



Review Article

A reflective theory of sensitive issues in the Partition of India in the Manohar Malgaonkar's "A bend in the Ganges."

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Abstract

Freedom & violence came to India with each other. The joy of independence was overshadowed by the painful partition of the great land along religious lines as India and Pakistan. In the process, thousands were slaughtered, a great number of women were raped, abducted and mutilated and millions were rendered homeless. Thus, the Partition of India remains a painful, watershed moment in the Indian freedom struggle. The events which led to the partition, the partition itself and its aftermath have captured the imagination of quite a few creative writers. These writers have given faithful and artistic accounts of the partition of the great land of India in their creative works. This has given birth to the genre of 'The Partition Novel'. The present paper is a critical study of Manohar Malgaonkar's A Bend in the Ganges, based on the Partition theme.

Keywords: Partition, freedom, independence, religious.

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Introduction

The period of 1946-1947 is considered to be the most crucial period in the history of modern India. A Bend in the Ganges depicts a vital aspect of that period which involves the relevance of violence and nonviolence. Almost every book on Partition talks about the violence committed during this period. As Mosley in The Last Days of the British Raj, gives a ring-side view of the trauma leading to independence and partition of India and writes: "In the nine months between August 1947 and the spring of the following year, between fourteen and sixteen million Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were forced to leave their homes and flee to safety from blood-crazed mobs. In that same period over 6,00,000 of them were killed." Malgaonkar, has the personal

experience of the partition which has been clearly pictured in his novel A Bend in the Ganges. There is an excellent presentation of bloody communal „apportionment“ which swept the whole country during this tragedy of partition. The breaking up of the old friends into enemies is the unfortunate outcome of the Partition.

The brutal and sanguinary actions were more shocking than what the people had experienced in the war. The two communities had begun to behave like fierce animals, thirsty for the blood of their own fellow beings. The significance of the human values had been lost and the sights of burning, raping and killing were common. The whole atmosphere was charged with doubt and distrust prevailing everywhere. The two communities, Hindu and the Muslims were not ready to live together, hence had drifted poles apart and

cried for a separate safe state. The Hindus never wanted that there should be an exclusive Muslim land. The British never wanted to leave the Hindus and the Muslims in harmony. So they played the heinous role of „divide and rule“. A Bend in the Ganges (1964) is Manohar Malgaonkar's second novel on Partition that has the partition holocaust, the freedom struggle and the accompanying trauma as its central theme. Mukerjee describes this novel as: "A Bend in the Ganges is panoramic in scope and epic in aspiration, crowded with events from Modern Indian history beginning with the Civil disobedience movement of the early thirties and ending in the post-partition in Punjab."

Malagaonkar says common man's opinion with his characters. "He nurses the popular Muslim beliefs that they are the superior race and that in the absence of the British regime they will become the second rate citizens amidst the Hindu dominated administration. His disguise as a Sikh is now disgusting to him, Shafi also hates the Congress, and Independence through the Congress is unacceptable to him. He believes along with the millions of other Muslims: 'The Congress had been desperate to grab power and create an India ruled only by the Hindus so that they could ride roughshod over the Muslims who once ruled them. It was the vengeance of sheep The Muslims would never agree. To them, independence was worth nothing unless it also ensured freedom from the domination of the Hindus.

They would never live in an India where they were only a tolerated minority". Some of them think that Gandhi's message of non-violence has lost its deeper significance and that as an ideology it is ineffective in practical situations. G.S. Amur accuses "Malgonkar of ignoring the nonviolence of the strong which demands a greater heroism than violence itself".(Amur) Asnani agrees with Amur in accusing the novelist of focusing

only on the superficial aspects of non-violence when it is commented that Malgonkar is "...biased and influenced by his own personal predilections". Much discussed subject nonviolence flowed around the novel. If Manohar Malgonkar gives such an impression that he discredits non-violence, according to James Y. Dayananda, it is mainly because he wants to tell the whole story from the point of view of his revolutionary characters who condemn non-violence as "the philosophy of sheep". It has been seen in our country that people try to use the same weapon to curb violence in our society. Mahatma Gandhi appealed to use weapon nonviolence but it is almost rare in our country. Malgonkar, at no stage, has rejected the philosophy of non-violence. On the other hand, the novel demonstrates that violence is self-consuming and self-destructive. N.S.Gundar is of the view that "...violence only breeds violence..." To Ambuj Kumar Sharma, the novel "...is not the refutation of Mahatma's ideology of non-violence". Pradhan agrees with him when he says A Bend in the Ganges is a powerful indictment of violence". People did struggle for a safe homeland away from the India-the partition. All these form the contents of the novel. The novel is open with the chapter echoes the words of freedom'Boycott British good', 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai', 'Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai'. M. Rajagopalachari strongly believes that the novelist does not favour violence in any way when he says "Mahohar Malgonkar, does not, however, uphold violence as a way of life. In the death of Debidayal, Malgonkar discards violence by revealing its self-consuming nature".

Manohar Malagaonkar left a strong foot print by writing this novel which related to many sensitive issues. Rituparna Roy says, "This novel is not just one of the most popular novels written on the Partition, but it is also one of the best-known texts in the whole canon of Indian English Fiction".He also feels the demand of a safe borne land for the Muslims a

great necessity. He now fully agrees with the Hafiz's earlier statements. The Hindus have to be eliminated: "Now the fight was no longer against the British, but against the Hindus who were aspiring to rule over them. It was Jihad a war sanctioned by religion, a sacred duty of every true believer. "By raising this question at the end of the novel, Malgonkar hinted that the achievement of freedom through militant action would have been a better and honest way than the path of non- violence".

Conclusion

As a partition novel, *A Bend in the Ganges* is, thus, marked by both strength and weaknesses. Unlike Other partition novels, it gives a detail historical introduction to the partition. It, however, does not reveal the kind of objectivity, although it has plenty of detachment, which *Train to Pakistan* has. "This observation is equally true of *A Bend in the Ganges* in which love represents one of the positive and humanistic forces.

The way in which Debi Dayal is ruthlessly separated from Mumtaz is a clear proof of the evil that is epitomized in the partition fury. As a Partition novel, *A Bend in the Ganges* succeeds in the delineation of the complex factors which led to the colossal disaster.

'*A Bend in the Ganges*' is really flowed in the minds of Indian reader. He discussed communal and nationalism and tried to depict ten current situation of India during partition. People misguided and misunderstood situation.

They left their belongings and crossed the border with age old memories who lived with Hindus as bhai bhai. Politics made them to leave the land and invisible wall constructed between two nations. Non-violence and love for motherland are sacred things. Manohar Malagaonkar succeeded in his effort to depict most sensitive issues in his novel '*A Bend in the Ganges*'.

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