

AJNEYA AND MRIDULA GARG – DIFFERENT WAYS OF PRESENTING INDIAN IDENTITY

Belonging to two generations of contemporary Hindi prose, two prominent writers, Ajneya and Mridula Garg, each in their own way represent Indianness. Ajneya, a founder of *prayogwad* – experimentalism and one of the founders of *Nayi Kavita*, later was influenced by French existentialism. Keeping this in mind, we can better understand how he represented Indian identity and opposition of the Indian world and mentality to the West. In his novel “Apne apne ajnabi” (‘To Each His Stranger’) this subject is considered mainly from philosophic and symbolic point of view. Much attention is given to experience and perception of time and interrelations between Indian and European philosophy. It is worth noticing that main heroines of the novel are two European women.

Mridula Garg, basically an economist by education, consciously chose Hindi (not English) as a language for writing her prose and dramas. The paper is mainly based on Mridula Garg’s two novels (“ChittaKobra” and “KathGulab” – ‘Chinese Rose’). The writer’s representation of Indianness will be discussed using two main themes – relations between man and woman (including their “circle of reading” – from Sharadchandra to Freud, Eliot, Kafka and others) and process of cooking food. Heroes of her novels are of Indian and Western origin, so Indian identity opposed to the Western becomes clearer. Though Mridula Garg does not want to be called “*lekhika*” or “*mahila lekhak*”, still she is often considered as a representative of the most popular now literary school - “mahila lekhan” (‘women writing’). Comparing novels of these two writers we can see development of presenting Indianness both in time and Indian literary process.