



## **Gandhi and the Partitions in India: Representation of Gandhi in Modern Indian Drama**

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### **Abstract:**

Mahatma Gandhi has influenced and inspired Indian literature ever since he appeared in the political scene. His role in South African politics and in the Indian socio-political arena ignited the imagination of the readers and the writers alike. Novels like *Kanthapura* and *The Untouchable* represent Gandhi as the saviour of the beleaguered masses; while several others add shades of grey to his character. These varied representations are owing to the response to Gandhi's actions and strategies as a socio-political leader.

A study of the depiction of Gandhi in Indian literature through the two Partitions in India will, therefore, will be an interesting area of analysis. They showcase the span of Gandhi's career as a leader. While the writings in response to the Partition of Bengal in 1905 anticipate a Gandhi-like figure and present his initial phase as a socio-political leader; those written in response to the 1947 Partition of India marks the last phase of his career.

The present paper looks into the representations of Gandhi through the two Partitions in India, in order to trace the changes in his image over the course of history. The paper analyses the Bangla play "*Prayaschitta*" (1909) by Rabindranath Tagore and the Hindi play "*Andha Yug*" (1954) by Dharamvir Bharati for this purpose.

**Keywords: Gandhi, Partition, Theatre, Indian Literature.**

India has been a witness to two Partitions – one in 1905, when the Bengal Division of the Presidency of Fort William was divided to create the new Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam and the other in 1947. In the intermittent period lies the Indian National Movement with Mahatma Gandhi playing a significant role in the Movement. In Indian literature, Gandhi was seen as an icon. Gandhi's actions in South Africa and in the Indian socio-political arena ignited the imagination of the masses, especially writers. A study of the depiction of Gandhi in Indian literature through the two Partitions in India showcase the span of Gandhi's career as a leader. The writings in response to the Partition of Bengal in 1905 anticipate the appearance of a Gandhi-like figure as a socio-political leader in India; while those written in response to the 1947 Partition of India marks the last phase of his career and are laced with an ambiguity about his policies and actions.

Hence, a study of the period would help one understand the impact of Gandhi in the Indian socio-political arena. The present paper attempts to study the impact on Gandhi during the two Partitions, through a historical study and by juxtaposing it with literature representing the two Partitions that India experienced. The paper analyses Rabindranath Tagore's *Prayaschitta* and Dharamvir Bharati's *Andha Yug* for this purpose. The paper is divided into three parts. The first part discusses the 1905 Partition of Bengal and the portrayal of a Gandhi-like figure in Tagore's play. The second part is a discussion of the 1947 Partition of India and the portrayal of Gandhi in Bharati's play. The third part is the conclusion.

## I

The Partition of Bengal in 1905 came to be called as “*banga bhanga*” (the break-up of Bengal) and was similar to “*anga bhanga*” (the fracture of the body) for masses. The anti-Partition agitation was launched by the Bengal faction of the Indian National Congress on the day the Partition was implemented on the province. Rabindranath Tagore announced the beginning of

the anti-Partition agitation through an article in the *Bangadarshan* published in 1905. Tagore writes, “Bengal will be divided on the 30<sup>th</sup> of *Ashwin*. To remind ourselves that this division is not decreed by God, we will commemorate the day by celebrating Rakhibandhan” (n.pag.). Owing to the strong influence of the bourgeoisie ideologies on Bengal politics, the path of ‘Swadeshi’ – love for the indigenous – and ‘Boycott’ – of foreign goods was adopted by the Congress.

However, the method of nationalism chosen was problematic. Tagore got disillusioned from the Movement and withdrew his support from it. He maintained a fair distance from the mindless jingoism that the Swadeshi volunteers were often susceptible to. Tagore’s own words suffice for such interpretation of his ideologies. In “Reflections on Non-Cooperation and Cooperation” (*Mahatma and the Poet*), Tagore writes:

I remember the day, during the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, when a crowd of young students came to see me in the first floor of our Bichitra House. They said to me that if I would order them to leave their schools and colleges they would instantly obey. I was emphatic in my refusal to do so, and they went away angry, doubting the sincerity of my love for my motherland . . . The reason for my refusing to advise those students to leave their schools was because the anarchy of a mere emptiness never tempts me, even when it is resorted to as a temporary measure. (58)

Flaws in the nationalist movement led to the historic Surat Split of the Indian National Congress in 1907. The Nationalist Party, formed by the Extremist faction of the Congress, later brought into its ambit the revolutionary secret groups in Bengal.

It was during this period that M. K. Gandhi began his *Satyagraha* movements in South Africa; the first being in 1906 against the Transvaal Asiatic Ordinance<sup>1</sup>. Gandhi's *satyagraha* was based on the concept of non-violence, restraint and resistance. Re-collecting his experience of his first *Satyagraha*, Gandhi writes;

One of them said in a fit of passion: 'If anyone came forward to demand a certificate from my wife, I would shoot him on that spot and take the consequences.' I quieted him and, addressing the meeting said, 'This is a very serious crisis. If the Ordinance were passed and if we acquiesced in it, it would be imitated all over South Africa. As it seems to me, it is designed to strike at the very root of our existence in South Africa. It is not the last step, but the first step with a view to hound us out of the country. We are therefore responsible for the safety, not only of the ten or fifteen thousand Indians in the Transvaal both of the entire Indian community in South Africa. Again, if we fully understand all the implications of this legislation, we shall find that India's honour is in our keeping. For the Ordinance seeks to humiliate not only ourselves but also the motherland. The humiliation consists in the degradation of innocent men. No one will take it upon himself to say that we have done anything to deserve such legislation. We are innocent, and insult offered to a single innocent member of a nation is tantamount to insulting the nation as a whole. It will not, therefore, do to be hasty, impatient or angry. That cannot save us from this onslaught. But God will come to our help, if we calmly think out and carry out in the time measures of resistance, presenting a united

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<sup>1</sup> 'Transvaal Asiatic Registration Ordinance/Act' of 1906 was named as the 'Black Act' by Gandhi. It required all Asiatics (men, women and children above eight years) residing in the Transvaal to register their names with the Registrar of Asiatics and take out a certificate of registration. The unregistered people and prohibited immigrants were to be deported without appeal or fined on the spot.

front and bearing the hardship, which such resistance brings in its train.’ (“Satyagraha in South Africa” n.pag)

Following the success of his *Satyagraha* movements, Gandhi went on to publish his treatise *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule* in 1909. The book is an assimilation of his ideologies tested and tried during his struggles in South Africa. “Gandhi’s *Hind Swaraj* is surely a foundational text for any understanding of the man and his mission.” (Heredia 1497) The book appeared at a pivotal time as it provided an alternative to the concept of ‘Swadeshi’ and nationalism that was being propagated in Bengal. His interpretation of Swadeshi goes beyond the meaning offered by the Swadeshi Movement of 1905 – “It does not mean merely the use of what is produced in one’s own country . . . Swadeshi means reliance on one’s own strength” (*CW IX* 118). He tactfully distances himself from the violence attached to the Extremist movement as he equates the “strength” of the body, mind and soul to the idea of Passive Resistance or *Satyagraha* which requires such ‘strength’. His definition of Swaraj in his 1909 treatise explicitly establishes Gandhi’s criticism of both the derivative philosophies, “we want English rule without Englishman. You want the tiger’s nature but not the tiger; that is to say, you make India English, and, when it becomes English, it will be called not Hindustan but Englistan. This is not the Swaraj I want” (*HS* n.pag.).

Gandhi, like Tagore, could foresee the problems that that Swadeshi Movement of 1905 would lead to.<sup>2</sup> In *Hind Swaraj*, he states that the anti-Partition movement is a consequence of discontent amongst the people but warned the Swadeshis about the ill-effects of aggression on their side: “Discontent has led to unrest, and the latter has brought about many deaths, many

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<sup>2</sup> Tagore and Gandhi very different in terms of their ideologies, yet there were many points of agreement. Tagore’s urban bourgeoisie upbringing gave his ideologies a different approach while Gandhi’s were connected to the rural masses. Nevertheless, they both were severely critical of western civilization and its influence on India. Choudhuri writes that “there was in Gandhi a lament for the loss of culture, a savage critique of Western civilization, much more savage than in the case of Tagore” (149).

imprisonments, many banishments. Such state of things will still continue. It must be so. All these must be considered good signs but they may also lead to bad results.” (*HS* n. pag.)

Tagore through his play *Prayaschitta* (1909)<sup>3</sup> aimed to present before the people the problems within the Swadeshi Movement. It was written two years after Tagore’s renunciation of Swadeshi ideals, and clearly warned against authoritarianism, narrow-mindedness and violence. These were some of the problems that the Hindu-elitist Swadeshi movement was ailing from.

Pratapaditya, the king of Jessore, is depicted as a ruthless and unscrupulous king. Not only are the people of Madhavpur, a small hamlet in Jessore, a victim of his torture; his old uncle, Basanta Ray, his son Udayaditya, daughter-in-law, Surama and his daughter Vibha bear the brunt of his vengeance. The hero of this play, the rescuer of the masses, is an ascetic Dhananjay Bairagi.

Slogans like national/ racial pride associated with nationalism are severely indicted through Tagore’s depiction of Pratapaditya. Pratapaditya is over-ambitious and autocratic. Surama faces the wrath of her father-in-law because her father, the king of Sripur had refused to accept the sovereignty of the kingdom of Jessore. Pratapaditya even plots to kill his uncle Basanta Ray, the king of Raigarh because he had formed an alliance with the Mughals of Delhi. He considers Basanta Ray’s decision as an act of treason. “Those Muslims have defiled our religion, if we let off those who have become friends of the Muslims it is a greater act of disobedience towards ones religion.” (695) According to Pratapaditya, the Muslims had taken away the purity of the Hindu religion hence by punishing those who are close to them, he attempts to restore pristine Hinduism.

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<sup>3</sup> The source of the “‘conventional-type’ prose play” (Chakraverty 94) is his early novel, *Bau-Thakuranir Hat*, written in 1882.

The crown prince Udayaditya's benevolent attitude infuriates Pratapaditya. In the opening scene, as Udayaditya refuses to extort taxes from the famine-stricken people of Madhavpur, he tells his wife that his father will not like his act for "the king considers acts of benevolence as effeminate" (691). Pratapaditya with his upper class, Hindu masculine attitude is a representative of the Swadeshi workers and is vilified by Tagore.

The ascetic Dhananjay Bairagi and the 'effeminate' Udayaditya are presented in the play as valorous and humane, in contrast to the zealots like Pratapaditya. Dhananjay Bairagi is introduced in the sixth scene of the play which is set on the roadside of Madhavpur. 'Dhananjay' is the other name of Arjuna, the mythical hero of the epic *Mahabharata* and a popular nationalist icon. Tagore's use of the name of this Aryan warrior for an ascetic – 'Bairagi' – symbolises his attempt to reverse the connotations associated with the popular nationalist iconography of Swadeshi nationalism. His fight against oppressive forces, symbolised by Pratapaditya, is not violent, neither is it done to gain power. This ascetic revolutionary is also different from the *santaans/ sanyasis* of the nationalist writings where they resort to violence to free the nation from colonialism.

Bairagi's non-violent revolt against the autocratic king is based on the principles of human love. The true king for him is Udayaditya, "The king of our hearts is he." (713) He defines the nation as the one which prioritises the power of humanism over political and military might. The nation is not just about the king and his regal pride. He says: "Maharaj, the kingdom is also like a road. If you can walk it, the mission is fulfilled! The one who visualises it as a road, he is the true traveller – what are we!" (731).

Parallels can be drawn between Dhananjay Bairagi and Gandhi. As has been discussed earlier, Gandhi enters into the Indian political scene through *Hind Swaraj* at a time when the Indian National Movement was fragmented and lost its way. *Hind Swaraj*, therefore, presented

a fresh direction to the Indian National Movement. Similarly, Dhananjay Bairagi enters into the plot at a time Pratapaditya's tyranny is at its peak. Bairagi gives a voice to the masses and teaches the king the ethics of a good king. He symbolises the fight of the masses against despotism through selflessness and is devoid of any prejudices and violence. *Prayaschitta* was, on the one hand, in Krishna Kripalani words, "Tagore's answer to his compatriots who had accused him of deserting the political battlefield. It was not desertion, but renunciation, the spirit of which is most movingly portrayed in the last scene of the play" (205). On the other, it was a demonstration of the values Gandhi was preaching. Tagore seems to be emphasizing on the necessity of a Gandhi-like figure in the Indian National Movement.

Bishweshwar Chakraverty says that the ascetic revolutionary, "Dhananjaya is another new character concept – this of an indigenous leader, later to be symbolised in the flesh by Gandhi – who uses soul-force as a political weapon to fight with might. He is more than a 'prototype of Mahatma Gandhi,' and represents a way of life." (97)

## II

The Partition of 1905, although annulled in 1911, had a lasting impact on Indian socio-political scenario. The formation of the Muslim League in 1906 and the Hindu Mahasabha in 1915 were the aftermaths of the Swadeshi Movement and indicated the steady communalisation of the Indian society. Despite Gandhi's conscious attempt to keep India united, the Muslims and the lower castes remained antagonised against the Congress and its policies. The Partition gradually became a reality.

Mahatma Gandhi said; "cut me to pieces and then divide India" (*CW* 73:25). He tried to project a secular attitude in his nationalism. For him, the ideal independent India was inclusive in nature.

By Ramarajya I do not mean Hindu Raj. I mean by Ramarajya Divine Raj, the Kingdom of God. For me Rama and Rahim are one and the same deity. I acknowledge no other God but the one God of truth and righteousness. Whether Rama of my imagination ever lived or not on this earth, the ancient ideal of Ramarajya is undoubtedly one of true democracy in which the meanest citizen could be sure of swift justice without an elaborate and costly procedure. Even the dog is described by the poet to have received justice under Ramarajya. (*YI* 305)

However, rhetorics like *Ramrajya* as the ideal state, his prayer meetings with *bhajans*, allusions to Hindu mythology and several such Hindu iconographies gave his politics a Hinduised appeal. This resulted in discontent within the Muslim League and a section of the Muslim population. Jinnah grew skeptical of Gandhi. Nisid Hajari in *Midnight's Furies: Deadly Legacy of Indian Partition* (2015) states that Jinnah;

found Gandhi's appeal to the largely Hindu masses dangerously sectarian. At his prayer meetings, the Mahatma would frame his political arguments using parables from Hindu fables; he described his vision of an independent India as 'Ram Rajya' ... All the chanting and praying that accompanied Gandhi's sermons seemed to Jinnah like theatrics. (n.pag.)

His fellow congressmen, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, abandoned him in his mission. They too were unsure about following Gandhi's path and wisdom. They agreed to the Mountbatten's Partition Plan without the consent of Gandhi. A heart-broken Gandhi told Manu, "Today I find myself all alone. (Even the Sardar and Jawahar) think that my reading of the situation is wrong and peace is sure to remain if partition is agreed upon." (*CW* 88:50-51) Talking about the growing isolation of Gandhi within the Congress, Mushirul Hasan states that;

Though Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel pressed his services to restore peace and harmony in riot-stricken areas, they willfully disregarded his views on crucial issues... When Pyarelal joined Gandhi in December 1947, barely six months before his death, he found him isolated from his surroundings and from almost everyone of his colleagues. (108)

Nevertheless, Gandhi refused to take the blame of the violence that came along with the announcement of the Partition. At a prayer meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June 1947, Gandhi said;

But I do not think I am in anyway to be blamed in this matter. When I said that the country should not be divided I was confident that I had the support of the masses. But when the popular view is contrary to mine, should I force my view on the people? (*CW* 88:117)

When the Partition riots broke out in Bengal, Gandhi detached himself from all political associations, settled in Bengal and went on fast-unto-death. In a letter to G. D. Birla, he writes,

It is my intention to stay on here just as long as the Hindus and the Muslims do not become sincerely well-disposed towards each other. God alone can keep man's resolve unshaken. Good-bye to Delhi, to Sevagram, to Uruli, to Panchgani – my only desire is to do or die. (288)

Yet, he was misunderstood by many. He was made responsible for the Partition and the ensuing violence. John Vincent blames him for the “shedding of innocent blood during the massacres”. According to him “Gandhi did not (foresee this danger), or shut his eyes to it” (qtd. in Nanda n.pag.).

Gandhi's endeavours at Noakhali and Calcutta during the Partition violence were, on the one hand, judged as sacrificial ritual for the welfare of humanity. He was described as a

“superhuman” (Pyarelal 685) owing to the positivity in his spirit at such dark times. Hasan writes, “Never before had a political leader taken so bold an initiative to provide healing touch not just to the people in Noakhali but to the warring groups across the vast subcontinent” (108). On the other hand, his absence from Delhi was criticized by many as act of escapism. He was also overtly criticized for siding with the Muslims. Rajmohan Gandhi in *The Good Boatman: A Portrait of Gandhi* (2018) points out that “some of his endeavours appeared pro-Muslim to many Hindu and Sikhs angered by Partition and the violence surrounding it” (n.pag.). It is for these reasons that Gandhi became an ambiguous figure in Indian politics.

Post-Partition literature, thereby, painted him in an ambiguous light. Novels written before the Partition like Raja Rao’s *Kanthpura* (1933), Mulk Raj Anand’s *Untouchable* (1935) depict him as a savior of the masses<sup>4</sup>. However, novels like R. K. Narayan’s *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955) and Manohar Malgonkar’s novel *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964) present a different picture of Gandhi. Comparing Anand’s *Untouchable* and R.K. Narayan’s *Waiting for the Mahatma*, Rituparna Roy states that “[U]nlike Anand’s Gandhi who appears as a legend, an oracle, the Mahatma (in *Waiting for the Mahatma*) stands in dialogic relation with the people of Malgudi” (121). Gandhi’s entrance in the novel is signified by just a lull amongst the crowd. Talking about Malgonkar’s novel, Roy states that although Gandhi is credited to having brought freedom for India, “there is a thorough questioning in *A Bend in the Ganges* of the validity of ‘ahimsa’ or non-violence” (49).

Dharamvir Bharati’s *Andha Yug* (1953) is a post-Partition play. In his Prefatory Note, Bharati writes that “Frustration, dejection, bloodshed, vengeance, disease, deformity, blindness

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<sup>4</sup> Meenakshi Mukherjee in *Twice Born Fiction* opines that: “The characteristically concrete imagination of the uneducated minds pictures the Mahatma as large and blue like the Sahyadri Mountain on whose slopes the pilgrims climb to the top, while Moorthy is seen as a small mountain (141)”. In *Untouchable*, the crowd waiting for the Mahatma are like blind followers. They are mesmerized by him. (See M.K. Bhatnagar, *New Insights into the Novels of R.K. Narayan*, p. 122).

– instead of hesitating, one faces them because hidden beneath are rare grains of truth!” (n. pag.) It is Bharati’s analysis of the Partition. Written in the *Drishya Kavya* (verse play) form, the play dramatises the last stage of the Mahabharata war and comes as a warning to the masses about the destructiveness of violence and war.

Alok Bhalla states;

Given the intensity of the moral anxieties *Andha Yug* evoked, it was obvious that the play, written soon after the carnage of the partition of the Indian subcontinent, which nearly erased a form of life and civilization, and being read once again in our *rakshas* (monstrous) times of hysterical unreason, still had the power to realize how close we live to the borders of nightmares. (5)

The fratricidal war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas is equated to the clash of the Hindu and the Muslims in India during the Partition. Beginning on the eighteenth day of the war, the play portrays the vengeance and frustration in the Kaurava camp after losing the war. Ashwatthama turns into an inhuman figure owing to the politics of war, Gandhari is angry and vengeful after losing her hundred sons in the war, Dhritarashtra fails to stop the vicious cycle of vengeance and violence and blindly supports the wrongs of his sons. The confusion within the Pandava camp is also visible. Yuyutsu, the half brother of Duryodhan and even Yudhisthira are unable to decode *dharma*. Vidura and Sanjaya, the staunch followers of Krishna, lose their moral sense of judgement.

At the centre of the plot is Krishna. Bhalla compares Bharati’s Krishna to Martin Buber’s Judaic God. He writes;

In contrast, Bharati’s Krishna, though equally firm and ruthless in his moral judgements, is more humanly-cherished figure, with whom the self can always

conduct a dialogue. Because Krishna's presence doesnot produce fear and trembling, he can be chastised and cursed, loved and worshipped, abandoned and killed. (3)

During the catastrophic times, when all have lost their sense of judgement, he is expected to become the savior. He is the only one to tell the people the right path to follow. The Chorus sings in the Proclamation:

but good and evil were so intricately knotted

that only Krishna had the courage to unravel them.

Krishna alone was dispassionate and detached.

Krishna alone

could be the savior

of their future. (26)

He is all powerful. He can change the path of destiny. The Old Mendicant's prediction about the victory of the Kauravas is overturned because of the interference of Krishna:

Today, all my knowledge

has proved to be false.

Suddenly, a man intervened.

He was stronger and swifter than

the changing constellations. (40)

He is the guide for several. Vidura is blind follower of Krishna. He advises Dhritarashtra and Gandhari to follow Krishna's advice:

As Krishna said:

'In order to know

the truth

surrender your

heart and mind

to me.

Released from fear

you will

find me.

You must have faith.' (36)

However, as the war gets intense, the followers lose their conviction. In the Interlude, Vidura's spectre confesses about doubting Krishna:

I am Vidura

a devout and righteous

follower of Krishna.

...

But now my voice is full of doubt

for it seems that my Lord

is like a useless axle

and cannot turn itself. (91-92)

However, the god-like demeanor of Krishna is rejected by many. He is described as a hateful prejudiced character. Balarama chastises him for being prejudiced towards the Pandavas.

Say what you like, Krishna

But what Bhima did today

violated Dharma.

Gandhari views Krishna as a mode of escape for the bigoted and the weak:

Morality, honour, selflessness

and surrender to Krishna

are mere disguises

-- masks that cover our blindness. (37)

She, like Balarama, accuses him of being “unjust” (101).

Krishna, however, turns into an epitome of sacrifice when the war reaches its cruelest part. He exchanges his life for the life of Uttara’s unborn child. Gandhari curses him that “all your friends and kinsmen...shall attack and kill each other./ They shall eat each other like rabid

dogs.” (122) Krishna, who is absent from the stage and silent so far, accepts the curse with humility. His words establish him as an emissary of peace and sacrifice:

In this terrible war of eighteen days

I am the only one who died a million times.

Every time a soldier was struck down

every time a soldier fell to the ground

it was I who was struck down

it was I who was wounded

it was I who fell to the ground. (123)

He describes himself through dialectics:

If I am life

then, Mother

I am also death. (123)

Later, Ashwattama reports that he saw Krishna kill his own men.

“he slaughtered/ all his kinsmen/who were drunk” (148)

“He acted/ as I did that night./ The only difference was/ that I killed my enemies/ while he slaughtered/ his own kinsmen.” (149)

Krishna is mercenary like Ashwattama, and simultaneously, a savior who redeems the Yadava clan. Bhumika Sharma points out this “duality of realities” (181). She states that the “dual realities suggest the existence of third in the relativity of two.” (181) Between life and

death, there is a “range of ‘existence’” which combine life and death in various proportions.”

(181) The plays ends by projecting him in terms of this duality of realities:

Whenever you like

you can destroy Him.

Whenever you like

you can make Him

a radiant presence

in your life. (159-160)

Krishna’s death is a sacrifice that he does for humanity as he absorbs the anger and vengeance of Gandhari and Ashwatthama. He eases the suffering of Ashwatthama and douses his anger. Krishna’s death paused the vicious cycle of violence and revenge that had begun in much before the Great War occurred. He dies, but he continues to live as the “future” (159). He can be made and destroyed by all human beings. He is the seed that will save mankind from the half-truths, great wars and violence because the age of darkness and blind doubt will continue simultaneously.

Krishna, in *Andha Yug*, is comparable to Gandhi. Gandhi’s stature as a savior amongst his followers is similar to Vidura’s belief in Krishna. Vidura’s doubting of Krishna is similar to what Gandhi faced at the time of the Partition, when his followers and co-Congressmen lost conviction in his policies and abandoned him. Gandhari and Ashwatthama’s hatred for Krishna is similar to the mistrust that the Jinnah had for Gandhi. The ambiguity associated with Gandhi during the Partition period is visible in the character of Krishna who seems to be dwelling the dialectical worlds simultaneously. Gandhi’s fast during the riots is similar Krishna’s

acceptance of the curse. Both suffer in order to redeem mankind and absorb the vengeance in humanity. Gandhi's assassination, like Krishna's death in the hands of a hunter, marked the end of a phase of violence. Like the message in the climax of the play, Gandhi will continue to be a future who will be made and destroyed by the Indians. His message of non-violence will continue to act as the voice of rationality, the seed, that will exist when the re-enactments of Partition occur in India.

### **Conclusion**

The repercussions of the first Partition of 1905 brought Gandhi into Indian politics. The ideas elucidated in *Hind Swaraj*, brought in a fresh breath of air into the fragmented Indian National Movement. The flaws in the Swadeshi Movement made Tagore anticipate a Gandhi-like figure in the form of Dhananjay Bairagi in his Bangla play *Prayaschitta*. He seems to be the peaceful solution to the atrocities of the king. He is the savior of the masses. There is a note of optimism in this anticipation of a Gandhi-like figure. However, the period leading up to the Partition of 1947 saw Gandhi as a significant leader in Indian politics. Hence, in *Andha Yug*, Gandhi is depicted through the character of Krishna, who is both a god and the human being. Krishna is hated, doubted and loved, simultaneously. This makes him an ambiguous figure. Yet, he sacrifices himself to redeem all of mankind from the violence and the suffering. Bharati's depiction of Gandhi, therefore, is different from that of Tagore's. The optimism that Gandhi will change the face of Indian politics is lost. He is ambiguous. A section of the masses doubt him. This shift in his image is visible which was undoubtedly owing to his policies and the people's reaction to them.

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