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CONFLITING HISTORIOGRAPHIES AND COMMUNAL IDENTITIES IN CHAMAN NAHAL'S NOVELS.



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Abstract: Chaman Nahal is the one of the outstanding novelist of the Seventies (1970's) he worked as a professor of English at Delhi University: he wrote eight novels four of them constitute the Gandhi quartet. Azadi (1975) is one of these four novels and is added the epilogue (1993) which serve as the epilogue to the whole quartet.

Keywords:freedom, religious, straggle, love.etc

INTRODUCTION:

Chaman Nahal who belongs to second generation of Indian English Novelists shot into fame with the publication of his novels among them Azadi (1975) the novel won the coveted Sahitya Academy award of the year.

India known as the land of spirituality and philosophy was the birth place of some religions, which even exist today in the world.

The most dominant religion in India today is Hinduism about 80% of Indians are Hindus. Hinduism is a colorful religion with a vast gallery of gods and goddesses. Hinduism is one of the ancient religions in the world. It is supposed to have developed about 500 years ago. Later on in ancient period other religions developed in India. Partition was a major national tragedy in the history of modern India. It not only destabilized people from two communities, but also produced indelible scars on the people's psyche who were deeply wounded by the event.

Communal identities and partition has a deeply affected the creative sensitive minds of the writers in all the major Indian languages including Indian English. The writers selected for the purpose were deeply wounded as they personally undergone the experiences of the Partition. The proposed thesis focuses upon their responses to the tragic event and the way it has been dealt with by these writers. Khushwant Singh has written, "Train to Pakistan", Chaman Nahal's "Azadi", Amitav Ghosh's "Shadow Lines", and Salman Rushdie's "Midnight's Children", all these novels will be studied deeply to understand the impact of the Partition on individual as well as on Indian Society.

Azadi ("Freedom"), which won the award of the Sahitya Akademi (India's national academy of letters), employs an entirely different style. It is a straightforward account of a rich Hindu grain merchant and his family. The novel begins in mid-1947 with the people of Sialkot (now in Pakistan) hearing the announcement regarding partition, but they refuse to believe that they now have to move. Nahal shows how Kanshi Ram the Hindu, Barkat Ali the

Mohammedan, and Teja Singh the Sikh share the same Punjabi culture and language, and consider Sialkot their homeland. Meticulous attention to details and a firsthand knowledge of the life of the characters enable Nahal to make the plight of the refugees real to the reader. The novel ends with a sadly depleted family trying to begin life anew in Delhi. Azadi has none of the sensationalism of other novels about India's partition, such as Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan or Manohar Malgonkar's A Bend in the Ganges. Nahal shows the cruelty as well as the humanity of both sides. The novel also shows the maturing of Arun, Kanshi Ram's only son, but the account of his love, first for Nur, the Muslim girl left behind in Pakistan, and then for Chandni, a low-caste girl who is abducted on the way to India, is not as gripping as the rest of the novel.

The English Queens is unique in Indian-English fiction; it is a very funny but hard-hitting satire against the elitism of the English-speaking groups in India, such as the officers of the defense forces, the nouveau riche, the highly placed civil servants, or Indians having foreign wives. Nahal unfolds a fantastic plot hatched by Lord Mountbatten, the last British Viceroy of India, to ensure India's subjugation to Britain. On the eve of handing over political power he prepares a charter for the "safe transfer of linguistic power" by which he gives the English language to India. To "preserve, propagate and spread" English in India he appoints six women in New Delhi to "The Order of the Queens." Rekha, the daughter of one of these queens, horrifies them by wanting to marry a young man from a working-class slum; worse still, he wears Indian clothes and is an expert in Indian classical music. The novel takes a further fantastic turn when the bridegroom reveals himself as an avatar of Vishnu, who has come to destroy this pernicious second-hand English culture. He flies back to heaven with the charter, but it drops out of his hand accidentally, and comes back to continue its destructive work; perhaps even God cannot help India! Of course, Nahal is not against the English language as such; his satire is against the kind of

Indian who thinks that it is shameful to know anything about his own culture. One wonders whether non-Indian readers would enjoy the book as much as Indians do, because much of the humor rests on topical allusions. remains Nahal's best novel.

Salt of life.

Another of Nahal's novel about freedom movement runs from 1930-41. While Gandhi is getting ready to set out for dandi, Kusum informs him she is marrying Raj Vishal Chand, the ruler of a small princely state. She had come to the Gandhi ashram in Sabarmati in 1922 along with her son Vikram soon after her first husband, Sunil Kumar was killed while saving the Prince of Wales during an attempt on his life in Lahore. Vikram, now thirteen, elects to stay on in the ashram and joins Gandhi in his famous salt march.

In 1941, Kusum is struck by tragedy a second time. Raja Vishal Chand dies in a mountain accident, and she decides to return to Gandhi, who has since moved his ashram to Sevagram. In the political scenario, a dramatic alternative to Gandhi is established through the introduction of Bhagat Singh and Subhash Chandra Bose, but Gandhi remains the master of the situation.

Since the novel is about the freedom of the motherland, Kusum slowly takes on the role of a symbolic mother, a role which grows on her and the reader.

The novel again displays Nahal's inimitable hold of character and situation and his immense faith in the cultural synthesis of unity of India.

Sunrise in Fiji. (1988) *Sunrise in Fiji* is set in India and the South Pacific, especially Fiji and Australia. Several cultures come together in it, as they do in Nahal's novel, into another dawn. Harivansh Batra, a middle-aged man, decides to take stock of his life, feels he has mismanaged most of it, and travels to the South Pacific to discover the truth about him. He is astonished at the revelations that await him there. The Australian bus and the islands of Fiji force upon him issues he had ignored or overlooked back in India. These revelations amount to a mystic illumination for him. Which altogether changes the direction of his existence.

The present novel, emphasizes the latter. *Sunrise in Fiji*, in Harivansh's love for Pratibha, and the impact of the spirit of the place on Harivansh, carries the personal quest to a new dimension.

The Crown and the Loincloth. (1981) In this first-ever fictional presentation of India's freedom movement, Nahal concentrates on the years 1955-22, and on the towering figure of Gandhi, whose burning idealism fired an entire nation's patriotism, and whom the author sees as a symbol of moral and spiritual strength triumphing over physical odds. Though him, the novel follows the fortunes of Thakur Shanti Nath, a landowner of Amritsar in the Punjab, and his family of eight, all of whom are inexorably drawn into the hub of political activity, as Gandhi's ideology crystallizes into a policy of non-violent resistance against the British. Into that we are woven their private lives, which run their own course, though often parallel to the national one. Sunil, a son of the family, and his wife Kusum, in particular, fight a hard battle with each other, which ends only with the death of Sunil.

The endearing portrait of Kenneth Ashby, a British ICS officer, highlights the love for India many of the British displayed and the close bond that existed between them and the Indians.

Written with compassion and understanding, the crown and the loincloth projects a period of history which gave India a new chronology and new myths, by which gave Indian aspirations will continue to be measured for a long time to come.

The Triumph of the Tricolor. (198) In the triumph of the tricolor, Chaman Nahal returns to India's freedom movement, this once to deal with the 1942 Quit India period. Gandhi is the central figure even here, though the violent revolutionaries now play a significant role in the challenge to the British rule.

Kusum's two sons, Vikram and Amit, adopt different postures. Vikram, being the product of the Gandhi Ashram, where he has lived from the age of five, follows the Gandhian path. Amit, Kusum's son by Raja Vishal Chand, is more inclined towards the violent revolutionaries. Historical circumstances force the British to announce an interim Indian government in 1946 before India's full freedom while most of Congress leaders accept office in that government of Vikram declines the honor. He, instead, opts to accompany Gandhi on his village-to-village *waik* to calm the communal frenzy.

Kusum's family forms an alliance with Lala Kanshi Ram of Sialkot, whose family will be placed in Pakistan if the partition of India is accepted by the British. This gives a tremendous

Momentum to the story and an anticipation, which is all too clearly established in the novel.

As ever Nahal's attention to detail, to character' to historical accuracy' to the tenor of Indian Life, is superb and beyond comparison.

My True Faces Chaman Nahal's first novel *My True Faces* shows how in a custom-ridden Hindu family the world "Dharma" is being bandied about, without bothering to understand to profound implications of the concept connoted by the word. Even love gets substituted by dharma in the man-woman relationship. This distorts image of dharma confuses and baffles Kamal the protagonist of the novel.

What ever he had received had been fed to them it reached his conscience. It was so devitalized so flavored with strange tinctures; he never knew what its natural taste was while accepting the presence of suffering in this world as a reality. Nahal seems to believe that a lot of suffering in India can be traced to the narrow-mindedness and selfishness of dehumanized social parasites and crafty, politicians. These people strenuously guard a corrupt system and stifle voices of dissent.

CONCLUSION

In all novels of Chaman Nahal aimed at analyzing. How for the novelist has succeeded projecting his essential view of life through his novels and deals with conflicting historiographies and communal identities religious and philosophical postulations that try to explain the complexities and intimacy of life. Also an attempt is made at

Conflicting Histroiographies And Communal Identities.....

distinguishing between the Indian view of life and view of life projected by the Semitic religious. It also calls for the comparison between the Indian atheistic philosophy which views life with robust optimism and the western existentialism which is essentially a philosophy of disillusion and despair.

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