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**A STUDY OF POSTMODERN NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE IN MANOHAR
MALGONKAR'S *THE BEND IN THE GANGES***

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Abstract:

Gita Mehta's Raj is a postmodern historical novel. It is a blend history with fiction, so becomes historiographic metafiction. Lewis Barry in Postmodernism and Literature writes 'temporal disorder', this work in the fiction by providing historical events and personages in the fiction. Postmodern fiction provides the subjective form of history and makes the playful nature of history. Historiographic metafiction guides the fiction to rethink the past. The postmodern historical novel becomes the guidelines to next generation's literature because the past is available in this fictional. The historiographic metafiction also a quintessentially postmodern art form, with reliance upon textual play, parody and historical re-conceptualization. The history in the postmodern fiction gives the plurality of meaning and the meanings are not false but the variety of histories. Linda Hutcheon opines history is presented in the fiction that is the re-writing or re-presentation of the past/history not to close it in the books but to open it for the present study and it prevents from being conclusive and teleological. Historiographic metafiction represents the 'other', representing the postmodern belief in plurality. She again focuses on the importance of remembering that our history is semiotic transmission, again reinforcing the postmodern idea that history reflects those who record it. Hayden White writes about the past and history, every representation of the past has specifiable ideological implication'. The researcher's argument in the paper is to present the postmodern technique in the selected novel of Manohar Malgonkar.

Keywords: *Postmodernism, historiographic metafiction, textual play, re-conceptualization, etc.*

Manohar Malgonkar is a renowned name in the Indian writing in English. He is famous for writing the historical novels. His most of the fiction bases on the Indian history and incorporates the important personages from the history. He is born in the royal family at Karwar district on July 12th 1913. The birth place of his is Jagalbeta village near Loda in Belgaum district. He belongs to Maharashtrian family. This always reflects in his work of art, mostly he writes about the personages from the Maharashtrian historical figures. His literary creation is famous for the fiction and non-fiction writing. His command over the language proves the popularity of his fiction and makes himself a good place in Indian English literature with R. K. Narayan and Khushwant Singh. His literary carrier starts little late in his life, before that he works for Indian army and becomes the Lieutenant Colonel. Because of he is Maharashtrian becomes the part of Maratha Light Regiment in the army. This is most important turning point in his writing that a lot of description available in his literature about the war and



violence. His early life is most happy life ever, one thing is that he is born in the royal family. Due to the good background he goes to school Dharwad.

He completes his schooling from a famous school from Dharwad. The opportunity, he gets to complete his education from the University of Mumbai. Manohar Malgonkar searches the roots of his royal family and gets the rest at Goa which is his root place. He recreates the picture of the picture of history in his writing so the new generation takes inspiration from the past historical characters. He uses the Shivaji the Great, KanhojiAngrey, Nana Saheb and Tatyia Tope in his fiction. When to see his background, it is very important to get to know the atmosphere he gets in his life is his maternal grandfather was a Governor of Gwalior State. This is something changes the life of person and gets the good inspiration in his life and goes ahead. He becomes the good hunter in his life and kills many tigers in his hunting. Later when he realises, he left the hunting. His life is full spectrum of experiences and due to that the different skills, he gets to narrate in the fiction. In his life after completing all government service and other work he joins the politics and stand up for the Indian parliament. In his life he becomes the farmer, miner owner, politician, army officer and hunter and many more things. The birth time of his shows that this the same period when India takes shape in the freedom movement and that reflects in his all fiction and nonfiction. Another important factor about his writing that he is not only famous for the fiction and non-fiction also for the biography and history writing. The entire world knows about his skill of writing, for many of the days he writes for the well-known newspaper as a columnist.

The newspaper he prefers are The Statesman and Deccan Herald. He is very open minded to write in the newspaper. The real political issues he always put in his column. The experience he gets in his life at the time of colonial era writes in his fiction. He is witness of the Civil Disobedience Movement and Jallianwala Bag Massacre. These are the most vulnerable act of Britisher in colonel period and that all reflects in his writing fiction. This may the reason that in his life he gets into the Indian army at his appropriate age to serve the nation.

Manohar Malgonkar's writing focuses on the historical period, he gives the fictions to the world are *The Sea Hawk: Life and Battles of KanhojiAngrey* (1959), *Distant Drum* (1960), *A Combat of Shadows* (1962), *The Princes* (1963), *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964), *Spy in Amber* (1971), *The Devil's Wind* (1972), *Shalimar* (1978), *Bandicoot Run* (1982). He gives some historical account in the non-fiction forms they are Puars (Pawars) of Dewas Senior (1963), Chhatrapatis of Kolhapur (1971), *The Men Who Killed Gandhi* (1978), *Cue from the Inner Voice: The Choice Before Big Business* (1980), *Dropping Business* (1996).

He is also famous for his short stories which people read with more interest. His short stories give him a good name in the readers mind and all short stories are well appreciates in the entire India. The short stories are as follows: *A Teller of Tales*, *The Garland Keepers*, *Cactus Country*, *Inside Goa*, *Two Red Roosters*, *A Toast in Warm Wine and Other Short Stories* (1974), *In Uniform*, *Bombay Beware* (1975), *Rumble-Tumble* (1977), *Four Graves and other Stories* (1990).

Manohar Malgonkar is a famous writer to write the history or past in his fiction and non-fiction. The historical figures of his novel are the inspiration for the young generation. All the historical events like Civil Disobedience movement, Jallianwala Bag Massacre and all minor details are available in his fiction. The life of great people like Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj a worrier, Kanhoji Angrey and Nana Saheb available in his fiction. The recreation of history is available in most of the fiction. Many critics mention that there are lot of similarities between Manohar Malgonkar and R.K. Narayan. Both are the contemporise of each other so their language is almost same according the subject matter. This is the period when the world is victim of industrialisation so both teach virtues to the world through their writing. The quality of writing a fiction with simple and lucid language, the reader finds a simplicity in the language but the subject is very strong base of the writing. The quality



of writing pre-independence and post-independence India overwhelms reader with the factual details. The narration is so scenic that the reader feels the picture in front of their eyes. The narration of partition scene makes the person think about the cruelties of separation. The narrative technique includes the life and events of history, the common concepts and themes like army life, the aristocratic commonality, partition of India, violence, sex, hunting and betrayal and revenge and many more ideas he handles in his fiction. There are the critics and essayist call him the 'Indian Kipling'. This is right also because the ability he has about handling subject nobody easily possesses. His most important factor of his narration is the complex facts of human nature.

Manohar Malgonkar's most famous novel *Distant Drum* (1960) is talks about the partition through the flashback technique. Kiran Garud and Abdul Jamal show the good friendship and communal solidarity at the times of Delhi riots of 1947. When the armed forces divide both go against each other at opposite site of new border. The novel focuses on the changes and clashes of the society. And shows the binary incidents in the fiction like army code verses civilian code, personal friendship verses national loyalties and many more. The focus of the *Distant Drum* is on the transition of British rule to Congress governance in relation with the British army. G.S. Amur writes in his book *Manohar Malgonkar* (1973) that *Distant Drum* is an 'an epitaph for British Indian Army'.

Manohar Malgonkar's another fiction *The Princes* (1963) is about the end of old Princely state system and establishes the democratic order. This is the result of independence nation in India. The king culture vanishes and the power goes in the hands of democratic leader. The novel focuses on the heroic virtues of the old Indian aristocracy as it comes to terms with new realities. The Prince Abhayraj gets the throne and his mother elopes with Abdulla Jan who is the palace officer at Pakistan. This is the new country of Muslim; she even starts a new life there as a Muslim. This country takes birth after the partition of India. The novel in the background gives details about the partition but the focus is not partition like *Bend in the Ganges*. Manohar Malgonkar is the supreme writer to follow the excellent theme in the fiction. The narrative technique is so innovative that it keeps reader attached to the fiction. The closeness of reader shows the quality of his writing.

The Bend in the Ganges (1964) is a historical novel. The historical experience he gets in his life that all get the proper justice in his fiction. He narrates all important historical events in this select fiction. The historical events play the important role in all character's life. The historical backdrop in the fiction affects the life of all prominent character. Manohar Malgonkar takes real historical events and fits his fictitious characters to write the novel, it is the blend of history and fiction. The mixture of history and fiction in the literature is called the 'historiographic metafiction'. This is the most important technique of postmodern novel. Linda Hutcheon develops this term and applies to all the historical novel to problematize the history. *The Bend in the Ganges* (1964) is a fiction bases on the realistic historical events from the Indian history. The history is the witness of the struggle for the independence.

Malgonkar uses the major historical events like Social Disobedience Movement, Jallianwala Bag Massacre and the partition of India to portray the novel. The novel set in the period of pre-colonial struggle for independence. The novel is the picture of violence and this violence take the fiction towards the freedom. The journey of nation struggle to free nation is depicted in the fiction. In the historical background Malgonkar present three important characters in the fiction. These all three characters represent thousands of different Indians who suffer in the freedom movement. The psyche of these characters matches with many of the people in India. The prominent characters in the fictions are Gian Talwar, Debi Dayal and Shafi Usman. The entire fiction moves around the life of these characters. The all three characters are the friends of each other. Gian Talwar comes from the small village for the college Duriabad. His college life is changes when he hears the speeches of Gandhi. In one of the programs when all people are against the British goods, he also supports them and gets the



influences of Mahatma Gandhiji's philosophy of non-violence. In the other hand, all people of the city burns the goods of British company and they oppose the manufacturing of the cloths. In this burning he himself throws his leather jacket, which was only good cloth he has. In this he supports Gandhian thought of non-violence. He also thinks that the non-violence is the only movement can give freedom to India. Shafi Usman and Debi Dayal are good friends and establish the Hanuman Club for the exercise but the terror activities are conducted form the same club.

The group is representative of the violence groups in India who thinks to throw the British out from India we need to kill them. This thought is kept alive with Debi and Shafi. Though, they are belonged to two different religion but work together for the independence. The only equal aim is to get free from the clutches of British Raj. The main activities this group conducts are to demolish the bridges and railway track which British make. Shafi is so brilliant that, he changes his name as shaikh and roams in the city. The activities are so dangerous for the British that he always in the wanted list of British company. Debi Dayal is a active member of Hanuman Club and works against the British government. He also participates in all activities like to blow the bridge and destroy the railway tracks. His name is also famous in the terrorist group. One day for the picnic they invite Gain with the intention to make a part of their terrorist group. When the discussion starts between the Debi and Shafi to convince him for the participation in the group at that time Gian shows the total disapproval and says his favor only for non-violence. And s gives the complete disapproval of being the part of their group.

Shafi represent the group of Muslims which are changed with time and demands the separate nation for the Muslims. The entire fights for the freedom of nation and at the same time Muslim come up with this idea of separate nation. This is very harmful thought at the time of freedom due to that British may deny the freedom to India. The radical people meet Shafi and pollute his mind. The radical thinkers say that once the British goes these Hindu will make the Muslim slave. With this wrong notion Muslim starts work against the Hindus. This thought leads the poison in mind of each against Hindu-Muslim unity. This unity is the only weapon can use against the British rule to through them out. But the Britishers are so clever that makes the efforts that the Hindu-Muslim fights forever for the name religion. At the time act Shafi stays with boys but one day he without any intimation goes away and Hindu boys are taken into custody by the police. Shafi knows the entire fact and he manages to go away with Muslim friends. This leads the Hindu Muslim disrespect for each other.

Gian visits his village and see his brother is killed in front of him. He is so quite at that time due to his non-violence. He does believe on the system and thinks he will get justice of his brothers' death. But the Vishnudutta is very clear and manages the police and get relief from the murder case. This hearts a lot to Gain and decides to kill Vishnudutta with same weapon. In revenge he really kills his cousin brother Vishnudutta who fights for the land. This leads the police action and he get the jail at Andaman. Here when polices catches Debi and send his jail at the same place Andaman. The new situation comes when Debi and Gain in the same jail at Andaman. Here Gian offers a help to escape from jail to Debi. He plans according but when the time comes to run at that time, he makes the sound and all police nabs him on the spot. The anger simmers in the mind of Debi against the Gain.

This is the time when the World War II starts and Germany tries to demolish the entire British legacy. In the fiction once again, Gian offers the help to Debi for the escape from the jail but this time he denies Gain's help. When the Japanese takes much part of world take under their control at that time all the prisoner very happy. They think that if the Germany comes in the power, then they will be free from the jail. The same things happen Gian runs away with the Japanese invade the island. This is the time that Debi does not run from the place though he wants to go India. He is the real freedom fighter. But the situation comes and with the help of Japanese he goes to India to be an informer. Gian in India changes his name and stays with Debi's family.



Debi in India meets his friend at Calcutta named Basu. Basu and his family are the victims of communal riots. In this riot his beautiful wife's face is disfigured. Some Muslim boys throws acid on her face. Debi and Basu want to take revenge on Shafi so they to the place where he stays. The meeting with Shafi again put them in the trouble that as soon as they meet him in the hotel, he informs the police about their stay. Police comes to take them in the custody but luckily Basu uses his presence of mind and run away. At that time with anger Debi abducts Shafi's mistress Mumtaj. Debi stays with Mumtaj and falls in love so he marries with her, at the bottom of his heart he never hates Muslim. The mistrust of Shafi makes him angry about Muslim. In the end of the story for this same girl Debi sacrifices his life. This the time when India gets the freedom and both the nations faces the communal riots both the side. Hindu kills Muslim and Muslim kills Hindu for the land. The influence on Shafi makes him a fanatic Muslim who thinks that only Hindus are the real enemy. So, when the new nation made, Hindus are forced to leave the places like Rawalpindi and other the part of west Panjab. In this riot situation Debi Dayal's father is not ready to leave his native place. In the feat of anger Shafi comes to take Sundari with him from the house of Debi at that time Gian and Sundari kills Shafi with idols of Shiva. This all incidents takes place in the big historical incident like the freedom of India, the creation of Muslim nation Pakistan and Hindu Muslim riots due to partition.

All the characters are the witness of the India's freedom struggle. One and the other way they are all victims of partition between India and Pakistan. The role of Jinnah, in making the Muslim League as the strong pillar for the fight for independent nation and the Indian National Congress wants the freedom for India. In the novel Malgonkar tries to prove that only non-violence helps to get the freedom from British. The country would have got free much earlier if the Hindu and Muslim do not keep the animosity in the mind for each other.

Manohar Malgonkar is postmodern historical writer; he intentionally inter-mingles the history in her fiction. The presentation of history in the same simple way, at the same time the contemporary political ideologies are presented through the novel. The development of the character and story is available in the novels with the proper political and historical background. The historical incidents make changes or affect the life of characters in the fiction. This is one type of intermingling historical events in the fiction. The historical characters are used with the fictitious character in the fiction. The facts are fictionalised in his work. The historical incidents are a prime subject of his narratives and that all are fictionalised. When he writes the fiction, he is much aware that this is the fictitious description of history and politics. He uses the intertextuality in his text because almost entire fiction talks about the historical incidents. The polyphony adequately uses in Manohar Malgonkar fictions.

The history and politics in *A Bend of the Ganges* (1964) is also her own version of subjective description. The own created fictitious characters and the nature of them get involved in the making process of the novel. Manohar Malgonkar's novel *ABend of the Ganges* (1964) is a form of self-reflexive literature. When he writes such historical novel, she is totally aware about the historical fact and with the help of its narration he keeps his reader attached to the novel. This takes the reader on another track that the pre-existed knowledge of them is useful to understand the novel better. This pre-existed knowledge carries forward in his fiction is a part of inter-textuality which is the prime feature of postmodern literature. There are verity of narratives forms he uses in her novel, they are history, satire, political details, love story, issue trust and distrust, human relationship, comic effect are available in his fiction *ABend of the Ganges* (1964) and this mixture of the forms is a part of postmodern literature.

Manohar Malgonkar uses the plurality and multiculturalism in his fiction. The plurality of the society, culture, religion, tradition and human beings are available in her fiction. Multiculturalism is available in *A Bend of the Ganges* (1964), the Hindu culture and Muslim culture, the Gandhian thought and the British and nationalist thought are available in the fiction. This multiculturalism and



plurality are the part of postmodern literature. Barry Lewis put the theory of 'temporal disorder' which goes with Linda Hutcheon's 'historiographic metafiction' are very clearly available in the fiction *A Bend of the Ganges* (1964). The novel bases on the precolonial and postcolonial issues because there is a lot of description available after the independence and before the independence. The postcolonialism is one integral part of postmodern literature. The meaning of the novel and the narrative technique of the novel make it a part of post-structuralism. There are many voices available in the text at the same time the dominant voice is measured in the fiction and the Bakhtin's polyphony is available in the fiction for the analysis. This all makes the novel as a postmodern novel and the author a postmodern author. Now the same text takes for the postmodern analysis with the help of major postmodern historical term historiographic meta-fiction and the traits of postmodernism.

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