

Partition a Concept of Reverberation in Indian Writing in English

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ABSTRACT

Literary work is the mirror of the age in which it is written. Fiction has undeniable significance in human life – as it collects various matters in multi-dimensional ways and remains as heritage which one generation can pass to its succeeding generations. Literature, at the same time, depicts the culture of the community of which it is a part. Besides, it presents the social, communal, economic, historical, religious and cultural temperament of the people. M. K. Naik rightly goes to the extent of saying that the real Indian fiction in English started only with the upsurge of nationalism and revolt against the foreign rule around 1930.

Keywords:- Literature,, Reverberation

I. INTRODUCTION

The movement took two directions-one naturally violent and another ideologically non-violent. Since the Indian novel in English was born before independence the politics of the freedom movement plays an integral part in the genre's development. In fact, it is possible to analyze the intimate connection between the growth of the freedom movement and the rise of Indian novel in English. Western education through the medium of the English language exposed the Indians to English constitutions, the British institutions, the idea of freedom and other liberal political ideologies. The scope of political novel 'in Indian writing in English is very wide and large. It covers all the political problems and social problems in the history of Indian Society. The term political conscious is defined by Miller as a Way of seeing, caring about and acting in the world.

It is guided by a commitment to human rights and justice and an understanding of power and inequity in social, political and economic system, relations and values. (Miller, 2) One of the results of British impact on India in the rise of the Indian novel in English is that the Indian writers of fiction adapted the Western form and medium to their own tradition of story- telling. The Big Three of Indo-English fiction is Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, and Raja Rao appeared with their first novels, the first two in 1935 and the third in 1938. These writers continued to creatively express the social, political, and spiritual

aspiration of India. Along with these three, Kamala Markandaya, Nayanatara Sahgal, and Manohar Malgonkar came up. But Malgonkar, unlike the others, often dealt with historical themes. He has written novels, thrillers, biographies, travelogues, books on history, a period play, and a large number of short stories. He has been accused of concentrating his attention more on the exotic and melodramatic than on the worthwhile aspects of Indian life.

The aspects of Indian life he portrays in his major novels are Indo-British encounter especially in the army, the disintegration of princely India, the Freedom Movement-the Gandhian struggle, the Terrorist Movement, and the Sepoy Revolt-and life in the Assam Tea Gardens. Though these are the themes in his novels, what he is chiefly concerned with is the portrayal of man's predicament in a world where values are changing too fast for his comprehension and adjustment, as N.S. Pradhan perceptively observed. What he exposes is the crisis in Indian life brought on by the winds of change in the traditional Indian society. What he argues for is a sincere adherence to our traditional values like honesty, integrity, and a sense of justice. The novel is a perfect medium, says D.H. Lawrence, for revealing to us the changing rainbow of our living relationships. Malgonkar reveals the colours of these relationships in his novels and short stories, and they are a remarkable phenomenon in modern Indo-English fiction. Branded as an entertainer and story teller, the deeper qualities of his fiction have been neglected or

unperceived by many. There are only two full-length studies on his fiction by academic critics, namely G.S. Amur, and James Y. Dayananda. N.S. Pradhan takes up only one of the novels *A Bend in the Ganges* for a detailed analysis. The various articles by commentators do not seem to bring out the merits of the author as a significant novelist of Indian life.

Malgonkar's novels and short stories provide all these which make them easily readable and enjoyable with his varied techniques of narration like 'the first person point of view', and 'omniscient author'. His fiction is well-made. Though his preoccupation often is with the outer world of action, it is not devoid of the inner world of introspection. The Western dramatic techniques of fiction are there along with the oriental recitalist manner of storytelling. He seems to adopt the epic method of storytelling, where episode follows episode, is the most suitable for the Indian temperament. Vernacular languages have limited readership while Indian fiction in English has the international audience and therefore it has drawn worldwide attention of writers and scholars, critics, readers and serious students of Indian English fiction.

Literature reflects the writer's personal observation of life, makes interesting use of history. An author interprets and decodes history to suit his objective and purpose of creativity. He merely makes an attempt to interpret history from a different point of view giving history a different perspective. The novels taken for study combines history, autobiography, travelogue, anthropology and fiction, the prime concern and focus of the novel is on inter-relationships of the people rather than nation states and their rulers. Indian writers cannot get the Indian environment out of their system. The place a writer lives in, the community he is in contact with, the concerns that affect his country. All together determine the ethos and personality of the writer. The memories of mother country are memorable. Thus, it can be said that the Indian English novelists were also greatly influenced by the Gandhian consciousness. It is revealed even in the works of the post-independence Indian English novelists also A.V. Krishna Rao throws light on Gandhi's influence on Indian English fiction: Almost all the Indo-Anglian novels have one or more of the following nuclear ideas, predominant in them; and the evil of partition,

the cult of 'Quit-India'; and the Gandhian myth... It is a significant fact that the image of Gandhi is present in all three types of novels, though the details and emphasis may vary. (Rao, 21)

Various writers have tried to write their experience in the form of novels, short stories, etc. The misery displacement, the huge loss, sufferings that was experienced by the people was recorded. Some writers have directly suffered due to partition. We can point out some of the famous novels based on partitions are, *The Heart Divided* by Mumtaz Navaz, *Ice Candy Man* by Bapsi Sidva, *Clear Light of Day* by Anitha Desai, *Shadow of Time* by Nigar Masroor, *Train to Pakistan* by Kushwant Singh, *Azadi* by ChamanNahal, *A Bend in the Ganges* by Manohar Malgokar, etc. Khushwant Singh once described himself as a writer of history and fiction. Commenting on the fundamental quality of Singh, V. A. Shahane writes: although Singh's consciousness appears to range from fiction to journalism certain basic qualities govern his creative talent and characterize the development of his art. His critical as well as creative, writing fall into a pattern which emerges from and is imperceptibly linked with, the primary characteristics of his creative mind. (Shahane, 21)

Train to Pakistan is a story everyone wants to forget; yet one cannot overlook this stark reality of our past. When the nation was on the threshold of new dawn, it also faced unprecedented destruction, bloodshed and trauma. Khushwant Singh has successfully delineated this unpleasant phase of our national history in the novel. Khushwant Singh's balanced presentation of Partition version concerns the way in which he introduces news of the atrocities. Though brutal violence provides the basis of the story, the restraint with which Singh approaches this subject, particularly at narrative points when excessive or premature description would be at the expense of real-life expectancies, is commendable. Thus Singh so manipulates the version that a gradual and refracted revelation of the atrocities is necessary to coincide with the villager's growing suspicions: psychologically the main interest is in the impact the violence makes on their minds. Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* differs from most of the other novels on Partition in respect of canvas, and unity of time, place and action. It has greater unity of time

and place. Its action centres in the vicinity of Mano Majra and it covers a period of not more than a month.

Perhaps this is an important factor that enables him to transform the horrendous raw theme into fine fiction that is full of human compassion and love. One significant aspect of *Train to Pakistan* is the use of English language. The style is realistic with down to earth idioms. It is transposed from Punjabi to English, which is a pronounced expression of the quality of his mind and his view of life. Another side of the novel is complete absence of direct impact of partition on the people of village, but indirect way to depict victims who feel affected by aftermath of partition. The climax of *Train to Pakistan* is exciting when Jugga saves the train at the cost of his life under the rumbling wheels of the Train to Pakistan may suggest the final estrangement of the two communities, but his heroic defense of the Muslims of Mano Majra and his consequent martyrdom attract attention to the inseparableness of the two communities of the rural India, the heart of the popular culture of India.

Train to Pakistan stands out as a shining example of the Sikh novel where the Sikh and the Muslims are never shown up in arms against each other. In spite of being a Sikh novel, Train to Pakistan can rightly be acclaimed as Indian version of Partition by Khushwant Singh. Manohar Malgonkar was a shikari, and a soldier before he ventured into the profession of writing and he is far from being indifferent to professional success; and this for him means reaching wide audiences in English speaking countries through foreign imprints and have found publishers in England and America and have been translated into several European and Indian languages.

Malgonkar studied both Sanskrit and English Literatures Malgonkar seems to be fully aware of the native tradition of presenting contemporary history in fictional mode. He learnt the colloquial English from books and his direct contacts with native speakers while he was in army. He developed friendship with many Englishmen and enjoyed the native English with them. His greatness lies in his originality and freshness of interpretation, V. S. Naipaul, aptly observes that: Malgonkar is

outstanding for his fondness for outdoor life. Other writers might sound bookish or imitative, but Malgonkar does not. Though most of his recent works tends to thrillers and entertainers, his popularity as a novelist is already established on a sound footing. It may be that, for chronological, historical and other related reasons, he does not rank with the Big Three in the field of Indo English fiction, but he is still a force to reckon with and not to be forgotten by the posterity. (Naipaul, 284) The novelist is a brilliant narrator of the story in *A Bend in the Ganges*. He is an observer of the historical events of the time. Therefore the narration is authentic. He narrates the events so superbly that the novel has become an excellent piece of story-telling. He uses a swiftly moving narrative for an epic portrayal of the complex forces which lead to the Partition tragedy. He mirrors the deeply rooted caste prejudices in the Indian Society. He uses the third person narrative technique. No doubt the narrator of the story is the novelist himself.

He presents the authentic rural world. He is also keen in the observation of the human nature and presents changing trends in the society. The action moves forward quite rapidly. The novel depicts powerfully the horrible developments resulting in the partition, the triumph and tragedy of the hour of freedom, the screams of the victims renting the morning air, the dawn of freedom greeting the sub-continent in the pools of blood, the barbarous cruelties heaped on men and women, catcalls of the crowd and innumerable women being carried away naked, struggling and screaming at the top of their voice. The Muslim fears of being ruled by the Hindus in the absence of the British rule in the country where they had been the rulers, their notion that the Hindus were mere dangerous than the foreigners and ought to be their real target and their subsequent striding at them, their struggle for a sage homeland separate from India leading to the Partition, and the terror and pity of it - all these form the contents of the novel. His novels, though, written in a later period, portray the pre-independence and recently independent scenario. The issues discussed in his novels are Indian Nationalism and British Colonialism on the one hand and religious fanaticism on the other. His novel presents a cogent account of political history of the thirties and forties unfolding an epic movement

for independence and its attainment at the cost of the division of the subcontinent.

II. CONCLUSION

In *A Bend in the Ganges* we find the classic situation of a man beset by conflicting values brought by historical changes, yet the entire background is enriched by the detailed accounts of social, political and historical circumstances and has been vividly portrayed and illustrated with a comprehensiveness and through sweeping accounts of the holocaust. N. S. Pradhan writes: In fact, so powerful and precise is his historical vision that at times his novels read like documentary, true -life accounts of the tempestuous events described. Quite often, his focus shifts from the individual to the event the presentation of which is marked by sharp detail, epic dimension and genuine authenticity. (Pradhan, 139).

The common concern of Singh, Malgonkar is the reflection of Indian value and feeling of common man and the sensitive writers that partition was a game that was unwanted element for the common man, and an unforgettable incident in the history of the subcontinent. Many years after the partition, the two nations are still trying to heal the wounds left behind by this incision to once-whole body of India. Many are still in search of an identity and a history left behind beyond an impenetrable boundary. The two countries started off with ruined economics and lands and without an established, experienced system of government. They lost many of their most dynamic leaders, such as Gandhi, Jinnah and Allama Iqbal. India and Pakistan have been to war twice since the partition and they are still deadlocked over the issue of possession of Kashmir. The same issues of boundaries and divisions, Hindu

and Muslim majorities and differences, still persist in Kashmir.

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