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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF INQILAB

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Abstract: *Inqilab* (1955) is the most important work of fiction by K.A. Abbas. It depicts the struggle for freedom between the Jalianwallah Bagh massacre and the Gandhi-Irwin pact. Although it shows the forces of imperialism exercising control over the situation but the rise of democratic and revolution forces is also properly demonstrated. The rising up of different sections of society against the colonial rule and their strength is a source of hope for Indian people.

The novel describes non-violent agitations, peasant movement, trade union activities and activities of revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh, Gandhi, Nehru, Vallabhai Patel and Subhas Chandra Bose and many other national leaders appear as living characters in this novel. The characters of fiction interact with these real historical figures and a live dialogue is established communicating to the readers the very spirit of the freedom struggle of India. Their commitment, their devotion, their courage and the spirit of sacrifice fill up the reader's heart with excitement. Most important is the participation of the common people in the movements, Non-cooperation, Khilafat movement, use of indigenous clothes, discarding government's educational and administrative machinery etc. were the ways through which millions of people participated in struggle for freedom. Abbas describes the famous Bardoli Peasant's movements.

Keywords: Inqilab, Bardoli, Bhagat Singh, Gandhi,

Inqilab (1956) develops the action of the narrative against the background of twentieth-century Indian history and between them covers a large span of time from 1919 onward. The background material of *Inqilab* consists of the important national events and social and economic situation between 1919 and 1932.

Inqilab a historical and political novel from one point of view may be considered autobiographical from another point of view. Its hero Anwar moves through scenes and events most of which his creator had himself experienced and he has been endowed with the author's sensibility. Barring certain invented episodes in Anwar's personal life he closely follows the career of Abbas himself more or less in a chronological order. As an autobiographical novel, *Inqilab* can be compared with *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by James Joyce and *Sons and Lovers* by D.H. Lawrence both of which like Abbas's novel were written at a time when there was a great confusion of values and the autobiographical mode was adopted to assess the prevailing human condition. These three novels have this point in common though they are very different from one another in their preoccupation. In a period of conflicting values an author falls back upon his own personal experiences and thinking as a guide to enable him to take a stand at national, social and personal levels. Abbas has lent not only his personal experiences but also his sensibility to Anwar, whose process of development is more or less identical with that of his creator.

Being a historical and autobiographical novel, *Inqilab* has an open-ended plot structure; the story of neither Anwar nor Gandhi and the country is rounded off. History and autobiography are both a process in which nothing is finally concluded. One can, however, arrest this endless process at any particular moment in one's consciousness of it and wrench some "life by values" out of it. The novel breaks off into a number of scenes and episodes in the personal life of Anwar and the history of the nation. The scenes and episodes are mounted one upon another in the manner of cinematographic montage, which Abbas had learnt well as a film-maker. Gandhi and India's struggle for freedom provide the background of epic dimensions for the personal trials and tribulations of Anwar; his personal history and the nation's history coalesce. The plot structure of the novel, then is that of history as a literary mode which affects the story of Anwar's career.

Anwar's association with the *Bombay Chronicle* gives him an opportunity to follow in the trail of Gandhi's Salt March and cover this historic event as a reporter with the American journalist Robert Mills. The Salt March is also a theme in Anand Lall's novel *The House at Adampur*. Anwar manages to procure passes for Bhagat Singh and his comrades for entry into the

meeting of the Parliament in Delhi. He is an eye-witness to historic events such as this and develops an unflinching faith in the indivisibility of his country. His patriotism enrages his uncle, Amjad Ali, who calls him a bastard born of a prostitute called Chhamia and Lal Ramehswar Dayal. This revelation staggers Anwar for a moment; then he realizes that our lives are moulded by undirected forces in the midst of a dizzy current, leading to a destination unknown. Then he comes to terms with the fact of his birth he is a symbolic son of India. He cannot but look upon his mother as an unfortunate woman, creature of adverse circumstances and symbol of the exploited. As he returns from his mother's house, without revealing his identity, he meets a bunch of workers returning from their shift in the factory. The exploited give him a purpose in life, a cause to live for: "Life and struggle! That was the pattern of the future. Now he knew where they were going from here."

S.C. Harrex has praised the novel for making the history of two decades alive for us: "*Inqilab*...does competently communicate experiences-particularly, a sense of what it might have been like to live in India in the Twenties and early Thirties and to be involved in the political struggle."

The power of the book to "competently communicate experiences" stems from Abbas's personal experiences during the period. The ordinary man forgets such experiences, but a creative writer stores it in his memory for the purposes of creating in anew: "A great book owes its greatness in the first instance to the greatness of the personality which gave it life..." Abbas's *Inqilab* is different from the works of other Indo-Anglian writers who write with an eye to the Anglo-American reading public: "Many educated Indians feel that the Indo-Anglian novelist sells his soul to foreign publishers eager to peddle quaint tales of the exotic East to a large book-buying public which relishes such escapism."

There is a ring of personal sincerity in Abbas's portrayal of the country's social, political, cultural and literary life. The local colour of the novel is not something superimposed but is inherent in the very material used. References to *mushaira* and *qawwali* are inevitable in a depiction of the literary taste of the Muslims. Exploitation of the unprivileged by the landlords, ill-treatment of daughter-in-law, premature deaths of women because of early marriage, these are familiar evils in our society. So also are untouchability, regionalism, communalism and casteism. The British rulers turned our weaknesses to their advantage and followed a policy of "divide and rule". The novel depicts how the British created a body of native Quislings in their administration. Anwar's uncle, Amjad Ali, is a type of such Indians in those days. If it suited the British, they did not hesitate to kill even those who had been loyal to them. Jamadar Ajit Singh-a pensioned soldier who was cited for heroism and awarded a medal for saving the life of an English officer as well as for his invaluable services and sacrifices rendered to the British army in its struggle against the German expansion-thought that he had a right to speak on behalf of the Indians and he was shot dead.

Gandhi appears in the novels only in the crucial moments of the action, but his presence is always felt as the force to shape the destiny of the nation. He is presented as an image of infinite compassion and saintliness when the country is bleeding with irrational passions and as the leader of his army of non-violent soldiers when the Salt March is launched. The American journalist Mills responds to Gandhi's action and personality with admiration. His response is in keeping with his character since he advocates freedom. The "Strange Pilgrimage" of Mill is made to witness the heroic action of the non-violent fighters for freedom and truth. Anwar has himself caught a refrain from the Gandhian principles: "There must be no killing", says Anwar to Ratan. But Ratan turns a terrorist and Bhagat Singh detonates the mutinous bomb in the Parliament Chamber: "India would never be the same again-the impact of that one single bomb would shake and change the life of every Indian." It generated patriotic reverberations throughout the country. But as the struggle gathered momentum, separatist tendencies came to the surface. Communalism raised its head and the country became torn with riots and disturbance. It was a tendency that was to lead to the division of the country.

Inqilab is the most important work of fiction by K.A. Abbas. It depicts the struggle for freedom between the Jalianwallah Bagh massacre and the Gandhi-Irwin pact. Although it shows the forces of imperialism exercising control over the situation but the rise of democratic and revolutionary forces is also properly demonstrated. This rising up of different sections of society against the colonial rule and their strength is a source of hope for Indian people.

The novel describes non-violent agitations, peasant movement, trade union activities and activities of revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh, Gandhi, Nehru, Vallab Bhai Patel and Subhash Chandra Bose and many other national leaders appear as living characters in this novel. The characters of fiction interact with these real historical figures and a live dialogue is established communicating to the readers the very spirit of the freedom struggle of India. Their commitment, their devotion their courage and the spirit of sacrifice fill up the reader's heart with excitement.

Inqilab depicts life in Indian society at a time when a momentous struggle was going on to throw off the yoke of foreign rule. Somewhat as Tolstov's *War and Peace* depicts the life in Russia during the invasion by Napoleon. *War and Peace* differs from *Inqilab* in many respects, but both the novels depict the life of a nation in the hour of crisis at epic scale. Perhaps the social scene, the motives of individuals with vested interests in different groups and communities and the crisscrossing of exclusive tendencies in *Inqilab* are more complex than in *War and Peace*. An obvious difference between the two novels is that whereas *War and Peace* may be considered a thesis novel illustrating a philosophy of history which the author has propounded inside the novel. *Inqilab* makes a portion of Indian history alive without propounding any ideology. Abbas's sympathy for the poor and the exploited gets expressed in a natural way through the situation between characters. *Inqilab* is not a propaganda novel and

whatever Abbas's personal belief of "ideology". It does not affect the integrity of his art. It is no wonder that he considers *Inqilab* his "first and best novel."

Anwar is motivated by a genuine concern for the welfare of the country. "You must arrest me also," said Anwar to the police officer, "I am also against the Government." Anwar's patriotism comes in the way of Salmah, who resents his love for the cause of the country: "Then it just means that you don't love me, that's all, To you, your politics and your Gandhi and Jawaharlal and all this non-sense about independence means more than my love." To lend support to the Swadeshi movement he burns his clothes made of foreign material: "Anwar had been feeding the bonfires with the few items of English made clothes he had quietly secreted away from home for fear of *Phoopi Amma* who certainly did not approve of burning nice new clothes. He had kept back, however, a gleaming silk *sherwani*, that he had worn on the last Eid. "

At Aligarh, he offers refuge to the revolutionary, Ratan: "Of course, you can stay-you should. I will just arrange about your bed."

His faith in God is lost when his prayer fail to save to life of his siter, Anjum: "He had prayed and yet his sister was dead! Even God had not saved her! As these bitter thoughts came rushing to his mind, something snapped within him. It was faith." The new faith that replace it is faith in human life and human values. Anwar develops into a person with liberal and enlightened human values. His liberalism stands in sharp contrast with the fanaticism of Amjad Ali.

Anwar has the virtues of truth and honesty and is influenced by Gandhi's ideas of non-violence and truth. Anwar is a patriot, nationalist, obedient son and man of self-respect. His early childhood was deeply influenced by the humane values and patriotic sentiments of his father, actually his godfather, Akbar Ali.

At the beginning of the novel's action, Akbar is presented as the finest product of Islamic culture that is immersed in the main stream of the country. He is an enlightened person and has correct ideas about social, economic and political matters. He has correct principles of public and private morality. He is, above all, very humane, a fact borne out by bringing up Rameshwar Dayal's "illegitimate offspring as his own legitimate son"; he gives "him more love and understanding than any other human being."

He provides Anwar moral education with his "insistence on truth and good conduct." He advises Anwar "to broaden his mind by travel" and take to commerce instead of going in for service: "Look at the English," he would say, "they have become masters of the world only by commerce." He advises him not to have superstitious beliefs in dragons and fairies, giants and gnomes and ghosts: "Of course there were really no such dragons, no fairies, no giants and gnomes and ghosts. His father had specifically told him that and asked him not to take Gulabo's stories seriously or else, he would grow up into a superstitious person like *Phoopi Amma* who believed in such things." He wants him to grow into a self-reliant man: "I want my boy to grow up into a strong self-reliant man and not a timid aristocrat who loves gold buttons."

Akbar Ali becomes a soured man towards the end of the novel's action because of unpleasant incidents such as riots and under the pressure of the general feeling in his community; but he is not like Hafiz in Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges*. Hafiz is more like Amjad Ali than like Akbar. Akbar Ali is dragged, against his wishes to preside over a meeting being held to condemn Gandhi-Irwin pact. But his reasons for disagreeing with Gandhi are different from any communal thinking. He was for complete independence and hence for a continuation of the Civil Disobedience movement. He did not want the movement to be suspended just because of stray cases of violence: "Some policemen were killed by the people in Chauri Chaura-it is some place in U.P. so Gandhiji says there is still violence in the hearts of the people and the Civil Disobedience must be stopped. As he spoke, there was bitterness in Akbar Ali's voice which Anwar had never felt before. Some policemen were killed, no doubt! What of it? Everyone cannot become a saint and a Mahatma. Haven't they killed so many of our men? What has he done? Stopped us just when we were so near the goal!"

He had courted arrest for the national cause and adopted the Gandhian way of life and Gandhi's views to the extent he could. But the unpleasant incidents and the pressure of the communal environment do bring a slight curve in his way of thinking and feeling towards the end of the novel.

Amjad Ali is a type of the Indian that favoured the British rule; he is a Government servant. This vested interest did not allow him to think independently no national lines. And when it suited the British Government to encourage communalism in the country on the signing of the Gandhi-Irwin pact, he became a communalist. At the beginning of the novel's action he is shown as an exploiting Government servant, exploiting the poor and in league with the influential zamindars such as Thakur Sahab.

The same authors hold that the "predominantly Hindu leaders of Congress" were responsible for Rehmat Ali and Muslim League's idea of a separate state catching up with the Muslim masses: "Adopted by the body that was the focal point of Moslem League, Rehmat Ali's proposal gradually took hold of the imagination of India's Moslem masses. Its progress was nurtured by the chauvinistic attitude of the predominantly Hindu leaders of Congress who remained determined to make no concession to their Moslem foes."

The function of Amjad in the novel is to serve a point of contrast with both his brother Akbar and his nephew Anwar. In regard to Anwar, he often assumes the role of an antagonist. If Anwar is the protagonist in quest for freedom, Amjad serves the function of an obstructing force, or an agent of that force. The device of contrast in characterization is artistically handled.

Among the minor background characters of the novel mention may be made of Lala Rameshwar Dayal and his wife, Lajwati, Rameshwar Dayal in a moment of indiscretion, visited the prostitute Chhamia and the outcome of it was the birth of Anwar by her. Though timid and cowardly, he redeems himself in our estimation by accepting some responsibility for his indiscretion. He persuades his fearless and defiant friend Akbar to bring up Anwar as his son. Akbar accepts this humane responsibility of a godfather. Rameshwar Dayal provides for Anwar's higher education with his savings. Akbar informs Anwar: "You can go with your own money. You see, Anwar your Kaka Rameshwar has left you ten thousand rupees. Omar criticizes Rameshwar Dayal as a typical unpatriotic merchant: "Kaka Rameshwar was an unpatriotic usurer who sold British cloth and so helped the enemy... his wife, Lajwati is overbearing and rules the household and her husband with an iron hand. She is issueless and finds satisfaction in mothering her sickly husband. She is intolerant of other faiths and resents her husband's close friendship with a Muslim, Akbar.

Mohan Shah, whom Anwar comes to know in Bombay, is a dandy and perfumed patriot in revolt against the values of his industrialist father, Maneklal Shah. He wears long hair and live "a wild, Bohemian life on the pretext of studying Art" in Paris. After his return from the French capital, he adopts revolutionary postures and wears khaddar to parade himself as a patriot. He even gets seriously involved in innumerable important political activities. In the fever of patriotic excitement, he forgets all concerns of personal welfare and the political cause seems to be the aim of his life. He participated in many important events than taking place in India for the overthrow of the foreign rule.

He successfully guided the production and distribution of political leaflets and bulletins at Taj and other places even though "All of us are under police surveillance and cannot get out of Bombay without causing suspicion."

He believes that international relations should be governed by respect for the sovereignty and independence of nations, big or small. The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of another country constitutes his basic approach to peaceful co-existence. He affirms the principles of equality, territorial integrity, mutual assistance, solidarity and respect for a country's sovereignty and independence. The humorous side of his character is that he is "a patriot who would cheerfully go to the gallows-provided press photographers were present to take pictures of his martyrdom." A photographic memorial is incentive enough for Mohan to court martyrdom. By his nationalistic activities he endangers the wealth of his father, offends the people with vested interest in his community and personally undergoes untold hardships for the great cause. He is a representative symbol and type of a very large number of young men of the time who were joyfully atoning for the sins of their fathers.

Mohan's father, Maneklal, is the type of Indian industrialists who never hesitate to undermine the patriotic cause for the sake of profit. He has a stunted spiritual and moral growth and cannot easily rise above his vested business interests. He is "soft-spoken," shrewd and avaricious by nature. The dark rings around his beady eyes denote dissipation in the "wild orgies of gambling" and night drinking among the "beviest of dancing girls," a type that now entertains businessmen, professionals-doctors, lawyers, university teacher, government officials, private sector officials, foreigners, politicians in hotels. Maneklal is oblivious of the effect his conduct could have on his son Mohan, his daughter, Asha or his wife. What he is careful about his business interests. He joins the Congress, starts wearing khaddar and signs the pledge providing for "full sympathy with the national aspirations of the people" and begins assisting "in the propagation of Swadeshi, firstly by taking steps to eliminate the competition of mill cloth with khadi (i.e. hand-spun and hand woven cloth) and secondly, by refraining from exploiting in our own interest the situation arising out of the movement in respect of the price or quality of cloth," when he is convinced of "the staying power of the Congress." He signs the pledge in the interest of his business: "They are preparing a Black List and the mills that don't sign up will have their product boycotted-just like foreign cloth." Self-interest is the sole motive behind the policies and decision of this mill owner. He represents a large number of industrialists of the time.

Maneklal's ethical and aesthetic sensibilities are uncultured, though he has filled his house with a heap of cultural artifacts. He has furnished shelves with a large number of books, which "had been ordered for ornamental purposes and were seldom taken off the shelves and certainly never by the great Seth whose literary interest was restricted to the Finance and Commerce pages of *The Times of India*." The number of Seth Maneklals in this respect, is legions in India. Acquisition of cultural monuments serves to satisfy only the richman's sense of snobbery, a type of snobbery which can be foreign.

Being unlike their father, both Mohan and Asha are sympathetically drawn and may be viewed as perpetual Messiahs to the sinning Maneklal. Asha has educated herself to the point of self-denial in the national cause. Her political innocence and enthusiasm are appealing: "Asha is a child and knows little about politics, even though she has gone to jail." As most of the other characters in the novel, she is seen through the eyes of Anwar, who trusts her. Though the daughter of a business tycoon, she remains unspoilt and uncorrupted by her father's scale of values. In this respect, she serves a point of contrast to Salmah, whose youthful thinking is vitiated by her father's scale of values.

Abbas has artfully presented Salmah through the love-crazed eyes of the adolescent hero, Anwar. To his mind, she has been the paragon of love and beauty till the reality of her character shatters all his dreams. Daughter of Professor Saleem, she has been “Brought up in a home charged with hostility and bitterness and torn by dissensions...” Her mother was an orthodox *pardah* observing woman and her father an anglicized modern rationalist; there could not exist harmony between them. Her mother died when Salmah was a child Salmah’s father sent her to an English school to encourage her growth as a modern emancipated woman. He wanted his daughter to become what his wife could not be. Her life at school gave her a lot of dubious knowledge which was “neither natural nor healthy for a child of her age.” Her six years’ stay at the convent school in Nainital exposed her to their gross and vulgar ways, their high-pitched laughter, their Anglo-Indian slang and their sneaky conspiratorial interest in sex even “In the company of English Anglo-Indian and Indian girls from rich and westernized families...” The atmosphere of the English school could not fully abolish her innate modesty lent charm to her otherwise uninhibited character: “She had the unselfconscious gay air of an English school girl and talked freely on diverse topics, but she was her mother’s daughter, too and in her eyes was an innate modesty which lent an additional charm to her uninhibited character.” Such was Anwar’s view of Salmah, who inspired in him love at first sight.

Daughter of a highly educated Professor, Salmah shows fondness of the poetry of Iqbal, Josh and other modern poets and endorses Anwar’s appreciation of these poets: “Salmah was particularly fond of poetry and Anwar would bring a volume of Iqbal or Josh or some other modern poet and read out a poem that had appealed to him and find new pleasure in Salmah’s endorsement of his appreciation.” He values her endorsement of his appreciation of the poets are “the precision of a barometer.” He values her reaction to every word, every phrase, every emotion evoked by the recitation of a poem. She is very shrewd and practical minded. Any friend of Anwar is welcome to her. She wants him to introduce her to his friends: “Salmah was never averse to male company which might include prospective admirers.” But Anwar cannot but see her through his love for her: “How considerate of Salmah! She was by his side, to comfort him and protect him from the slings and arrows of fortune!” But she has in fact, no sympathy with Anwar’s aspirations. When he is expelled for holding a meeting, she asks him to sign “a few words of apology.”

Professor Saleem is “a competent teacher and a brilliant speaker,” but he has no sympathy with the struggle for freedom. His three years’ stay in England has completely westernized him in dress, mode of living and outlook. Even on the occasion of Eid or Baqre Eid, he refuses to put on *sherwanee*. Nor does he attend prayers in the mosque or observe fasts. He openly criticizes “the conservative observances of *pardah* and polygamy in the Indian Muslim society.” He also entertains English officials. He not only brings up his daughter as an emancipated modern girl, but also guides her way to love and marriage with cunning: “The idea of a ‘forced marriage’ was repugnant to the Professor who prided himself on being a rationalist, but even a love match could be ‘arranged’ by careful handling.”

He is not a patriot and sides with forces of British imperialism for expediency and self-interest. Neither he nor his daughter is liberal enough to gladly accept people of other faiths on a social level. The complexity of his character lies in the fact that even though he is not a devout Muslim, his English education has failed to make him liberal enough to join the main stream of the country. He is the type of Indian who obstructs the process of national integration. He disapproves of Anwar’s patriotic affiliations with the struggle for freedom and dissuades him from being loyal to a patriotic bosom friend of his, i.e. Ratan: “Think about it and decide for yourself. If I were you I wouldn’t spoil my chances by false notions of loyalty and hospitality.” Manzoor Alam is yet another character who represents the forces against the patriot’s quest for freedom: “...we are quite prepared to deal with these Congress fellows. You just wait and see how we squash Mister Gandhi’s Civil Disobedience movement in less than twenty four hours. Everything is planned to the last detail. Indeed, we have had a few rehearsals.” Anwar becomes “shaky with nervousness” to think of the inhuman strategy the police has adopted to put down the patriots. Manzoor boasts of his brutal treatment of the political prisoners, the Satyagrahis: “I got hold of half a dozen of the toughest *badmashes* of the town, gave each of them a bottle of country liquor-you know it’s deadly stuff, Professor-and when they were thoroughly soaked, locked them up in the same cell as the three congress Volunteers.”

Inqilab the first of the trio that Abbas had planned is an epic novel and has been projected as the representative work of the author. It reflects the phase of Indian freedom struggle from 1919, the year of Jallianwala Bagh Massacre to 1931, the year of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. All the main political events of this period find place in the novel through the consciousness of the hero Anwar who finds himself involved in them, though he is not committed to any of the political creeds of the time-the creed of the Congress or the creed of the Muslim League.

Anwar, the central character of this novel as well as the later novel *The World is my Village* is a sensitive person, both as a child and as a young man. He is moved when he comes to know about the poor state his friend Ratan lives in after his father’s savage murder in the Jallianwallah Bagh massacre: “Ratan had been having a hard time which made Anwar quite ashamed of his own life of ease and comfort. The Jamadar’s pension had died with him and Ratan’s widowed mother had to pawn all her ornaments so that her son could go to school. Even these had been exhausted and now-she eked out a living by playing the Charkha by the day and selling the yarn. ‘But for this charkha the Mahatma has given us,’ wrote Ratan, ‘we would have to starve and I would have had to leave school and perhaps carry loads at the station.’”

Even when it was not a personal case whenever Anwar saw poor, suffering people his heart went out to them in compassion. His adventures during his tour with his uncle Taya Amjad Ali, who was a big officer in the revenue administration under the British Rule, Anwar came across several such sights and instances which developed in him life-long commitment to the oppressed classes and filled his heart with hatred towards the exploiting classes of society. Such scenes as described below were a common sight then: "As soon as the camp was set and the Tehsildar installed in his easy chair with his *hookah* by his side, a procession of bedraggled peasants started to arrive, each begging for favour from him. The crops have been bad, Huzoor and we have hardly any money to pay the revenue Huzoor 'you are our mother and father, Huzoor."

On his way from Aligarh to Agra he finds labourers "eating only course bread with onions and the tin-roofed huts where the labourers lived." But the most pitiable misery could be seen in the village on his way to Agra, where people had lived a life of destitution for years and in the process had lost all hopes: "But the village that met their eyes now was indescribable. If it had not been for the few dark, skinny and practically naked children walking around the lanes, one would have thought it to be the ruins of a deserted village. Destitution and despair seemed to have settled on it, not a man or woman who was not in rags, not a child who was healthy..."

The novel depicts the India of 1920s and 1930s. In this period poverty and destitution spread not in the rural India only but also in the more advanced urban centers. Bombay, even as it is today, stood as an epitome of glaring inequalities. The glittering skyscrapers grew at their feet settlements which could not anyhow be described fit for human habitation. Abbas describes this with utmost vividness: "On the pavement, filthy with Pan-juice and banana peelings slept a number of homeless waifs. The buildings here lacked even the imposing size of the Chawls and tenements they had passed on their way, alongside the main road. Two storied houses, rickety with age, unpainted and unwhite-washed ever since they were first built were huddled close together like drunken men leaning on each other and surrounding them, like poorer relations of poor men, was a jumble of tin-roofed shacks jerry built shanties."

Although *Inqilab* is a political novel with its main focus on the political events of the time and how they influenced individual life yet the author finds time to show his concern towards the social problem too. Particularly, he is conscious of the poor masses, both rural as well as urban and hints that the ultimate success of the political movement for freedom lay with the redemption of the millions for such people. Shiv M. Pandey observes, "Throughout the book (*Inqilab*), the situation of the downtrodden and the depressed is hinted at. The novel sees the Mahatma and the Congress as endowed with a mission to work for the poor."

The description of the inhuman conditions in which hutment and slum dwellers are forced to live comes in like an obsession in almost all novels of Abbas which have Bombay, Calcutta or any other big city as their locale. It is either the protagonist himself who lives in one of these miserable dwellings or the protagonist watches them and grows conscious of the wide gulf that separates the two worlds existing side by side.

Inqilab is written in a simple style which can appropriately render the historical situation and its conflicts or express the moments of lyric intensity in the life of Anwar. It has dramatic decorum and modulates according to the character of the speakers on the sense being expressed. Tehsildar Amjad Ali is pro-British and opposed to Gandhi's Civil Disobedience movement. He remarks: "You can't live in the sea and pick a quarrel with the alligator." The utterance of the cliché suits the mood of Amhad though the image is inapt: there are not alligators in the sea. The description of the scorching heat is realistic; "Blazing June arrive in a swelter of perspiration and the children were strictly ordered to keep indoors from noon till dusk for fear of the fiery *loo*, the scorching wind that blew outside and dried the *khus* curtains so quickly that three of Tehsildar Amjad Ali's servants had to be kept busy sprinkling them with water."

Abbas often describes nature with great feelings: "It was late October and already there was a bracing nip in the air. The sweet-pea fields were aflame with violet and red flowers and the setting sun had cast over everything a touch of burnished gold."

It is natural for novelists to include in their narrative an occasional description of nature, against the background of which human drama is enacted and human emotion depicted. Abbas's description of nature is casual and builds up the locale or occasion of the human action. In this respect, he differs from Manohar Malgonkar, who gives elaborate description of nature, such as the following from his *A Bend in the Ganges*: "There you could see the old river-bed, its deep clean-cut white and pink banks gleaming with specks of mica, waiting for the largeness of the flood, for a momentary fulfillment, when some of the surplus water found its way into the old channel, making gorgeous blue pools in the sand. It was a favourite spot of swimming and picnicking. Barely half a mile away, you could see the main course of the Chenab, drunk angry, contemptuous and vaguely frightening because it was believed that the river was once again ready to change course".

Abbas's use of simile is in keeping with the mood of the speakers, as when Salmah calls Anwar "obstinate-like a mule. "Suddenly, she threw down her knitting, got up from the sofa and shouted at him, "Well, you are obstinate-like a mule!"

The author can create ironic situations which encompass a larger part of the action. When the declining Aristocrat Meer Faiyar Ali calls the war-profiteers “low-born bastards,” the eleven-year old Anwar asks his father what the word bastard means. The query embarrasses Akbar, who gives an unsatisfactory answer. Then curious child says: “Then will I be called a bastard if I do something bad-like disobeying you or not learning my lesson properly.”

The word bastard will occur again later in the novel’s action. This time it will be used by Amjad for Anwar himself and with serious emotional implications for the hero. The first encounter of Anwar with the word “bastard” at Panipat is in a context which is light in itself. But since the embarrassment of Akbar involves much more than just answering a child’s question, the situation is ironic. Use of certain words provides local colour to the narrative, words such as quawali, mushaira, sufi etc.

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