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A CRITICAL STUDY OF MANOHAR MALGONKAR'S *A BEND IN THE GANGES*, AS A PARTITION NOVEL

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Abstract: T.S. Eliot is not only a well known name in the poetry circles but also a visionary critic who advocated the importance of tradition in the formation of literary canon for the future writers who aims to undertake research, as he argues in his most seminal essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" that "the most individuals parts of his (writer's) work may be those in which dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously". This concept of tradition, itself prepares the ground for undertaking research in Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges*, an epic saga, that provides a "historical sense"(in Eliot's terminology)of the pre-partition scenario.

Manohar Malgonkar was an Indian author of both fiction and nonfiction in the English Language. Malgonkar was born into a royal family, and educated at Bombay University. He was a Lieutenant Colonel in the Maratha Light Infantry a big game hunter, a civil servant, a mine owner and a farmer, and he also stood for parliament. Most of that activity was during the build-up to Indian independence and its aftermath, often the settings for his works. The socio-historical milieu of those times form the backdrop of his novels, which are usually of action and adventure. He also wrote non-fiction, including biography and history. Manohar Malgonkar who earned a prominent space in literary annals, has champion the cause of tradition in his work, as he firmly believes in the notion that one should never forget one's own roots because it is from these that we achieve our identity.

Therefore achieving identity of an Indian cannot be duly felt or keenly acknowledged, what it means to be one without referring to what it actually cost to a million of others who struggled in search of a concrete identity, attempting to come to terms with the two worlds, namely India and Pakistan.

Literary spaces, therefore become spaces of pain when exploring themes related to partition, especially that of India, therefore demanding greater attention from the people across the globe in general while Indians in particular.

The present paper seeks to analyze the novel by applying various literary theories in various contexts, thereby expanding its critical understanding in the realm of the reader.

Index Terms: eroticization, castration, decapitation, imperial gaze.

INTRODUCTION

A Bend in the Ganges, one of the seminal novels of Manohar Malgonkar, was also selected as one of the three best novels of 1964 by E.M. Foster, the noted English novelist. He compliments it as a fine novel written in English by an Indian.

Malgonkar presents here a powerful story against the background of the troublesome times of India. As 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”.

The novel starts with Civil Disobedience Movement of the early 1930s and ends with the partition riots in Punjab. It also encompasses Swadeshi Movement, the activities of the freedom fighters, the outbreak of the Second World War, the British retreat from Rangoon, the Bombay dock explosion and the division of India. The sheer massing of events may have been intended to provide the novel with epic dimensions. This prompts Mukherjee to remark that *A Bend in the Ganges* is a political novel “...panoramic in scope and epic in aspiration” (Mukherjee 59).

Also, Khushwant Singh considers Manohar Malgonkar’s *A Bend in the Ganges*, a successful novel due to the number of great national events depicted by the author and praises it as one of the few books that are “...samples of good writing by Indian English writers of today” (Singh 284)

Therefore it becomes imperative to decode the text through application of various ideological perspectives that can help the reader to better gain an insight on the novel.

Cixous’ Theory of Castration and Decapitation:

The essay “Castration and Decapitation” by Helene Cixous can help to showcase the intense brutality of the political assailants that caused inhumane butchering of immigrants traveling by rail during partition. The chapter ‘The Anatomy of Partition’ recounts the memory of holocaust as the novel quotes:

As a background to this great, two way migration, religious civil war was being waged all over the country; a war fought in every village and town and city where the two communities came upon each other. The most barbaric cruelties of primitive war prevails over all other human attributes. The administration has collapsed; the railways had stopped

functioning because the officials and technicians had themselves join the mass migrations. Mobs ruled the street, burning, looting, killing, dishonoring women and mutilating children; even animal scared to the other community; became the legitimate targets of reprisals. (Malgonkar 282)

Helene Cixous theory, therefore holds tremendous significance to this context as she asserts “If man operates under the threat of castration complex, it might be said that the backlash the return, on woman of the castration anxiety is its displacement as decapitation, execution, of women, as loss of her head”(Cixous 43)

Though Helene Cixous intended to respond to the imbalance created by Freud’s psychoanalytical leanings, yet here in the novel this theory has more to do with religious contradiction. The novel exposes the religious concept of how men are circumcise, as a mark of their religious Muslim identity. Muslim women too on the other hand are not spared from “eroticization of hair” which is presupposed by veiling practices, purely symbolic of decapitation.

Cixous’ essay not only confirms that hair alone has erotic and sexual significance, but the female head entirely is also in some sense viewed as a genital organ, whose exposure is considered shameful.

The novel also displays this act of veiling through the following lines “Others let the women in the burkha away; she was howling and beating her breast. Some reached out and tore away her veil and then others joined in eagerly and stripped off all her clothes.” (Malgonkar 311)

Cixous writes “Silence is the mark of hysteria since they are decapitated, their tongues cut off and what talks isn’t heard because it’s the body that talks and man doesn’t hear the body.”(Cixous 49)

But here in the novel Mumtaz is not led down by her decapitation complex by succumbing to the situation she is forced into as the novel quotes her unflinching voice at the end:

Above the clamor that rose all around them, he could hear Mumtaz shrieks distinctly. ‘No! No-oo! No - ooo!’ And then he saw her struggle and leap through the packed rose of men and boys around him. She hurled herself on his prone body, still shrieking. (Malgonkar 312)

The assailants could only silence her through violence, decapitation, rape and bloodshed. The readers can very well notice that the mutant have left no room for mercy, displaying no sense of discrimination between man and a woman, by carrying out their operation with exceptional brutality. Perhaps the writer seems to suggest that when it comes to punishment, women are equally condemned like men. Indeed a case of dehumanized man-slaughter.

Cixous therefore denies the “lack” which psychoanalytical theory ascribe to a woman, denying them equal status with a man, because here if Debi Dayal has to give up on his masculinity “as though a bomb had exploded between his loins”, Mumtaz too does not “lack” behind in showing true courage of parting with her womanhood for the sake of her love as “her clothes being torn off her, heard obscenities and cat calls of the

crowds.” Thus she not only proves to be equal to Debi Dayal in her fight for freedom, but also shares equal space with Debi Dayal in matters of life and death as the novel quotes, “She wanted to be with him wherever he was now going ; go with him as she has always wanted to go wherever he went.”(Malgonkar 313)

Freud, who through his psychoanalysis suggest that women do not fear losing an organ, therefore their superego (morals) did not develop to the same degree as men.

However, by asserting that there is a corresponding female fear of loss, Cixous subverts the understanding of gender construction that informs psychoanalytical theory. Here Mumtaz superego (self-critical conscience) is shown to be highly pronounced when she comes in touch with Debi Dayal who gave her shelter under his protective wings. Being a brothel woman she is made to feel her sense of dignity, the moment she attaches herself to Debi Dayal.

Her sense of love for him also fosters a sense of fear of losing her organ, in other words her virginity, since she make up her mind of regarding her body as a temple, only to be shared with the person she loves the most. It is Debi Dayal who gave her a sense of being as she refuses to be a mistress of the wicked Shafi, unwilling to make any further negotiation of her respect.

William Golding’s concept of Symbolic Sanction:

It is William Golding’s concept of Symbolic Sanction that makes his novel *Lord of the Flies*, an iconic piece of work, thereby giving it a symbolic significance.

Had he not evoked this concept in his novel, readers would have never been able to decipher the value of Conch that became the status symbol of leadership. The boys acknowledge Ralph as their leader because he happens to be in possession of the Conch, thereafter no one could expect to make a speech before the assembled children unless he has the custody of the conch. Golding shows by this means how dependent we are in any organization on symbolic meaning, since no community can exist without symbol and ritual.

This concept of symbolic sanction when extended to Malgonkar’s novel, can justify the division of the Hindus and Muslim into respective terrorist groups-the Hanuman Club and the Muslim League respectively, as given. Both the terrorist groups represent the power structure which forms the base of holding their respective political ideologies. It also determines the status of their modus operandi. Hanuman Club as the very name suggest, stands for the enormity of power possessed by Lord Hanuman. When Lakshmana is severely wounded during the battle against Ravana, Hanuman is sent to fetch the sangivini, a powerful life restoring herb from Dronagiri mountain in the Himalayas, to revive him. Here in the novel, one can see youngsters like Debi Dayal, who professed a never ending battle against the colonial power, as he challenged them, a will equally symbolic of Hanuman like power, indeed can be termed as an Act of God. Debi Dayal is therefore a variant of Hanuman as he involves himself in terrorist activities along with the members of the Hanuman Club, blowing up railway tracks and bridges, symbolic of his nationalist revolt:

Now they had graduated to bigger tasks: burning remote Government buildings, burning wooden sleepers on railway racks and removing the fish plates that join the rails (Malgonkar 59)

The magnitude of their terrorist operation surely is one like that of war waged by Hanuman against Ravana with his entire troop of Vanar Sena. Contrary to Hindu Hanuman Club, Muslim League is an official organization, having a legal stamp of recognition, yet this was communal in nature unlike Hindu Hanuman Club which was secular in nature, as Shafi Usman was its leaders. It was formed to safeguard the political rights of Muslim in India. The closed wrist featured in the flag of the Muslim League stand for Muslim solidarity and union. However, its motive was more to maintain the hegemony of Muslim over Hindus rather than fight against the British as Shafi retorts:

I am not a Leaguer only because the League does not believe in our methods. But there is no denying that Jinnah is a great man. He has pointed out the way. We must now turn our back on the Hindus, otherwise we shall become their slaves. (72)

Therefore this symbolic segregation of Hindus and Muslim into respective groups had expedite the process of partition in the wake of the most bloodiest upheavals of that time. The power structure of their groups although more fuelled the effective execution of Divide and Rule Policy of the British. Had these power structure not existed, Partition of India would have never seen the light of the day. Since no community can exist without a symbol which is an explicit representation of their motive, here too we see that none of the parties could do away with the concept of symbolic sanction to give coherent meaning to their respective parties. Also, the visual impact of symbols went too far in awakening a sense of patriotism in the mutanists towards their respective nation. These symbols carry objectives, values, code and decorum of the groups. Therefore Manohar Malgonkar's novel achieves symbolic relevance when read in this context.

Antonio Gramsci's Concept of Dual Hegemony:

Antonio Gramsci introduces the concept of dual hegemony, in other words ideological and coercive domination, to explain how the ruling class maintains their dominance and influence over society. Gramsci sees the ruling class maintaining its dominance over society in two different ways:

- (a) Coercive Control: It uses the army, the police, prison and courts of the capitalist state to force other classes to accept its role.
- (b) Consensual Control: it uses ideas and values to persuade the subordinate class, that its rule is legitimate.

This concept of dual hegemony can be applied to the British system of Divide and Rule. As Divide and Rule can give the explanation to how British could consolidate their position successfully in India being in minority, that could break up the existing power structure of the royal hegemony and prevented smaller power groups from linking up.

Traiano Boccalini cites “divide et impera” in *La bilancia politica* –a common principle in politics. The use of this technique is meant to empower the sovereign to control subjects, population or factions of different interest, who collectively might be able to oppose his rule:

The British invaders of India did not create the Hindu Muslim rivalry but they certainly made use of what they found. A divided India was a weak India. Religious differences among the races of India were the roots cause of the country’s slavery and the British had learnt to take the fullest advantage of these differences, playing the Hindus against the Muslim and the Sikhs against both. (Boccalini 57)

One cannot help but recount the most horrendous example of coercive control ever given by any Colonial power to the history of mankind-The Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy or Amritsar massacre that took place on 13 April 1919, when a crowd of nonviolent protestors along with Baisakhi pilgrims, who had gathered in Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar, Punjab were fired upon by troops of the British India Army under the command of Reginald Dyer. Official British Indian sources gave a figure of 379 identified dead, with approximately 1,100 wounded.

Shafi too was one of the victims of this tragedy:

As a boy of seven, he had been taken to identify the body of his father, flung obscenely on a heap of other bodies, in the enclosure of the Jallianwala Bagh. It was a hot April day in the year 1919, and the dead of Jallianwala had already begun to smell. There were three hundred and seventy nine bodies in the enclosure-the authorities knew the exact number because they had been counted-and it had taken him a long time to discover his father’s body.

(Malgonkar 58-59)

Surprisingly this was not enough that could satiate the British for:

General Dyer had promulgated what was called the crawling order. Everyone had to go on all fours; Shafi had told them. Like dog!-all of us, men, women, children –no one was exempt. That is the sort of insult we have to avenge. And then we talk of non-violence! The creed of non-violence is a naked insult to the land of Shivaji and Akbar and Ranjeet. (Malgonkar 59)

Furthermore, through consensual control British took the Royal Princes that were Nawab of Awadh and Nizam of Hyderabad under its control, thereby legitimizing their power and position in India through their consent, a stand also taken by Mahatma Gandhi in his political document *The Hind Swaraj*. In chapter VII, “Why Was India Lost?” Mahatma Gandhi clearly stated:

The English have not taken India; we have given it to them. They are not in India because of their strength, but because we keep them...They came to our country originally for purpose trade....Who assisted the Company’s officers? Who was tempted at the sight of silver? Who bought goods? History

testifies us that we did all this. In order to become rich all at once we welcomed the Company's officer with open arms....We have already seen that the English merchants were able to get a footing in India because we encouraged them. When our Princes fought among themselves, they sought the assistance of Company Bahadur... Its object was to increase its commerce and to make money. It accepted our assistance, and increased the number of warehouses. To protect the latter it employed an army which was utilized by us also (Gandhi 31-32)

However, this mutual agreement between the Princes and the British was achieved in lieu of political stability and royal power, promised by the British to the princes in return of taxes and homage payed by them. Apart from this, growing number of Christian missionaries and churches in India were also their consensual strategy to preach and propagate the Christian doctrine.

Although, this was initially not received well by the strong beliefs of Hindu majority and Muslim minority. Nevertheless, it gradually seeped into the Indian British administration and later into the mainstream Indian culture through large scale conversions. Introduction of modern technology, especially the British Indian Railways and overseas business that disrupted the traditional slow paced culture and Indian economy. British style education system brought by Lord Macaulay also was one of the strategies to seize the mind of the Indians. Civilizing the Indians were also a humungous task undertaken by the British to maintain its hegemony over them. Rudyard Kipling's term it as "The White Man's Burden" to justify imperialism as a noble enterprise in his poem:

Take up the white man's burden, send forth the best ye breed. Go bind your son's to exile, to serve your captive's need; To wait in heavy harness, On fluttered folk and wild-Your new caught, sullen peoples, Half-devil and Half-child.

Ironically, Kipling did not intend the poem to be viewed as unqualified support of the imperialist endeavor; infact, a more careful reading will reveal that Kipling was offering warning to those who sought to undertake such actions. However none of Kipling's exhortation to the White man, were adhered in actual practice by the British in India.

Postcolonial Theory and Question of Language Monopoly:

This postcolonial text by Malgonkar not only sought to lay bear the relations of power between the colonizer and the colonized, but it also reinforces the question of language monopoly, for one who has got the power of language consequently has got the power of hegemony. However, as fate would have it, sometimes this equation gets reversed with the same weapon of language and accordingly works in favour of the colonized.

For instance, Caliban's speech in *The Tempest*, bears testimony to this reverted or cryptic game of language. The same language taught by the Colonizer to the colonized has an element of subversion within this system of language politics. The following lines from the play, is an illustration of Caliban's (colonized) act of subversion. "You taught me language and my profit on't Is. I know how to curse the red plague rid you for learning me your language" (Shakespeare, 365-367)

Caliban who had no language before, later is able to challenge the authority of his master Prospero, once he gets in possession of the power of the language. He is therefore finally able to give him back in the same language, his learnt power. Thus, one can see to what extent language can become a question of power politics between a colonizer and the colonized.

The concept when extended to this novel, one can see that although British taught Indians their language with the sole purpose of civilizing Indians who they considered a pack of uncivilized barbarians, yet they failed to foresee its wider implication in years to come. The same language that established their hegemony over Indians, also became the cause of their obliteration, not only from the map of India but also from those regions where they ruled through language politics.

Therefore one should not be surprised when youngsters like Debi Dayal who received formal education, "represented the forward generation, enlightened by westernization"(Malgonkar 9), had the courage of a lion and will of a steel to challenge his masters, for he knew their ways and means. Who else could have known this better other than him, being a part of the system? He used the same language that the British intended to use against the Indians. This is a mark of a simultaneous and deliberate refusal of a shared sign system (the meanings assigned to language of the colonizer) and an ironic deployment of the same semiotic to create disconcerting counter effects of terror in the enemy. Having nothing more to lose after he is transported to Andaman, he realizes the vulnerability of his oppressors- Japanese as their rival's competitors. He joined hands with them to stand against the colonial rule. Even in jail he exerts an unusual form of resistance:

In the office, Mulligan sat at his desk. The assistant jailer, Joseph stood by his side, stooping slightly almost from habit, the picture of abject servility. Joseph held a sheaf of papers in his hands. On the table lay the blue envelope. Debi Dayal was marched in. The sentry came to halt with a crash of his ammunition boosts. "Salaam Karo! he ordered. Debi Dayal did not salaam he stared at Mulligan's face in silence for a moment stared back at him, red faced and champing his jaws. His face sweated. (150)

Derrida's Theory of Deconstruction:

Structuralism is the theory of meaning in the philosophy that draws its insights from linguistic. In linguistic structuralism means, that particular words or sentence have meaning only when they are arranged in a particular manner or structure. This structuralist linguistic theory, when extended to other knowledge system, means that the understanding of or the working of a particular knowledge system is hinged on the smooth functioning of the structure within which the knowledge system functions. This structuralist idea of the functioning of the knowledge system was challenged by Derrida on the basis that the structures themselves are not unquestioned principles or parameters because they are the product of the assumptions on which knowledge system is erected or created. All knowledge system are transient, they are there because we believe them, that's why they are changeable. Human beings will in any any case change the existing structure. All moral and cultural systems have undergone changes from time immemorial.

Jacques Derrida is one of the most influential thinkers of these times. His theory of deconstruction has revolutionized the whole history of ideas of knowledge system. His essay "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences", was held at John Hopkins University. The 1950s and 60s were the times when structuralism was being used to re-conceptualized and redefine the origin of meanings. In that sense structuralism was a radical theory that was locating the meaning in language and culture, not in human beings but in the structures of language and cultural practices. This idea of the origin and nature of meaning was challenged by Derrida in this essay.

Jacques Derrida begins this essay by referring to an "event" that has taken place. The event that Derrida is referring is an event that refers to the moment of reflection on the origin of structure or on the basis of structure or what Derrida calls "structurality of the structure." Derrida explains the role of the structure, in the orientation, organization and sustenance of episteme (knowledge system). Derrida argues that the structure that plays the role of organizing the knowledge system, or keeping the knowledge system together has not been reflected upon and has not been questioned. He argues that if we reflect upon the nature and function of the structure then we would realize that the unquestionable principle (structure) that organize the knowledge system are also arbitrarily selected to keep the knowledge system intact or unproblematic. In the next section of the essay, Derrida explains the role of the "centre", in the organization and in keeping together the knowledge system. The "centre" that Derrida is talking about is "the transcendental signified" or unquestionable meaning.

Derrida refers to this centre as the principle of knowledge systems that does not allow the questioning of certain types of meaning that operate as unquestionable signifieds. Derrida says that the Western knowledge systems have functioned unquestionably because they were always oriented by the centre- the centre that is unquestionable. Derrida gives example of various centre that have oriented and organized the knowledge system. All these concepts are filled with presence of unquestionable meaning but the meaning comes from language, language that cannot be relied on because there is no inherent relationship between signifier and the signified. Derrida explains the fictional nature of the various concepts that have been functioning as centre, by

relating these concepts- the transcendental signified- with language, discourse. Language is the necessity to create meanings. Without language, meanings or knowledge system cannot be created.

However, this does not mean that the knowledge system as created in the language has an unquestionable status, since the meaning or the signified is in arbitrary relationship with the signifier. Reflecting more deeply on the nature of the signified or the signification or the meaning of the concepts, one will realize that they have no existence outside the signifiers. In other words, even though there is an arbitrary relationship between the signifier and the signified, the signified cannot exist or meaning cannot exist without the signifier. So the presence, the presence of meaning is dependent on the existence of signifier. It is this paradoxical nature that Derrida exposes in this essay. The paradoxical nature that Derrida refers to the questioning of the presence of meaning to three philosophers- Sigmund Freud, Fredrick Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger. The three philosophers they too questioned the transcendental signified or the centre that has organized or oriented the knowledge system in the history of ideas.

Sigmund Freud questioned the truth of conscious meanings as he showed the truth of the unconscious.

Fredrick Neitzche exposed the burden of historical meanings that crumble the basic existence of the human beings.

Martin Heidegger claimed the absence of Being or the separation of Being from being forever. Derrida accepts that these philosophers have 'de centered' the centre, yet they have created another centre, because without centre no knowledge system can exist including the knowledge system of deconstruction. Even the language of deconstruction cannot come into existence without bringing the presence of meaning or transcendental signifier.

Similarly, the theory of deconstruction can be applied to dismantle the existing power structure. Here in the novel, though there is a no shift of power centre from the colonizer to the colonized but it certainly has started laying grounds for one, in the form of insurgency among Indians like Debi Dayal and Shafi Usman. It is working towards such a development by revolting against the existing power structure of the colonizer, that they have consequently started dismantling the 'centre' that means, started questioning the 'essentialist' nature of the power system which is based in its origin and functioning and thereby are in a position to prove that even the subjugated can wield power at its end. This could only happen by dismantling the old structure, so that the centre of power could be displaced and could form a new structure for subjugates.

Economic forces which have always worked as the "centre" for the power system to build its structure, its credibility here in this novel is put to question, since the subjugated Indians fought with the weapon of both violence and non-violence to oust the British. A combination of both active and passive resistance surely creates a 'centre' which provides a solid nucleus of power to the newly forming structure. As a result the force of colonizer's power nucleus thus would prove powerless when matched against that of Colonized power structure that will ultimately result in the shift of power from the colonizer to the colonized.

Freud's Concept of Psychoanalysis:

Freud's concept of psychoanalysis broadly describes what festers inside the conscious mind. He came up with this theory on the functioning of the conscious and unconscious realm of the mind. He is of the view, that the conscious minds fears to enter the unconscious realm of mind which is a storehouse of one's real instinct and desires. It determines who we are in real sense. Psychoanalysis is based on the concept that individuals are unaware of the many factors that cause their behavior and emotions. These unconscious factors have the potential to produce the unhappiness, which in turn is expressed through a score of distinct symptoms, including disturbances in self esteem on general disposition. (American Psychoanalytical Association)

Psychoanalytic treatment is highly individualized and seeks to show how the unconscious factors affect behavior patterns, relationships, and overall mental health. Treatment traces the unconscious factors to their origins, shows how they have evolved and developed over the course of many years and subsequently helps individuals to overcome the challenges they face in life. (National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis). Psychoanalysis is generally a theory of individual human behavior and experience, and it has both contributed to and been enriched by many other disciplines. Psychoanalysis seeks to explain the complex relationship between the body and the mind and furthers the understanding of the role of emotions in medical illness and health.

In *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, Freud (1949) explains the principle tenets on which psychoanalytic theory is based. He begins with an explanation of three forces of the psychical apparatus- the Id, the Ego, and the Superego.

The Id has the quality of being unconscious and contains everything that is inherited, everything that is present at birth, and the instincts. (Freud 14)

The Ego has the quality of being conscious and is responsible for controlling the demand of id and of instincts, becoming aware of stimuli and serving as a link between the id and the external world. In addition, the ego responds to stimulation by either adaptation or flight, regulates activity, and strives to achieve pleasure and avoid un-pleasure.(Freud 14-15) Finally, the Superego, whose demands are managed by the id, is responsible for the limitation of satisfactions and represents the influence of others, such as parents, teachers, and role models, as well as the impact of racial, societal and cultural traditions(Freud 15)

This psychoanalytical theory when extended to the characters in this novel, it sheds some light into the unconscious realm of character like Gian, Debi Dayal and Sundari. Gian although advocated in favour of non-violence fails to adhere it in practice, killing Vishnu Dutt in an uncontrolled fury. He refuses to accept as he admits that violence and rage is flowing through his veins and thereby is very much in his blood:

I have just killed Vishnu Dutt; Gian told him. Killed him with the same axe with which he murdered my brother, and then the darogah noticed the blood that was spattered on his shirt in a diagonal streak 'I had to find the axe', Gian was telling him. You see, it was important that he should be killed with the same axe. (Malgonkar 52)

On the other hand, Debi Dayal who professed violence against British is seen towards the end allowing his defenses to fall when it comes to fighting against his own countrymen. Debi Dayal shifted his gaze, trying to hide his nervousness. He must remember to keep away from him; avoid those searching, penetrating eyes of the religious zealot. (Malgonkar 306)

Sundari who rebukes Gian for cheating on his brother Debi Dayal is later seen giving him back in the same manner thereby falling into the same mire of disloyalty like her husband:

Sundari and a man lay in the thicket of reeds and palms leaning against the trunk of a tree. They lay on towels spread out on the short grass, and neither of them wore a stitch of clothing. They looked relaxed and contented, as though wishing to give the impression that their passions had been assuaged, and almost as a corroboration, he noticed that her hair was disarrayed so this was her way of getting her own back, delivering the death-blow to their marriage. (Malgonkar, 277)

Therefore there are also psychoanalytical dimensions in the play.

Social Ecology:

Though Manohar Malgonkar did not explicitly mention the effect of partition on the natural environmental, yet through the concept of social ecology one can delve into this unknown territory.

Social Ecology mainly associated with the US anarchist writer Murray Bookchin, emphasizes the link between environmental degradation and the exploitation of human being arguing that better treatment of the environment can only come with abolition of oppressive hierarchies in human society.

Because partition completely upturned the political and social environment of India, it wouldn't be strange to imagine, how could Nature be kept immune from it, since it is the most vulnerable to any environmental disturbance?

The Division of Kashmir, the Indus Waters Treaty governs the rivers that flow from India to Pakistan are such examples that describes the effect of partition on the natural resources. Water is cited as one possible cause for conflict between the two nations but due to Ninoo Bazgo Project has resolved the issue through diplomacy.

As a consequence of Partition, India receives almost all of the subcontinent's modern industries and most of its mineral wealth and energy supplies. Pakistan, including the present Bangladesh was left with a small industrial infrastructure and fewer natural resources. With Independence, most of jute growing areas were isolated on the Pakistan (now Bangladesh) side, while the jute mills, which had developed in the Calcutta area, are in India. After Independence India struggled to promote jute cultivation and Bangladesh to promote jute processing. The subcontinent northern plain split between Pakistan and India.

The division of natural resources in turn reflects the division of humanity between Hindus and Muslims and the region of newly formed Pakistan on both socio and regional level.

Eco-Feminism:

Ortner discovers, that women are closer to nature. Nature is akin to the condition of female, owing to the fact that just as man has ascendancy over Nature in the same manner males have proved their hegemony over females.

A Bend in the Ganges includes some incidents that clearly demonstrate the position of women equivalent to that of the Nature at the hands of men. Whether it is the acid attack on Mumtaz or Sundari's ill treatment at the hands of his husband Gopal or even further mutilation of female genitals and their breasts during mass immigration are a reflection of man's animalistic nature. One can possibly draw an analogy between man as a woodcutter and women as plank of wood, ready to be chopped off for a Great Fall.

Imperial Gaze:

Edward Said's most seminal work *Orientalism* written in 1978 uses the concept of Imperial gaze to outlay the politics that empower the Colonizer (west) and disempower the Colonized (East). From the start of his book, Said insists that Orientalism is premised upon what he calls exteriority: it is the (European) orientalist who like a ventriloquist makes the Orient speak, rather than allowing it to speak freely for itself through its own people.

Following Said, theorists have been able to develop the idea of orientalism as a 'way of looking' that joins the empowered 'lookers' and the disempowered 'looked at'. Very often as in E. Ann Kaplan's concept of the 'imperial gaze'- it involves one way, the oppressors defining how the oppressed are to be seen- including how they are to see themselves. Returning the gaze of the oppressors can thus be seen as a challenge to oppression, a chain of equality.

Likewise in this novel, Debi Dayal is one such character who challenged the Imperial Gaze of the British. He exerts an unusual form of resistance and subverts the gaze in such a way that it is his oppressors who are made to feel the shame. Patrick Mulligan is one such victim of the 'disempowered' gaze of Debi Dayal. The following lines from one of the chapters from the novel, narrates this instance of subversion:

He (Debi Dayal) stared at Mulligan's face in silence. For a moment Mulligan stared back at him, red faced and champing his jaws. His face sweated. (page 150)

So if on one hand Mahatama Gandhi experimented with non-violence to embark his revenge upon the Britishers there on the hand we also have characters like Debi Dayal, Gian and Shafi Usman, with the exception of Sundari who took their revenge resorting to means of violence and causing bloodshed.

The difference in the condition and objectives of Indian Jail and that of the Andaman could serve as an eye opener of the discrepancy shown in treatment of prisoners. Episode wherein we find Tukaram changing

his statement under the pressure of inhumane form of investigation in the police custody is sharply juxtaposed against the Prison Reform of 1920, posited in the Andaman Manual whereby allowing every prisoner a chance to resettle and lead a normal life as a 'feri' after serving for six months without any charges coming up against him or with a clean service record, not to mention the atrocities that were faced by the prisoners while sailing on the prison ship where they were stuffed like cattle in warehouses and were denied of the basic needs such as provision for proper latrines. Episode like 'Beyond the Black Water' speaks volumes about this.

Moreover poor censure activity in jail gives ample space and opportunity for prisoners like Gian to play false intrigues against their fellow prisoners. Incident where Gian falsely tricks Debi Dayal into illegal hoarding of money in jail raises questions on the moral activity of the prison's administration by the British. However this became a reason for Sundari in the later times to enact her revenge against her own husband by tricking Gian on the pretext of using his own enacted disloyalty against his brother Debi.

The issue of selfless love versus selfish love is also explored in the novel. Mumtaz's selfless devotion to Debi Dayal and Sundari's selfish devotion to Gian cannot go unnoticed and needs to be looked into with a greater magnanimity in order to understand the text in its entirety. Mumtaz, a brothel woman and a Muslim, does not allow her religious predilections to come in her way of proving her love for Debi Dayal. She serves him as an honest Indian self-sacrificing wife while Sundari, an educated women from a sophisticated background hatched a plan against her own love Gian to achieve her end. She fails to adhere to the laws of selfless love and sincere devotion, as expected from every Indian wife which has gain the status of a norm in the Indian society ie Pativrata Devi.

However, when it comes to concern for self-realization, both Debi Dayal and Gian are similar in one aspect that both realized their true love for their ladies towards the end of the novel. One can see Gian vigorously working for his atonement to undo the wrongs done by him to Sundari's brother by coming back for her family and assisting them in their task of rescue. This selfless act on his part is partially projected as his awareness of his own sense of love for Sundari. Also, Debi Dayal who caused a personal affront to Shafi by deceitfully winning Mumtaz by paying a heavy price for her release, is made to fall in love with the lady on witnessing her unflinching devotion for him. He too is not spared in matters of love and life by the writer.

We therefore can see degradation of human morals, as the analytical tools lay bare open the intricacies that largely occupied the socio, political as well as the personal life of an Indian as projected in the text. Further, how war can be detrimental towards human progress for all times to come and also what had happened on the Indian soil that had left a permanent scar on its map of human history. Manohar Malgonkar though considered to have pro-British sentiments yet seems to project the villany of Partition and its aftermath that gave a new direction and governing of Indo-Pak policies and politics.

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