order of the pieces suggests the specific premium of the magazine on engaging readers rather than directly teaching them or scaring them off.

35. See *Sārikā* (Jan. 1969).

36. In his recollections, Kamleshwar explicitly mentions *Lotus*, the magazine of the Leftist Afro-Asian Writers’ Bureau: Kamleshwar, *Yadon ke Chiragh*, p. 8.

37. Kamleshwar, ‘Donon Taṭon se Ūbkar’, *Sārikā* (Jan. 1969), p. 7.

38. Other issues of *Sārikā* that combine a strong political thrust with a wide range of literary aesthetics include ‘African Literature’ (Jan. 1975), which largely drew on Ellis Ayitey Komey and Ezekiel Mphahlele (eds), *Modern African Stories* (London: Faber, 1964), and ‘Palestinian Resistance Literature’ (Mar. 1977).

39. Kamleshwar, ‘*Viśvakahānī kī Yātrā*’, *Sārikā* (Jan. 1970), pp. 44–7.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Magazines were a democratic medium thanks to their cheap price, accessible format and active engagement with ordinary readers. Despite being an ephemeral medium, magazines like *Kahānī*, *Kalpanā*, *Nai Kahāniyān* and *Sārikā* invested in the creation of a corpus of 'stable literature' and in the formation of discerning readers and new writers. Their special issues, many of them truly innovative and 'spectacular', vastly broadened readers' horizons, made whole new parts of world literature visible, and allowed Hindi readers to situate Indian literature within world literature.⁴¹ Meanwhile, translations from Indian languages made the abstract idea of Indian literature graspable. Magazines made modernity and literary cosmopolitanism accessible at very little expense.

An ecology of magazines

Everywhere there is a demand for 'more *culture* and more of our own *culture*!' ... The problem now is not of too few journals, but of too many (250 applications for new licenses in UP alone!). This will produce a vicious circle of more required literature—higher reward—little choice—bad publishers and competition among publishers.

—Agyeya, 'Periodical Literature, New Writing', in *Pratik* (1947)⁴²

Big industrial families (*gharāne*) were running large periodicals. They needed big names as editors, that is writers who were established and accepted in the literary field. It was an experiment that had started not with Hemchandra Joshi but [earlier] with Ilachandra Joshi.... A different kind of experiment in the sense that the editor had to be not a journalist but a *littérateur*. By then, cultural and literary horizons had opened up together with the national horizon.

Kamleshwar, *Ādhārśilāen*, p. 169

What do I mean by magazine ecology? When we consider magazines as a field, we think of magazines in a single language, hierarchically distributed into more or less literary ('restricted' or commercial, to use Bourdieu's terms) and according to ideological and aesthetic positions.⁴³ From this perspective, Agyeya's magazine, *Pratik* (*Symbol*, 1947), so wary of the flood of new periodicals, and *Kalpanā* (Hyderabad, 1949, edited by Aryendra Sharma), with its artistic covers by M.F. Husain (its proprietor and art director were collectors Badrivishal Pitti and Jagdish Mittal), its sober white pages and unashamedly literary content (it called itself 'a high-standard

41. *Sārikā's* special issues in particular included Hindi writers (as representatives of Indian literature, as Preetha Mani has suggested in *The Idea of Indian Literature*) among world writers: for example, its special issue on '25 Best Stories' includes Premchand and Manto alongside Stefan Zweig (as a 'German author' [*sic*]), Katherine Mansfield, Lord Dunsany ('Irish specialist of very short stories'), Guy de Maupassant, Anton Chekhov, Maxim Gorky, Dostoevsky, Jean-Paul Sartre ('existentialist and France's most famous writer'), O. Henry, Saki, Jorge Luis Borges, W. Somerset Maugham, D.H. Lawrence, Mark Twain, Sherwood Anderson, Stephen Crane, Cristiana Aidoo, Mahmud Taymur ('the most famous and lauded story writer in the Arab world'), Ernest Hemingway, Karel Čapek, Isaak Babel ('a disciple of Gorky's'), Osamu Dazai ('Japanese story writer, pessimist, nihilist'), Luigi Pirandello, Edgar Allan Poe, Lu Xun, Ray Bradbury ('world-famous science fiction writer'), Frank O'Connor, Pär Lagerqvist and Bernard Malamud: *Sārikā* (Jan. 1972), pp. 6–7. This special issue is more canonical than others and includes far more European and American authors, but it still includes several Arabic, African and Japanese writers, and pushes the boundaries of the literary genre by including science fiction.

42. S.H. Vatsyayan, 'Samayik Sāhitya, Nayi Lekhani' ('Periodical Literature, New Writing'), in *Pratik*, Vol. 1, no. 3 (Autumn 1947), pp. 121–2.

43. Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed', in *Poetics*, Vol. 13, nos. 4–5 (1983), pp. 311–56, DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-422X\(83\)90012-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-422X(83)90012-8). For ideological positions within the Hindi magazine field, see Kamleshwar, *Ādhārśilāen*.

literary and cultural monthly’), count as ‘highbrow’. *Nāi Kahāniyān* was literary and ideologically aligned to the Progressive movement; *Kahānī* was also literary but more ideologically and aesthetically eclectic. On a different scale, the weekly *Dharmyug*, which called itself ‘India’s Prestige Hindi Illustrated Weekly’, pursued under Dharamvir Bharati’s editorship (1959–) what Aakriti Mandhwani has termed ‘middlebrow cosmopolitanism’, which she defines as ‘a cosmopolitanism that was made accessible and approachable, while fulfilling the middlebrow curiosity or “need to know”, in addition to providing a range of pleasures to the readers’.⁴⁴ The Delhi Press’ *Sarītā* (1945, edited by Vishvanath) was determinedly middlebrow, and the Maya Press story magazines, *Rasīlī Kahāniyān* (*Juicy Stories*) and *Manohar Kahāniyān* (*Pleasing Stories*), with their lurid pictures and sensational crime and love stories, were unashamedly lowbrow. We would then consider contemporary English magazines like *Quest* (Bombay, ICCF, 1954, edited by Nissim Ezekiel), *The Illustrated Weekly of India* (Bombay, Bennett Coleman and Company Limited, BCCL, which also prints *The Times of India*, edited by C.R. Mandy) and *Caravan* (New Delhi, Delhi Press, 1940, edited by Vishvanath) as belonging to quite a separate field.⁴⁵ Thinking of Hindi and English magazines together as part of the same ecology, instead, allows us to broaden our purview beyond literary magazines and to consider overlaps across magazines and across languages beyond the oppositional logic of ideology and of linguistic fields.⁴⁶

For one thing, the ecology of magazines helps us focus on the sites of sociability where editors and writers from different periodicals collected—not just editorial offices but also the inexpensive coffee and tea houses in cities like Allahabad and Delhi.⁴⁷ It also helps us trace the movement of peripatetic writers and editors from city to city and to different publications and positions across the field. Communist writer Bhairav Prasad Gupta (1918–95), for example, first edited the Maya Press’ lowbrow magazine *Manohar Kahāniyān* (1944–53) before moving to the literary magazine *Kahānī* (1954–60) and then to the Progressive story magazine *Nāi Kahāniyān* (1960–63).⁴⁸ Kamleshwar, himself a celebrated short story writer and a protagonist of the *Nai Kahani* (New Story) group, began working for *Kahānī* in Allahabad before he moved to Delhi in the early 1960s, where he edited a foreign affairs periodical, *Īngit*, and supported himself through translation work for the Delhi Press.⁴⁹ Offered the editorship of both *Sārikā* and *Nāi Kahāniyān*, Kamleshwar initially opted for *Nāi Kahāniyān* (1963–66) on ideological grounds, but then moved to *Sārikā* (1966–78), attracted by

44. Mandhwani, ‘Everyday Reading’, p. 142.

45. For *Quest*, see Laetitia Zecchini, ‘What Filters Through the Curtain: Reconsidering Indian Modernisms, Travelling Literatures, and Little Magazines in a Cold War Context’, in *Interventions*, Vol. 22, no. 2 (2020), pp. 172–194, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2019.1649183>.

46. ‘Ecology, like economics, deals in how scarce resources get distributed in a given context—but where economic models tend to suggest a single winner, and a single winning strategy, ecology suggests that there can be multiple strategies for surviving in different niches’: Rosie Clarke, ‘Interviewing Alexander Beecroft, Author of *An Ecology of World Literature*’, in *Asymptote* (25 Jan. 2016) [<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/blog/2016/01/25/interviewing-alexander-beecroft-author-of-an-ecology-of-world-literature>, accessed 16 Feb. 2022].

47. See Baldev Vanshi, *Delhi Tī Hāus* (Delhi: National, 2009).

48. ‘When I found out, at the end of 1959, that Shripat Rai had decided to make *Kahānī* a commercial magazine with the help of Ramnarayan Shukla, I resigned in January 1960 with fifteen days’ notice’: quoted in Madhuresh, *Bhairav Prasād Gupta* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2000), p. 77.

49. Kamleshwar, ‘Tī Hāus: Ab Na Rahe Ve Pinevāle’, in Baldev Vanshi, *Delhi Tī Hāus* (Delhi: National, 2009), pp. 76–8.

the much greater possibilities offered by BCCL.⁵⁰ The move of Experimentalist stalwart Dharamvir Bharati to BCCL's Hindi weekly *Dharmyug* in 1959 has been variously hailed as a brilliant step that raised the standards of Hindi journalism or as the sacrifice of a talented writer to the demands of the market.⁵¹ Agyeya switched between editing Hindi and English periodicals, and in its short life, his literary monthly *Pratik* (1947–52) moved from Allahabad to Delhi.⁵² This is to say that although many writers at the time were wary of working for the government or for 'big industrial *gharāne*', as Kamleshwar put it, that was the reality of the employment on offer. Given the writers' need for income and the editors' for material, it is not too unusual to find stories by literary writers—Rajendra Yadav, Mohan Rakesh, even Dostoevsky!—in high-, middle- and even lowbrow magazines.⁵³ Again, while 'field' suggests a clear hierarchical and ideological distribution, 'ecology' reflects this more nuanced picture.

Moreover, magazines themselves, already in the colonial period, surveyed the broader literary field, reviewing literary gatherings and festivals, pieces and debates in other magazines, and publications in other languages.⁵⁴ *Kalpanā* ran a regular column that informed readers about new articles, stories and translations, and it occasionally reviewed news beyond Hindi.⁵⁵ *Sarītā* undertook a similar exercise on an annual scale, commissioning veteran critic Manmath Nath Gupta to write forty-page surveys of the best publications in Hindi over the past year, including novels, short stories, poems, non-fiction books, children's books and translations of foreign books and from other Indian languages.⁵⁶

It is useful to think of the ecology of post-colonial magazines as multilingual, in more ways than one. Multilingual competence, whether in English and *bhasha* or in more than one Indian language, characterised many editors, writers and readers.⁵⁷ Large publishers, too, were multilingual, and had been so already in the colonial

50. 'I still remember that evening well: the three of us, [Mohan] Rakesh, [Jawahir] Chaudhri and I chatted and walked from Ansari Road in Daryaganj to Asaf Ali Road. On the footpath in front of Delite Cinema I decided, there and then, that I should accept the offer of editing *Nai Kahāniyān*, not *Sārikā* Because *Nai Kahāniyān* is an intellectual magazine ... it's the bearer of an extremely important movement, a movement with which we were not only connected but in whose creation we had invested a lot. We discussed salary and opportunities. *Sārikā* would surely offer four times the salary and ten times the opportunities ...': Kamleshwar, *Adharsīlaen*, p. 190.

51. Mandhwani, 'Everyday Reading', chap. 3.

52. He edited the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom (ICCF) English periodical, *Thought*.

53. 'Mohan Rakesh and Rajendra Yadav were very stable presences' in *Sarītā*, writing short stories and essays since 1949: Mandhwani, 'Everyday Reading', p. 69. See, for example, Rajendra Yadav's story, '*Beśaram*' ('Shameless') in *Sarītā* (Jan. 1960), p. 66; for Dostoevsky's story in lowbrow magazines, see Mandhwani, 'Everyday Reading', p. 165.

54. For such activism by the *Modern Review* and *The Indian PEN* magazines, see F. Orsini, 'World Literature, Indian Views, 1920s–1940s', in *Journal of World Literature*, Vol. 4, no. 1 (2019), pp. 56–80, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1163/24056480-00401002>; and Laetitia Zecchini, 'Practices, Constructions and Deconstructions of "World Literature" and "Indian Literature" from the PEN All-India Centre to Arvind Krishna Mehrotra', in *Journal of World Literature*, Vol. 4, no. 1 (2019), pp. 81–105, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1163/24056480-00401005>.

55. Called '*Sahitya Dhārā*' ('Literary Current'), it reviewed, in one issue, Hindi magazines outside North India; recent articles by Rahul Sankrityayan and Muktibodh (from *Rāṣṭrabhārati*); a critique of Agyeya's controversial account of recent Hindi literature for a Sahitya Akademi function and volume (from *Sahitya Sandeś*); 'I could not find anything notable to read in fiction in the last month', the columnist concluded: *Kalpanā* (Nov. 1958), pp. 2–6.

56. See M. Gupta, '1958 kā Hindi Sāhitya', in *Sarītā* (Jan. 1959), pp. 21–50, (Feb. 1959), pp. 51–60. He singled out the first volume of Yashpal's novel *Jhūthā Sach* but glossed over Mohan Rakesh's play *Aṣārḥ kā Ek Din*.

57. The examples are too many to list: both Shripat and Amrit Rai read Urdu and Bangla beside Hindi and English; Agyeya read and wrote in English and translated from Bangla; Arun Kolatkar and Dilip Chitre wrote in Marathi and English; A.K. Ramanujan in Kannada and English, etc.

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Figure 3. Advertisement for BCCL's periodicals in *Sarika*, January 1965, p. 83. Source: Courtesy of the Regenstein Library, University of Chicago.

period, maximising investment by reusing materials in one language or platform for readers in another language, while also catering to specific constituencies.⁵⁸ This trend continued after Independence, as the array of periodicals brought out by BCCL (Figure 3) shows.

The enterprising Delhi Press also brought out the English monthly *Caravan* (1940, edited by Vishwanath) and the Hindi and Urdu *Sarita* (Hindi 1945, Urdu 1959, edited by Vishwanath). While the magazines can be read as individual texts, they reward consideration as part of a single conglomerate. Advertised as 'India's largest selling English monthly' and a 'Magazine for relaxation', *Caravan* combined serious articles about Indian and foreign politics ('Criminal Justice in India', 'The Prime Minister's American Tour', 'From Abyssinia to Korea', 'The Chinese Double-Game in Indonesia', 'Racial Strife in South Africa') with Bimla Luthra's humorous sketches on Indian everyday politics and a column on Delhi gossip ('Capital Currents'). *Caravan's* feature section included 'famous novels condensed', mostly world classics (from Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* to Dickens' *The Little Curiosity Shop* or Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*) but occasionally also

58. See Ulrike Stark, *An Empire of Books: The Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2007); see also Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere*; and Ali, *Indiyan Pres Monograph*.

Indian classics (like Bankim Chandra's *The Poison Tree*). It included 'short stories from around the world' (see above) and translated stories and poems from Indian languages, including works by Buddhadev Basu, Sitakant Mahapatra and Nanduri Subbarao; survey articles on Indian literatures ('Five Urdu Poets', 'The Two Joshes', 'Telugu Literature') also appeared regularly.⁵⁹

Mostly, however, *Caravan's* original stories reveal an archive of Anglo-Indian fiction, overwhelmingly set in India, that is quite far from the familiar post-colonial canon and that deserves further scrutiny. This is a world of action-packed, rousing historical narratives and office romances that blends Englishness and Indianness in several ways.⁶⁰ Interestingly, many of these stories, sketches and serialised novels were translated into Hindi and Urdu in *Saritā*. As for the Hindi *Saritā* and Urdu *Saritā*, though more detailed comparison is required, their format and content appear practically identical, with only a few more articles on Urdu literary figures in *Saritā*.⁶¹ Luthra's parodies of a district collector's office, of the arcane knowledge required in Service Commission exams, or of the handover of power in a princely state, read as naturally in Hindi and Urdu as they do in English. The fact that the same translations of Anglo-Indian writers and Bimla Luthra's sketches feature with equal prominence in all three magazines, without in fact spelling out the language they were originally written in, suggests a striking overlap between the English and vernacular urban magazine worlds.⁶²

While English education and the English language had not left India in 1947 and attempts to shift even partly higher education to the regional languages were met with vociferous opposition,⁶³ in the early post-colonial decades, India's regional languages confidently occupied the literary and cultural centre-stage while English periodicals were more thinly spread. 'Periodical journalism in India, especially in English', *Caravan's* editor quipped in 1950, 'is a consistent struggle against death; it is no better than tight rope dancing hundreds of feet above the ground. Literacy is confined to a negligible percentage, and the taste for English to a still narrower field ... Book and magazine buying is a habit almost conspicuous by its absence. Reading is a luxury in India, a luxury that comes even after films, races and other amusements'.⁶⁴

Like *Caravan*, *The Illustrated Weekly of India* and *Quest* also balanced information about foreign writers with the championing of Indian English writers and translations and essays about Indian language writers. Before 1947, *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, BCCL's weekly magazine, edited between 1946 and 1958 by the Irish C.R. Mandy (who

59. See, for example, *Caravan* (Feb. 1950), pp. 61–7.

60. The January 1950 issue of *Caravan*, for example, includes stories by S. Krishniah ('The Monsoon'), Perin Irani ('Golden Brown with White Spots'), Michael Owen ('Mohammed-ki-Mai') and Kalyani Devi ('Bride for Sale'); other recurring names are John O'Hind, A.M. Mortimer, C.L. Proudfoot, M. Prem Kumar, G.S. Panchabhai and Hamdi Bey.

61. See, for example, the articles in *Saritā* on the Urdu poet Riyaz Khairabadi (Oct. 1959) and playwright Agha Hashr Kashmiri (Sept. 1959).

62. See, for example, 'Sunehra Yug', in *Saritā* (Hindi) (June 1959), pp. 81–8; and 'Sunehri Daur', in *Saritā* (Urdu) (June 1959), pp. 47–51.

63. See the debate in *Quest* on 'The Necessity of English in India' (Winter 1958, Summer 1959); R. Bhaskaran, 'Universities and the Language Problem', in *Quest* (Spring 1967), pp. 24–31; D.D. Karve, 'Universities and the Language Question', in *Quest* (Spring 1967), pp. 32–9, in the special issue on 'Higher Education in India'; and the plea by Progressive stalwart Mulk Raj Anand not to give up on English (Spring 1968), pp. 30–9.

64. *Caravan* (Aug. 1950), p. 14.

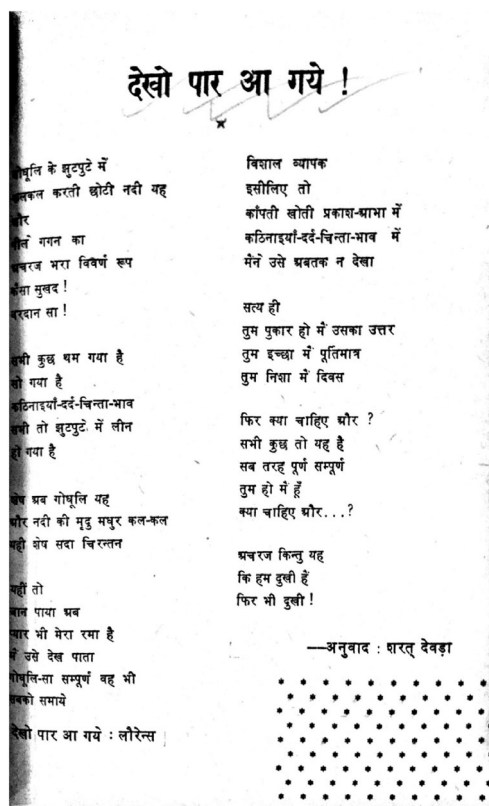


Figure 4. Translation and transliteration of D.H. Lawrence's poem, 'Look, We Have Come Through', in *Jñānodaya*, February 1956. Source: Author's photograph, courtesy of Marwari Pustakalay, Chandni Chowk, Delhi.

wrote an editorial column under the penname Gallimaufry, and a literary column called 'Books and Comment'), negotiated a position that was located in India but 'naturally' looked towards England.⁶⁵ After 1947, the *Illustrated Weekly of India* realigned itself with the new nation-state, with covers of happy farmers and a focus on modern development and bustling cities combined with artistic locales and ethnographic artefacts and peoples, a combination that recalls the Films Division documentaries.⁶⁶ While Mandy was known to encourage local talent, and his literary column featured a few Indian writers in English, almost all book reviews and articles were of British and American authors and books,⁶⁷ and the magazine ran special features on G.B. Shaw ('Thirty Years with G.B.S.'), Ngaio Marsh ('She Writes Her Thrillers at

65. The column, 'London Calling', continued after 1947 as 'London Letter' (written by L.M. Gander, a journalist who had worked for *The Times of India* and *The Illustrated Weekly of India* in the early 1920s) and brought news of the British government, post-War queues and theatre premieres.

66. See, for example, *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, 'Bombay's Business Hub' (12 Oct. 1947); and Verrier Elwin's 'Toys of Tribal Children' (18 Oct. 1953) in. See Srirupa Roy, 'Moving Pictures: The Postcolonial State and Visual Representations of India', in *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, Vol. 36, nos. 1–2 (2002), pp. 233–63.

67. For example, Mandy appraised the first issue of *Encounter*, the magazine edited by Stephen Spender and part of the network of magazines of the Congress for Cultural Freedom in *The Illustrated Weekly of India* (25 Oct. 1953), p. 42.

Night'), Elizabeth Bowen and William Faulkner ('Dynamic Story-Teller').⁶⁸ At the same time, the *Illustrated Weekly of India* also regularly published stories by contemporary writers in Hindi (Krishna Baldev Vaid), Telugu (S. Subbulakshmi) and other regional languages.⁶⁹ Under Nissim Ezekiel, *Quest* reviewed books of Indian English writers, not always encouragingly, and published bilingual poets A.K. Ramanujan and Arun Kolatkar, but also surveyed articles and even special issues on Indian language literatures.⁷⁰ Even apparently monolingual magazines, then, bore conspicuous traces of other languages, through translations or advertisements. Similarly, while *Kahānī*, *Nāī Kahāniyān* and *Sārikā* are remembered as *Hindi* magazines and as fostering the contemporary Hindi story and nurtured a new generation of writers, they brought other Indian and foreign stories to Hindi readers, some of which revealed their English reading in their letters. Though in general the names of translators and the work of translation was underplayed, occasionally magazines highlighted it and experimented with representing other languages, for example through transliteration that helped Hindi readers 'hear' the English, or Malayalam, original (Figure 4).

Conclusions

This essay has grappled with some of the paradoxes that post-colonial magazines in South Asia embody—their textual abundance in the face of the absence of other archives documenting their production; their crucial importance as literary platforms; and the strong attachments they aroused as objects of consumption versus their ephemerality and sad end on the waste heap or in the dark deposits of libraries. If magazines, particularly in South Asia, embody a perishable archive, this essay has employed the term 'literary activism' to acknowledge and value the investment required in producing—but also in reading—them.

As literary, cultural and social historians, we do well to consider the magazine archive beyond 'little magazines', and beyond a narrow focus on specific authors, genres or topics, or on self-contained linguistic fields. A comparative, multilingual perspective reveals common trends, such as an interest in foreign literatures and in writing in other Indian languages, and a close, non-paternalistic engagement with readers. Moreover, whereas we tend to think of Hindi and English as starkly hierarchical linguistic and literary domains, and of English as intrinsically more cosmopolitan, in these early decades, Hindi, Urdu and English magazines display equal ambition and confidence, and magazines published by the same conglomerate—like *Caravan* and the Hindi and Urdu *Sarītā*—shared authors and content, without always specifying the original language. Both Hindi and English magazines of these decades register Nehruvian foreign policy and Cold War trends in their competing internationalisms, and they embrace various kinds of cosmopolitanisms, including what Aakriti Mandhwani has called 'middlebrow cosmopolitanism'—in English as well as in Hindi. In short, magazines

68. See *The Illustrated Weekly of India* (April–May 1951); 6 May 1951, p. 35; 3 June 1951, p. 35; and 21 Oct. 1951, p. 53.

69. It even attempted a regular column on the Hindi literary world called 'A Window into Hindi Writing' by 'Sahityakar' ('Literato'), *The Illustrated Weekly of India* (1 April 1962), p. 70.

70. See, for example, G.S. Talib, 'A Glance at Modern Urdu Literature', in *Quest* (Jan.–Mar. 1959); and the Marathi Special Issue (April–May 1957), guest edited by G.D. Nadkarni.

provided a literary and intellectual education and an exposure to the world, and to the world of consumption, that went much beyond the material possibilities of their readers. As Santu Babu, the lower-middle-class clerk of Vinod Kumar Shukla's novel, *The Servant's Shirt*, rightly considered, buying a magazine for his homemaker wife was a good investment even if, or especially because, they could not afford any of the items advertised.

Acknowledgement

I warmly thank my co-editor, Anjali Nerlekar, and the anonymous readers for their comments.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.