

Chapter - VICONCLUSION

## I

The partition of the sub-continent in 1947 was the most fateful incident in the history of Indian freedom struggle. It affected millions of people on both sides of the new international border. Tens of thousands of people were killed and an equal number of people were rendered homeless and injured. The historic migration that took place during these days has no equal in history.

While taking a brief survey of the partition, it becomes clear that it was the Muslim communalism launched by the Muslim League's two-nation theory that gave birth to the evil of partition. Earlier the Congress was not ready for any kind of division of the sub-continent. But finally the leaders of the Congress Party were also circumstanced to accept it as it became an 'inevitable alternative'. Thus the real responsibility of the partition goes to Jinnah and his Muslim League. Of course, Jinnah was not the first person to sow the seeds of separatist tendencies. It was even before 1947 that Muslims like Sir Syed Ahmed, Choudhary Rahmat Ali and Mahomed Iqbal, in the latter period, tried hard to create a separate Muslim nation. The Congress, however, tried to maintain harmony between the two communities. But unfortunately the Indian leaders failed to keep the

Hindus and the Muslims together and in 1947 the vast Indian sub-continent was partitioned.

## II

All great events in history have inspired the novelists throughout the world to pen them in fiction. For instance, Leo Tolstoy dealt with the Napoleonic wars in his world famous work WAR AND PEACE and Dickens wrote his A Tale of Two Cities on the background of French Revolution. Similarly, the 1857 Indian Mutiny has also been a theme of several English novelists. The partition being an event of such a magnitude, it is also dealt with by some Indian novelists writing in English and other regional languages.

However, though there are nearly fifteen novels on the theme of partition, there is not a single novel of the magnitude of either WAR AND PEACE or A Tale of Two Cities. The Indo-Anglian novelists have given stress on depicting only the human agony and sufferings rather than probing deeply into the historical and psychological causes that led to a schism in the human psyche. Almost all novelists monotonously depict the massacre, rape, bloodshed, arsoning and other inhuman atrocities committed by both the Hindus and Muslims. They are almost interchangeable from one partition novel to another.

## III

We see certain common characteristics in the partition novels. The most discernible of these is the melodramatic element since the novels written on the theme of partition are full of melodramatic descriptions. The novels like The Train to Pakistan (1956), A Hand in the Ganges (1964) and Agadi (1978) are loaded with melodramatic scenes. There are the descriptions of massacre, rapes, abductions and even the romantic love-affairs between the Hindu or Sikh men and Muslim women in all these novels. When Freedom Came (1982) is, perhaps, a solitary example of a different type of novel where the melodramatic element is absent. The only consolation is that novelists like Khushwant Singh, Chaman Nahal, Amrita Pritam, K. S. Duggal, N. S. Gill and Raj Gill were born on the Indo-Pak border. Hence their descriptions have become more or less realistic and authentic. They mainly do the work of documentation but hardly try to analyse the nature of the tremendous tragedy that struck people from all walks of life. Only Malgorkar, Sharf Mukaddam and Balchandra Rajan are the novelists born in South India, far away from the actual scene of the action.

All the novelists find a tentative solution to the division of communities and conflicts. It is a fictional or romantic solution - love affairs between a Hindu or Sikh boy and a Muslim girl. In Train to Pakistan, we have - the love-affair between Juggat Singh,

a Sikh youth and Nooran, a Muslim girl. It is this love that inspires Juggat Singh to perform the heroic act of rescuing the train to Pakistan. In A Band in the Ganges, too, there is a love-affair between Dabi, a Hindu youth and Mantas, a Muslim girl. The love of the Muslim girl brings about a change in the terrorist Dabi Dayal. In Asadi, the novelist has portrayed the love-affair between Arun, a Hindu youth and Nur, a Muslim girl. These lovers are represented to bring about unity and fraternity among the warring communities. Thus all the novelists have tried to prove that 'love' is the supreme value which can save the world and not hatred. This is their fictional solution. However, in Man Ekadash Ganga, there is no such love-affair or fictional solution.

The general tendency of most of the novelists seems to concentrate on the physical vivisection of India. In these novels we observe the historic migration of millions of people across the new border which provides the novelists with material to describe the violent scenes in a melodramatic manner.

As these novels portray only the evils of partition and are loaded with the scenes of atrocities, there is hardly an attempt at analysing the ideological clash which prompted people to hate one another. But in A Band in the Ganges, Malgonkar has attempted to discuss the historical and philosophical causes which were responsible for partition. The novelist, here, challenges

the very philosophy of Gandhi's non-violence. He suggests that Ahimsa actually led to more violence than full-scale war of independence involving death and destruction. With the portrayal of characters like Gian and Debi, he has shown that Gandhi's way of fighting were not understood by average Indians and hence the movement was an utter failure. However, Malgonkar does not uphold terrorism as an answer to the Gandhian philosophy of Ahimsa. In Jhann Khoshim Gang, Sharf Mukaddam has presented the organisational clash between the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Muslim National Guard. However, he shows that in their approach both the organisations were destructive and not constructive. Sharf Mukaddam has very objectively dealt with the psyche of the Muslims of India who had no alternative but to reconcile themselves with the situation. Except these two, the other partition novelists seem to be contented with the descriptions of violent scenes of killings and rapes.

From among the translations from Indian languages into English the novels Twice Born Twice Dead by K. S. Duggal, The Skeleton by Anrita Pritam and Kites Will Fly by Khishma Sahani also deal with the partition issue originally in Indian languages. Anrita Pritam's novel is noteworthy for it provides not only a female angle to the partition issue, but it deals with the predicament and the complex fate of the abducted

women across the Pakistani border. Unfortunately, translation situation as it is in India today not many translations of such novels dealing with the partition issue, are available.

One more striking feature of these novels is the use of the symbol of train. All the novelists have used the train as the symbol of destruction and death. In fact, the train symbolises a continuous activity and it brings two places and people together. But in the partition novels, the train becomes the means of carrying corpses of thousands of men, women and children from this side to that and vice versa. Thus in the normal course of time the train symbolises hope and safety, but contrary to the expectation, the train, here, symbolises death and destruction.

During the days of partition trains were the only available means of transfer of population between the newly created Pakistan and what remained of the Indian sub-continent. Thus when the historic migration occurred it was the train which played a very significant role. The very title of Khushwant Singh's novel is ample testimony to this. Similarly, Malgonkar's A Road in the Ganges and Chaman Nahai's Agadi and other novels in which we find the trains crossing the borders of the two nations, taking masses of people to safety only to be attacked by the enemy to murder, abduct and rape. Thus the train provides the novelists with an opportunity to

highlight the gruesome tragedy of partition.

In Train to Pakistan, A Bend in the Ganges and Agadi and other novels we come across several trains bringing dead bodies of Hindus and Sikhs to India and taking the dead bodies of Muslims to Pakistan. In the course of time the train is recognised as the 'ghost train.' However, the only exception to this is Sharf Mukaddam's When Freedom Came where we do not find even a reference to the train.

On the whole, the novels under discussion are monotonous in their descriptions of violent scenes. The scenes of atrocities have almost become interchangeable from one novel to another. Train to Pakistan reads like a film story; A Bend in the Ganges, however, deals with the ideological clash between violence and non-violence; Agadi is replete with the scenes of inhuman atrocities; When Freedom Came is, perhaps the only novel which deals with the psyche of the Indian Muslims. It differs in every respect from the other partition novels. But all these novelists deal with the theme of partition on a surface level and in a somewhat simplistic manner. To sum up, these novelists have not been able to improve upon the Dickensian formula of the historical romance.

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