

The Impact of Partition On Indian Writing In English With Referance To Kushwant Singh's *Train To Pakistan*, Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend In The Ganges*, And ChamanNahal's *Azadi*

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Abstract

Fiction is thus the expression of the most intimate social consciousness in which it is born and evolves. As a creative process, fiction registers the creative evolution of the society itself. Thus, the evolution of fiction and the evolution of the consciousness of the societal apparatus are simultaneous and intermeshed. Indo-Anglian novel, right since its beginning, has inextricable bonds with the socio-political milieu where in it took birth and has been written since. The emerging national political consciousness in India which was slowly permeating to the grass-roots has been faithfully mirrored in Indo-Anglian fiction.

The partition of the Indian subcontinent was an event of such a great magnitude that profoundly affected human emotions and values to such a great extent that all creative arts and artists have come under its influence. They have been performed and produced to educate and appeal the audience about partition. But it is fiction that provides vast canvass to the creative genius to deal with the very complex theme of partition and this genre has attracted writers of all Indian languages.

Key words: partition, refugees, political consciousness, non-violent, Indian subcontinent, misery displacement, destruction and bloodshed, holocaust, demonic creatures, communal riots.

Indroduction:

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. 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. As it is observed by M. K. Naik:

Up to the 1930's there was no Indian novelist who could claim sustained and considerable achievement in fiction originally written in English. Then came a sudden flowering, and it is significant that it came in 1930's a period during which the glory that was Gandhi's attained perhaps its brightest splendour. The Indian freedom struggle was already more than a generation old, yet with the advent of Mahatma Gandhi it was so thoroughly democratized that freedom consciousness percolated for the first time to the very grassroots of Indian society and revitalized it. It is possible to see a connection between this developments and the rise of the Indian novel in English; for fiction, of all literary forms is most vitally concerned with social conditions and values. (Naik, 194)

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, NayanataraSahgal, 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 story-telling. He seems to adopt the epic method of story-telling, 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 writers live-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 inflame 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 MumtazNavaz, *Ice Candy Man* by BapsiSidva, *Clear Light of Day* by Anitha Desai, *Shadow of Time* by NigarMasroor, *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 expectances, 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 defence 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.

‘Karma’ the last part of the novel indicates the Indian way of life in relation to man’s experience with the unknown cosmic design stored for him. Arthur Lalaply comments:

Its intrinsic qualities as a novel grip the reader. Throughout, the action sweeps one along. The characters are vivid and highly credible, and Khushwant Singh keeps them going magnificently on two levels; in their quotidian matrix compounded of their passions of love and revenge, their tremendous sense of belonging to a village community, and there insolence and heroism; and then again on the wide stage set by the tornado that breaks on their lives in the shape of the cataclysmic events of the partition of India in 1947. (Pobby, 133)

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.

The indelible impression of Manohar Malgonkar's novels is that of easy readability. As H.U. Khan observes:

His novels and short stories mark a reaction against social realism and romanticism in their keynote. His novels and short stories are rooted in authenticity and sound historical sense. *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964) serves as an interesting illustration of his vision of human nature. As regards violence, Malgonkar views it as the essence of human nature. His novels depict outdoor life, action, adventure and violence. A major element that contributes to continuous external action, violence and adventure in his fiction is the theme of revenge. It is a recurrent feature of his novels and it ultimately acquires the status of a major motif in them. (Khan, 28-29)

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 rent 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 more 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.

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).

ChamanNahal may be said to be one of such ‘good writers’ who is mediumistic to the deeper strings of life of the Gandhian age. Nahal's first novel *My True Faces* (1973) deals in main with the marital discord and the resultant conflict between Kamal and Malti. *Azadi* (1975), which won the SahityaAkademi award for the year 1977, is one of the most comprehensive fictional accounts of the

partition holocaust in Indian literature. The theme of *Into Another Dawn* (1977) is cosmopolitanism and international fraternity. His next novel, *The English Queens* (1979) is a satire on the follies, affectations and moralities of the anglicized Indians. *The Crown and the Loincloth* (1981) is a forceful recordation of the non-violent non-cooperation movement that swept the country during 1920-22. He once again introduces the quest motif in his *Sunrise in Fiji* (1988). *The Salt of Life* (1990) is a remarkable historical novel with a fine blend of fact and fiction, representing vast canvas of the Indian freedom struggle. *The Triumph of the Tricolor* (1993), which deals with the third and final phase of Indian freedom struggle – Quit India movement.

Chaman Nahal says that the study of Nationalism and history is a study of the alternative choices open to people at a particular time, but, for a writer of fiction, choices are endless. What he could not change in real life, he changed through his creative imagination! He is the true representative on Indian panorama of his time.

He has a remarkable skill in blending fact and fiction. Another feature of Nahal's style is the occasional use of too many adjectives for the sake of emphasis. Nahal has a fascination for writing long sentences.

Nahal makes use of a number of linguistic devices in his narration techniques, that is carefully chosen clusters of images and symbols that figure most prominently amongst the devices deployed by him. They help in evoking the required atmosphere to provide a deep insight into the characters' psyche and lend textural density and structural unity to the novel.

Nahal makes an exquisite use of the stylistic devices of contrast and conflict. In *Azadi* the 'demonic creatures' Abdul Ghani, Inayat Ullah Khan and Vasptain Rahmat-Ullah Khan offer a contrast with Bill Davidson, Chaudhri Barkat Mi and the Hakim, who are sympathetic and enlightened. Gangu Mull, who becomes a Muslim so that he can remain in the newly created Pakistan and retain his property, is contrasted with Niranjana Singh, who is steadfast in his faith and ends his life for the sake of religion.

The plot of the novel is structurally speaking symmetrical and well organized. The novel is neatly divided in three parts entitled 'The Lull,' 'The Storm' and 'The Aftermath' — all suggestive and symbolic of the three distinct stages in the narrative. 'The

Lull' describes the peace and communal harmony among the people of Sialkot before the idea of partition captures the imagination of some Muslim zealots

'The storm' takes place after the announcement of partition. Incommunal frenzy, the Muslims started to humiliate Hindu minorities. They take out the procession to warn the Hindu and Sikh population that they had no land of theirs and that they should quit.

A detailed description of the atrocities was given by K. R. SrinivasaIyenger who writes : "The 'leaders' had sowed the wind of communal suspicion and partition was the result; like a whirlwind, the mad act of partition was uprooting masses of humanity, mangling them and throwing them across the border heap after heap." (Iyenger, 498)

'The Aftermath', ChamanNahal attempted to give the problem of refugees with the government's policy. The Indian government was handling the situation carelessly. LalaKanshi Ram though started to live in free India; but actually had no freedom, no identity in his own homeland. This freedom remained to him meaningless and futile. His condition became more critical, when officers demanded him bribe for the house.

The novel starts with an expectation from the public on the 3rd June, 1947 when the Viceroy was awaited to make an important announcement in the evening. LalaKanshi Ram, the major character in the novel, was not literate enough person but an experienced intelligent. He and his wife, Prabha Rani with a son, Arun live a quite and peaceful life. The announcement of partition shattered their lives. In communal frenzy, the Muslims started to humiliate Hindu minorities. They take out the procession to warn the Hindu and Sikh population that they had no land of theirs and that they should quit. LalaKanshi Ram evaluated the situation and convinced that the British already were not interested in preserving the unity of India.

Azadi is an important novel which deals with various aspects of the traumatic experience of Partition of the country into two. ChamanNahal shows his remarkable powers of observation of the human nature in general and the political behaviour of Hindus and Muslims in particular. Though the novel is tragic in its tone, it is epical in its vast canvas. The greatness of ChamanNahal's version of partition lies in his balanced and impartial picture of the Hindu - Muslim hatred and love, their emotional and political relationships and the ambivalent relationship

between Indians and British people in a very realistic and elaborate manner. In this regard, Parvati Rao opines:

What makes *Azadi* memorable is the faithful, realistic and sincere documentation of the situation in the Punjab during the time of partition. Among the numerous partition novels in Indian English literature, *Azadi*, with all its structural and other flaws is easily one of the most outstanding. (Rao, 51)

In the beginning The Hindu leaders made people to think that the ancient cultural tradition is decaying because of Muslim rule. The Hindu leaders aroused hatred towards Muslims in the mind of the Hindu community. Arya Samaj too was playing a crucial role to make Hindu community passionate and harsh. Arya Samaj Consciously promoted religiosity and orthodoxy as part of revival in Hinduism.

The cow protection agitation, the crusade for Hindi, and the sangathanof a caste ridden society. LalaKanshi Ram realised that the true language of an Indian was Sanskrit, the language of the Vedas. Arya Samaj's crusade for Hindi drew the lines of cleavage between the Hindus and the Muslims in Punjab.

Nahal's *Azadi* seems to be different from all the other Partition novels as it makes an effort to encompass all the evils that Partition has brought forth. It does not terminate with the minorities fleeing to India. Perhaps the novelist seeks to continue the plot in India in order to catch the ominous effects of the aftermath on the lives of a few individuals in particular. The novel seems to be very significant because here Nahal's vision is very expansive which enables his protagonist to cease hating his counterparts in Pakistan.

Nahal portrays the feelings of all his characters in the novel; the temperament of each one is given more importance, and their ultimate craze for peace and harmony. The peaceful life of residents of Sialkot and their Hindu-Muslim unity was disturbed by the announcement of Partition by Mountbatten. The Muslims started celebrating the creation of Pakistan with drum-beating and firecrackers.

Muslims started looting shops and burning one Hindu 'mohalla' every night. Meanwhile, a train came from Amritsar which was full of murdered and wounded Muslims. This excited the Muslims who killed and wounded the Hindus in Trunk Bazaar. Soon the Hindus were forced to

leave for the Refugee Camp. The scene of the leaving of the tenant families and of the family of Bibi Amar Vati is really very emotional. The scene symbolizes thousands of such scenes. Fifteen million refugees poured across the borders to regions completely foreign to them, for though they were Hindu or Muslim, their identity had been embedded in the regions where their ancestors were from.

The partition brought the communal riots between Hindus and Muslims and Sikhs and Muslims. However, Nahal plays a neutral role while delineating the trauma of partition. It is not as if his sympathies are either with the Muslims or the Hindus; rather, one cannot pass any judgments on them. Actually, he brings to our attention as to how the reactions to the partition range from disappointment, cynicism, frustration to partial happiness and ultimate betrayal.

Conclusion:

The common concern of Singh, Malgonkar and Nahal 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 sub-continent.

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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