

A Talk To Remember: Goutam Karmakar In Conversation With PCK Prem

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About P C K Prem

Born in the year 1945 at Malher Garh, Palampur, Kangra in Himachal Pradesh, P C K Prem (P C Katoch) has published more than fifty books in Hindi and English and *Pahari*. Completing his masters in English literature from Punjab University in 1970, he has engaged himself in teaching for eight years and various colleges of Himachal and Punjab got the opportunity to be served by this great literary persona. After that, he became the civil servant and in later years, he served as the Member of Himachal Pradesh Public Service Commission. This administrator gradually turns into an academician. From 1989 he shifted his interest and took the pen to give vent his thoughts and feelings. He started writing poetry, short stories and novels. Besides this, he is emerged as a critic when his books on criticism like *Contemporary Indian English Poetry from Himachal*, *English Poetry in India: A Comprehensive survey of Trends and Thoughts-Patterns*, *English Poetry in India: A Secular Viewpoint* and *A Study of Poetic Minds & Time and Continuity* have come out. Till now he has published Ten collections of poetry- *Among the Shadows*, *Enigmas of an Identity*, *Those*

Distant Horizons, The Bermuda Triangles, Oracles of the Last Decade, Rainbows at Sixty, Of This age and Obscurity and Other Poems and Tales of Half-men and Other Poems. & Yayati Returns and Other Poems This great literary eminent persona showed his creativity in novels also. From 1991, he began his career as a novelist. Novels like *Rainbows at Dawn, A Night of Storms, It Shall Be Green Again, A Handsome Man, A Heart for the Man, Not Their Lives and Relations* bear the stamp of a perfect novelist. Besides writing poetry and novels, PCK Prem showed his mastery in short stories as *Shadows at Dawn and A Slings Bag and Other Stories* prove this. Not only in English but also in Hindi also he has established himself with nine books on short fictions, one poetry collection namely *Indradhanush Shabd Ho Gaye*, twenty novels and one book on criticism. The Authors press, Delhi recently released a critical book on the Poetry and Hindi Literature of P C K Prem- *PCK Prem: Echoing Time and Civilizations* (Editors –Rob Harle, Dr Sunil Sharma and Sangeeta Sharma), and another critical book on novels -*The Spirit of Age, and Ideas in the Novels of P C K Prem* (Editor-Dr. P.V. Laxmiprasad).

He has received several literary awards from both the state and academic section. Notable among those are HP State Guleri & academy awards and *Bharat Hindi Rattan* award, Punjab Kala Academy Award, Himachal Sahitya Academy Award, Arya Samiti Award, Him kala Sangam Award, Hindi Rattan Award. International Poets Academy has given him Lifetime Achievement Award for his immense contribution in the domain of poetry. He is also accredited with American Medal of Honour by the International Board of Research of ABI, USA. His works are explored by many scholars and academicians. Research is going on his poetry and so many articles on his works have been published in national and

international journals, books and anthologies. He is one of the most popular contemporary Indian English writers whose works are explored on a large scale.

TEXT OF THE INTERVIEW

Q1. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Sir, the world is known to the background of you. But Sir does the surrounding of Himachal Pradesh cast any impact on your literary career? Is there any other source of inspiration that is unknown to your readers?

PCK PREM: Yes, background and the surrounding are very important. Even if one is unaware the surroundings continue to influence the man and the subtlety is quite silent and at times, apparent. The natural world of the state exercised tremendous impact. The sources of inspiration are invariably unknown but whatever a sensitive mind confronts revisits and exerts pressure. People, books, incidents, history, culture and contemporary happenings indirectly become the source from where one gets strength, and these factors become the origin and root of motivation.

Q2. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Sir, can you share your experience of working as an IAS Officer? Did you really find job satisfaction there or you serve for being paid? Did you really get ample scope to work freely or muffled by the system?

PCK PREM: Not only I enjoyed teaching and books but in the administrative service also, I did not get less joy. Mental attitude matters. One must be clear as to what he wants from life.

The massive system does not permit you to celebrate thoughts on freedom and individuality. One ought to follow rules of life the system imposes. In services, the system expects you respect it and here, you live a convenient life. However, it does not happen always. In administration, I did the job, had sufficient satisfaction and served people where I could in a limited way, a little bit. Nevertheless, you are dependent. Many people, varied situations, facts and truths confront you. 'The inner man' often rebels and guides you to the right path. You call it soul, the invisible, and a sort of mirage in a desert but definitely, you get the strength.

If you listen to the unknown, at times, you are happy, and at other moments, challenges uncertain dishearten. Everyone serves people the averment is obvious. It is not. You work and you get money. Nobody works if reward in the shape of money does not exist. It is simple. Money is important. Those, who assert that they serve people for no pecuniary benefits I doubt if they are correct. To serve and devote time, and caring for others is a virtue but if you get strength in terms of money for livelihood, it gains meaning. All else is a lie, a sophisticated intellectual lie. I genuinely worked hard and served people and found adequate scope for the expansion of work and 'the self' as the legal and humane parameters permitted. Here, many a time, I confronted irritations, difficult situations and challenges, for I annoyed those in power. It is natural. I knew the fall out, the possible embarrassment, a little of humiliation but I stood the ground and soon, as time rolled on, everything was normal. It takes time to recover the inner doldrums and wounds. As you move, you live and fight out. It is not that the system muffles you but it is the search for identity and individuality somewhere that disturbs I feel and so, I could stand up a little hurt, and still unscathed.

Q3. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Why have you shifted your interest from administrative line to academic line? You are an honest administrator and an established writer. So in which way do you want to be remembered for lifetime?

PCK PREM: It is not shifting of interests but I call it strengthening of ‘the self’ through work on the first available opportunity. You grow and expand and it benefits the people around you. The first poem ‘Memories’ & a short story ‘Tryst with Destiny’ and a Hindi story ‘Dhundh’ appeared in early sixties. Irregular creativity disturbed but I could not find time. Yes, during this long period I read everything what the known and unknown authors wrote and whose books were available in this, the then remote corner of the state. In service, When I thought to manage time...it was a difficult situation. However, I did it. To overcome official monotony, irritations and hurts, I sought refuge in books. Slowly, I began to struggle with the pen...and then, I did not stop.

Last part of the question...puzzles and teases. I must admit, I enjoyed each moment of life...love, warmth and passion and even hatred and violent bitterness. I loved the life of a bureaucrat but with many questions of ethics... and non-existence of morality Yes, creative writing is the field where you are independent and you write what you feel sincerely, and the sharing of creativity gives you joy. Rest it is for you to make out.

Q4. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: You are a trilingual writer. So have you faced the problem of ‘Trans-creation’ while writing in English? Among the three languages in which do you feel most homely to give vent your thoughts and feelings?

PCK PREM: ‘To read, interpret, re-read and revise’ is very important. I tried to write in *Pahari* much later and I did it comfortably. It is still growing. I wrote in Hindi and English earlier and then, some subjects fascinated and I realized I could write well in Hindi. Then, as experiences of life crowded the mental areas, I turned to English and after sometime, it was all fine and good I would say. In creative writings, I explored many subjects –human relations, history, culture, religions, civilizations, societal pulsations, the massive system, politics, the governance... and the continuous changes that I witnessed.

Q5. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Sir it is unmistakably true that you know how to manage time better than many others do. How did you make a balance between professional and personal life? Did your professional experience as an administrator help your creative faculty? Sir you are not only a poet and novelist but also a critic. How do you make a balance between your critical and creative writings?

PCK PREM: If one builds up strong invisible walls within it is possible. Out of the professional routine, I tried to construct the wall and jumped out. It was rare that I took home a bundle of files. I finished the work in the office ...even if I had to sit late. At home, it was family...and the rest of the time, an hour or so, was for reading or writing. On tours, it was

after a quiet dinner that I again read something and wrote if I desired so. In administration, one meets people from different strata of society, the rich and the poor, the politicians and the religious men and so on...one simply has to imagine. I experienced each situation deeply, felt the people's emotions and understood their aspirations intensely, read the politicians' minds and everything...it was enough to stir creative passions. However, I kept the invisible wall strong despite mental stresses, challenges and disturbances. Yes, at times, I was mentally disturbed and then, I just thought...and did nothing. I knew...you are disturbed when you disturb others. If others disturb you, you also get the kick. The thorny situations arising out of varied experiences and encounters, lead you to analyze and critically scrutinize your personal status and dangers to self-image. Perhaps, for me, it was a school of learning the art of life, living and critical evaluation also.

Q6. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: What is your definition of poetry? What are the unique poetic features of P C K Prem that differ you from other Indian English poets?

PCK PREM: I look at it differently. Creativity is the art of defining life and society in totality. Poetry is one of the creative wings, not cut off from life. Poetry is an expression of a moment. It is the art of articulating what one experiences. It is an effort to contain an emotional upsurge in language. It defines and interprets man, and obliquely, many a time, directly speaks of man, society and culture, and that gives it meaning. If it moralizes, it turns burdensome and monotonous and hurts the poetic sensibility. Art overwhelms you. If it enchants, it also irritates and challenges, for it puts stress on perceptivity. I feel if one keeps

ethics at a distance from any creative work, it attains the real meaning and objective. Art creates its region of expression I feel but it is the creative artist, who ought to grant it the right phrase. It is difficult to do so but efforts must continue and I think I still try to hold on to it a bit. Any art would impose that limitation.

Q7. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Poems like *Fort, Notes on Dullness, Record Keeper, Happiness, Rainbows, Mother, Thugs* and in many other poems you have used myth as metaphor. What are reasons behind using myth in such way? While the discussion is on myth then allow me Sir to ask the reasons behind your editing of a few tales from *Mahabharata*?

PCK PREM: To interpret contemporary psyche creates impatience. I find feelings, and experiences, impressions and thoughts often intermingle and create a separate regime, and then, each gives birth to a huge crisis. If you are obvious, it bores and you look flat, for in such a situation, a bit of situational depiction gives rise to moral tone and this aspect looks awkward. Many lyrics seek help of myths, a sort of prop to make the meaning clear, and relate an ordinary experience to past, to some ancient occurrence not easily identifiable. It also drives one to some region of cultural and historical allegory and so the lyric gets roots and a kind of legitimacy. In a faint mechanism, the lyrics also expose the psychic dimensions of man without pity.

Here, one appears vaguely moralistic and yet is far away. The lyrics you mentioned relate to routine observations of facts and truths but directness, I felt, could hurt a man

somewhere even without the realization resulting in consequential failure to convey the right meaning and so I looked back and back. Metaphors give you adequate space to avoid the bluntness and still become apt and understandable. Interestingly, it is noticeable after one gives language to feelings and thoughts.

I wanted to do it in another way not entirely new. We are aware of the story of *Mahabharata*. It is understandable and interesting. If one reads the book, one finds many tales and subplots, which at times, escape notice even of a sensitive academic. The little delightful tales of birds, animals, insects, and kings, sages and many other characters from the long-gone ages from the other worlds create matchless background and make it convenient to understand human nature and its cultural roots. Tales talk of humankind, its little tribulations and then, reveal the right path to *dharma*, *karma*, truth and righteousness, and therefore, these objectives and reasons just gave an idea to look into the rationale and the principle of the tales and of course life, that form the backdrop of a colossal story of humankind, the great *Mahabharata*.

Q8. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: You are a poet writing in English, Hindi and Pahari or Dogri language. In which way do you want to be known and loved to your readers? You are a poet, novelist, storywriter and a successful and reputed administrator. Moreover, you are a human being. So what is the real self?

PCK PREM: It is again a very delicate and teasing question where I find difficult to say anything unambiguously. I did not write lyrics in *Pahari* but I have a collection of poems in *Hindi*, and have a good number of unpublished verses in the above languages. I cannot say

what the readers feel. It is difficult for the writers to decide. It is the prerogative and area of readers. In whatever genre I wrote, I wrote with passion, zeal and warmth and tried to peel off the layers of man's consciousness. If I did it, I feel gratified. Yes, I believe in the warmth or chilliness in human relations and I firmly hold the view that a man cannot live in isolation. The contemporary nucleus system puts strain on relations and a man lives in suffocating environment and feels he is an island in himself. It causes real anxiety...and it leads me to say that I am a human being first. 'The real self' is that indefinite and still very much known person, who you imagine but cannot really figure out and yet you go to him to seek guidance and this, 'the real self' never tells lies I believe and if you listen, you create a new world. Is it possible? The questions pester.

Q9. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: If I say, in order to explicate modern disintrigation and corruption P C K Prem uses myth and legendary allusions then how will you justify it? In poems like Birth, Grave, Struggle and Rogues, you have tried to relate creation myth with Indian philosophy. Why have you done so?

PCK PREM: At times, the unsaid raises questions. A man goes back to myths and legends to find roots of the truth of life. Nothing exists in a void one affirms but in fact, void also grants meaning to life. Philosophically speaking, void does not exist because in a void, a man tries to find meaning in meaninglessness. It speaks of a contradiction and of a synthesis, many a time a man fails to discern. In 'Struggle', a lifetime of a man in the world becomes alive in a capsule. It is an agonizing predicament a man faces and still refuses to recognize. If

an effort to find a parallel blueprint of man's destiny is noticeable in the legends and myths scattered around the world...it is not an argument that untruths or lies did not exist but they speak of a patterned living style.

The lyric talks of opposite forces the good and the bad, and the demons and the gods, who live in the world, fighting for respective survival in a principled mode that finally takes path to the goodness of life. I will not speak of the divine or the celestial. Existence of evil or negative living patterns is not all modern, it existed earlier but the contrast needs careful understanding and then, the contemporary life will have meaning. I feel, in contemporary life, one does not find opposing forces...it is essentially a fight for survival among the not so good men or one may call ugly men, for saintly men are rare or if they exist, they only dish out good thoughts (without meaning?). When I wrote the lyric nearly fifteen years back, I thought the good takes birth in the evil and that makes life purposeful. If you go into the text of Birth, Grave, Rogues and a few other verses, an argument in different scenario appears to tell man that not all is lost. Hope is a fundamental truth of life even while one speaks of hatred, violence, corruption and widespread disbelief in the design of life and existence.

Q10. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: In your *Struggle from Rainbows at Sixty* you have presented the cultural confusion of this generation. How far have your poetry cried for this rootlessness and identity crisis of this present era? In this regard, what is your opinion about the status of woman or what are the issues do you raise in your poetry (especially in *Oh Rama*)?

PCK PREM: When you speak of cultural confusion, you hint at the obvious. To this extent, it is correct. However, my intention is to depict a contemporary man, who fails to stick to a single thought. He wishes to go beyond the post-modern scenario. It is difficult to envisage a man, who would adhere to any one religious or philosophic thought. A multiple assault on mind and intellect will usually remain unsteady and erratic or probably, the truth will take the shape of fiction and thus, defy meaning at this moment and invent another connotation next minute. The changing contours of intellect and mind at present, encourage rather provoke a man to explore other areas of thought and religion and therefore, a sort of assimilation is possible in future if a man wants to exist as a man bereft of any label or insignia.

It is possible if man goes through the tedious and arduous journey the rigmarole of thoughts the men of the world transmit. I believe, one finds awful confrontation amidst vociferous talks of conciliation, and therefore, culture and philosophy are likely to give new definition to the man, for everything that gives meaning to man has relevance. Therefore, identity crisis in contemporary life will linger on until a man refuses to find any distinction in humankind as a whole. Perhaps, at that time, confusion and chaos around will lead to harmony, the possible destination of man. Philosophy has meaning provided it recognizes man as man and discards negativity and cynicism. The long poem 'The Tales of Half Men' is an attempt to find possible answers to these conflicting thoughts. In spite of the untenable questions, I hope, peace exists somewhere beyond the answer.

Q11. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: How far do you consider yourself as a rationalist? In your verse, one can find various instances of definition, criticism and reinterpretation of

history and historical genocides. What role do these historical allusions and genocides play in your verse?

PCK PREM: I think one cannot define life and limit its scope and magnitude because compartmentalization or regimentation obstructs growth and expansion. It is also not a journey where you move at leisure without an objective. It is meaningful if each minute you spend brings some satisfaction despite its good or bad effects. The questions arise when a man simply goes back to find out the roots. Questions of identity crop up. How one arrives in the world, itself causes a bewildering situation. From here, one begins to think and analyze. It is a perennial search. You try to evaluate each moment, every person you meet becomes the subject of enquiry, and every situation questions you. You live on earth and you go beyond and do not know how it happens. It is a different situation and necessitates entirely special yardstick to measure the impact of life and its origin. Every man sets up a benchmark from where he begins and comes back to scrutinize.

Poetry is not simply a play of emotions and feelings. It goes beyond and one tries to reach those areas where the right of entry is impossible but still you try. Poetry gives you the liberty to approach the goal and naturally, you evaluate each situation. You referred to a few poems. Yes, some are long but it is an effort to analyze and critically inspect what you feel and how you wish to come out from the haze of multiple choices. You want to go into the rationale of feelings and you know feelings are exclusive and hold on to respective areas these define without lines of distinction. You try to reach the objective and so, continuity determines poetry and creative writing and you feel you have arrived somewhere, and you sit

back and think and abruptly a thought assails that a kind of incompleteness haunts you still.

You mix up thoughts and emotions and try to understand how it happens.

A man even without knowing continues the journey. To find a reasonable fulcrum or the basis of life, he looks at culture, history and other areas to derive satisfaction that he has a meaningful role in life to play. It is a search for an identity and an origin, and in the process, you evaluate status and you feel you have achieved the destination (?) but enquiry tells you it is not. Poetry as an art offers you the possibility to explore those unknown regions critically but still some lacunae chase you notwithstanding the efforts you make.

Q12. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: In your *Chaos* you have mentioned about Indian Folk Theatre. What is your opinion about Street theatre and folk theatre? In poems like *The Monk*, one can find the religious void. Do you think modern generation is totally ignorant of religious aspects?

PCK PREM: I think, you re-emphasize earlier doubts. If you find hints of folk theatre, it is again an attempt to look at life, ‘...life of ironic downfall /And caricature unnumbered...’ Man thinks of religion and feels, but does not share, it seems because he is uncertain. Ideas of god and faith are strictly private so it is difficult to say that a man exists in a religious void. If you go through the lyric the lines, ‘I create existence and God /And so this constitution unwritten/ for my democracy without/that remembers dates and not men’ you find an oblique connection with the void as the past, the present and the future stand together to interpret life.

Q13. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: In poems like *Solutions, Nostalgia, Cultural Notes* you have discussed about dilemmas and deterioration of social, ethical and cultural values.

What are the reasons behind this? What kind of utopian society do you dream of?

PCK PREM: You are right. I talk about the anxieties a man faces. I try to reach the mental horizon of man, the inner invisible man, who looks at everything that goes on but cannot do anything. Perhaps, he wants but fails. It is the dilemma of a modern man. It existed earlier and the stalemate still pursues. It worries not only an individual but also the entire social, ethical and cultural gamut. Man creates, improves upon, cleanses it and distorts and he thinks he would make future better. It does not happen. Even in failure, a man continues to hope and that is the strength, I often hint at and believe. The concept of Utopian society is impossibility. However, if efforts continue, it is good. To reach the objective, I believe man must love man and permit him to live life with a certain amount of goodness.

Q14. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Sir kindly, allow me to change the topic to some more personal level. Your poetry bears your annoyance, irritation and disbelief of the present administrative system. Scams, corruptions, scandals and materialism are also noticed by you. So sir can you tell me what is the scenario you want to show. Can we call your poems as political satire?

PCK PREM: It is correct. I find nothing wrong. I say what I hear, see and read. It is an obligation of an author to talk of society in which he lives and survives. He is part of the elite

(the rich and the powerful segment) of the society and looks at the neglected section as well. He thinks, he talks well and churns out good thoughts, and is quite shrewd and clever, for he speaks convincingly of ethics and principles, truth and righteousness. He is not sincere I feel. It is a question. He is intelligent and tells lies wisely. I am part of it. A very small part it is but it is powerful and so, dictates and the rest, and the major part... hangs about in unvarying deprivation amidst talks of welfare and equality in social and economic life, which is not the reality. Even lies turn truths. You can find your answer to the question you asked. Either you live a straight and honest life or you reject it. Many if not all, confront the dilemma and anguish because they live to watch how the elite functions. You evaluate the stature of an author ...I do it and I fail as a man, as a human being. It causes anger and distrust. However, I consider it as strength...I mean it. I am harsh if not...I would be unfair to 'the self.'

'Political satire' is a mild expression, an often-repeated cliché and it does not really depict the scenario rightly. When a particular distortion persists without a hiatus, it becomes part of the tradition and slowly makes entry into the cultural ethos. It is another way of looking at things if you want to be true.

Q15. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Why is there so much violence in the poem? In general, what are the purposes your poetry wants to serve before the nation?

PCK PREM: I see differently. Earlier, you spoke of corruption, irritation, scandals etc. We talk because we do not like unethical conduct. Ethics and principles are the much talked about themes of life and existence. How many really adhere to...just a few, a negligible

section. Everyone speaks of morality and *dharma* of life. Who in practice cares for a value-oriented life? It disturbs. It is violence and untruth. If a man understands and rejects violence fiercely and truly, truth will prevail. If you do not know violence and hatred how would evaluate peace and love? If a man belittles and rejects negative features of life even a little, perhaps he brings brightness in life. Everyone hates war but still a man engages in a war for survival because peace is the destination. No one can avoid hatred and violence, for it is a historical and sociological necessity, a method to purify the world, a sort of cathartic mechanism.

Q16. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: How do you evaluate the future of both Indian English Poetry and fiction? In an era where people are more fascinated with fictions, dramas and short stories what are the ways you would suggest as a teacher and a poet for the betterment of poetry in India.

PCK PREM: Indian English writing has matured and it demonstrates command over the language. The authors rooted to the soil take up themes and characters from life and depict its tribulations. Here, they are aware of Indian consciousness. In novels, one consistently encounters very fine delineation of life Indians live and the depiction gives glimpses of traditions, rituals, customs and various aspects of culture and heritage of the region. One finds very authentic portrayal of the life of farmers, workers, and people living in urban areas and in slums. They treat life as a whole and also evaluate life in parts and in the process, do not forget to talk of ethics, principles, politics and deterioration in value system. Poverty,

hunger and exploitation continue to disturb. Woman in the novels shows signs of awakening and one finds a sensitive struggle to rise up. They wish to live a respectable life and stand up against the injustice the male-dominated society inflicts but at the same time, they care for culture, values and heritage and human relations. Indian authors, who live in other countries talk of a somewhat different life and one finds a kind of poignant strain in their creative work. Nostalgia, an eager wish to go to the motherland, filial relations and materialistic onslaught on human bonds form the text of novels.

Human relations and the falling quality of life constitute the paradigm of fiction long or short and it is the latent strength of short and long fiction. In a few novels, one discerns autobiographical touch and the psychological penetration impresses. A few novelists take life and relations philosophically, particularly, when they speak of ego, self-image, religion, ethics, politics and the system as a whole. Lack of warmth in human relations also disappoints. It is a natural corollary of man's attainments and changing life-styles where everyone asserts individuality. If a man loves man, it is good and it benefits not only the man and society but also the nation. One has to be cautious because of regimented diktats the authors wish to convey. These characteristics make Indian fiction memorable, and assure of its bright future.

In creative writing, if the author is introvert and enjoys sharing of impressions and experiences with inconvenient inclination towards ethics, it weakens a work of art. He has to rise up and look at the world with distinctive mindset. It is better if a writer tries to lessen, even a bit remotely the subjective component, the outcome would be fine and ideal.

Q17. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: After observing your themes and issues related to your poetry, one can compare you with Keki N. Daruwala, Nissim Ezekiel, D. C. Chhabial and to some extent A. K. Ramanujan. How would you like to justify it? Are you conscious with the ongoing literary activities going on your works?

PCK PREM: As poets, they are great and respectable. It would be inappropriate if I say at this moment something about their poetic art. I do not understand the last fraction of the question. If I were correct, I would say that when I write a story or a novel, I do not begin with the thought or theme. It comes to me much later. I visualize and create a character, move with him, permit him to go ahead the moment he begins to say and express. At this moment, as a creator, I am conscious but I take delight when the character grows...and butt in when it is necessary.

Q18. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Irony, playfulness, humour, satire, histographic fiction, allusions, pastiche and many other features are found in your poetry and that strongly cast you as a postmodern poet. In which category do you want to stand? Are there any postcolonial characteristics that you want to mention in your poetry?

PCK PREM: Any interest in a work of art, offers you an opportunity to see life differently and at that time, in a way, you wish to look at it. Each time, you look at the work it conveys different meaning. An author writes about the time and location, and carries the gathered and experienced knowledge of culture and heritage. He cannot cut off from the influences even if

he wants. If one is aware of history and culture, one looks at life differently and if one restricts to the given time and space one cannot go beyond. I admit time, location and space never restrict me whenever I write. It is a journey. I go, stay, touch a particular point and come back. The route changes, the sensibility undergoes ephemeral and dithering shifts and so I construct the edifice of creative work. I write about the transferred colonial experience in a specific time context and then, go beyond to the present and future. I do not think 'post colonial' attitude has anything to do now. It is gone, dead along with its culture, language, life-style, and medium and whatever is left, is pure Indian.

One cannot completely scare away or obliterate the traces of 1930s, 1950s and 1960s. Present never abandons the past, in fact, it improves, corrects and readjusts to time, and carries it to the future, and therefore, the process continues. Text provides the clue to many meanings other than the obvious and the critic struggles to find the real meaning in the maze of multiple layers of meanings the author wishes to convey. If you paraphrase a line, it connects the writer to the critic only but when you go beyond, you try to understand the author and also convey the depth of understanding. You enjoy a piece of art only when you go much beyond the obvious. I would not go into various theories and concepts of the real meaning and the meaning beyond meaning, which I prefer to leave to the critic. It requires efforts to delink the text and the context from meaning and relative aberrations, and still stay at a distance. At this moment, you face challenge to reality and the truth of meaning you know and understand. Undoubtedly, the disfiguring of meaning and the manifestation of altered meaning when you struggle with the text and the outside meaning, disturb and confound.

Q19. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Why have you used so much rhetorical devices in your poem? Your imagery consists of natural and animal images drawn from surroundings. So sir, can you elaborate your philosophy of nature?

PCK PREM: In poetry, symbols and metaphors are significant. Many a time, allegorical and theoretical mode of phrase grants it beauty and charm. One cannot be pedestrian in idiom. Nature provides powerful tools of fine and meaningful expression in abundance. A man even if unaware of the nature and beauty, somewhere, it silently exercises influence and changes the mental attitude. If a man is alone, natural world stays forever. I am not an exception. As a creative artist, I look at everything and whatever I need I get from nature and strengthen the fund of language. Nature gives you so much but you cannot offer anything. Nature is a symbol of charity, discipline and goodwill if a man understands and if not, he witnesses the ugly and angry face of nature. When it is angry, it does not forgive.

Q20. Only drama is not written by you. So can your readers expect this from you? Are there any future projects with that you are now engaging?

P C K Prem: At present, I have no plan. I am working on ancient literature. To what extent, I am able to work...is uncertain. However, a book on folktales and some significant tales from *Srimadbhagavata Mahapurana* may appear in the near future. I feel the ancient tales are still relevant if man has to live life objectively and happily amidst inconvenient men in crisis-ridden time.

Q21. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Now many young poets are coming. So sir, what will be your advice to them? Sir, is there any message that you to want to convey to your readers and to the world in general?

PCK PREM: Let us work together. Work jointly and share. It teaches art and the art of life.

GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Thank you very much sir for your brave and honest confessions. It is a pleasure meeting with you.

PCK PREM: Thank you Mr Goutam Karmakar. Wish you a rich and rewarding future.
