

The background of the cover is a dark, textured green with black brushstrokes. A thin red arc curves around the left side of the word 'cenacle'.

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Editorial

Partition even after 67 years arouses multi-faceted response. In the recent years a rich body of literature: fictional and nonfictional, short stories, documentaries, TV serials and films, blogs and websites on Partition have emerged, which are vast and diverse, but are documenting memories difficult to forget. It is rather intriguing to trace that these writings are not just fictional recalling of the traumatic times, but a more integrated study of whys and hows, that epitomize the trauma and turbulence which affected many nations and communities. Academia no longer treats Partition as a trope, and part of post-colonial activity in the third world. This subject has been raised and thrashed out by historians, social thinkers, artists and also film makers with equal gravity. The larger socio-economic issues of India and Pakistan, as well as those affecting India and Bangladesh are part of these studies. Seminal writings have emerged, which show that Partition was supposed to be a modernist solution to the problems of differences, like Ranabir Samaddar's: *Reflections on Partition in the East* (1997). Various women related issues have been raised by Urvashi Butalia in *The other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (1998), Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin's *Borders and Boundaries* (2000), Jasodhara Bagchi's and Shubhoranjan Dasgupta's anthology, *The Trauma and the Triumph: Gender and Partition in Eastern India* (2003).

Well known Hindi writer Krishna Sobti is often remembered to have said that Partition was difficult to forget but

dangerous to remember. Amrita Pritam her contemporary, addressed this issue through the medium of poetry. Ismat Chughtai, and Khadija Mastoor both short story writers, Begum Shah Nawaz, an educationist, can be regarded as the first generation of women writers, who took up the issue of Partition prominently. A random list of writers highlights the fact that this body of literature by women, who raise multiple related issues and perspectives: Ritu Menon, Kamla Bhasin, Veena Das, Wazira Zamindar, Yasmin Khan, Ananya Jahanara Kabir, Rita Kothari, Kavita Panjabi, Sukeshi Kamra, Jhumpa Sen, Pranja Parashar, Niti Nair, Kavita Dahiya, Deepti Misri, to name a few. More established and well-known names are Bapsi Sidhwa, Kamlaben Patel, Mirudula Sarabhai, Usha Mehta, Kamila Shamsie and Shauna Singh Baldwin. In this sense partition writings go beyond the dominant narratives of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. Female scholars have added new arenas of reconnaissance. Women artists such as Nilima Sheikh, Nalini Malini and Aparna Kaur go deeper into stories of Partition.

The borders between literature and history are also collapsing. The new histories that are being written provide a new dimension to Partition like: *Pangs of Partition, Volume I: The Parting of Ways, and Volume II: The Human Dimension* edited by S Settar and Indira Baptista Gupta (2002) These two volumes have immensely added to the narratives of Partition, with personal reminiscences, recollections by contemporaries, impressions mirrored in creative literature and events and incidents which inspired the visual media, narratives and popular culture. Three journalists, Tridivesh Singh Maini, Tahir Malik and Ali Farooq Malik, have compiled their book *Humanity Amidst Insanity: Hope During and After the Indo-Pak Partition* (2008), which focuses on the partition of Punjab through interviews of both Indians and Pakistanis. Some of the stories told are incredible and reflect on the

fact that even in those turbulent times, people managed to remain honorable and humane. Ishtiaq Ahmed's *The Punjab Bloodied, Partitioned and Cleansed* (2012) presents a more political view of the massacre in Punjab. He analyses Partition as a national ideology in a different manner. *Historian Stanley Wolpert's, Shameful Flight*, (2006) revisits Partition, and lays the blame for one of the most horrific episodes of the 20th century squarely on the shoulders of British. It provides vivid behind-the-scenes realities, and also the ghastly effects of this event on Britain's decisions. Recent non-fictions are Rahul Pandit's *Our Moon Has Blood Clots* (2013), Amandeep Sandhu's *Roll of Honour* (2012), Chitrita Banerji's *Mirror City* (2014), Sujata Massey's *The City of Palaces* (2014), Sudipto Das's *The Ekkos Clan* (2013) and Samanth Subramanian's *The Divided Land* (2014).

The partition of Bengal and Assam has received relatively less critical acclaim, though seminal fictional representations are many like Joya Chatterji's: The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967 (Cambridge Studies in Indian History and Society 2007) is one such book. The text provides a compelling and authoritative account of the transitions and transformations in West Bengal in the early post-independence era. Jasodhara Bagchi's in *The Trauma and the Triumph: Gender and Partition in Eastern India* (2003), writes, "Moreover, the distasteful aspect of a vivisection in which nations are defined in terms of religious communities is the way it renders women's bodies and sexuality vulnerable. Women in ordinary peaceful times are seen as icons of the honor of the community." The fear psychosis and mass exodus during the Bengal partition has found reflection in many stories, both in Bangla and in English. Many books like Bidyut Chakraborty's: *Communal Identity in India: Its Construction and Articulations in The Twentieth Century* (2000), Dipesh Chakraborty's: *Habitations of Modernity: Essay in the Wake Subaltern Studies* (2002), Bharti Devi's *Middle Class*

Working Women in Calcutta: A Study in Continuity and Change (1988), all reflect various social changes and lives of women due to Partition.

Films have also proved to be a powerful genre to show the various issues involved with Partition. Many of these movies have been inspired by real life stories and novels, which have been produced in many languages. Some of the prominent ones in Hindi are *Chhalia* (1960), though it is loosely based on the work of Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoyevsky, which gives a social overview of Partition. *Dharmaputra* (1961), *Garam Hawa* (1973), *Sardar* (1993), *1947 Earth* (1998), *Train to Pakistan* (1998), *Hey Ram* (2000), *Gadar* (2001), *Pinjar* (2003) *Partition (MacMullen 1987)* (2007), *Partition* (directed By Vic Sarin, in English 2007) are only some of the prominent Partition movies. More recently *Children of War* (2014), based on a Bengal partition, present the issue from a different angle. So also the comedy movies like *Total Siyappa* (2014) and *Filmistan* (2014) reflect on how the diaspora view the Hindu Muslim divide even so many years after the Partition. More recently the movie, *Kya Dili Kya Lahore* (2014) presents nostalgia and glimpses of pre-partition brotherhood.

Many acclaimed documentaries have digitized the memories of Partition, like *Partition of India* (2007), provide an excellent overview of events. It is a documentary about the effects of Britain's withdrawal from India in 1947 which triggered one of the biggest migrations in history. 15 million were displaced and more than a million lost their lives. The story is told through the testimony of people who lived together for centuries, but were forced out of their homes as one of the largest and most ethnically diverse nations in the world was divided. Dramatized reconstructions evoke some of the mistrust, violence and upheaval that ensued. *India-Pakistan 07*, a BBC- made documentary is very informative and well-made.

Sarah Singh's documentary *The Sky Below* (2008) is also an award winning documentary, similarly *Beyond Partition* (2006) by Lalit Mohan Joshi, recollects the past from the view point of filmmakers. Some more recent documentaries are: *A Season Outside* (English) Dir. Amar Kanwar (1977) *Abar Ashibo Phire* (Benagali), Dir. Supriyo Sen (2004), *Anhad Baja Baailey* (Punjabi) Dir. Daljeet Ami (2004), *Stories of the Broken Self* (Punjabi) Dir. Furrukh Khan (2006), *Crossing The Line* (English) Dir. Anita Barar (2007), *Partition Documentary* (English) Dir. Mara Ahmed and Dewan (2011), *Partition: The Day India Burned* (English) Dir. Yousuf Saeed (2014). Documentaries on this issue have intensively dealt with the subject and many of them have been awarded. TV serials like *Tamas*, *Paragon Partition*, and *Buniyaad* have made the common viewer of the 21st century understand the tortuous dismembering of the subcontinent.

These narratives of pain and loss have also been archived on *The Partition Archive* on its website 1947 partitionarchive.org and their Facebook page. It is a crowd funded oral history project which records stories from Partition from across South Asia. This was conceived and initiated in 2010 by US based Guneeta Singh Bhalla, a physicist by training. They employ “story scholars”, citizen historian and volunteers who can record stories for the website. Bhalla's grandmother is also a partition survivor and she feels that all these stories of adaptation and co-existence, which opens our eyes to a time of multiple communities living together. In Pakistan www.citizensarchive.org has recorded 1800 stories, sharing an understanding of history. Similarly www.indianmemory project.com, www.ispad1947.com, and prominent blog posts like shirazhassan.blogspot are also making stories of Partition available online.

Many feel that the issue of Partition should now be left

behind and nations should move on, so should the individuals. But then this is easier said than actually practiced. The generation which faced forced migration, still mourn the loss. Many who take up these projects to record and document these stories are in a hurry because the generation which actually witnessed the holocaust is dying. There are multiple issues like India-Pakistan peace talks, issues of LOC, Kashmir, ethnic violence, which have their roots in this six decade old partition. Ethnicity which is often interchangeable with religion, culture and race has become a site for identification. In spite of spread of modernity, people and political parties, seem to continue to invest in ethnic identities and fund ethnic terrorism. Partition constitutes as a discourse, a field of transformation for South Asia. Therefore any study or any inquiry through any genre can not only help preserve national histories but also help raise and answer questions of contradictory history. Rethinking on issues of violence, ethnicity, border warfare and role of refugees in the cultural landscape of the nation in the 21st century is of seminal importance as alternate discourse.

This issue of Cenacle seeks to explore the complex dimensions of this subject through literature and films. We hope that it will provide greater insight into the subject, for young researchers, students and readers. The critical perspective provided in the papers interweaves many issues and raise many analytical questions. Partition was not just trauma or violence. It was also about survival, forced migration and multiple shades of compromise. There are still many stories which are untold, perhaps this issue will encourage many to say more, write more.

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Partition Literature: An Overview

Leela Kanel

Abstract:

The Partition of the Indian Sub-Continent and its traumatic aftermath has been a steady source of inspiration for many post-independence writers, who either used it as a theme, or indirectly treated it as a background to their narratives. The historical records of the events considered it as an aberration, while glossing over the carnage that followed it, in an otherwise remarkable story of non-violent freedom movement against the British colonizers. It was the literary narratives that gave us the real picture of the impact of this event on everyday life in the nations formed by this partition. After filtering through the bloodbath that followed it, a majority of the writers attempted to salvage some humanism and secularism in the incoherence of the partition. A number of anthologies published in the recent past have proven the continuing interest in the holocaust, presenting different aspects of a single, tragic, shared experience. The present paper deals with these and other aspects of the Partition narratives, which have formed a sub-genre over the past seven decades.

Key Words: Cultural narratives, aberration, memory, retrieval of memory, holocaust, dislocation, oral history.

Creative fiction has always been enamored by historical events, and the Partition of the Indian Sub-continent has provided plenty of tragic grist for the fictional mill. Thus a natural outcome of this horrific event was that the main themes of many post-

independence writers revolved around the freedom struggle and the subsequent partitioning of the country.

As is well-known, this event led to a frenzy, sweeping across northern India and the newly formed country of Pakistan, for six long and terrible weeks, resulting in the slaughter of over a quarter of a million people, rendering many more homeless as a result of mass exodus of populations on both sides. The birth of a nation was actually the creation of two nations out of a once-united population, resulting in destruction, massacre, loot and rape, representing one of the bloodiest upheavals that memory can recall. The massacres and migrations represented an unfolding human tragedy of enormous proportions. The scale and nature of violence that India's partition involved, makes it also one of the most violent events in the history of modern nation-forming.

Considered as an aberration in modern Indian history, the partition is little memorialized by the state or by those affected by it. Urvashi Butalia remarked on this silence on the partition in *The Other Side of Silence* (1998):

In India there is no institutional memory of Partition: the state has not seen fit to construct any memorials, to mark any particular place – as has been done, say, in the case of holocaust memorials or memorials for the Vietnam War. (Introd.)

Apart from a few films and novels, the Partition was relegated to the past. The newly-formed government considered this necessary, in order to maintain harmonious ethnic relations. Popularly perceived as irreconcilable with our country's history of peaceful, non-violent, anti-colonial struggle under Gandhi's leadership, it suggested its failure, especially since the violence that was the consequence of partition was blamed squarely on all the elements involved – the British, the Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs. So conveniently it was regarded as a moment of 'insanity' – an aberration – in an otherwise remarkable story of non-violent freedom movement against the British colonizers.

As early as 1948, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had emphasized on the need to preserve law and order and peaceful inter-community relations. This led to the censoring of public accounts of the Partition which could provoke communal conflict. In his momentous speech on the eve of independence, the Prime Minister stated:

Before the birth of freedom we have endured all the pains of labour and our hearts are heavy with the memory of this sorrow. Some of those pains continue even now. Nevertheless, the past is over and it is the future that beckons to us now. We think also of our brothers and sisters who have been cut off from us by political boundaries and who unhappily cannot share at present in the freedom that has come. They are of us and will remain of us whatever may happen and we shall be sharers in this good [or] ill fortune alike. (qtd. in Daiya)

As in the case of other partitioned societies, here in India, too, cultural narratives play a number of very important functions. They represent one of the media through which the trauma of partition is subsequently memorialized and understood by the peoples involved. According to Jill Didur, such narratives “can ... help to ratify the state divisions produced by partition or to contest the partitionist mentalities generated by such divisions” (Didur 2).

Earlier, partition literature was characterized as 'documentary,' rather than representing the violence of the time. But, undoubtedly, such literature significantly enhanced the production of hegemonic nationalist imaginaries in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. As Alok Bhalla states: “I have put together this anthology of stories about the Partition not in order to exorcise the past, but in the hope of initiating an ethical inquiry into the history of my age and place (x).” Literary texts, apart from other print media like journals and newspapers, become key technical means for representing the modern nation, while examining colonialism as well as aiding the formation of national consciousness. These texts provide a central ground that links the state and civil society, while developing large reading populations that form a collective cultural imagined community.

The partition narratives revealed the impact of the Partition on everyday life in urban India, which went unrecorded by official histories. They gave a form and shape to collective memory and to the survivors' oral testimonies, through their stories about national history. It is an established fact, that, this holocaust was the consequence of the reckless speed at which the partition was accomplished with no regard for a well-organized and peaceful transfer of populations between the two new nations. This carnage was antithetical to the spirit of the freedom-fighters, and to Gandhiji's belief in humanity and non-violence. We have to rely on literature to provide us with the bloody and gruesome details of this event that are unrecorded in the annals of history.

The writers of much partition literature frame the events in a variety of ways and read them according to their own sense of the multi-religious and multi-cultural past of the Indian sub-continent. Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956) is the first Indian English novel on partition presenting a realistic portrayal of the holocaust. *Azadi* (Chaman Nahal, 1975), incorporated its horrors and the various issues related to it, in an epical manner. The chief concern of this novel is to expose the reasons for partition, blaming it on the collective failure of the political leaders. It reveals the deliberate indifference of the British statesmen towards easing the communal chaos. It is Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas* (1974) that uncompromisingly depicted the dubious role of the politicians and the power-politics leading to the two-nation theory. It successfully represents how people of all religions were caught up in the religious frenzy that could be solved only by partitioning the sub-continent.

Some of the issues dealt with by early partition literature are: the disintegration of values, the incompetence of the political leaders, the divide and rule policy of the British and their shrewd manipulations, the condemnation of the two-nation theory, the pre-partition co-existence and communal interdependence and the horrific effects of communalism along with the horrors of partition and the subsequent chaos caused by the refugees. In the background of

most of this literature is the universal warning against communalism and the divisive intentions of the Machiavellian policies of stirring up religious frenzies.

Writers like Khushwant Singh, Manohar Malgonkar, Attia Hosain, Raj Gill, Chaman Nahal, either took the Partition as a theme or included it indirectly as a background for their narratives. Bhairab Prasad Gupta in *Sati Maiya Ka Chaura*, Yashpal in *Jhoota Sach*, Bhisham Sahani in *Tamas*, Kishan Chander's *Chaddar* and *Peshawar Express*, Vatsyayan Agyey's *Sharnarhi*, Ramanand Sagar's *Aur Insaan Mar Gaya*, Masoom Raza Rahi's *Topi Shukla*, *Adha Gaon*, and *Oase ke Boond*, Hayatullah Hussain's *Udas Naslen*, Kartar Singh's *Ujla Aanchal*, and Qurratul-Ain Haider's *Housing Society* and *Aag ka Dariya*, and Kamleshwar's *Laute Hue Musafir*, portray the problems arising out of partition and the mass exodus of populations which gave birth to refugee literature. A dominant trope of the partition's excessive violence is the image of trains arriving from each country laden with the slaughtered bodies of refugees who had tried to get across to the other side. There was large-scale abduction of over 150,000 women by men, often, but not always, from a different community.

This literature examines the hardening communal attitudes represented by the fundamentalism and fanaticism, the inexorable logic of which caused the relentless division of an erstwhile communal harmonic relationship. The genre of partition literature examines this political and moral upheaval which resulted in a serration of the roots of people of different communities, irrespective of ideology and rational ideas. A majority of the writers tried to salvage some humanism and secularism amidst all the bloody upheaval of communalism. But the painful memories survived. The reasons for the incoherence of the communal violence could be sought only in the role of a handful of politicians leading to such a massacre.

A number of anthologies published in the recent past have proven the existence of a continuing interest in the holocaust, by

presenting different aspects of this singularly traumatic shared experience. Alok Bhalla's Anthology, *Stories about the Partition of India*, is one of the most diligent chronicles of partition narratives. This anthology is an example of the interweaving of literature and history through which both streams can benefit. Through these narratives, undeniably, the fact emerges that what is important is not merely to remember the horrors of the past, but also to recall them in such a manner that, as Bhalla aspires, "[to initiate] an ethical inquiry into the history of my age and place." (introd. X)

Through the stories in this anthology, one realizes that the real tragedy of the partition was that it signaled the end of an era which had boasted of communal tolerance and cohabitation. Bhalla states that the daily lives of Hindus and Muslims were so richly interwoven that they produced a veritable collection of mixed practices and customs. This explains the theme of utter bewilderment underlying almost all the narratives about the Partition. The migration of whole communities that brought about dislocation, uprootedness and alienation, are some of the themes of stories such as Intezar Husain's *An Unwritten Epic*. The horrors witnessed on the way, and the problems related to relocation to safe refuges (the eponymous refugee colonies are ubiquitous in most cities, and can be found in all the metropolitan cities).

Many stories are personal and cathartic too. A compulsive scraping of wounds, description of unimaginable horrors, are some of the images scattered through the pages of this four-volume anthology. Manto's stories are depictions of a momentarily depraved society. There is more emphasis on incoherent pain or bewilderment rather than on actual historical facts, with only a vague reference to political events. The impact of partition on the common people was of greater concern to these writers, rather than the reasons why the political leaders failed to resolve their disputes over power-sharing that eventually led to this 'cracking' of the country along religious lines. Loss of life and property, abduction and rape of women, desecration of holy places and other instances of such mindless, primitive and

barbaric violence, are the common links of narrative, uniting all partition literature. Such glimpses into the events that took place are more valuable than actual documented facts, and cannot be termed as literary 'voyeurism.'

The journey of the partition narratives reveals an interesting trajectory, from mere reportage of the holocaust to theorizing about it. The early narratives concentrate on 'high politics' with most of the writers emphasizing on the roles of, and the political tactics of the state politics of the British, the Congress and the Muslim League leaderships. In the 1990s, this perspective shifted to oral histories – letters, interviews, diaries – of the survivors, in an attempt to understand the Partition and its aftermath. *The Partitions of Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India* edited by Suvir Kaul (2001), and *Translating Partition* edited by Ravikant and Tarun K. Saint (2001), are collections that go into some of the finer points of history, while relying on the survivors' memory to study the Partition, outside the context of the strategies and ideological politics of the leaders. Suvir Kaul's collection of essays emphasizes the impact of the Partition on contemporary India and Pakistan, exploring the intellectual, human, and material problems it has created in the two countries, which still exist, unresolved.

The essay by Urvashi Butalia's *An Archive with a Difference: Partition Letters* underlines the role of oral history in documenting the experiences of partition. She has used unconventional sources in both, *The Other Side of Silence*, as well as in the above-mentioned collection – based on letters written by ordinary people who were directly affected by the miseries of partition, putting the blame squarely on those officials, who were then in the civil administration. These people were displaced by events and decisions larger than themselves, notwithstanding requests for help to the representatives of the newly formed states.

M. Banerjee's essay *Partition and Northwest Frontier: Memories of some Khudai Khidmatgars*, uses the memories of some khidmatgars

or the Red Shirts to explore the culture and history of the Frontier before and at the time of the partition. Banerjee's interviews with the khidmatgars are examples that underscore the significance of their memories function as a buffer against the precise historical narratives, which were the official versions of the events. These authorized narratives denied them a place within Pakistan's political history. Thus these interviews comprise a study of the Frontier which, as Banerjee points out, is a difficult area to partition, because of its very nature as a region of exchange of populations. For instance *Toba Tek Singh* by Manto is a triumph of ambivalence, proclaiming the in-betweenness of its protagonist and his victory over those who want to fix his identity. The madman's death takes place in no-man's land, where the authority of neither nation exists.

Thus there was a subtle shift from a thematic focus on the calamitous outcome of partition, of large scale killings and abductions, to the retrieval of memory related to the experiences of exile. These letters, diaries, memories and testimonies, relying on memory alone, can be considered as an archive, a veritable treasure house of collective memory, which can enable us to understand the Partition in a holistic manner. Nevertheless, there is a lot of research that proves that memory has its constraints, since it is not always undiluted, or unmediated. The subjective element in memories, often tend to warp them. But the importance of these recollections is undeniably significant, since the manner in which people recollect them is as important as the historically documented facts.

Like Suvir Kaul's anthology, *Translating Partition*, too, emphasizes the necessity of rethinking Partition events. It includes stories by Bhisham Sahni, Joginder Paul, Attia Hosain, Kamleshwar, Sa'adat Hasan Manto, and Surendra Prakash, and also includes commentaries. The essays describe the presence of contemporary debates on the Partition, both in the field of social sciences and in literary criticism, as well as the feminist concern about representation (or the lack of it) in the partition narratives. These essays also describe the madness that defined the partition, and the metaphor of madness

was continuously used by the writers in their fiction, probably to convey a sense of incomprehension regarding the fall out of this event, the horror of which was dismissed as an aberration. Thus the responsibility of accepting this ugly reality was denied.

Translating Partition places a special emphasis on partition literature that reflects an "ambivalent response to the question of national allegiance" in the work of writers like Sa'adat Hasan Manto, in contrast to "a distinct strain" of nostalgia in many of the later writings about partition that "veer towards the romanticization of the pre-partition experience" (xvii – xix). There are counter-narratives which focus on the local situation, rather than the national narrative of recovery of 'honour' embodied in the large-scale abduction of women. These counter-narratives can be seen as pivotal in opposing the traditional and conventional ways of narrating the past experiences (xxxi). The counter-narratives are texts that depict how women's bodies and identities became the focus of nationalist literatures of partition.

Thus we see that, although the Partition has been a recurrent theme in Indian fiction, a new perspective on the event emerged in each succeeding decade. From the 1950s to the present day, the Partition, in the minds of writers, no longer remained a mere cataclysmic event that needed to be recorded, but more as a phenomenon that needed to be explored and even theorized about as something that influenced and defined the social, political, cultural, and religious realities existing in the Indian Sub-continent. The Partition is a historical legacy handed down unwanted to the children of the three nations – India, Pakistan, and what became later Bangladesh. It gave rise to the partition narrative, a kind of subgenre in fiction, over the last seven decades, the pages of which are filled with the memories of the pain suffered on the fracturing of the Subcontinent, and of the scale and intensity of the human suffering caused by it.

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Football, Identity and Partition: The Case of *Mohun Baganer Meye* (1976)

Amrit Sen

Abstract:

This paper attempts to trace the interesting relationship between post partition identities, choice of genre and football in *Mohun Baganer Meye* (1976). While the identification of football and Bengali nationalism can be traced back to 1911, the game had seen an interesting polarization of identities of the *Ghoti* and the *Bangal* subsequently. As the memories of the partition began to recede in the 1970's, how did a liminal zone develop which saw different generations approach club culture in different contexts with interesting crossovers of rigid categories of identity? How was this crossover manifested in the choice of romantic comedy as the cinematic genre? Was this also an attempt to elide the spectre of violence and frustration that Bengal faced in the 1970s? My presentation takes a close look at the representation of club football as a point of entry into these debates about the lingering aftereffects of the partition of Bengal.

Keywords: Football, partition, identity, nationalism, fan culture, proximity, liminality.

I would like to begin the paper with a personal anecdote. I grew up in Durgapur with the radio as an integral part of my life. I remember my engineer father (a *Bangal* from the eastern part of Bengal) return a little earlier than usual from office, every time East

Bengal played. My mother of a 'ghoti' (Western Bengal) family would switch on the radio every time Mohun Bagan played. On Derby matches the radio stayed silent. I grew up as a Mohun Bagan fan, may be because my maternal uncles took me early to the Mohun Bagan club member's gallery to watch matches. If my father was disappointed, he did not show it.

The anecdote sets the tone for my paper as it looks at the representation of football vis-à-vis post-partition identities in Bengali popular culture with special emphasis on *Mohun Baganer Meye* (1976). Why did football assume such a fundamental position in post-partition Bengal? Why was its representation so scarce? What were the genres that were used to represent it and how did this choice bring out a liminal zone in response to the partition between different generations? These are some of the questions that I seek to explore.

The detailed researches of Paul Dimeo, Boria Majumder and Kaushik Bandyopadhyay highlight interesting aspects of football and the rise of sub-nationalisms in Bengal post 1947. The rise of Mohun Bagan and the IFA Shield victory in 1911 definitely embedded football in the collective memory of Bengali nationalism, as they happened in the same year as the annulment of the partition of 1905. It was also a landmark response against the imperial claims of Bengali frailty. Football emerged as a more democratic, vivacious sport that the Bengali middle class quickly identified with. However as more and more clubs began to evolve the different categories of difference vis-à-vis religious and regional identities too began to develop. Gerry Finn and Richard Giulianotti suggest that the evolution of difference is part of a global culture of club football:

The evolution of football clubs will not lead to conformity, let alone uniformity. Without some framing of difference in association with football clubs, there can be no contest; without some social difference there would be no social significance to this match between two opposed teams. The

issue is not social difference as such: the issue is how we conceptualize social difference, how it evolves, and then how we sport social identities when we come together to compare how we match up. (Finn and Giulianotti 8)

However, as Majumder has pointed out, ethnic tensions simmered quite early in football and the exclusion of players from the Eastern part of Bengal in Calcutta based clubs led to the formation of East Bengal club. (Majumder 172) The pioneering members included players like Sailesh Basu, administrators like Suresh Chaudhuri (vice President, Jorabagan club) and Manmath Chaudhuri, the Zaminder of Mymensingh club. In 1924, animosities deepened when Mohun Bagan and Aryan collaborated to defeat a motion permitting the participation of more than two Indian clubs in the first division league to prevent the entry of East Bengal. Quite clearly, even in pre-partition Bengal, club rivalries had already ensued. As Ranabir Samaddar mentions, the term *Bangal* pejoratively defined the rustic 'other' of the more cultured Babu, predominantly of Kolkata and its suburbs and had been used as early as the late nineteenth century. Thus, "ethnic boundaries were present in pre-partition times. The partition not merely legitimized these boundaries, it made the question of how these boundaries melt or burden a critical one." (Samaddar 108)

The partition of 1947 became the fulcrum on which club affiliations took on a hardened sub nationalist strain and football became the zone of contestation of identities. The staggering movement of the population (in 1950 alone one million people moved, in 1956 nearly 500 refugee families were permanently encamped upon the platforms of Sealdah station) meant the transformation of the balance of support in Kolkata club football. Most of the refugees (my grand parents included) lived in refugee colonies, plunged into poverty and squalor, with pain and anger as companions. For them supporting East Bengal became an overriding assertion of identity, as Moti Nandi points out; "the one source of hope, pride and victory lay in the tramples of the club named after the abandoned homeland".

(Nandi 319) The politics of differentiation was noted in the way binaries were drawn between the *Ghoti* and the *Bangal* – in their eating habits (*chingrior* prawn – *ilishor* hilsa), dialect, space (North Calcutta – South Calcutta), dress, and, of course, Mohun Bagan – East Bengal. The overriding poverty and economic hardship spilled on to the anger on the football field. From the 1950s, police were deployed for every game and, later in the decade, the Chief Minister B. C. Roy pleaded that East Bengal change its name to erase the overwhelming affiliation of regional identity. Ironically, the iconic players that East Bengal fielded during their golden run (1946-53) included the *Pancha Pandava*, Venkatesh, Apparo, Dhanraj, Ahmed Khan and Saleh, none of them even remotely Bengali! The formation of Bangladesh in 1971, the Naxalite movement and the identification of the Communist Party with refugees created an environment that accentuated the rivalry and violence on the Kolkata maidan. As Bandopadhyay points out; “political uncertainty and social depression often turned Calcutta's football ground hot and violent”. (Bandopadhyay 117) Between 1970 and 1975 East Bengal won six league championships in a row. In 1975, Umakanto Palodhi, a Mohun Bagan supporter committed suicide after a 5-0 drubbing with the wish to be reborn a Mohun Bagan player and extract revenge.

At the same time the rigid differences of identities were showing significant fissures. A liminal zone was evolving with a new generation that had intermarriages, lost its dialect and imbibed only memories of the golden homeland. As Dimeo points out,

The memory of East Bengal as home was the pressure of a fading generation of migrants, their sons and daughters more at home in West Bengal. Intergroup relationships became more common, dialects less pronounced, and cultural traditions passed away. There are cases of fans with East Bengali parents supporting Mohun Bagan. Thus, a liminal, in-between space developed that contravened the polarity of previous years. (Dimeo 106)

Football still united and divided the city, but the dynamics were changing.

It is interesting to recollect Dipesh Chakrabarty's idea in his volume *Habitations of Modernity*, about two ways of responding to difference – identity and proximity. Dipesh identifies identity as a mode of relating where difference is congealed, frozen, fixed or erased, while proximity becomes a mode of relating to difference where it is neither reified nor erased but negotiated. (Chakrabarty 140) Dipesh argues that while *ghotis* and *bangals* lived in proximity rather than intimacy with one another, in the subsequent generations, such differences were more articulately challenged and, the whole culture around football embodied this flux.

In this context, how did Bangla popular culture respond to the complexities of the East Bengal – Mohun Bagan dichotomy? Given that this discourse occupied centre stage in Bengali life, representations are surprisingly miniscule. Sharmishtha Gooptu particularly draws attention to this uneasy relationship between football and its representations in cinema. (Gooptu 67) Direct references to the sport at the centre of representation can be seen only in Moti Nandi's novels – *Striker* and *Stopper*, while in cinema '*Dhanni Meye*' is a notable exception with '*Saheb*' following suit. The only direct references to Mohun Bagan and East Bengal rivalries occur in two mainstream romantic comedies *Ora Thake Odharey* (1954) and *Mohun Baganer Meye* (1976). Another film *East Bengaler Chhele* was made but never released.

Why wasn't there adequate cultural representation on such a central aspect of Bengali identity? Sharmishtha Gooptu feels that the intellectual bent in Bengali cinema, refused to choose the more plebian subject of 'play' associated with football. (Gooptu 70) The argument seems timorous given the richness of Bengali popular cinema. The other more plausible explanation might have been the

frightening spectre of violence that football and the politics of identity generated. Did literature and cinema shy away from the depiction of the grossness and inflammation that such representations provoked? The explanation seems curious given that *avantgarde* Bengali cinema did depict the violence and trauma of the partition subsequently. But what were the strategies adapted in the few depictions of the sport in Bangla popular culture?

The consistent thread that links novels and films in this context is the split of the narrative within two generations. In Moti Nandi's *Stopper* (July 1974) and *Striker* (July 1973), the author completely elides the rivalry of the two soccer giants. Instead, Prasun the protagonist, in *Striker* belongs to the club Yuger Jatri and seeks to create a niche in club football much to the chagrin of his father, the former striker Anibabu. In *Stopper*, the veteran Kamal-da belongs to Sobha Bazaar football club and in his swan song prevents Yuger Jatri from clinching the league. As he achieves his goal, his erstwhile diffident son applauds his tenacity. The novels do talk about the “hunger, heat, humiliation and hopelessness” (Nandi 3) of club football but the direct rivalries of East Bengal and Mohun Bagan feature only obliquely in them. As the only prolific sports novelist of his times, was Nandi aware that sufficient critical distance was yet to be created to write about responses to the sport? Was he carving out the story of the emergence of the new professional football player through the feeder clubs thus critiquing the overpowering discourse of ethnicity around club football? Or was Nandi merely pandering to his heterogeneous fan following of readers from both Mohun Bagan and East Bengal? Or was his interest in the social conditions of footballers performing under conditions of poverty, undernourishment and a lack of social recognition? The melodrama of Nandi's novels, the shattering climax of overpowering emotions and the reconciliation between two generations, however, suggests the centrality of football in the Bengali psyche; even if the violent divides are carefully glossed over. *DhanniMeye*, too, uses this strategy carefully, deflecting the

game to Harbhangha, even though it depicts the subterranean violence that the game is likely to provoke --, be it in Kalibabu, played by Uttam Kumar, kicking his wife off from bed or Kalibabu and the zamindar locked in a vicious battle for control. The song '*Sab Khelar Sera Bangalir Tumi Football*' ('You are the best of all sports O Football') - highlights the percolation of the game in Bengali life. However, the depiction of cricket is interesting. While the middle class Bengali is engrossed in football, it is the Anglicised aristocrat Naffar and his daughter who enjoy cricket instead; clearly indicating a class polarization of sport.

Two romantic comedies in cinema directly deal with the *Ghoti-Bangal* conflict – *Ora Thake Odhare*, and *Mohun Baganer Meye*. In *Ora Thake Odhare* the *Ghoti* and the *Bangal* families continuously bicker, yet manage to remain in proximity, enduring poverty and hardship en route. The younger generation played by Uttam Kumar and Suchitra Sen clearly represent the development of romantic inclinations cutting across identities. The Mohun Bagan-East Bengal match, a central narrative point, embodies this movement where the older generation is inflamed but Uttam Kumar and Suchitra Sen steer clear of any confrontation asserting that they support whoever wins or loses respectively. For this new generation such ossified identities hardly matter. Even the older guardians willingly sacrifice their savings for each other as the film ends with the quip – “we are two hands – we joust, yet we clap together”. Interestingly, this fracture of identities hardly touches the domestic sphere, both homemakers busy struggling to make ends meet. The role of the *pishima* (aunt) from Narayangunj simultaneously as match- maker and peace- maker also suggests an alternative feminine sphere where the rigid and ossified identities merge and coexist.

In *Mohun Baganer Meye* the story fragments into two generations. Mahadeb Chatterjee played by Utpal Dutta is the garrulous, yet generous Mohun Bagan diehard who treats Mohun

Bagan as sacrosanct, a symbol of Indian identity. He is ready to cast away his only son when he supports East Bengal and pledges to marry him off only to a Mohun Bagan supporter. Yet by the machinations of Rabi Ghosh (himself a *Bangal*), Subinoy (played by Dipankar Dey) the son passes off his fiancée (a diehard East Bengal fan) as a Mohun Bagan supporter. Discovery follows and the pregnant daughter-in-law is cast off for falsehood along with the son. The film, however, ends with a repentant father-in-law embracing the estranged pair and singing the praise of both Mohun Bagan and East Bengal as the grandchild is named Chuni Parimal (as a tribute to iconic players of both teams)!

Quite clearly in these films romantic comedy becomes a vehicle that can successfully bridge the fissures of identity. While parameters like *hilsa* and prawn, dialect and dress are markers of difference; both films reveal the older generation struggling between identity and proximity, while the women are at ease with one another. Marriage is the teleological end in both films leading to identity crossovers and the newer generation is more involved in the aesthetics of the game rather than its ethnic associations. The generic marker reveals a society struggling to come to terms with post-partition identities. Very often it is the *Dhanni Meye* or the smart girl who precipitates the resolution.

At the same time these films are cautious depictions of the uneasy artificiality that such truces can conceal. The pace at which mutual relationships may deteriorate, the blindness that can lead a father to cast off his son, lurks in the frightening underbelly of the text. The role of Rabi Ghosh is complex – matchmaker and comic agent provocateur. Rabi Ghosh sells bricks and chips at the Kolkata ramparts to warring supporters, and returns to Patna at the end of each season with a fractured limb. The high point of the film is the song *Mohun Bagan East Bengaler Khelahoyeche* with its pertinent question – “wins and losses are part of every game / why does it have to entail such

violence”? Also, subtly understated in the film is the grim possibility of August 1980, where 16 young lives were lost to the altars of football, identity and fan culture.

My study of the representation of the after-effects of partition on soccer and identity clearly shows that ethnic questions did confront football in the pre-partition period, but the issues of identity and conflict were foregrounded with devastating urgency on the Maidan immediately *after* the partition. As the memories began to recede, a culture of proximity also developed, more acutely in the domestic sphere as new alliances and uneasy truces were made. Interestingly, the partition of 1905 was the moment when Bengali nationalism crystallised into a movement with 1911 as a definite catalyst. Post 1947, football became a field of contest that fractured Bengali identity. While Bengali literature and cinema were acutely aware of the centrality of this soccer discourse, it shied away from the possible violent repercussions of depiction either ignoring the divide altogether or using romantic comedy as a genre to talk about possible reconciliation. It thus chose the liminal space of proximity as its forte. In its presences and absences, in its capacity to unite and divide, the story of soccer and the nation came together in the formation of Bengali post-partition identity in the period 1905 – 1980.

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Of Roots across '*Borders*': Readings from Short Fiction by Amar Jaleel

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Abstract:

The cataclysmic nature of events following the partition of India first into two nations based on sectarian principles and finally into three; thereby proving not just the fallacy but also the mala fide intentions behind the much vaunted 'Two Nation' theory has been the staple of much historical analysis and fictional representation in the subcontinent since 1947. It has been rued that Partition and not Independence became the primary event; the aftermath of the former overshadowed the much desired and deserved euphoria of the latter. Amar Jaleel's collection of short stories *Love, Longing and Death: Mystic Stories*, avowedly dedicated to children conceived to the innumerable women victims of partition violence, delves deep into the protracted effects of the multi-layered trauma. The scars for subsequent generations may not pertain as much to physical violation or immediate pains of displacement, but the psychological, emotional trauma caused by insistent self-questionings on the basics of identity, nationhood, human relationships et al – the many 'why's' as Jaleel puts it, are no less intriguing. The three stories chosen from the collection are strung with the motif of journeys undertaken across borders in quest for roots. The moving experiences of the subjects reflect the microcosmic discourse of a collective unconscious; its power is no less than any astute historical account.

Keywords: Partition-Independence, Identity, Mother (land), Nostalgia, Refugee, Pious Muslim, Fundamentalist Hindu.

“When my critics object and tell me that I am obsessed by the experience of the partition, trapped in it, my response is that what happened in 1947 was so complex, so devastating, that I have yet to understand it fully. How can I get away from it?”([Intizar Hussain in conversation with Alok Bhalla] Bhalla 107)

Indeed the baffling nature of the events following what Gyanendra Pandey rightly calls 'Partition-Independence' (Pandey 2261), the monstrosity of the holocaust and its protracted aftermath have been the staple of much historical debate. It has virtually shaped a lexicon of discourses and given rise to a wide array of fictional representations over the past six decades and more. No less varied has been the pluralist historiography of responses with the passage of time, to this mother of all migrations, nee exoduses of the past century that has ineradicably altered the South Asian prism from all possible views. While Pandey holds that partition, more than independence, was central to the dynamic process of 'nationalising the nation(s)' and hence the barbarities notwithstanding, it should also be looked upon as 'a history of struggle—of people fighting to cope, to survive and to build anew'; a staunch Marxist like Lal Khan pins his hopes on 'a voluntary socialist federation of the Indian subcontinent' as the only panacea to balanced mutual relations. However much social scientists and post-partition generations of thinkers might search for tropes to exit the trauma, for creative artists of Intizar Hussain's generation who have lived through 1947 and seen a rehash of the sham of the 'Two-Nation' theory again in 1971 with the cessation of East Pakistan, there is indeed no getting away from the trauma that courses through the veins.

This Paper attempts to read three short stories by the eminent Sindhi columnist, short story writer and novelist Amar Jaleel (Qazi

Abdul Jaleel, born 1936) from his collection *Love, Longing and Death: Mystic Stories*. The reference to Hussain's words quoted at the outset holds validity in the context of this Paper because Jaleel professedly dedicates his book 'to the children who were conceived to the millions of miserable Hindu, Muslim and Sikh women, dishonoured during the savage devastations of 1947, in the wake of the Partition of India' (Khan 5). Any conscientious reader will at once read into the multiple layers of trauma embedded in the harsh reality of pregnant women as soft targets being dislocated, marauded, disowned and torn asunder in such tumultuous times. *Love, Longing and Death* is in that sense of temporality a post modernist take on Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*; for Jaleel's book, published in 2008, is avowedly dedicated to those children born in 1948 and therefore turned 'senior citizens in India and Pakistan' at the time of publication of this collection. As the doubly colonised subject, women's paradoxical glorification as symbolising the purity of nationhood as an attainable goal served to make them the worst victims of the mayhem of Partition and their plights have received succinctly moving documentations in literature and films that have served as secondary archival material to supplement historical evidence. My contention is that Jaleel takes the impact and implications of the trauma – both physical and psychological, one generation further through the progeny of the women sufferers of Partition. The subjects of the stories chosen here – Ram Chandaraka Chandu in 'A Train To Karachi', Farhad Akelo in 'It Happened in Mumbai' and Professor Dr. Suddha Mehtani in 'Between Arrival and Departure' engage themselves in trans-border journeys that rake up the embers of buried but indefatigable memories of ruptures, sometimes avowedly and incidentally at others. Each of these characters wily nilly explore roots for which they either have deep longings or even deeper antipathies; nonetheless roots that have overwhelmingly shaped their lives. Whatever the mode, all these stories bring home the basic fact that temporal-spatial distance from

the holocaust might perforce have succeeded in meandering the pathways of daily life, but its harrowing experiences are never ever lost on the subconscious psyche of the subject(s). Thus, the bafflement that Intizar Hussain talks of, far from being something that can be got rid of with the passage of time, is actually ineffaceable; for, the inheritance of loss comes down to generations of posterity in multiple ways. The stories chosen here are a microcosm that gives the lie to indifferent and unfeeling theorisations by disaffected academia that Partition has given the sub continent a treasure trove of impassioned literature; or even such postcolonial assumptions that it is in the best interests to accept history and move on in search of better futures. While I consider the first a left handed compliment, a position of complacency taken from safe removes that barely recognises the reasons behind the inability to let go of a sordid past that has inflicted questionable trajectories of 'nation'al identity upon generations; the second would suit social scientists and strategists better than litterateurs who feel with the mystical intensity of being in fires that continue to scald.

This helplessness of the partitioned self who becomes a stranger in his adopted country and an outsider in the land of his birth, as politics redesignates geographical territories, is poignantly brought out by Jaleel in the Preamble to *Love, Longing and Death*, which he aptly titles 'A Cry in the Wilderness'. Beginning with what is presumably his own memory at the impressionable age of eleven of witnessing the burning down of the Primary School in Karachi where he had spent the 'most memorable four years of his childhood' and had internalised '*Sareyahan se accha Hindustan hamara*', the author rues the countlessness of human resources across all religious denominations that was violated; property that was destroyed; and national heritage that was torched or demolished. In terms of intensity of the holocaust, this is considered worse than any of the dreadful invasions of yore or even the atrocious final phase of World War II, because the survivors have since been plagued with what Jaleel calls

the inclusive paradigms of several 'Why's' to which neither history nor polity have any answers. Thus Partition fiction as a genre becomes seamless in terms of time – its subjects are not only those who have succumbed but more so those that have lived on, decimated as individuals, stripped of the nationality invested with at birth, deprived of the nation as mother and hence orphaned; and above all, of no significance to the Governments of Pakistan or India! Jaleel's characters, like their creator, are thus a world unto themselves – they are confident that their otherness is no descent into abysmal depths of psychosomatic problems. Rather, the numerous 'why's' that haunt them have opened up diverse avenues for their mystic minds that have alternatively penetrating visions into the secret chambers of history that are way different from any public history of the annals of 'partition-independence'.

The protagonist of the first story 'Train to Karachi' is a man in his seventies, undertaking his second attempt at reclaiming identity by 'returning' to the land of his birth, to his beloved Ritu from whom he was separated fifty-eight years ago, and is thereby in search of the quintessence of his life. Thus while to the understanding of the young immigration officer at Khokropar, he is Mr. Ram Chandar who is on his first visit to Pakistan; the septuagenarian insists that he was born in Karachi and that he has always known himself as Chandu, which is what his loved one(s) whom he is going to see, call him by. Quite clearly, his earlier failed attempt at reaching Karachi via Monabao and Khokropar without an Indian passport that had ended abortively at Zero Point, an incident that led to a protracted series of travails and mental turmoil for Chandu, now cloud his subconscious mind in flashbacks at intermittent successions. Significantly, young Chandu had then reasoned that he was born a British Indian at Karachi in 1930, the Partition came about in 1947 and definitely it was the landmass that was partitioned and not the person who has essentially remained one in body and soul! To the authorities, this would obviously be a

trespasser's devilish logic and he was thrown back across the Indian border; to an impressionable young boy it was incomprehensible how laws could be enacted that forbade one from returning home. While Jaleel does not mention as much, it is important to note that the route his protagonist takes to reach Karachi was one that repeatedly came under duress in the wake of successive Indo-Pak wars. Thus Chandu not only prioritises the painful reality of partition in supersession of the hollow sham of independence; he also asserts that his primary identity is as an Indian born in pre-partition (and therefore pre-independence) united India, and not his religious creed of being a Hindu. Hence he has always looked upon the move from Karachi to Baroda in 1947 to settle his parents as only warranted by the infamous 'Two Nation' theory that can have had nothing to impact his return to his best friend, his eternal love Ritu (Rehmat Fatima). Chandu's parting words to his soul mate, the spirit of which become his leitmotif in life are poignant:

'After I have settled my mother and father in India, I will come back. I will come back to you. I am destined to return some day, Ritu.' (18)

Clearly, these words were as much a promise to her as they are a chant unto himself that affirmed and has continues to reaffirm his sense of belonging, imperatively to the soil. It is this faith against which borders and boundaries pale into insignificance, that has seen him through nearly six decades of trauma, loss, solitude and even spells in psychiatry wards of hospitals where he has been identified as 'an unfortunate victim of his own consciousness'.

Jaleel's Chandu is not an isolated case just as his story is not any fairytale of adolescent romance; he represents the millions of Indians labouring under the yoke of foreign rule who came to swear by the mainstream nationalist movement's logic of the nation as mother that must be liberated from the shackles of the coloniser. Logically

therefore, his question 'How can they partition my mother?' which points at the corrosion that beset the freedom movement and finally led to a grossly 'dissected' motherland, and his insistent note 'I have not been partitioned. I don't need a passport to move about in my own country' are valid stand points that bring out the collective truth of a generation 'betrayed by history'. In successfully undertaking the journey to Karachi this time, Chandu not only relives his promise to Ritu and thereby himself, albeit delayed by circumstances beyond his control; he also attains private redemption by scripting his desired narrative of imagined nationhood embodied in the figure of Ritu who has been in his psyche the origin and destination of what collectively constitutes the nation in deference to the values he had acquired in early life.

If Ritu marks the culmination of Chandu's quest, then the city of Karachi with its drastically altered signposts is no less important as a means to his end. Before he could undertake this journey across the border to what he has always considered his roots, Chandu was wont to think that he was a victim of history, and his amulet amidst loneliness was the memory of Ritu. But once in Karachi, he is faced with a new bewildering thought – 'Is history too divisible like a country!' The elimination of trams might be a step towards pacing up modes of conveyance, but the mindless renaming spree renders the old city of his birth alien to Chandu. Significantly, Jaleel devotes ample space to narrativising the city through the eyes of his protagonist and Chandu indeed has had his tryst with history before he finally bumps into Chand Jumani, another Chandu, right in front of the residence of Abdul Raheem, who was father of Rehmat Fatima, alias Ritu.

Chand Jumani is Ritu's son, the identical nicknames begin a series of affirmations that on a metaphysical plane neither the self, nor history and least of all human ties, are divisible. The estranged lovers show muted but palpably evident responses to each other; Ritu isn't surprised that her Chandu hasn't married; and most of all her husband,

Nisar Jumani spontaneously takes to the guest from India, affirming how integral a family name he has always been in the Jumani household. Having redeemed his pledge made as much to Ritu as to himself, Chandu departs as suddenly as he had arrived, collapses on the footpath in front of Edulji Dinshaw Building (now renamed Taj Building) where the young lovers once lived as next door neighbours, and falls back to his frenzied reciting 'I have returned, Ritu'. His mission accomplished, for he had nothing more to get out of life than the acceptance and recognition his long estranged past bestowed upon him; Chandu's Ritu now becomes completely synonymous with his simultaneously irrevocable and irreplaceable past. Jaleel finally allows salvation for his protagonist when he brings his life circle to its full. The story ends with the reported rumour that Chandu, who lay motionless on the footpath for two days, was taken away in the dead of night as an Indian spy. That is perhaps Jaleel's indignant last shot at what many of his ilk have considered as strong arm tactics of the failed state of Pakistan. Within the broader spectrum, it is baffling that without a Passport one is denied entry to one's land of birth; with a valid document, one can equally ignominiously be implicated on false and disreputable charges. And to think that it all began in the name of liberating the enslaved mother!

The second story 'It Happened in Mumbai' is an almost mystical account (Jaleel calls it metaphysical) by Farhad Akelo, 'an Indian born in Karachi' in the early 1930's, and one whose 'soul and heart are in India'. It is important to understand that the creed of Indian-ness bequeathed upon them at birth, holds abiding relevance as an inclusive identity for people of this generation; the subsequent partition in the sense of portioning out landmasses based on queer sectarian logic has never really registered in the minds and hearts of such people. So Farhad, the retired university teacher from Karachi, presently an invited guest of Mumbai University at a seminar on Sindhi Language and literature, continues to be an Indian in his own

right irrespective of the geographical and diplomatic delimitations of present day Pakistan or India.

Broken out of his sleep early morning by the intercom at the Rose Petal Hotel on Tulsiwari Road, he is surprised to know he has had a female visitor (not knowing a female soul in Mumbai) who however left after a long wait, but has left behind a note that jerks him out of his senses and puts Farhad in a puzzling reminiscence mode:

'We were next door neighbours in Burhani Building, Garden Road, Karachi. I will wait for you near Haji Ali Fruit Centre at 9 p.m tonight. There won't be another night after tonight.' (81)

He is puzzled for one because this note refers to a place and time sixty seven years back, when he was just a kid of four and of which he has only the vaguest reminiscences. Besides, the note as is clear, was delivered by a messenger – 'a pretty young lady'; and all that Farhad's wild attempts at figuring its essence leads to, is more and more perplexity. The walk from Tulsiwari to Haji Ali via Tardeo Road, a mere twenty minutes distance, seems a 'walk into the unknown' and is undertaken with a pounding heart. His attention is drawn to a very old woman seated against the parapet of the Haji Ali Fruit Centre, who is reportedly revered as a living deity and is known to make only occasional appearances. As Farhad goes down on his knees and yet cannot make out her face that is bowed down with head covered in a saffron cloth, she addresses him by name and expresses her conviction in the knowledge that he would come. This journey to meet one's nondescript past is rewarded with the gift of a coin that belongs to the era of King George the Fifth; an era that coincides with the period of time these once next door neighbours would have spent at Burhani Building. It is fascinating how paltry or even intangible objects like this old woman's antique coin or Chandu's ever vibrant love for Ritu become 'objective-correlatives' of a time that has perforce been divested of its relevance in the annals of temporality but remains

unfazed in the psychic memories of the subjects! It is in this innate urge of clinging on to such infinitesimal memoirs of times that are long lost, never to return, that much of the abiding quality of individual partition memoirs rest. Consequently, literature that tries to capture or represent these unrepresentables of lived experiences becomes invaluable, much more than historical interpretation.

For an instant, this old woman is not the oriental 'living deity' by which she presumably makes a living, but transfixed nearly seven decades back in history; her parting words which are a distant promise of meeting again 'Someday...in Karachi near the Jehangir Kothari Canopy' are deeply embedded in the mind of the retired academic, for as Jaleel informs, Farhad does appear in Clifton and keeps looking for the promised appearance. His thoughts before and after the meeting at Haji Ali Fruit Centre are no less interesting. From very pragmatic ruminations that there were no financial gains to be got out of him by trading on memories, to his inexplicable waitings in Clifton – is no metamorphosis but the subconscious clinging on to a time frame that, however hazed by spatial-temporal distance, is never ever lost out from the deep rooted psyche. Hence, such substantive questions as to how this apparently mendicant woman tracks him, or what implications the gift of a slice of past time can actually have on his present never cross Farhad's mind. In the ultimate analysis, the dynamics of real time are suspended in a cyclical motion of continuum into which experiences; half formed reminiscences and nostalgia all coalesce to form an imagined community of a nation beyond borders.

The scurrying for roots for Dr. Suddha Mehtani, protagonist of 'Between Arrival and Departure', is different from either that of Chandu or Farhad. The only woman protagonist among the stories chosen, she has arrived in trouble infested Karachi with an internalised vengeance that is hardly belied by her calm exterior, exclusively to search out Jallad, a runaway convict who was awaiting

execution in Kanpur Jail for serial murders and heinous crimes when India was partitioned. The rise and transformation of Jallad in Karachi from a dreadful rapist of Hindus who showed reluctance to leave for India, an instinctive killer and a grabber of evacuee property with all impunity from the law, to Alhaj Seth Jallaluddin Siddiqui Madani, the 'pious' chairman of the Al-Mashriq Al-Maghrib Trust is a tale that is common in the murky political scenarios of postcolonial Indo-Pak societies in the wake of partition, going by the infamous Two-Nation theory. Little wonder thus that the narrator Mr. Sarang is surprised to no end when Suddha, a Professor of Economics at the Bangalore College of Commerce and Economics, with a reference from his childhood friend Parshotum from India, lands in Karachi with the express intent of meeting 'such a rogue'. However, her graceful elegance and reticent manner prohibit him from making any further queries, and within a day he does manage to fix an appointment with 'the dreaded crook of yesteryears' now turned a man of real substance with proxy links to the underworld.

While much has been written on the betrayal, brutalities and violation of women and womanhood in partition fiction and rightly so, there has hardly ever been such a powerful backlash registered as in this short story by Jaleel. Far from cringing before the white shervani and Jinnah cap clad Alhaj Jallaluddin Siddiqui Madani at the helm of his sinful empire in his imposing office, Suddha takes him back in time to Krishna Mansion on Burns Road amidst the 1947 Karachi riots where in a second floor apartment he had raped a teenage girl in front of her parents, beheaded her father when he tried to rescue his daughter and flung her mother to death from the balcony. Stating that she has come in search of her father to whom she has to tell a tale '... that he won't forget for the rest of his life', Suddha reveals that the teenage victim died at childbirth in a refugee camp in Baroda, and that she is the product of the rape. A visibly dazed Alhaj who has turned speechless, is reduced to obeying Suddha's stern command made while

she looks him in the eye, and there is little he can do but look at her 'nervously' as she utters:

'I am your daughter and a Hindu.' (242)

When Chandu in 'A Train to Karachi' talks of the nation as mother, he echoes the patriarchal logic of the mainstream nationalist movement, especially of Hindu nationalism that looked upon women as embodiment of the Nation. By extension of the same logic, women would be perceived as embodiments of the honour of the whole community to which they belonged; and this 'respect' paradoxically rendered them as potent targets of attack by the 'other' community in fanatic times of religious conflict and ethnic cleansing which was what Partition was subversively made out to be. Understandably for Jallad, rape and butchering would be the most ready means of 'humiliating and emasculating the enemy'. So, Dr. Suddha Mehtani's words:

'In my veins runs your blood, a pious Muslim's blood, but I am a Hindu, and am married to a fundamentalist Hindu... This is your perpetual punishment that will torment you even after your death.' (242)

Which are apparently a triumphant proclamation of her proud Hindutva need however to be seen less as a sectarian utterance and more as her tearing apart the fallacious presumptions that enabled power mongers to divide a people who were essentially indivisible and in the process drive a wedge that never was between religious communities. Urvashi Butalia's debatable theorisation on women's 'agency' in the context of those who internalised patriarchal notions of their role in society and committed suicide in order to preserve 'sanctity' and 'purity' of their religion does not definitely apply to Suddha's mother, the teenage rape victim. But it can be said without doubt that for the present, the empowered daughter has acquired agency enough to corner someone like Alhaj, who is definitely a prototype figure both in the reality and the fiction of partition.

Suddha's words, it must however be recognised, are invested with a paradoxical double intent on the literary plane – nullifying by the very fact of her existence and identity the evil logic that made innumerable rapes and physical violence to women the de facto norm during partition on the one hand; and the realisation that her momentary victory by flooring Alhaj does not still give her anymore than a temporary respite from the burden of memory that has and will continue to strangle her all through life. The tears in the eyes of this hitherto composed woman as she leaves her 'father's' office and her parting words to her interlocutor – 'Thanks Sarang, I hope you understand', make clear the unalleviated pains with which she came to dig out her roots and perhaps the even greater lifelong trauma of existence that she takes back with her. Yet this almost existentialist interaction with the man responsible for her birth was a necessary episode in the life of Dr. Suddha Mehtani. It is in such inexplicable anecdotes of experience that the subtleties of the sensibilities of victims and survivors of partition trauma are to be traced. Sarang's understanding in turn, Jaleel perhaps says unuttered, is the humane understanding of the millions who have similarly lost their kith and kin, been uprooted from their ancestral lands and above all, sadly been appropriated by equally venomous postcolonial fanaticisms, that posterity needs to empathise with.

In the ultimate analysis, Amar Jaleel's avowedly mystical stories harp around the single theme that he has doggedly pursued as a political analyst – why partition of India was wrong. Through the aspirations and disappointments of his fellow beings and contemporaries who people his stories as characters, Jaleel reinforces the autonomous minds of astute individuals who are bound to come into conflict with powers that breed tyranny, indifference and injustice. It is through extreme sufferance that they attain their respective ends.

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Itihasey Stree Parva? - An analysis of *The River Churning*.

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Abstract:

Women have not been adequately represented in social and cultural history. This can be substantiated by specifically taking a look at history during the times of the Mahabharata or Partition where voices of official history make cursory references to women. Thus, representations by women writers prove to be a great resource to know (her) story from a wholly different perspective. The parallels between the Mahabharata and Partition can be drawn on the basis of the devastation of the subcontinent during the battle of Kurukshetra, and the violation of Yadav women after the death of their men in the battle, and the semblance found in partition atrocities which constitute the epic of the modern Indian nation.

This paper will deal with Jyotirmoyee Devi's work- *Epar Ganga Opar Ganga (The River Churning)*, which will be juxtaposed with instances from Mahasweta Devi's *After Kurukshetra* where she presents the battle of the Mahabharata and its immediate aftermath. References would also be made to *The Stone Women*, a novella, where Shashi Deshpande uses myth as a technique. In these short stories, the epic provides a common background. This paper is an attempt to fashion a seamless quilt charting the history of women by women writers by including glimpses from the Mahabharata to Partition.

Key Words: Stree Parva, Itihasa, Partition, Absences in Historical Discourse, Religious and Cultural Nationalism, Idealised Notion of Womanhood, Keepers of Tradition, Patriarchy.

Women have not been adequately represented in social and cultural history. This can be substantiated by specifically taking a look at history during the times of the Mahabharata or Partition where voices of official history only make cursory references to women. Even the chapter titled Stree Parva (The Woman Chapter) for instance, composed by Veda Vyasa in the Mahabharata does not deal with the actual travails of women.

Hence re-presentations by women writers prove to be a great resource to know (her) story from a different perspective. This paper is an attempt to fashion a seamless quilt charting the history of women by women writers by including glimpses from the Mahabharata to Partition.

This paper will deal with Jyotirmoyee Devi's work -*Epar Ganga Opar Ganga (The River Churning)* which opens with Sutara Datta, Assistant Professor of History, meditating over the absences in historical discourse. This is juxtaposed with instances from Mahasweta Devi's *After Kurukshetra* where she presents the battle of the Mahabharata and its immediate aftermath. She presents a convincing and consistent picture of the 'other' and the 'marginalised'. References would also be made to *The Stone Women*, a novella, where Shashi Deshpande uses myth as a technique. In *The Stone Women*, where the epic provides a common background, Shashi Deshpande has tried to revisit her mythological sisters and has tapped their feminist consciousness from an awakened woman's point of view.

About the original title: *Itihasey Stree Parva*

The River Churning by Jyotirmoyee Devi is a Partition Novel which was originally called *Itihasey Stree Parva* (The Woman Chapter in History). Jyotirmoyee Devi, changed the title to *The River Churning* at the request of her publisher. The *Stree Parva* in the Itihasa-Mahabharata, despite its name does not exclusively deal with women's histories. In no way does it even suggest the saga of suffering experienced by the gamut of women characters in the grand epic. It is merely an account of the tragedy of both men and women. It is a tale of death and bereavement, the agony of both men and women post the destructive Kurukshetra battle.

The Stree-Parva of the Mahabharata is no conventional chapter on women; for Jyotirmoyee Devi it contains the potential of cross-cutting “myth” with “history”: the great “open secret” that is kept carefully hidden from the public eye by a manipulative patriarchy. (Pgs 27-28 Introduction –*The River Churning*)

Jyotirmoyee Devi detects such injustice at the heart of the vivisection of the subcontinent into two and, later, three, states. The tragedy of this holocaust, carefully elided in our history books, is brought home by Jyotirmoyee through the life of a middle class girl.

The novel *Epar Ganga Opar Ganga* was intended to lift the veil on a StreeParva in history-the blood-stained, chequered history of “secular” modern India.

The River Churning in a nut shell:

Written in 1967, published in book form a year later, Jyotirmoyee Devi's *Epar Ganga Opar Ganga (The River Churning)* is one of the rare examples of a Partition novel in Bengali written by a woman. It focuses on violence and, possibly, the rape of a Hindu girl in East Bengal and her subsequent marginalisation by her own community in post Partition “secular” India. With restraint, yet daring rare in a septuagenarian of her generation, Jyotirmoyee presents the physical trauma of the young, adolescent girl. Her sexuality is the great “unspoken” in the novel, yet it remains the stake in the sinister game in which the community teams up with nationhood, in order to keep live the caste-class entente of the hegemonic group in independent India.

The novel unfolds in the background of a blaze of communal violence, arson, murder, and rape in the Noakhali and Comilla districts of east Bengal subsequent to the Great Calcutta Killing in August 1946. A young woman, Sutara Datta, loses her parents in the communal fury: her father is murdered, her mother attempts suicide (and is eventually untraceable), and her sister is abducted. Sutara herself loses consciousness in the course of an attack. She convalesces in the care of her Muslim neighbors (Tamijuddin's family), who escort her to the “safety” of her brothers in Calcutta. She joins her brothers

and sister-in-law Bibha at the home of Bibha's parents where they have taken refuge to escape the violence of the Calcutta riots, but the elderly women of the household disapprove of Sutara's presence hastening her further displacement. Shunned by family and the community, Sutara is sent to a Christian boarding school for women, a non-Hindu space where the student-body is primarily constituted by lower-castes or low-caste converts and women in situations similar to hers. She completes her studies and eventually realizes that she is unwanted not only in the extended family but also among her closest kin, her brothers. She finds employment teaching history at a women's college at Delhi. Her correspondence and encounters with her Muslim neighbors from her village, who had rescued her and who continue to cherish her, comes to an abrupt end when they suggest a matrimonial alliance. The novel ends with Pramode, Bibha's brother, proposing marriage to Sutara. ([Section 36], *Disenfranchised Bodies- Jyotirmoyee Devi's Writings on the Partition-Debali Mookerjea-Leonard*)

Situating the novel in the socio-cultural frame work of the nineteenth century:

In this work Jyotirmoyee Devi doesn't raise the question 'Why' women are subjected to communal form of gendered hostility? Rather, she analyses 'How' women's bodies are made the preferred sites for exerting power through everyday domestic life.

(*Disenfranchised Bodies - Jyotirmoyee Devi's Writings on the Partition-Debali Mookerjea - Leonard*)

In the 19th century, women's sexuality was a 'site of pedagogy and mobilization for an embryonic collective political identity'. (*Disenfranchised Bodies - Jyotirmoyee Devi's Writings on the Partition - Debali Mookerjea - Leonard*) Back then it was a question of creating a consolidated Hindu Cultural Identity. The easiest way to do so was by deploying a discourse of women's purity by elites to counter issues of foreign domination.

Thus, as Debali Mookerjea Leonard contends, the rejections

of abducted and raped women led to social production of a discourse of honour and especially women's purity.

It is from this early nationalism and high imperialism did the image of the chaste upper caste, upper and middle class Hindu woman emerge. The symbolic purity associated with the inner private domain was mapped onto the actual bodies of women. Woman was the icon, the honour of the nation.

Bodies thus, became a site for the performance of identity, they destabilised community alliances. This resulted in patriarchal logic that resulted in mass rape of women from 'other' religious community. Thus the purity of Hindu and Sikh women became a political prerequisite for belonging to the new nation. This rise of religious and cultural nationalism in all South Asian countries is a cause for concern especially for women as it imposed an 'idealised notion' of womanhood on them.

The ideals were derived from an uncorrupted mythical past, religious prescriptions that always circumscribed women's rights and mobility (Menon and Bhasin, 1998:254). Thus a different patriarchy was given birth to. The colonial administration policy of non-intervention in the private sphere on grounds of alleged cultural sensitivity granted a sovereignty over domesticity to the colonized male as if in exchange of control over land.

The single largest area of discursive production and regulation was women's sexual purity over which a strict supervision was exercised, and its place established by defining it as the prerogative of the husband or the future husband.

To put it succinctly what the men couldn't do with the nation, they did it with its women. Also the responsibility for indoctrination into the new patriarchy were delegated to miniature platforms of control: caste, communities and the family. The heads of households were held accountable for ensuring the "proper" conduct and ideational development of individuals through a disciplinary regime of constant vigilance.

The community was authorised to make and implement decisions in the name of the larger interests of the nation. This augmented the power of the community (especially through the joint-family system) over individual members at a geometric rate. And, since elite young women were mostly confined to the inner women's quarters ("antahpur") the disciplining gaze of senior women as "keepers of tradition" wielded immense control over them.

The Mahabharata and The River Churning:

The novel is structured in four parts, the last three the "AdiParva" (The Beginning), the "Anusashana Parva" (The Disciplining), and the "Stree Parva" (The Women Chapter) derive their names from books of the Mahabharata; the first short section is titled "Sutara Datta." The second, third, and fourth sections plot Sutara's continuous migrancy; hence, the locale for the second is a village in Noakhali, the third Calcutta, and the fourth Delhi. Further, towards the end of the fourth section, the author hints at a future possibility of Sutara's passage to England with Pramode.

AdiParva:

In the *Mahabharata* the AdiParva traces the beginnings of the Kaurava and the Pandavas, follows the trajectories of their lives, the animosities shared by them and the Parva concludes with the burning of the Khandavprastha by Krishna and Arjuna.

In *The River Churning*-AdiParva, recreates the idyllic untainted setting of Noakhali, where Hindus and Muslims co-exist harmoniously. Devi's description of the violence that engulfs the Bamunpara (the area where high caste Brahmins live), is very sparse. The victim-Sutara, loses her family and is taken good care of by Tamijuddin, the village head master and his family. Through this section the common refrain is that the brothers who are in Calcutta are not bothered about the sister and seem to be more concerned about the family name and honour. Tamijuddin and his wife have a very clear idea about the Hindus approach towards their forsaken women. The Parva ends with Sutara being safely handed over by Tamij kaka to Sutara's male family members.

In this section the closeness developed between Tamijuddin's wife and Sutara is striking. She even nurses a secret wish of keeping Sutara with her as she knows she would not be accepted by her community. "If you sense any reluctance at all on their part, bring her back," said Sakina's mother. "She can stay with us like our daughter. Among the Hindus even parents reject their daughter-and they are only her brothers!" (Pg.26 *The River Churning*) However, Tamijuddin is sure that conversion was the last option, almost taboo, a high caste Hindu could ever accept of their own free will.

Tamijuddin comes across as a responsible patriarch who keeps his word and carries out his responsibility to the fullest by handing over Sutara safely to her brothers in person and not just handing her over to the relief camp workers. In spite of the constant threats and taunts that he has to bear from the people of his own community for having sheltered a high caste Hindu girl.

The comments that he has to counter bring about the views that the other community holds about the Hindus:

"Can you tell us of a single instance when women have not been molested, pushed about? Look at their stories in their Puranas-what about the abduction of Sita? What about Draupadi?" (Pg. 14 *The River Churning*)

These arguments are put forth by Muslims, who are educated, religious and do their namaz and observe Roza.

Ironically, the manner in which the Khandavprastha forest is burnt down by Krishna and Arjuna to establish the Pandava empire, Sutara has to burn the pleasant and unpleasant memories in order to set up a new life with her brothers (which later ends in disillusionment akin to the obliteration of Indraprastha).

Anushasana Parva:

The Mahabharata witnesses the grand patriarch Bhishma advising Yudhishtira on various shastras, rules and regulations and codes of conduct for life in the Anushasana Parva. Also in the

uttarayan Bhishma through yogic practice invites death.

In the novel, the Anushasan Parva entails several impositions on Sutara. She is treated like an outsider. The only solace in her life is Amulya Babu, the grand patriarch, who is gentle, loving and understanding. To Amulya Babu Sutara seems like the bloody symbol of the mother figure we call our country. (Pg. 38 *The River Churning*)

The tradition bearing women of the house, on the other hand leave no stone unturned to keep Sutara systematically out of the system. The novel highlights the role of women not as "victims" of a patriarchal culture but in policing one another and as active reproducers of repressive masculinity (and femininity) against women. While Jyotirmoyee Devi deems the fetish of women's bodily purity as the cardinal cause of Sutara's miseries, she also indicates that its perpetuation is guaranteed by women.

This is witnessed at every step by Sutara, when she tries to be part of the household, by trying to share the household work, the response she gets from Amulya Babu's wife is discouraging, who tries to justify her behaviour in the following manner:

"Have you taken leave of your senses? She has spent so many days in a Muslim household, six long months. What is left of her caste you tell me! It was good of you to bring her over, that is alright. But keep her away from household work as you would a low caste hadi or Bagdi. Look at what she is doing, polluting everything. Who knows what she has done, the kind of food she has eaten there!" (Pg 36. *The River Churning*)

The offence committed by Sutara is that she lived with a Muslim family. Her integration in her original community seems to be almost impossible because her body carries an alternative history, the imprint of another set of practices that constitute another everyday life. The details of her life are rendered meaningless for others, and the course of future events, the multiple instances of psychological harassment, were determined by the single incident of bodily violence.

However, this baseless discrimination infuriates Amulya Babu, who compares Sutara with Sita, thus mockingly absolves his wife and the other senior women of their accusations:

"My mistake! Yes, it is wrong to stay with another family- Sita was exiled for the same offence!"....You can't stand that young girl, you won't allow her to adjust, you even call her low caste. Have you forgotten the trauma she has been through-losing her sister, her parents? The poor girl has nobody to turn to. How heartless can you be?" (Pg.43. *The River Churning*)

The sister and sister-in-law continue the conversation in low voices: "Even parents refuse to take back such girls, I know of such cases." (Pg.43. *The River Churning*)

Amulya Babu realises that, "A lost girl was never taken back, even her parents would shut their door on her. Society had a rigid stand, it was never moved by tales of woe of abducted and displaced women. Perhaps, Sutara's own parents would have disowned her. This has been going on since the time of Amba of the Mahabharata and Sita of the Ramayana." (pg.47)

This reminds us of *The Inner Rooms*, in *The Stone Women*, where Deshpande invades the mind space of Amba and her two sisters, abducted by Bhishma, at the time of their swayamwara, for getting them married to Vichitravirya, 'a puppet in the hands of Bhishma'. Amba, an anachronism in her time, has a mind of her own and speaks for herself. She refuses to bow down to the rules of the game formulated by the Bhishmas of the world. She expresses her love for the king of Saubha, Salva, who with a ruptured ego, refuses to 'accept' Amba as he is 'defeated' by Bhishma at the swayamwara. Accepting her would mean to be a disgrace to his manhood.

This proves to be a turning point in Amba's life, she questions at this juncture, "honour, dishonour, right, wrong-what are these but words used by a man to cover their real emotions?" (*The Stone Women*, Pg 21).

Amba realises that it is pointless to continue being a pawn in the hands of patriarchy, wilfully chooses her own nirvana by choosing death over a life of servitude, echoing probably the thoughts of Satan in *Paradise Lost*, "Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven." Here Amba decides to give up her life, which in a way is her approach to save her honour and pride. This resonates with the thoughts expressed by M. K. Gandhi, who not only advised women subjected to sexual violence in Noakhali, in 1946, to consume poison and end their lives rather than live with the shame of rape, but in 1947 during the Partition riots he went further exalting suicide, even murder, as deterrence to rape. (Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, v. XXXIX.)

Amulya Babua veteran deputy magistrate who had seen a lot, the practice and prejudices of Hindu, Muslim and Christian society at all levels. It was clear that if Sutara stayed with them, it would jeopardise the future of his own grand daughters as Sutara's marriage prospects were very bleak. Of course, the worried and scared face of Sutara made him ill at ease, but it would be foolish to shoulder the burden of a distant relation.

Even the great Ramchandra could not do so for his wife. Nor does the entire Ramyana bear testimony of Janak having come to the aid of Sita. For Amulya Babu, Sutara became the face of the exiled Sita, Amba or any other neglected girl-a symbol for all of them. Sutara was also being sent to her exile. Like Sita, Sutara had to accept her fate and the brass tacks of life.

As in *The Day of the Golden Deer*, in *The Stone Women*, Deshpande brings about, Sita's evaluation of Lord Rama as being the victim of his own ideas. He is still chasing the golden deer of perfection, while she had surrendered the golden deer-she had given up on the idea of perfection in any man, in any human for that matter. Here, Sita is portrayed like any other woman, who has been through the entire gamut of peaks and troughs in the form of expectation, disillusionment in relationships and finally an acceptance of life as it is. Similarly, the society that Sutara lived expected its women to adhere to unrealistic ideals; as they were the soft targets.

Sutara is exiled to a missionary school, it is not very expensive as it was meant for Christian girls of modest means. Hindu Boarding Houses too were fussy about admissions. Sutara found the environment strange, but it at least meant an end to a nightmare. She was once again in unfamiliar surroundings. She was engulfed by fear. As everything was unfamiliar.

"Most of the boarders were converted Christians from the villages, belonging to low castes like nabask, namasudra, rishi and some tribals. They were dark, healthy and a jolly lot."

(Pg 51-52 *The River Churning*). This matches with Devi's description of the other vibrant, strong willed lokavritta (common women), who are alive with purpose and capable of doing what royal women can never even dream of achieving.

Sutara is practically disowned by her brothers after admitting her to a Christian Missionary School. Thus, from one set of rules and regulations Sutara is pushed into another system. The Grand patriarch Amulya Babu like Bhishmahas no control beyond a point, he passes his verdict and leaves Sutara to her destiny.

Stree Parva:

Stree Parva in the Mahabharata is a saga of lamentations by the widows of the Kurukshetra war. Dhritarashtra and Gandhari are consoled by Sanjay and Vidura. The Pandavas and Krishna too pay a visit to Dhritarashtra. Gandhari is in deep sorrow, out of which she curses Krishna to having to face similar destruction of his clan. The dead are cremated by Yudhishtira at the end of this parva.

In *The River Churning*-in the chapter titled- Stree Parva, Sutara completes her graduation and post-graduation and is in a better position to evaluate her past. She lands a job of a teacher in history in a new private college in Delhi. Incidentally, it is called Yajnaseni College. She wonders why it's not named after Sita. She feels that the students could be as brave and bold as Draupadi, though she had her doubts about their ability to live up to that ideal. Maybe that was unattainable anyway. Since there was nobody to support them

these Yajnasen is were forced to fend for themselves. Molested, without shelter, money or power, they were victims of Partition. Some of the teachers and professors belonged to that category.

Sutara had now become independent. Sutara represented all women insulted, tortured, neglected, deserted through history. She felt an unspoken kinship with people of Punjab. As they too had lost their homes, their pride, their land, like the Bengalis.

Sutara finds solace in the company of women like Kaushalyawati who are also victims of partition. Separated from middle-class domestic life, Sutara with her colleagues and friends working in the college and residing in the dormitory constitute a community, a women's community that disregards regional differences and sustains a group-therapeutic function through a mutual support system.

Sutara sets out on a pilgrimage and finds herself. They take the path taken by the Pandavas in their final exit, she is reminded of not much having been written about Draupadi's death. In spite of her having loved the Pandavasso well. This reminds us of Draupadi who has been shortchanged by the Pandavas the short story titled-*And what has been decided*, from *The Stone Women*, brings the reader and Draupadi face-to-face with the intentions of the Pandavas. The Pandavas, who are ready to settle with just five villages, conveniently forget the insults Draupadi suffered at the Kuru court.

“Give us five villages—we ask for no more. One village for each one of us. And there will be peace.” (*The Stone Women*, Pg 25)

Thus, Draupadi is forced to think, “We will forget-yes, even more easily-what they did to me, we will never think of the hands that touched me so cruelly, we will never remember the words they spoke to me. And all those oaths we took that day, the promises we made-yes, we will forget them too.” (*The Stone Women*, Pg 28)

The fact that promises made to women did not mean much, they were so light that they could be easily blown away. The fact that men spoke a different language and their promises were too hollow

and could be negotiated is experienced by Draupadi, when she is disillusioned by the disinterest shown by the Pandavas in avenging her insults.

The anti-climax is experienced when all efforts at getting what the Pandavas want from the Kauravas fall flat, and they (Pandavas), put up a show, as though they have obliged Draupadi and agreed to go to war as the Queen wanted it! Here, Shashi Deshpande brings to fore the Janus-faced patriarchy and in Sutara's case it has a third dimension with the power being handed over by the patriarchy to senior women in the household!

Finally, Pramode proposes marriage to Sutara and perhaps that is another turn in the life of Sutara. Pramode's proposal has a sharp feel of a conscious act of good will by a responsible citizen. It is nevertheless the first proactive step taken to reintegrate Sutara within the Hindu fold. Unlike the obliteration of women's voice in the Stree Parva, Devi represents Sutara as an independent, thinking, feeling and a sensitive woman, capable of taking charge of her life. That is the whole purpose of undertaking the venture. Devi very categorically drives home the point, that education is the answer to atrocities and not suicide and death.

To conclude:

The charting of histories of women's oppression acquires the semantics of a political project for Jyotirmoyee Devi. Her counter-history in the novel incorporates a larger concern for the recuperation of obliterated narratives of other subordinated groups.

Jyotirmoyee Devi is not wrong, when she says, the last word has not been spoken yet in terms of women's histories. Women even in our day are being pushed towards the “community”, to be repeatedly washed by blood baths, and redeemed by violence. Honour killings even amongst the educated, elite class make headlines even today, the Khap Panchayats still thrive. Rape carries the social stigma, irrespective of the increased public outcry and support. The ages might change, but the Stree Parva history will still bewanting!

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Dialectics of Geographies of Identity and Correlative Imaginaries in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*

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Abstract:

The Shadow Lines meditates on the theme of national identities and national cultures, and the location of the colonial/postcolonial subject. It demonstrates how the nation is not the state, and how national identities bound to national borders are fractured in movement and migration to include transnational features. The central paradox the novel exemplifies is this – that if borders are what constitute the political reality of nations, then they actually are 'shadow lines' which both divide and connect peoples along ethnic-linguistic lines. This paper interrogates the relationship between various types of identities that are constructed both *in* and *outside* the processes of nation-making. It formulates a typology of identities that constitutes the postcolonial subject, and problematizes the so-called 'historical' correspondence between nation and nationality.

Key Words: Partition, Nation, Identity, Geographies of Identity, Correlative Imaginary

Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* is about the violence of memory and the memory of violence. It recalls the terrible bloodshed and carnage that communal riots unleashed on people in Calcutta and Dacca several decades after Partition. But, besides depicting violence triggered by events recorded in national history, like the stealing of

Prophet Mohammed's hair from a Srinagar mosque, the narrative also eviscerates tales of loss and suffering from private memory. Ghosh seeks to restore the lives of individuals and families from the forgotten archives of family history and examine their relationship with the meta-narratives of national history. What are recuperated in the process are those micro-histories that are elided by the national narrative. Ghosh, in the manner of Subaltern Historians, challenges the 'facts' of history's overarching discourse by situating his 'fiction' precisely in its gaps and fissures that are not otherwise known to the public. Finally, the novel identifies and examines the overwhelming influence of a particular sub-continental sensibility shaped by Partition, a sensibility born out of

... a fear that comes of the knowledge that normalcy is utterly contingent, that the spaces that surround one, the streets that one inhabits, can become suddenly without warning, as hostile as a desert in a flash flood. (SL204).

Two dramatic and interrelated events form the emotional core of the novel. Both share the same timeline – the year 1964, and both involve the crossing of borders – one physical and legal, the other metaphysical and violative.

The first occurs in the 'Coming Home' episode when Tha'mma, the narrator's grandmother, visits her ancestral house in Dakha 14 years after Partition. Her sister's husband is a Councillor in the Indian Deputy High Commission there, and so Tha'mma decides to finally make the trip she had always longed for. Her main purpose, however, is to bring her uncle 'Jethamoshai', now a ninety-year old man, back to India. The old man had refused to leave Dakha after the formation of East Pakistan. Tha'mma is accompanied on this trip by Tridib and the girl he loves, May Price, who is visiting him from England. It is when they leave and are driving through the narrow lanes of Dhaka that disaster strikes. A mob surrounds the cycle-rickshaw carrying Jethamoshai, and May urges Tridib to get out of the car and rescue him. The mob turns violent, killing Tridib on the spot. Both Maya's and Tridib's intervention in the larger context of the novel is the second 'border' crossing. In Maya's case it is her failure to

understand the politics of the subcontinent that makes her push Tridib into a situation over which he has no control. Hers is a failure of that cosmopolitan compassion that takes no account of a regional 'normalcy' that is 'utterly contingent', and therefore, explosive in its terrible denouement. In Tridib's case, it is the overwhelming sway of transnational love that propels him in crossing a fragile, invisible line that makes Hindus and Muslims hold their ground in a state of tenuous and temporary peace. His violent end is a script foretold by the history of two nations. The remaining parts of the novel are a slow, careful segueing of events and episodes that together unfold its main themes.

The Shadow Lines is Ghosh's definitive work on the fictionality of nations and nationality, the porousness of borders and boundaries and the fluidity of human subjectivity. Ghosh's own statements reveal his preoccupation with borders in his work:

What interested me first about borders was their arbitrariness, their constructedness – the ways in which they are 'naturalised' by modern political myth-making. I think this interest arose because of some kind of inborn distrust of anything that appears to be 'given' or taken-for-granted. (Hawley 2005: 9)

His novel is a critique of the arbitrariness of borders and the superficiality of national identities. It exposes the 'lie of the land' in projecting national identity as homogeneous, discrete, and unitary.

Nation, Religion and Typology of Identity

My analysis takes the plural, multivalent nature of identity as the text's ideological premise in order to project the political philosophy of its author. This is crucial to an understanding of the aesthetics and politics of this novel in particular, and Ghosh's oeuvre in general. I propose to show that the progress of the narrative is hinged on the construction of three types of identities – national, communal and personal. Together, the overlap of these identities forms the subjectivity of individuals, and the compositeness of the nation. Moreover, each of these identities is configured by different but intersecting spatio-temporal frames.

Political theorists have irrefutably demonstrated that national identity is a historical construction. Its features are bounded by the physical limits of the nation-state and the intangible but real political affiliations that tie the individual to a shared history, a distinct citizenry and a common ideology. In this regard, Ghosh's take on the discursive 'constructedness' of the nation-state is aligned with Benedict Anderson's definition of the nation:

It is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (1983: 6).

Anderson explains that the nation is imagined as limited, precisely because its political reality is shaped by its territorial limits defined by borders with other nations. It is also sovereign in the sense that its historical development since the Age of Enlightenment has reposed faith in plural, allomorphic compositions. And finally, the nation is an imagined community as it fosters a “deep, horizontal comradeship” (1983: 16). Ghosh's novel envisages the nation as a political and discursive entity that is an attestation and an expansion of Anderson's formulation.

The second type of identity that is imbricated in the nationalist narrative of the novel is that of communal identity based on religion. Communal identity is the broader rubric that includes national identity because the former can transgress and transcend national borders whereas the latter is bound geographically. It comprises a substantive set of characteristics that make citizenship ambiguous and sunder borderlines of nations. The limits of the nation cannot circumscribe historical and imaginary ties of social formations whose collectivity is produced by a shared membership defined by religion. What is also interesting about these two social identities is that they often coalesce in shaping collectivities that emphasize a high degree of difference and sovereignty, of belonging and bonding. The degree of cohesiveness, however, is attained by radicalizing difference from

'others'. It is this allomorphic nature of different types of interrelated subjectivities that is explored by Ghosh in the scripting of family tales as a nation's unwritten histories. In *The Shadow Lines* the 'otherness' that separates people on the basis of race, ethnicity, nationality and religion spills over national and international borders to loosen the cultural, linguistic and social ties that are imbricated in the notion of the nation. The flow of events as described in the novel shows how things happening in Karachi, Srinagar, Dhaka or Calcutta are interconnected with one another, and how people's lives are conjoined together despite being separated by long distances.

The third category, that is personal identity, is both an ontological disposition and an attribute of social circumstances. Of course, it is determined by multiple affiliations with nation, race, ethnicity, religion, caste, class and gender. Nevertheless, it is also a private space inhabited by the individual whose coordinates may not be circumscribed by his location in the discursive and political space of nation and community. What is evident from Ghosh's construction of characters and plot is the lack of emphasis on a gendered narration of the nation and a subtle playing down of its signification. In fact, a few of Ghosh's critics have alleged A person may break out of filial, communal and national loyalties, all of which are deigned to be social constructs, and forge connections, emotional and ethical with 'others', thereby transcending locationary limits. In the novel, this transcendental aspect of individual identity is evident in the relationships of love and friendship forged by Tridib, May, the narrator, the families of Roychoudharis and the Trewalenys, cutting across boundaries of nation, race and religion.

'Geographies of identities' and 'Correlative imaginaries'

Over and above the outlined categories that ontologically define the individual in relation to his multiple affiliations, my analysis also puts forward two concepts that describe the individual's performative mode of acting and doing. It is the dialectics of these individual descriptors that enrolls each citizen and member of family, community and nation in different and often conflictual ways. In other

words, the engagement with the nationalist site for the individual as well as groups spawns varying modes of assimilation, adaptation and contestation. Thus, the two categories used in this study help explain the shifting nature of the ontological and ideological boundaries of national identity.

In Ghosh's novel, characters like the grandmother display a sanguinary predisposition to the affirmative qualities of nations and nationality. Her notion of a nation as bounded identity with a discrete culture is an example of 'geographies of identity'. Geographies of identity can be defined as a subjectivity which is constituted in (and which in turn acts to constitute) different spaces and social sites. They are embodied at the personal level, deriving substantive qualities from the individual subject's biography and interpretative schema.

In the character of the grandmother, Ghosh shows how national characteristics, drawn up as a set of discrete attributes by history's 'myth-making' ability, are perceived more important than markers of individual identity. Tha'mma believes that the sanctity of national culture and singularity of political identity is preserved in the closure of borders. Her evident dislike for refugee settlements in Calcutta is indicative of the anxiety that nation-states have of infiltration by 'other' identities. Ironically, when her own son reminds her that she too has come over to Calcutta from Dhanmundi, a place in East Pakistan, she is piqued; "we're not refugees" she snapped, "we came long before Partition" (SL: 131).

On the other hand, in others like Tridib, May and the narrator, the conjunction of culture and identity is one of 'correlative imaginaries', transcending the limits of national borders. 'Correlative imaginaries' generate and sustain an ideational horizontal integration with a shared space, through a form of interpellation which correlates subjectivities and social spaces. In *The Shadow Lines*, such correlative imaginaries are recruited by Tridib and the narrator to experience ways of being and becoming *in* the world and *of* the world. Their exposure to disparate cultures in the world through travel, real or imaginary, gives them a cosmopolitan identity that is at 'home' with the world.

It is Tridib who as the narrator's mentor helps him traverse borders with ease through the medium of maps, atlases, compasses, and anecdotes infusing in him the liberatory spirit of the postcolonial subject, one that is perfectly at ease with the inchoateness and dissonances of a pluralized world. He trains the narrator's sensibility by exposing him to a cultural milieu that is eclectic and esoteric: Eastern European jazz, the habits of arboreal apes, the plays of Garcia Lorca, and the archaeological sites associated with the Sena dynasty of Bengal. All inhere in the narrator's mind to create a cosmopolitan sensibility that renders the notion of the nation as limiting and mutable. Besides, the narrator is told by Tridib that "stories are all there to live in, it is just a question of which one you chose" (SL: 15). From Tridib's skills as a raconteur, he learns the use of imagination in a specific way – "imagination with precision" (SL: 24). It is the logic of this particular imagination that enables the narrator to solve history's jigsaw puzzle – the causality of Tridib's death in a Dhaka riot with the communal violence in Kashmir and in Calcutta in 1964 – the invisible connect between the personal and the political,

In the novel Ghosh offers the faculty of imagination as a mode of liberation from political and cultural borders. Imagination helps the postcolonial subject in remaking narratives of the past and choosing the ones in the present, for otherwise "the alternative wasn't blankness – it only meant that if we didn't try ourselves, we would never be free of other people's inventions" (SL: 31). This paper contends that *The Shadow Lines* belongs to the tradition of the "counter-narratives of the nation" that, according to Homi Bhabha, "continually evoke and erase its totalizing boundaries" and "disturb those ideological manoeuvres through which 'imagined communities' are given essentialist identities" (1990: 300).

Perhaps, the best example of the novel's critique of the artificiality of borders comes out in its central episode – Tha'mma visit to Dhaka to bring Jethamoshai 'home'. The novel reveals its deepest ironies when Jethamoshai, a Hindu, who has lived all his life in Dhaka and is now a senile old man taken care of by a Muslim family, refuses to go to Tha'mma's 'home'. When she urges Jethamoshai to leave Dacca,

especially in the wake of communal tension, the old man remonstrates, “I don't believe in this India-Shindia” (SL 215) and “I was born here, and I'll die here” (SL 215). Along with the questionable status of nation, the idea of 'home' here acquires an ambiguous dimension. For Thamma, who has crossed to India from Dhaka before Partition, her attachment to the place of her origin is sustained by an “ideology of return” (Brah 180). It is a locus of nostalgia and nightmares. Thus, Tha'mma's mistaken belief in the rootedness of national identity is inscribed in the ambivalence of her travel and movement.

As pointed out by several critics (Kaul, Prasad), Tha'mma is an embodiment of the nationalist imagination. She reflects the spirit of national and cultural identity constructed by state ideology. Her middle-class mentality lays great store in bourgeois cultural values, and is in absolute dread of Tridib and those “all fail-cases” (SL7) who waste their time doing *adda* at street corners and tea-stalls in Gole Park, Calcutta. She tries to instil in the narrator the virtues of good physique, industry and discipline. It is in her consciousness that Ghosh conflates the Indian family and its middle-class values and the irrefutable logic of nation for the upkeep of a stable national identity. Her identity, therefore, is a self-declared affirmation of geographies of identity.

'Going Away' & 'Coming Home'

But actually the novel contests and overthrows Thamma's ideology with its militant brand of nationalism. In the section 'Coming Home', her simplistic belief that nations are political entities with clearly defined borders is proved wrong. Her son, the narrator's father, points out how mistaken she is in believing that the border between India and East Pakistan would be visible like a “long black line with green on one side and scarlet on the other, like it was in a school atlas” (SL: 151). All this while, the grandmother's mythical belief in “the unity of nationhood and territory, of self-respect and national power” (SL: 78) had provided meaning to her middle-class existence with the resoluteness and propensity of historical 'truth'. However, her border-crossing makes her personal self, a correlate of national identity, totter

in the political reality of a “no-man's land” (SL: 151). What was home to her in East Pakistan had been forever lost in the process of 'othering' by history – “her place of birth had come to be so messily at odds with her nationality” (SL: 152).

The final assault on her implacable middle-class national identity occurs in the climactic event of the novel – the killing of Tridib by a mob in Dhaka. Tridib's death in a communal riot shatters her nationalist belief that once borders and frontiers are drawn and nations created, places acquire a sanctity that somehow inoculates its people from 'other' contamination. She realizes the utter contingency of normalcy in the subcontinent when events happening on one side of the border have serious repercussions on the other side in a kind of 'irreversible symmetry'. When India and Pakistan war with each other in 1965, more than one and a half years after the trip to Dhaka, Tha'mma's distraught self gives way to absolute militant frenzy. She listens to the news of the war on radio, and pounding her fists on it shrieks “this is the only chance” and “we're fighting them properly at last, with tanks and guns and bombs” (SL: 237). In her tragic loss of sanity Ghosh seems to imply the irrationality of nationalism, and the fragmentation of people's psyche brought on by war and partition.

The Family of Nation

Ghosh deliberately merges the narrative of the nation with the narrative of the family by revealing the fragility of their symbolic orders. Whereas the national myth, of unity in diversity, fails to contain the sporadic outbreak of riots and insurgency across nation states and their borders, the filial solidarity warranted by ties of kinship and consanguinity is also prone to feuds and dissensions over property and its division. This point is farcically represented by the division of Tha'mma's ancestral house in pre-Partition Dhaka. Her past reveals that as children she and her sister, Mayadebi, were once part of an extended family living in a huge ancestral house in Dhaka. But after their grandfather died, their parents and their paternal uncle and his family grew apart. When the dispute turned bitter and irreconcilable, the two brothers decided to carve out their share of the house in a manner that can at best be described as a parody of Partition:

Soon things came to such a pass that they decided to divide the house with a wooden partition wall; there was no other alternative. But the building of the wall proved to be far from easy because the two brothers, insisting on their rights with a lawyer-like precision, demanded that the division be exact down to the minutest detail. When the wall was eventually built, they found that it had ploughed right through a couple of door-ways so that no one could get through them anymore; it has also gone through a lavatory bisecting an old commode. The brothers even partitioned their father's old nameplate. It was divided down the middle by a white thin line, and their names were inscribed on the two halves. (SL 123)

The family here is a metaphor for the nation, and home becomes by extension a metonymy for the state. After all, *The Shadow Lines* is a collection of several fragments of a family story; but in its narration, the fragmented history of nations is told.

Conclusion

In the light of the above discussion, the predominant theme of *The Shadow Lines* is arguably the crossing of borders by people, borders of nation, culture, and language. Ghosh's 'shadow lines' are 'shadowy' in the sense that they artificially keep people with a shared cultural history separate. Paradoxically, these 'lines' are also real and historical, legislated by juridical decree and policed by jingoistic forces. The 'shadow lines' make real geographies of identities by circumscribing people to a location, by inventing myths of 'purity' and 'origin', and thus, permanently emplacing people's lives in local/national specificities. But people are also empowered by correlatives of memory and imagination to straddle between borders and boundaries and to forge connections. The myth of nations and the historicity of Partition is continually challenged and overcome by the simple fact of human will and human possibility.

Using a double critique of home and abroad in its two parts entitled 'Going Away' and 'Coming Home', the narrative creates Bhabha's Third Space where the correlative imaginaries of Tridib and

the narrator can exist both in and beyond the material reality of grandmother's geographies of identity.

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Part(ur)ition Pains: Representations of Maternal Trauma in Partition Discourse

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Abstract:

The Partition has been one of the most traumatic events in the history of the Indian sub-continent, leaving deep psychological scars that continue to haunt us within and without. As Ashis Nandy and many others have commented, silence became the main psychological defence of the survivors, which is why researchers have had to wait long and dig deep for partition narratives. Along with the oblivion of silence, women, especially mothers – as double-victims of both patriarchal power structures and the violence and violations of the Partition – have had to face erasure from the Partition discourse as well. This is particularly ironic when juxtaposed with the recurrent image of Mother India as a rallying symbol for nationalist upsurges. The paper proposes to examine the nuances of the trope of birthing in nationalist discourse: how the 'birth' of a new nation caused immense suffering to real mothers.

Keywords: Birth, Body, Death, Maternal, Mother, Narrative, Nation, Partition, Parturition, Trauma

The discourse of Indian nationalist history, geography and politics centralises and often glorifies the icon of the Bharat Mata or Mother India. One of the earliest appearances of this icon was in the painting by Abanindranath Tagore, as an attempt to mobilise the nativist *swadeshi* movement, which was “sparked off in 1905 around the territorial partitioning of Bengal, British India's largest presidency” (Ramaswamy 15). The fact that Abanindranath Tagore initially chose to name the painting *Banga Mata* (Mother Bengal)

shows the localised and intimate linkages between the Mother India image and the Bengal Partition.

The divine four-armed, haloed image of Abanindranath's Mother India gradually morphed into images where the body of the goddess is juxtaposed against or converges with the map of the nation. As a result, “the map form of India is 'anthropomorphized' while the gendered body of Mother India comes to be 'cartographed'” (Ramaswamy 36).

The image of Mother India was used by men for various purposes. As Radha Kumar notes,

The revivalists and extremists used the image of the mother as victim (mother India, ravaged and depleted by rampaging foreign hordes), and the mother as warrior-protector (mother Kali); reformists and nationalist feminists had used the image of the mother as nurturer, socializer and supporter of men; Gandhi created the image of the mother as the repository of spiritual and moral values as a preceptor of men (quoted in Didur 34).

Since the Bharat Mata is a direct descendant of the warrior goddesses in Hindu iconography like Durga and Kali, it may be deduced that the nation that she embodied was primarily a Hindu nation, 'Hindustan', in fact. In this context, it is quite explicable that the pictures of Bharat Mata often appear to “deny the Partition of British India” by incorporating the new countries of Pakistan and East Pakistan into the geo-body of the goddess (Ramaswamy 37).

If the Bharat Mata is visualised as occupying the territory of the entire subcontinent, then, as a corollary, the Partition may be metaphorized as a violent division of this maternal body, indeed, as Parturition. It is no coincidence that the Partition is also referred to as the 'Birth of a new nation/s'. Parturition is the process of childbirth, the process of bringing forth the child from the womb through inducing of labour, which has two parts, dilatation and expulsion, and which is accompanied with labour pains of considerable intensity.

Yet the image of the suffering and vivisected Mother India was mostly absent from the visual nationalist discourse, and, even when present, it was idealised rather than realistic. It was as if, “the outer limits of visual patriotism are reached in picturing a bloodied or wounded Bharat Mata and female martyrdom more generally” (Ramaswamy 233).

The erasure of the trauma of parturition from the image of the Bharat Mata, who is a construct of and for the male gaze, is a metaphor for the silence and silencing of women and mothers in most Partition narratives. The established discourse of the Partition has been very masculine and public. From the idea of Partition, the violence thereafter, to the drawing of boundaries everything was carried out by males and in public. The loss of ancestral homes and property that is central to the redrawing of the borders in the Partition is often seen as affecting men more than women, as land has always belonged to men in patriarchal tradition. Women are also seen as patriarchal property and, hence, even when their suffering is brought into the established public political discourse, it is often as an adjunct to the male dishonour. For instance, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin refer to a Parliamentary debate on the large-scale abduction and non-restoration of Hindu women, where a male Member of Parliament invokes ancient Hindu patriarchal pride, “As descendants of Ram we have to bring back every Sita that is alive” (68). Such discourse marginalises and de-personalises the real trauma of women under the guise of idealisation and glorification.

Yet, oral histories recovered painstakingly reveal that women were often the worst victims of the Partition. “Disenfranchised as sexual objects, communal commodities, and patriarchal property, by both the nation-state and their relations, hundreds of thousands of South Asian women experienced multiple forms of gendered and sexual violence” (Daiya 65). In fact, many researchers opine that the nationalist patriarchal construct of woman/mother as nation makes the female body a site of negotiation in national conflicts. The direct consequence of this is the violence perpetrated on the

female/maternal body: rape, forced marriages, abduction, mutilation, stripping and parading, branding the body parts and feticide. Basant Kaur's narrative recalls the horrors suffered by mothers in the name of protection of 'family honour': she took her two children and jumped in a well that was full to the brim with people, like “rotis into a tandoor”, so they “could not drown...the children survived” (Butalia 200). The gruesome image and the lack of real choices read like a real-life theatre of the absurd.

The pregnant maternal body is further problematized by its very in-between-ness, by the fact that it is actually two entities (mother and child) in one body. On the one hand, it can be seen as an embodiment of the trauma and violence suffered by women. The very process of parturition as expulsion of the foetus is symbolic of the refugees' condition, of being forcibly ejected from the motherland, never to return. On the other hand, the maternal body is a site for renaissance, for a new birth. The majoritarian nation-building narratives of Pakistan and Bangladesh often celebrate the Partition as the parturition of a new national identity defined by man-made borders. This duality of emotions generated by the Partition has been termed as “the tragic creation narrative”, a term that can also encompass the process of parturition: a process of division that brings both joy and pain (Larson 182).

Sometimes the schism or gap between agency and affect that characterised the official discourse of the 'two-nation' policy regarding mothers is exposed in the personal memories of maternal trauma. After the Partition, during the recovery and transfer of thousands of women, the then Government of India “passed an ordinance that those whose babies were born in Pakistan would have to leave them in behind there and those children born in India would stay in India” (Menon & Bhasin 83). Feminist Partition writers like Urvashi Butalia critiques such gendered definitions of citizenship: Mothers “did not even have the right to decide what to do with their children” (277). Kamlaben Patel, a social worker who was actively involved in the process of recovery of women between 1947 and 1952 says, “All I knew

was that one should not separate a mother from her child” (Menon & Bhasin 84). This certitude of common sense, that seems so obvious to us, was shaken and troubled by the Partition ordeal. Sadat Hassan Manto's short story, “**In Tayaqqun (An Anguished Certitude)**”, derides the patchwork and inept governmental efforts to rehabilitate these abducted women while ignoring their children (Jalal 77-78). The disheveled and crazed Muslim mother, who is desperately looking for her daughter, is told by the Pakistani police officer that her daughter is dead. One day she spots her daughter walking down the street with a young Sikh, but the young woman walks away. The distraught mother calls after her but drops dead when the officer reiterates that she is dead. Manto's mystifying ending opens up the ambiguities of the maternal conundrum: to what extent does the maternal bond determine the actions of the mother, the child and the state? Is maternal love responsible only for birth and nurture, or also for death?

The memories of this bipartite birth and death, have been mapped in many texts: subterranean or acknowledged, written or oral, official or domestic, through fiction and documentation. The texts selected for study in this paper are from *Mapmaking*, and these short stories, written by writers of both the Bengals, translated from Bengali, focus on the Partition of Bengal in 1947, and its aftermath, the creation of Bangladesh in 1971. As the editor, Debjani Sengupta says in her Afterword, “[T]his volume of stories addresses a silence regarding the Partition in the East” and they foreground the “forgotten histories of the people that have been pushed out of a centralised narrative” (192-193).

“The Final Solution” is a story by Manik Bandopadhyay, who is an Indian Bengali, writing about the destruction of values and the politics of power and sexuality in the spiralling refugee problem in Calcutta, which was a direct aftermath of the 1947 Partition. Many of the Hindu families who left their homes in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and came to West Bengal in India, could not find refuge in the overcrowded camps. They were forced to settle in any place they could find, including public places like the Sealdaha Railway Station.

The protagonist of the story, Mallika, resides on this railway platform: “Mallika's family had a place, the length of a spread out mattress. Everything, everyone is squeezed in there – Mallika, her husband Bhushan, their two-and-half-year-old son Khokon and her widowed sister-in-law Asha; tin suitcases, beddings, bundles, pots and pans” (19). The very precariousness and transit-oriness of such a location foregrounds the family's rootless and destabilised existence, and the irony of having a “mattress kingdom” is sharper in the context of the irreversible displacement suffered by them (19). When the tout, Pramatha, comes to Mallika with the offer of “some jobs still available for women”, she understands the risk, yet one look at her child, “now reduced to a skeleton”, makes her agree because, as she says, “There's no other way out for us” (21). It is the compulsions of maternal love that prompt her to compromise her body and self-respect. As she says to her sister-in-law, Asha, “I would be ready to die if that could keep my child alive” (23). Yet she is repulsed when Pramatha makes sexual advances to her. “She had accepted the fact that Pramatha was going to engage her in prostitution, but she couldn't tolerate the thought that he had planned to enjoy her first, before introducing her to the profession” (29). Whereas prostitution is like a humiliating, yet depersonalised and necessary act she must engage in to in the hope of a better present for her son, Pramatha's violation of her body is like a personal betrayal of her trust in him. This act of betrayal breaks the boundaries of her patience, and she strangles him to death. The money she takes from the dead man's pockets represents “the final solution” to her, as she says in the end, “We'll never be hungry again...My son will have milk four times a day” (30). The act of murdering Pramatha empowers her, and she says, “What did he take me for? Am I weak just because I'm a woman?” (30). She decides henceforth to carry a knife when engaging with men, because violence has become the currency of human negotiation during Partition. From a victim, she becomes an agent of her own and her family's destiny. Any moral guilt that she might have felt is erased by the fierce mother-love that propels her. The text is open-ended; the writer does not judge her morally or punish her legally, and even the reader is compelled to withhold

judgement in the context of the sheer desperation of the plight of the refugee mother.

In Pratibha Basu's "Flotsam and Jetsam", the protagonist is located in a different intersection of social class and generation. Bindubasini is an elderly land-owning widowed matriarch of an all-female family, comprising her widowed daughter-in-law and two young granddaughters, residing in East Bengal. During the "break-up of the country", her Muslim tenants are unable to reassure her that her home would be a "safe haven...for the four hapless women", despite their extremely cordial past personal relationship (34). The mindless violence that was the result of the incitements of bigoted religious leaders had created an unbridgeable rift between the Hindus and the Muslims, yet on a personal level, helpless to control the escalating violence, the tenant Jamir, does his best to advise and help Bindubasini. The long road journey to India had been "two whole days of untold misery", and Bindubasini had left behind "her sunlit home, her numerous possessions" and had arrived "in India with nothing" (36-37). She becomes "like a beggar", sleeping on the cold courtyard of the refugee camp, eating the meagre food doled out by the relief workers. This sudden erasure of status and stability is a recurrent theme in all Partition narratives. The road journey becomes a chronotope, not just for loss and nostalgia, but also for the hope that "the darkness would be lifted once they reached India" (37). This was the hope that impelled millions of people to leave their homes behind and cross borders into unfamiliar territories. This hope is tested severely by the plight of the refugee camp, and when one of her granddaughters die, her hope is at the lowest ebb. Her impoverishment and desperation, like Mallika's in the earlier story, make her vulnerable to the machinations of the duplicitous social worker, Keshabananda, who appears to be a messenger of "light and hope" (40). When he comes with the offer of a "respectable" job for her daughter-in-law, Uttara, they agree, if only to improve their destitute situation. But Keshabananda, like Pramatha, is a villain, doing all the "dirty work" to satisfy the greed and lust of his employer,

Rajiblochan Sarkar, who was the "kingpin of the black market" under the guise of running the charitable society, "Friends of the Orphans" (43). To him, the simple trust of Bindubasini and Uttara is stupidity that deserves to be exploited. He exploits their trust repeatedly, taking Bindubasini's granddaughter Milu away on the pretext of making her meet her mother, and selling her to the lecherous film scout, Sashishekhar, who rapes the young girl. In this story, maternal care and concern become the weakness that allows unscrupulous men to exploit women. In the end, Bindubasini is pushed out of the running jeep by Keshabananda, because she is now a dispensable "old woman". As a matriarch, she had three saleable assets: her daughter-in-law and her granddaughters. In the corrupted, inverted, anarchic, lawless capitalism that flourished post-Partition – a parallel, illegal power structure – a mother was an easy victim. She will be willing to trade her body and her labour for the sake of her children, just as Uttara and Mallika do, in different ways. Despite being located at different class intersections, their maternal vulnerability propel them towards the same end as rape-victims. Bindubasini, who is from an older generation, is not considered saleable as an object of male desire, and so she is disposed with. Ironically, although the materialistic, masculine society – as embodied in Keshabananda – dehumanise her by regarding her as a disposable loose end, the maternal feelings in Bindubasini are so strong that her last thought before death are of her "treasure, the apple of her eye, her darling granddaughter Mrinalini – Milu" (47).

The vulnerability and plight of mothers during Partition is explored from a more visceral perspective in the story "Two More Deaths" by Bangladeshi writer, Hasan Hafizur Rehman. The story is set in a "night train from Narayanganj to Bahadurabad", which is filled with weary and terrified people desperate to cross borders and escape from insecurity. In the aftermath of the Partition riots in Calcutta and Dhaka, the animosity lingers. The narrator, a Muslim man, notices an old Hindu man with a woman of about thirty and a young girl. He worries because the train is not a "safe place" for Hindus (119). It takes

“superhuman effort” for the narrator to talk to this old man and offer him a seat, because “the inhumanity we have all witnessed has crushed our souls” (120). This breach of normality, civility and humanity is intensified by the central event in the story: the young woman who goes into labour in the middle of the compartment. When the old Hindu man announces this, his words “seem to shatter the horrific silence” (122). It is a cataclysmic inversion of the natural order: an event which has been in the private, female domain for centuries has been forced out into the public, male gaze because of the Partition. Parturition in the train compartment is like the breaking of a taboo, and the unfamiliarity of the situation creates a distinctly uncomfortable encounter. Even the mother, absorbed in the physically painful process of delivery is aware of this intrusive gaze, and she tries “with all her might to contain the pain – trembling and folding her entire body, gripping it with her fingers, without even a single moan” (123). The Partition has invaded and inverted even the sanctified female space and voice of parturition. The woman drags herself inside the toilet to hide and give birth in privacy. The empathetic but helpless narrator worries about the woman inside the toilet for over an hour, waiting keenly to hear the “first mewl of a newborn” (124). But in such an unnatural order of nature, births cannot take place, and so, “everything remains silent as ever” (124). Unable to negotiate the process of parturition all by herself, the nameless mother dies with her child at childbirth. In retrospect, the title of the story, “Two More Deaths” becomes both ironic and metonymic. The deaths of the mother and child just another statistic in a total of millions; these physical deaths are also part of a multitude of larger deaths characterising the Partition: of values, certitudes, harmony and humanity.

Bangladeshi writer Selina Hossain's “An Evening of Prayer” is also about a birth in transit: “the birth of a nation followed by the birth of a human child” (146). The journey, in this story, is not in a train alone, but also in a boat crossing the Mahananda river. The mother-to-be, Pushpita, is a Muslim, although she has a Hindu name. This shared

cultural transactions between Hindus and Muslims was a common feature in earlier, more harmonious times. In the rigid and arbitrary divide following the Partition, Pushpita and her husband, Ali Ahmed, who is a teacher of literature, “are fleeing because they were Muslims” (146). Ali Ahmed is troubled by the fact “that identity was enough to lose their home, their land”, and also about their uncertain new identity as refugees in East Pakistan. For Pushpita, the “pang of regret” that she feels as leaving behind “her village Rangamati” coalesces with the physical pain of labour that “soon spread to her belly” (147). First they journey on a boat, which is an ancient mode of transport, more in sync with the immemorial rhythms of nature, floating on the river like a child floats in the womb. The boatman talks to the river, seeking its active cooperation, like a midwife or a mother: “Be calm, my mother; be calm.... The river is in full spate, She is ready for birth” (148). Not just the boatman and her husband, Pushpita has a female friend and ally who acts as a midwife in this birth. Khala, “the matriarch of their village”, who had lost sixteen members of her family to communal violence, pushes aside her own grief, to help Pushpita up the muddy riverbank, and assist Pushpita during childbirth in the train compartment (147). This female intervention is absent in the nameless woman's birthing process in the earlier story by Hasan Hafizur Rehman, which perhaps explains why both the mother and the child die in “Two More Deaths”. Feminist scholars on mothering like Adrienne Rich have always privileged midwife-assisted childbirth over modern surgical interventions controlled by male doctors, as they feel that the natural woman-bonding that shapes childbirth in such cases makes parturition a gentler and less traumatic experience. In the story, when Pushpita climbs out of the boat, “her belly jutting out”, she has to encounter the “transfixed gaze” of the onlookers, in which perhaps there is “a sudden rush of feeling, a little desire, something carnal” (150), the same gaze that shamed the nameless mother in the earlier story and forced her to crawl to the cramped train toilet. In Selina Hossain's story, however, Khala is there to shield and help her in this vulnerable juncture. She pulls the chain to stop the train, orders the male passengers to vacate the compartment, engages the other women

to support Pushpita on the narrow bench, urges her to push during contractions, comforts her distraught and helpless husband, uses makeshift rags to mop up the uterine blood, cuts the placenta and the umbilical cord. This female support system is vital in negotiating the painful process of parturition, and so, while the earlier story ends in silence, in this story, “the cry of a newborn rent the air” (156). The halted train resumes its journey, and the train moving toward the new country in the early dawn becomes a chronotope of survival and hope. The new son, “born to a new life in this country with a new name” is called “Prateek”, which means symbol, symbolic of a personal, familial and national renaissance (156). The placenta buried in the old earth connects Pushpita and her family to “all that went before” (156). Cutting the umbilical cord is essential for life: “That ribbon of man's existence must be torn asunder for him to live” (156). The process of parturition becomes a parallel of the border-crossing engendered by the Partition: just as a child is expelled from the womb that nurtured him to survive, the migrants are forcibly uprooted from their motherland to survive. The irony lies in the fact that while parturition is a natural, eternal process, Partition is a man-made, sudden rupture. The mixed affect of nostalgia and hope – symbolised by the buried placenta and the newborn child – is a recurring feature of Bangladeshi Partition narratives, where the sense of loss is accompanied by the sense of a new future.

Such stories, about the anonymous, futile, shocking tragedies and small consolations that are marginalised by history, “might just make a few uncomfortable in that [self-constructed] cocoon”, as Ashis Nandy says in his Foreword to the collection (Sengupta xviii). According to statistics, in the Partition two million people died and sixteen million were displaced (Daiya). Of these, a considerable number were mothers and their children. Some of the survivors' histories have been recovered, many more have been silenced forever. These fictional representations of maternal trauma are attempts to insert them into a history that has marginalised and forgotten them: lest we forget.

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Narrating Partition in Pakistani Short Stories

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Abstract:

The partition of the former British colony of India into the states of India and Pakistan has witnessed unending conflicts creating territorial, political, ethnic or religious battles within the subcontinent. Research exploring the effects of partition in the South Asian diaspora has challenged the conventional representations of the event. Texts by authors from both the nations have attempted to recuperate voices that narrate the human side of partition history pertaining to their gender, class and religious identity. Focusing on the short story collections in Pakistan, this paper provides the representational challenges of partition themes and the way literary artists have dealt with them considering the changing socio-political climate and the manner in which communal memory challenges and changes national history.

Keywords: Partition Literature, Pakistani Short Stories, Home, Identity, Belonging.

How can I see my land, my rights usurped,
And remain here, a wanderer, with my shame?
Shall I live here and die in a foreign land?
No! I will return to my beloved land,
I will return, and there will I close the book of my life,
Let the noble soil tenderly cover my remains.

-Poet Fadwa Tuqan (Trans. by A.L. Tibawi).

The partition in 1947 and the birth of two sovereign states of

India and Pakistan is one of the most significant events of twentieth-century world history. The bloody process of independence granted to both nations shattered religious homogeneity, and the cultural deracination of an entire population shook one's self definition as a human being. This historical event accompanied by an unprecedented mass migration with an enormous account of violent deaths, rioting, looting, sexual assaults, and abduction of women paralyzed the two nations in all domains. The tragic event is recorded not only as a lethal incident in the history of both nations, but left an indelible imprint on the psyche of humans who inevitably became victims of this horror. The communal slaughter proved to be a trauma from which the subcontinent has never fully recovered. Partition functioned as the logical outcome of Britain's policies of divide and rule, involving the creation of new boundaries, new borders, new lines on the world map, and citizens belonging to new states.

The geographical and surgical division reflecting the multiple mind sets about the events, personalities, processes that contributed to it, led to bloody dismemberment of the motherland. The mass exodus of refugees, communal riots, and mass killing was unimaginably vast and led to forced uprooting of people in both cities and villages. Partition not only altered the social, political, economic, and psychological conditions but also the constitutional. In the first issue of the *Journal of International Affairs* (1953), William Henderson describes "the holocaust of burning communal hate that followed the decision of the British Raj to transfer sovereignty to two independent states, rather than to a united India" (57) as a horrific one. The creation of borders signaled a unique rupture within the subcontinent serving as a fruitful ground for developing new approaches to history that undertakes literature situating it uniquely between representation and theory, between what a text represents and how it represents. This paper moves away from the familiar nationalist rhetoric that has dominated conversations about the 1947 Partition. Rather than focusing on the geographical border as a conceptual figure that is at once spatially and corporeally oriented to a collective identity it focuses on illuminating a broad range of issues concerning the short story collection in Pakistan.

Living in a state of constant hostility, responding to different moments of crisis, fighting three wars in 1947-48, 1965, 1971; and the contentious issue over Kashmir, both India and Pakistan over the past sixty years have conceptualized Partition as a kind of meta-narrative at the level of popular discourse. The search for one's roots and their relevance for one's identity can be seen in attempts to find commonalities with people across the border. Research exploring the inter generational effects of Partition is sparse, particularly in the diaspora. Many critical works on communalism, nationalism, gender and violence sought to provide a global context for examining, expanding and exploring the Partition perspectives. The works constitute a larger area in migration studies, diaspora studies, producing insights into the historical and cultural connections, comparisons and linkages, and questions concerning the division. Though this subject has been central to much of the Indian/Pakistani Literatures (from 1950s onwards), yet considerable scholarly research was generated only from the second half of the century. The growth of interest in Partition related literary narratives is evident from the plethora of English translations of these narratives.

Pakistani literature, and more specifically Pakistani short stories provide a broad picture not only of the society and environment that emerged after the partition but also that which evolved over the past sixty years. Right after Partition, writers and thinkers in Pakistan had to negotiate questions that were specific to Pakistan. While the writers in India didn't face such questions as they were inheritors of an established historical and literary continuity, there was a rupture in that continuity here. Pakistanis had to discover new connections, new boundaries and new identities. Some critics believed that Pakistani fiction and its place in contemporary short story literature remains vague. But the intellectuals of this nation left a significant imprint on the poetry and short stories written in Pakistan. In general, short stories engaged with various questions rigorously. The short stories written originally in Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, Pushto and Saraiki, and now translated into English articulate a multiplicity of voices and experiences. They chronicle the birth of the Pakistani nation in its traumatic circumstances depicting the fear, horror, guilt, pride,

shame, helplessness, abandonment and dislocation. They also depict the immensely varied and rich tapestry of the cultural life in Pakistan.

Partition events and representations roughly over fifty years has become a site of critical study largely addressing issues of shattered and shared histories, cultures, myths, memories, and religion. Approaches to Partition perspective cannot be retold without addressing the voices of the unknown or forgotten people and their terrible experiences. Though unofficial by counts, at least fifteen/sixteen million people were forced to flee their homes and become refugees; out of which nearly two million were killed in ethnic violence. The ways in which notions of 'Hindu,' 'Muslim,' and 'Sikh' have been articulated at various historical junctures, as well as the terrifying consequences of communal violence, invite us to realms of pain and sorrow that are normally left outside the explanatory bounds of political discussions on secularism. Dislocated and disconnected from home/ homeland, millions of people were left without money, home, identity but with haunting stories and memories. Trains became sites of national politics, violence, separation and union, and thus served as a microcosm of partition. The long history of turmoil and suffering and the scale of violence that partition involved marked it as one of the most disturbing and distressing event in the Asian continent. Partition played a central role in the making of new Indian and Pakistani national identities and the apparently irreconcilable differences which continue to exist today.

The historical relationship between Indians and Pakistanis constitutes a major subject not only in history, but in other discourses as well. Though this subject has been central to South Asian Literatures (from the beginning of the twentieth century), yet considerable scholarly research was generated only from the second half of the century. Many intellectuals, writers, and artists have interrogated issues revealing varying degrees of social and cultural survival.

Intensely affecting all spheres – the social, political, economic and cultural, Partition altered the normal lives of millions and the horror of individual tales explored in the literary texts unraveled

images and stories of self spanning over the subcontinent. The aftermath of Partition and the evolving search for a spiritual and cultural home for millions involved embracing painful memories enacted through physical and psychological journeys. As such, the journeys the protagonist's undertake in their works begins with the departure from home/homeland – an important trope in constituting identity.

Recent research and scholarship carried out on the Partition perspective re-examines the contours of Partition in two directions. The first one, the translations into English of Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, and Bengali Literature about the Partition experience has resulted in a wide range of new novels and edited collections of short stories and poetry most notably through the valuable work of Mushirul Hasan and Alok Bhalla. The second one, concerning subaltern and feminist studies research has focused on recording the oral testimonies of Partition survivors and witnesses, thereby making the unheard voices and silences of Partition histories and memories audible. Addressing identities fragmented by dislocation, displacement, and migration – historians, cultural theorists, and anthropologists have mapped the dynamic negotiation between the past and the present, personal and collective, and the living and dead. In dealing with the current pre-occupation with memory, translation, and testimony, however, a large body of literary and cultural texts about Partition and migration is indeed viewed as the best evidence of experience. The contemporary relevance of Partition continues to influence the happenings and events in present-day India, or as Ritu Menon asserts, it is a “memory that refuses to go away” (xiii).

Due to the renewed interest within the subcontinent to voice the impact of Partition on people, the South Asian diaspora has contributed largely in re-constituting and re-establishing the forgotten experiences of millions. There was a drastic increase in Partition-related themes and literature. The planned massacre of Sikhs in 1984, the riots following the demolition of the Babri Masjid on December 6th 1992, the 2002 communal riots in Gujarat, and more recently, the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai and several other riots since independence

have all contributed to writings and debates converging on Partition as a focal point. Novels and short stories written by both Indian and Pakistani writers like Krishen Chander, Saadat Hassan Manto, Bapsi Sidhwa, Attia Hosain, Rahi Masoom Reza, Abdullah Hussain have been prolific. Some of the best known collection of short stories are Alok Bhalla's Vol.3 *Stories about the Partition of India* (1994); Saros Cowasjee and K. S. Duggal's *Orphans in the Storm: Stories on the Partition of India* (1995); Mushirul Hassan's *India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom* (1995). Intizar Hussain, Mohd. Salim-ur-Rehman and Joginder Paul's short story collection on Partition have been popular. Translations are also abundant and in good number. The works – fictional prose, short stories as well as poetry have been translated from Urdu as well as from Punjabi and Sindhi. Thus Shaik Ayaz, Khadija Mastur, Parveen Shakir, Munir Niazi and Ghulam Abbas are read by great numbers. Muhammad Iqbal, Saadat Hasan Manto, and Noon Meem Rashid are well-translated authors already, but the new translations evoke interest and are useful to the discussions of translation as a subject. Abdullah Hussein's *The Weary Generations* is a special item in this category.

The Partition themes provide us with key metaphors of post-colonial identity: separatism, rupture, fragmentation, and psychological wounding. Urdu novelists and short story writers, who migrated from India to Pakistan after Partition represent the first-generation of Pakistani fiction writers. Intezar Husain is one of the finest writers of fiction as well as short stories. His work engages with the past and present weaving a fictional fabric comprised of threads of the shared cultural-literary tradition of the Indian subcontinent, but producing a distinct content that can be identified as Pakistani. He laments the loss of the composite culture and feels sad for the new generation of Pakistanis, who cannot understand the loss because they have failed to experience its richness. Two of his collections of short stories in English translations deserve to be mentioned – *A Chronicle of the Peacocks: Stories of Partition, Exile and Lost Memories; Circle and Other Stories* (2002). Both publications reconfirm Husain as a great master of short fiction. In the former, past and present coalesce in the tales of Partition, migration, change, mutation, and destiny. The

second anthology *Circle*, makes an illuminating comment on the themes of exile and memory. But unlike most writers of his generation, such as Saadat Hasan Manto or Mohammed Marsha Yad, who inscribe the horrors of partition and social realities, Hussain unlocks the secrets of human nature and the moral domain in a concrete society, as observed in *The Seventh Door and Other Stories*.

Inherently rooted in the historical violence experienced by Partition survivors has been a major pre-occupation with Saadat Hasan Manto. Devastated by the events he witnessed during Partition, he wrote dozens of short stories set in the black episode of Indo-Pakistan history. The loss of belonging Partition generated, lies in what Homi Bhabha has named “an inassimilable place outside history” (250). Survivors after Partition inhabit a zone of transformation that carries their creative potential to produce alternative structures and new meanings. Almost all of his short stories deal with Partition theme in a bitter tone and expose the realities vividly because Manto consciously experienced Partition as an Indian-based Muslim who subsequently moved to Pakistan. He epitomizes the modern Urdu short story, but his stories are part of the cultural heritage of both Urdu and Hindi literatures, well received and appreciated both in India and Pakistan (including their translations). His 700 page *A Wet Afternoon: Stories, Sketches, Reminiscences* (2001), translated by Khalid Hasan is a real feast. 'Sketches'- brief vignettes about Partition are reproduced in their entirety and speak volumes in a few words whereas 'Reminiscences' include wonderful pre-partition portraits of people ranging from the magnificent Mohammed Ali Jinnah to celebrated film personalities such as Ashok Kumar and Noorjahan. There are different nuances in Manto's *For Freedom's Sake: Selected Stories and Sketches* (2001), selected with an introduction by M. Asaduddin, and translations by Urdu scholars such as M. U. Memon, Asaduddin and Ralph Russell. The collection includes Manto's writings about Ismat Chughtai. Conversely, Ismat writes on Manto in the title essay of *My Friend, My Enemy: Essays, Reminiscences and Portraits*, translated by Tahira Naqvi. The collection is wonderfully alive and covers a wide range of subjects and observations before and after the Partition. Each item is a gem, including Chughtai's astute comments on gender,

partition literature, contemporary literature and sexuality. Another collection *Mottled Dawn: Fifty Sketches and Stories of Partition* is a powerful one on the Partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan. The book includes unforgettable stories like “Toba Tek Singh”, “The Return”, “The Assignment”, “Colder Than Ice” and many more, bringing alive the most tragic event in the history of the Indian subcontinent.

Black Margins: Stories by Manto includes Manto's open letter to Nehru about his state of mind after the Partition and captures the best of Manto's literary powers. *A Letter from India: Contemporary Short Stories* (2003) from Pakistan, edited by Moazzam Sheikh, showcases some fine work in the original English by Talat Abbasi, Sorayya Khan, Sonia Kamal, and Moazzam Sheikh – as well as really good English translations from Pashto, Punjabi, Saraiki, Sindhi, and Urdu. The title is taken from Intizar Husain's famous partition story, but the collection makes a point in providing space to accomplished writers as well. Refreshing in their style and diverse in their themes, the stories reflect a move away from rationalism and parochialism thereby examining issues of individual freedom and interpersonal relationships. A bold, sensitive, and intricate collection, it is a timely reminder of the diversity of Pakistan's multi-ethnic society. *Storywallah: A Celebration of South Asian Fiction* (2004), edited by Shyam Selvadurai is a collection of twenty-six beautifully written stories from different parts of the South Asian diaspora; *Short Stories from Pakistan* (2003) edited by Intizar Husain and Asif Farrukhi, translated by M. Asaduddin, consists of short stories from Pakistan's many literatures and follows the development of the genre dealing with themes of migration, displacement, partition, people's loss of belongings – historical, material, and emotional, marking their marginality in the process of nation-formation. Daniyal Mueenuddin's *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* (2009) which is set in the Pakistani district of Punjab, portrays eight linked stories showcasing the lives of a rich, powerful feudal family and its employees.

The contribution of Anglophone writers to Pakistani literature has also been significant. Some of the writers living in the

west, mostly in Great Britain or the U.S deal with issues of identity, reclamation, reconciliation, and retelling of the past. Some of the well-known Anglophone writers are Bapsi Sidhwa (born in 1938), Akbar Ahmed (born in 1943), and Kamila Shamsie (born in 1973), Uzma Aslam Khan (born 1969), Mohsin Hamid (born 1971). Most of the Anglophone writers explore the Pakistani experience of migration from the widest perspective examining notions of homeland and identity; links and contrasts between resident Pakistanis and expatriates. The work of expatriate Talat Abbasi which has been frequently anthologized and used in American textbooks, was put together into a very fine collection, *Bitter Gourd and Other Stories* (2001). Her stories capture entire worlds, often thematizing the class divide in Pakistani society, the financial disparities which characterize it, the struggles and dilemmas of women trapped in oppressive marriages, and showcases that migration to the 'developed nations' is not always the answer to the problems of women in traditional societies. Instead, Moin Ashraf and Sabrina Saleem provide multicultural fare, which has to do with Pakistani/Asian lives in the USA and Canada. Recollection of past events, lost languages and cities, betrayal, exile, belonging, historical and personal displacements, and the power of family patriarchs are the substance of the bilingual, Karachi-born expatriate Aamer Hussein's stories in *This Other Salt* (1999), which established his position as a Pakistani/British short story writer. His first short story collection was *Mirror to the Sun* (1993). His third short story collection *Turquoise* (2002), published in London, vividly recreates the Karachi of the 1950s. In Pakistan, Hussein brought out a collection titled *Cactus Town and Other Stories* (2003). This collection includes one story from *Turquoise* and a substantial selection from his previous volumes. They include a quartet of creative memoirs that question notions of home, identity and belonging. In 2004 Imad Rahman came out with his debut story collection *I Dream of Microwaves: Stories* narrated by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, an out-of-work Pakistani American actor. Rahman navigates the world of marginal actors looking for work and love in quirky, unseemly places. Throughout, Rahman lampoons the American dream and myths perpetuated in literature and film.

Though few in number, Short fiction maintained a diversity and quality appearing in international anthologies. But a look at Pakistan's women writers contribution to literature gained momentum only after Partition. Previously, women were confined to the conventional roles assigned by the society. Pakistan's relationship with its women was rooted in a patriarchal feudal system. Traditionally dominated within cultures by patriarchal norms, they have been silenced and their retelling of the past by them not only validate memories of women's everyday experiences, but also provide resistance to dominant narratives and present new ways of conceiving stories, memories, and identities. The storied memories are not simply a picture of the past, but encode the present state as well. Works carried out by them have created new plots reflecting the present as it is constituted by the concentration of new realities that call for shifting frameworks of understanding just like the past events that continue to haunt memory.

Ever since Partition, Pakistani women have been trapped in a web of dependency and subordination where the patriarchs made them invisible from the state structures and decision-making bodies that could bring about structural changes. Their inclusion in governance structures is critical to bring about substantive changes in the development policies and programs that would lead to a shift in gender relations in the society. Their role in formal political bodies is negligible in Pakistan. But through struggles and concealments, they have unveiled the delicate thread of oppression challenging patriarchal norms of society that has taught them to be culturally silent. Women have contributed to the full range of literary production, from poetry to short stories to novels to journalism to personal-experience essays to scholarly articles, monographs, and books. Theirs is a literature born out of distinctive culture. Their subject matter is one of survival, triumph, and serenity in a hostile or indifferent majority world. Pakistani Women's writing has now become one of the sites of contestation for expression as they tried out their authority in terms simultaneously personal and public. The latest to find their place in short stories have all dealt with diverse themes and intellectual debates based on personal experiences and emotions.

Dealing with political, ethnic, or religious battles, women writers have attempted to recuperate voices of women who experienced the violence of Partition. Prominent Women writers on both sides of the divide like Attia Hosain's *Sunlight On a Broken Column* (1961), Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* (1991), set during partition, showcases constructions of gender, sexuality, class and religious identity. Tahira Naqvi's short collection *Attar of Roses* (1998), is a psychological tour to the gentler times, when people were assigned to a distinct position in the world and carried out their duties of that position with dignity and ease. The seeds of progressive thoughts are already present in the stories. The stories touch many aspects of the educated urban middle class life in Pakistan weaving around mundane issues. *Beyond the Cayenne Wall* (2005) is a collection of stories by Shaila Abdullah about Pakistani women struggling to find their individualities despite the barriers imposed by society, capturing the cultural chasm/collision of the East and the West. Beyond the wall lie women of or from Pakistan, who are eternally challenged by the looming traditional wall that separates the acceptable from the sinful. The country exhibited as a region of shifting boundaries allows the characters to dare and go beyond the wall that divides their traditions and the world outside. In these and several other stories, Abdullah weaves together a collection of events that spin around betrayals, confessions, misunderstandings, revenge, acceptance, and denial, shaken in with exotic spices and flavor, a potpourri for the senses. The only English-language anthology by Pakistani women published in the United States, *And the World Changed: Contemporary Stories by Pakistani Women* (2005) goes beyond the sensational headlines to reveal the stories of Pakistani women. The urge for the 'return' of women after Partition to their original home and issues concerning them as immigrants and refugees, travelers and explorers, seasoned authors and fresh voices, dominate the collection. All the twenty-five writers in this volume are as dynamic and diverse as their stories. *Kahani: Short stories by Pakistani Women* (2005) is a tribute to their emergence as authentic voices. In this collection of stories by Pakistan's finest women writers – including Jamila Hashmi, Mumtaz Shirin, and Fahmida Riaz - introduce us to the compelling cadences of

a rich literary culture. Focusing on the discursive constructions of nationalism, agency, subjectivity and history in their narrativization, these writers mirror the events of their convoluted history – wars with India, struggle and independence, the creation of Bangladesh, the ethnic conflicts in Karachi especially in intricate, innovative and courageous forms. Influenced both by the Indian and Islamic traditions of their milieu and by the shocking impact of modernity, they are distinguished above all by their artistic integrity and intellectual honesty.

The inclusion of English fiction along with translations from Pakistan's indigenous languages also indicated a healthy move away from a literary apartheid that had once led to the exclusion of Pakistani English literature from mainstream Pakistani writing. One notable feature of Pakistani literature is the adaptations of literary texts into films exercising as the perfect communicative medium. Hence, the cultural texts like literature and film both registered the impact of Partition in everyday life not recorded by official histories. Films challenge conventional representations of the event. The broader context of this issue is the public/private memory and the way in which communal memory challenges and changes national history. They give shape to the collective memory and survivor's oral testimonies being gathered today, through their stories about national history. It's hard to separate early national literary and film culture, simply because many films about partition are based on novels. Writers like Ismat Chughtai, Saadat Hasan Manto, and Rajinder Singh Bedi often used their film work to support their literary endeavors. Both in India and Pakistan, 'cinema' as a cultural production wields immense influence in the lives of the people. The Partition theme also inspired filmmakers on both sides of the divide. Some of the Partition based Indian films are *Dharamputra* (1961), *Garm Hava* (1973), *1947 Earth* (1998), *Train to Pakistan* (1998), *Hey Ram* (2000), *Gadar – Ek Prem Katha* (2001), and *Pinjar* (2003). However, Pakistani cinema did produce some significant works which include *Kartar Singh* (1959), *Khaak aur Khoon* (1979), *Tauba* (1964), *Behen Bhai* (1968) and *Pehli Nazar* (1977).

Considering the changing socio-political climate, filmmakers have accordingly drawn conclusions and form predictions for the future of Partition cinema. Almost all Partition films broadly belong to the genre of historical films as their referent. They strive hard to present on screen a visual version of national histories. In doing so, they engage in political categories such as nation, state, national identity and citizenship. Cultural productions such as films made some central contribution to contemporary intellectual and political debates. But mostly films depicting sensitive issues which result in demonstrations by political groups, who pretend to act as cultural police and often rationalize that “public order would be disrupted” and a film on Partition theme would be a fresh “incitement to violence and communal hate” (Mazumdar 313) have magnified the issue immensely. But considering the nature of the cataclysmic event, Partition has not received due attention in films.

Partition stories narrate histories of violence and terror validating memories of horrific experiences that seem too terrible to relate. These stories are retrieved not as a snapshot picture of the past, but instead based on how it was originally encoded into the mind/memory. Many scholars, writers, poets, intellectuals, photographers, filmmakers, journalists, reached out to the survivors to retrieve and preserve their oral testimonies. They have made exemplary pioneering efforts to retrace the long forgotten and unheard voices of people. Both countries are proud of and known for their heterogeneous populations. But the dichotomization within the Indians and Pakistanis which took place only after Partition has created an atmosphere of mutual hostility and suspicion plaguing their relationship to this day. The wedge between India and Pakistan cries for attention as it is perceived as a process with no clear beginning or end.

Overall, Pakistani English literature continues to be vital and varied. Pakistan's recent flourish of art, literature and music has been overshadowed by increasing violence and extremism. At present the Pakistani short story is moving towards new directions. Short stories in Pakistan suggest the cultural distinctiveness of the Muslim population weaving identity politics and Pakistani nationalism. With the partition

theme receding into the background, focus is shifted to questions of gendered violence, history, culture and modernity. Pakistani literature is assuming new forms with consequent changes in social, cultural and political issues as well. Whatever the case, short story genre has always stood significant and dynamic in its portrayal of realism, thereby becoming a metaphor for fragmented lives.

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Partitions: Relooking at History from the Present Location

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Abstract:

The issue of the Partition of the Indian subcontinent is and will always be an issue of national importance. The Indian Partition has raised many issues and questions about citizenship, national identity and the making of national and sub national mentalities. So even though it is studied often, it still demands from us a continuing search for many vital answers. This search leads us to a study of its attendant narratives in history and fiction. This paper attempts to look at a text of fiction as an important historical document in the context of the Indian partition. Thus *Partitions* by Amit Majmudar has been selected as it was published in 2011, separated by more than 60 years from the Partition. The location of the writer is on that of an outsider, but also bordering on that of an insider.

Key words: Partition, History and fiction, historical document, location, text and context.

The Indian freedom struggle resulted in the creation of two new nations with the departure of the British in August 1947. The Muslim majority provinces of Punjab and Bengal were divided, with West Punjab along with the Sindh, North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Baluchistan, and East Bengal forming West and East Pakistan respectively, and India in the middle and in the North East. This partition of 1947 resulted in a massive and violent transfer of population as Sikhs and Hindus moved into India and Muslims fled to

Pakistan. As a result, a million people were left dead, at least seventy five thousand women were raped, mutilated and abandoned, about twelve million people were displaced and rendered homeless, countless homes, properties, families were devastated as new national borders were drawn, ruthlessly wiping away the old existing cultural, ethnic and geographical entities.

The issue of the Partition of the Indian subcontinent is and will always be an issue of national importance. The Indian Partition is not to be seen only as an important and crucial moment in history. It is coupled with the birth of two nations and is also a permanent marker of 'self' and 'other' on a gigantic material and national scale. The Indian Partition has raised many issues and questions about citizenship, national identity and the making of national and sub national mentalities. So even though it is studied often, it still demands from us a continuing search for many vital answers. This search leads us to a study of its attendant narratives in history and fiction.

A plethora of literature in the form of novels, short stories, plays memoirs, essays, and biographies and in numerous other forms was created during and after the partition; and the process still continues. The genre of novel, being more expansive than short story provides the broader canvas for contemplation and also for presenting a particular ideology¹. The partition functions as a touchstone of our culture and polity. Thus every study and reading of the partition is learning about our changing social and political values. Only a few attempts have been made to incorporate the well-known poems, novels, fiction of partition into official school and college syllabi.

'In exploration of past, the aspects we choose to illuminate are determined by not only the present we live in, but the future we wish to work towards.' Hence looking at the partition from every temporal point is crucial. The interpretation of the past should direct us to contemporary relevant issues and thus provide important markers for the future. Most importantly, it is not a moment on the linear temporal scale. It is a major marker in the nation's psyche. Every study and

reading of the partition is learning about our changing social and political values.

In other words, a periodic study of partition literature in the contemporary framework is required. This study has attempted to mirror the trajectory of sociopolitical conditions in the context of the partition. Partition remains a major point of reference in the national history even today. Thus this study need not be repetitive or redundant. When the Indian partition is looked at from various vantage points temporally, it forms a critique of the changing socio-political conditions.

This could be all the more true in the case of fiction based on the partition. A study of past-partition fiction created at various points in time could reveal the trajectories of inclusion and exclusion, foregrounding and back grounding or focusing and diffusing. This could be a marker of the polity of changing times. To bring this point in sharper picture in relevance to today's socio-political conditions, this body of literature parallels the fiction related to terrorism, communal strife and riots which are very much a part of the reality today.

Literature has often been a blend of reality, imaginary, fantasy on one level and abstract and concrete, ideal and material, metaphysical and physical, transcendental and imminent, rational and irrational, conscious and unconscious on the other level. It is as much a political and empowering act as it is an aesthetic and philosophical one. This obviously leads to the conjecture that the socio-political material realities of particular times are knowingly/unknowingly reflected in the contemporary literature on conscious/unconscious level in an overt/subtle manner. This study focuses on the historical, social and political aspect of literature. It chooses this perspective as it agrees that writing is as much a political act as it is an aesthetic one. This fact is all the more prominent and foregrounded in the literature produced during the period of strife or that which is set in those times. Thus the novels on the partition try to depict the socio-cultural ethos

of a community in detail within a historically specific temporal framework.

Narratives give a lived reality based on experiential level that does not find a space in mainstream or traditional histories. The objectivity of historical truth is covered in the subjectivity of narratives. It becomes a part of 'lived reality'.

The partition of 1947 was a cataclysmic event in the life of a nation. As literature is the reflection of society and lived reality it was no wonder after the initial shock, the writers gave vent to this unmanageable grief and trauma through their writings. Writings of all types and genres poured in- novels, short stories, plays, poetry, memoirs, sketches, essays, letters, articles and other various forms. They were written primarily in Hindi, Urdu, English and Sindhi. The fiction produced during this period answered a range of needs ranging from the initial response, thawing of shock, outlet for grief, coming to terms and the healing process.

Partition fiction attempts to assimilate the enormity of the experience and presents the history of the lives and experiences of the common people who lived through partition. The trauma of partition still haunts the national psyche, thus the partition continues to engage the consciousness of the writers of the Indian subcontinent even today. This also reaffirms the fact that partition is an ongoing a- temporal process, expressed time and again through partition fiction.

Krishna Sobti, Rahi Masoom Reza, Intizar Husain and Mohan Rakesh, Qurratulain Hyder and Saadat Hasan Manto wrote some of the finest, thought provoking fiction on the partition. The landmarks of partition fiction include *Tamas*, *Train to Pakistan*, *Ice Candy Man*, *What the Body Remembers*, *Midnight's Children*, *The Shadow Lines*, *AurKitne Pakistan*, *Zindaginama*, *A Bend in the Ganges*, *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, *A Heart Divided* and the short stories by *Saadat Hasan Manto*.

'Partitions' by Amit Majmudar is written recently. Its temporal and spatial location is markedly different and hence the study of this text becomes important. It reflects the contemporary perspective of looking at the Indian Partition a cataclysmic event that is separated from present by more than 60 years. This paper attempts a study of 'Partitions' as spatial and temporal location of the texts is also an important parameter in an analytical study.

Thus *Partitions* has been selected as it was published in 2011, separated by more than 60 years from the Partition. The location of the writer is on that of an outsider, but also bordering on that of an insider. Amit Majmudar is a diagnostic radiologist and award-winning poet. He lives with his wife and twin sons in Columbus, Ohio. His poems have been published in International Journals. Partition, his first novel, has been published quite recently, in 2011 Thus the temporal and spatial location is far removed from the actual historical event of the Indian partition.

The location of the writer is on that of an outsider, but also bordering on that of an insider. Majmudar is conscious of his location, he is aware that neither he nor his parents had direct experience of the partition. Majmudar states that the influence on him was the Partition Literature. He especially mentions Urvashi Butalia's *The Other Side of Silence* and *Freedom at Midnight* by Collins and La Pierre. Majmudar feels that most partition texts 'describe the politics, not the people'. This is where the fiction comes in it fills in this gap as it deals more with people. Majmudar has a definite agenda. "To me, as a novelist, it's the people that matter".²

Majmudar's family – ancestry is connected to partition and pre partition days. His family is from Junagadh that was ruled by a Muslim Nawab in pre-partition days. Majmudar's ancestors has close relations with the Nawab, one of his ancestors had tutored the young princes. In recognition the Nawab had gifted land and the title 'Majmudar'; his ancestors earlier had a more Brahmin –sounding name 'Vaishnav',

meaning devotee of Vishnu. This Nawab chose to join Pakistan on Independence but over Pakistan's protests, Junagadh was annexed. To this day some maps of Pakistan insist on inking a green dot in in Gujarat, indicating that Junagadh is rightfully theirs. Due to this curious family history, Majmudar feels that his ancestry acquired a duality – he belongs to a Hindu family whose very name was chosen by a Muslim benefactor and whose home can be thought of as either Indian or Pakistani of both.

'Partition' is structured in six sections –

- 1) Connection
- 2) Departures
- 3) Dispersal
- 4) Convergence
- 5) Arrivals
- 6) Settlements.

The narrative has a significant narrative technique. Dr. Roshan Jaitly, the narrator is already dead before partition. He dies due to delicate heart condition. Here, he follows his twins – Keshav and Shankar, and their mother – Sonia as they are trying to flee to safety during partition. In an attempt to board the last train to Delhi, Shankar and Keshav are torn from their mother. They now embark on a terrifying journey to fulfill a difficult task – to unite with their mother and move to shelter, safely and Delhi. They are vulnerable, six years old twins. Furthermore Shankar is very weak and suffers from a weak heart condition since his birth. Keshav and Shankar spend a difficult time searching for their mother but it is futile. In the meanwhile they sail through many turbulent events, including one in which they are sold to a Muslim childless widow; they run away, facing the threat of conversion and new religious identity.

The other main characters are – Doctor Ibrahim Masud and Simran. Doctor Masud, unnerved by the attack on his clinic and threat

to his life, embark on a journey to safety. His timid personality envelopes a noble soul as he treats all the injured and sick people along the way. Masud struggles on his way to the new state of Pakistan.

Simran Kaur, a young Sikh girl, has a more dramatic escape. Her father and his brothers had planned honour death for all the women of the family as they are under threat of kidnapping, conversion and rape by the Muslim attackers. They plan to drug the women by giving opium in milk and then shoot them. Simran senses that something is wrong, throws the milk out of the window and bolts for the door. Her younger sister also tries to join her, and is killed by her father. Simran horrified by the violence, starts running, never once turning back. She is a devout Sikh and hence yearns for her refuge, a spiritual sanctuary at the temple of Amritsar. She is innocent and her idea of danger is limited only to a forced religious conversion. She cannot imagine anything beyond that. She plans to commit suicide if her religious identity is under threat.

“How difficult, she thinks, how impossible it is to kill yourself in time, before the bad things happen to you! Beside a blade or a pistol, nothing works quickly enough. Even a blade would have to be used correctly – across the throat; she had heard of people dying with their throats slit. The throat would work. But would she be able to do it, if she had to? The body is so careful to protect its heart with ribs, everything vital inside a fortress. You can't enter without setting off pain, and the pain weakening your arm”.³

The narrative traces the three journeys – of Simran, Masud and Shankar – Keshav. The common linking thread is that of the narrator who knows that fate is going to throw them together. The turmoil, violence and destruction continue. Simran is forcibly put in a truck by Qarim, Saif and Ayub. They have rented a truck to abduct girls and later sell them off. They have also hired the services of a prostitute Alisha alias Kusum to cajole and convince the girls. Simran tries to jump from the truck and run away. She is caught by Saif who is tempted

by her youth. He abandons the thought of selling her and tries to rape her. Simran attempts to run and is saved by Masud. In the meanwhile, Shankar – Keshav face threat to their life by a bunch of Hindu hooligan, who take them to be Muslim boys. They too run and meet Masud and Simran. They decide to stick to each other. The boys abandon the hope of reuniting with their mother after making a last attempt to look for her.

The last part of the novel reveals Sonia's whereabouts and dark secrets from the past tumble out: Sonia's physical relationship with Ghulam Sikri, the foreman, whose men had been working a few houses down from theirs. The relation continued even after the birth of the twins and stopped only after Dr. Roshan Jaitely fell ill and stayed at home. Sonia refused to meet her lover even after the death of her husband. It was as if a chapter was closed, which wasn't really. Sikri kept watch on a Sonia and hence knew of her departure. He followed her to the station and the idea of separating her from her children was conceived and he planned to keep her with him. He let the twins board the train and pulls her back as she is boarding the train.

Sikri keeps Sonia under lock for four days and weakens her spirit. She wants him to get back her sons at any cost. Instead he promises that he would give her new life, new sons, new religious identity and a new name. Then he rapes her, broken Sonia drowns herself in a well. But the death too doesn't come easily; she has to make space as the well is full of bodies.

“She believes her boys are dead and that she because of her sin has caused their deaths. She steps into the well. The splash she makes is small. There are other women in the well. Cold arms and cold hair stroke her scarred arms and chest. She is only neck deep. She lowers her face. She kicks to make room for herself. At last, the bodies under her shift and give, and she sinks a little, the part in her hair still visible above the water. It takes a few minutes. Bubbles rest on the surface. At last they break, and she is released. I follow her into the universe”.⁴

The novel concludes with a flashback where the narrator relives his own death.

As mentioned earlier, the study of 'Partitions' becomes important as it is located differently from other partition literature studied, spatially and temporally. The novel is strikingly different from other fiction in the following aspects:

- There is absolutely no reference to the politics of partition and freedom movement. The names of leaders, the facts, the important meetings, the events –all this is excluded. There is a very definite agenda to do away with 'why' and focus on 'how'. The state is entirely missing in the narrative, the people and their lives take precedence.
- As compared to the earlier partition fiction, the novel has few characters. There are only a handful of main characters with a couple of minor characters.
- The narrative technique of the novel is markedly different. The narrator is dead when the narrative opens. This gives him an easy flexibility and permeability across time and space, which he flaunts and uses to its maximum. The narrative jumps across time and space, and ends with a recounting of the narrator's death that occurs much before the narrative opens.
- The narrative is focused on the partition and its aftermath but there is a strong presence of a sub narrative of Dr. Jaitely's personal life. His marriage with Sonia shocks his family and he is disowned by them. He was a widower for eleven years, she was fifteen years old. Furthermore, Sonia had no origin – no family ancestry to claim for.

“That is part of why I love her, that quality of being found, of having no origin. Portuguese missionaries had discovered her sleeping naked in a furrow, her body strangely scarred no language on her tongue. Neither Muslim nor Hindu nor Sikh: some fourth natural creature sprung from the soil”.⁵

At the end Sonia's shameful past in the form of extra marital relationship with Ghulam Sikri is revealed.

These characteristic have a strong presence in the novel, many a times pushing the devastation of partition aside, if recedes in the background. It remains a family narrative as much it is a partition narrative.

- The religious identity and origins of the characters are mixed up, combined and tossed and turned with a forceful vigour. Sonia's origins are unknown, hence Shankar- Keshav are half upper caste Hindus and half of unknown origin. When their paths cross with their new family, again there is a mixed pattern of religious identities. Dr. Masud is a Muslim, Simran is Sikh.

It appears as if Majmudar wants to interrogate the fixedness of religious identity by using a mixed pattern.

- The fact of partition which divided a country into two resounds throughout the narrative with metaphorical connotations.

Keshav and Shankar – twins – stand for the two countries. The idea of parting crops up a number of times, for instance-

“.....two children embrace until parted by a wind”.⁶

“.....so his face remains divided one side clean-shaven, shadow on the other”.⁷

There are numerous such instances.

Majmudar points out how religion became the major marker of identity during partition and all other identities. The identity of individuals is decreed only by religion.

“It's taken the smell of smoke to prove to him he isn't Ibrahim Masud to anyone but himself now. His profession, two, means nothing. Muslim: that's suddenly the defining presence thing about him. The only detail, everything around it is effaced”.⁸

Thus the violence of partition was charted on the religious identity and boundaries. It assumed a different form depending on the ghettos of respective communities.

“.....He marveled how the violence respected borders, how the unspeakable in one place could be conversation in another. There was no partition, no check point or sign, but he had left, appreciably, the Muslim part of the city”.⁹

'Partitions', removed in time and space from the other partition literature is different from other Partition literature. The impact of partition is lessened, temporal and spatial distancing has lent certain objectivity in the entire rendering of events. The narrator's presence not as a physical entity but as a spirit signifies that the physical presence and reality of partition has receded in the distant part, only the ghosts or shadows of the memories linger on. The location also makes all the details that went into making of partition, redundant. So the politics of partition is completely swept aside, what remains – survives the passage of time and space is the partition violence and trauma – physical and mental. This definitely finds a place in the narrative.

The most striking difference in *Partitions* and other, earlier works on partition (*Tamas*, *Train to Pakistan*, *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, *Azadi*, *Ice- Candy Man* etc.) is the ending. *Partitions* clearly conclude on new beginnings while all the other mentioned novels are full of a sense of loss at the end. This fact points to a change in the way we are looking at the past, the trauma and grief is not forgotten, but a new ray of hope is also emerging. This is significant in today's socio-political context. As mentioned earlier, the way we look at the past indicate important markers for present and future. Thus the new emerging national identity spells hope and new beginnings.

Therefore *Partitions* is far removed from the partition in the sense that it is contemporary. Significantly this is reflected in the narrative. It is strikingly different from the other partition narratives.

Although the theme is the same the treatment is definitely different. The setting although temporally located in the time of the partition is more contemporary as compared to the other works studied. The tenor of the novel has subtle suggestions of looking back at an event far removed in time and space. The location of Amit Majmudar confirms this fact. Weaving a partition narrative in 1950s in Amritsar, Delhi or Lucknow is very different from writing it in Ohio in 2011. Thus an important central argument of this study is reaffirmed – **'Looking back at the past especially at a historically significant point from different temporal and spatial location would yield different insights as the perspectives would differ'**. The urgency would vary with time and the changing spatial location would reinterpret the vision. In other words, looking at the past is formed by the present and also provides important markers for the future. Looking at the past becomes a responsible activity firmly anchored in the present and future. History becomes contemporary and reinvents itself in the form of temporally and spatially changing narratives like the changing patterns of a kaleidoscope.

End notes

¹For this illumination, I am indebted to an informal talk that I was fortunate to have with Uma Chakravorty during lunch on the 1st March, 2011 at a National Seminar on “Addressing Gender in Research: Debates and Challenges” organized by the Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule Women Studies Centre, University of Pune.

²Amit. Majmudar, *Partitions* (Oxford: One World Publication, 2011) 213.

³(Majmudar 71)

⁴(Majmudar 209)

⁵(Majmudar 6)

⁶(Majmudar 19).

⁷(Majmudar 27)

⁸ (Majmudar.21)

⁹ (Majmudar53)

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Humanity versus Cruelty in *Train to Pakistan*

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Abstract:

Partition of India in 1947 into two separate states Pakistan and Hindustan has brought utter chaos and destruction to life on both the sides of the border. Freedom, which was to be celebrated with sweets, fun and frolic activities and cracking crackers like in Diwali, was actually celebrated with massacres and savage human behaviour. *Train to Pakistan*, which is considered to be the first novel on the theme of partition, realistically portrays the turbulent fate of the victimized people. It narrates the pathetic saga of individuals and communities caught in the swirl of this historical event. Partition entailed to the fleeing of Hindus and Sikhs from the newly formed boundary of Pakistan and vice-versa. Millions of people went homeless, jobless and penniless as they were uprooted from their land to move to a place which was never theirs. The situation became worse when these people were attacked and became victim of mass slaughter, rapes, loot and other beastly behaviour as they were caught in a communal riot as an aftermath of Partition.

Keywords: Partition, Khushwant Singh, Humanity, Cruelty.

Literature, as they say is the mirror of the society. It reflects what it sees happening around in the neighbourhood. Legends, folklores and history have always attracted writers and time and again they have woven their stories around historical events that have changed the whole destiny of races, classes and nations for that matter. Historical events such as World Wars, colonization, freedom struggles have attracted writers from various parts of the world. Partition of

India and Pakistan in 1947 was also one such event that has lured many storytellers to build their stories around the instance. The story may include the exploitation and suffering of the characters during the Partition or it can be the suffering of characters as the aftermath of Partition in terms of difficulties confronted by the refugees on both the sides of the border. The subject has been exploited by creative minds either in the form of literature or cinematic depiction of the event. The movies or television serial on the subject include *Gadar - Ek Prem Katha*, *Garam Hawa*, *Hey Ram!*, *Earth*, *Sardar*, *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag* and many more. Literature includes *A Bend in the Ganges* (1965, Manohar Malgonkar), *Ice Candy Man* (1988, Bapsi Sidhwa), *Midnight's Children* (1980, Salman Rushdie), *The Shadow Lines* (1988, Amitav Ghosh) etc. There are also literary works that have been later made into movies or TV serials including *Tamas* (a tele-serial based on the book by the same name by Bhishma Sahni), *Pinjar* (a movie based on a novel by Amrita Pritam), *Train to Pakistan* (a movie based on a novel by Khushwant Singh) and so on.

In august 1947, British and Indian politicians had decided on the creation of a new nation, Pakistan based on the fact that Hindus and Muslims are fundamentally incompatible. This entailed to the division of Indian subcontinent into two rivals. The British left India divided in two on the basis of religion- Pakistan, a Muslim state and India, the secular one. Partition, the largest transfer of population in history, forced an estimate of fifteen million people to go homeless and lead to an untimely death of around one million in the bargain.

Partition was a crucial event in the history of both the nations which led to brothers turning into foes. It had promised its people both political and religious freedom through liberation from British and through a separate state both for Hindus and Muslims where they can enjoy the sanctity of their religion without any fear or hindrance. However, the fact remains intact that this geographical divide has resulted into a drift in the heart of the people of both the communities of both the states. The Partition has brought displacement, rapes, murders and deaths of people from both the nations creating a rift between the Pakistanis and Hindustan is, sixty-six years hence, which is

The harmony among the people of the different castes entailed to the peaceful life led by the people and was not affected a tinge by the political events at the centre of the country. The villagers were in a way cut off from the rest of the country. A person asked Iqbal who was educated and came to the village as a social worker to spread awareness,

...tell us something. What is happening in the world? What is all this about Pakistan and Hindustan. We live in this little village and know nothing.

The lambardar part puts in, 'Babuji tell us, why did the english leave?' (50 51)

Iqbal realized the innocence of Mano Majrans. He felt that the situation was under control till then. However, it would not remain the same as and when the air of communalism will affect the village very soon as it had affected the whole nation especially when the village happened to be at the border. He was sent by his party to persuade it the potential victims of communal riots in the village to cease all the bloodshed as Mano Majra was a vital point of refugee movements and it was supposed that the trouble there would be disastrous. However, on reaching the village Iqbal saw that the people there are not at all affected by whatever was happening in the country and were living in perfect peace. He came there to impart them some knowledge over how communal riots should be stopped and let people move to the respective nations peacefully. However, Iqbal realized,

Independence meant little or nothing to these people. They did not even realize that it was a step forward and that all they needed to do was to take the next step and turn the make-believe political freedom into a real economic one. (51)

The fear of political and communal upheaval affecting Mano Majra negatively, came true with the arrival of the train full of corpses from Pakistan. The simple Mano Majrans were aghast and taken aback when they saw the inhuman massacre of a whole train full of bodies of innocent people including ladies and children. They could not believe themselves and tasted the air communal rights for the first time, however in the most brutal way.

Still, the way the villagers felt for each other did not change a bit. They were informed by the police that the Muslims of the village would have to leave Mano Majra to settle in Pakistan as Mano Majra happened to be a part of Hindustan. The villagers were simple enough to perceive that all their Muslim friends would leave for a refugee camp till the communal riots were over and would come back as and when the things happen to settle down. They then planned out that the Sikh friends of the Muslims would look after their property and cattle like their own until they come back.

The lambardar spoke: 'Yes, you are our brothers. As far as we are concerned, you and your children and your grandchildren can live here as long as you like. If anyone speaks rudely to you, your wives or your children, it will be us first and our wife and children before a single hair of your head is touched. But Chacha, we are so few and the strangers coming from Pakistan are coming in thousands. Who will be responsible for what they do?' (134)

But, they soon realized that things were not as easy as they thought them to be. They are much deeper than they could imagine. Finally, they were sure that once they were gone to Pakistan there will be no coming back and that they were seeing each other for the last time. They will have to leave their country, their belongings, their cattle, friends and all their possessions to settle in a totally strange place.

Their roots losing their grip over the native soil, men, women, and children on the move in search of a new home, a new harbor, a new identity, is a pathetic process of disintegration of human lives segregated by the decisions not their own. (Giridhar, 84-85)

The whole village went into a gush of dejection, nobody wanted anybody to leave the village, as they had always lived that far as closed knit families and it was tough for them to see them go and never appear again.

'What have we to do with Pakistan? We were born here. So were our ancestors. We have lived amongst you as brothers.' Imam Baksh broke down. Meet Singh clasped him in his

arms and began to sob. Several of the people started crying quietly and blowing their noses. (133)

However, such deep sense of brotherhood and respect for each other faded with the circumstances surrounded them in the evil face of the communal disharmony on both the sides of the border. A group of avengers appeared in the Gurudwara to instigate the people to act against their wrong doers, who have massacred Sikhs coming from Pakistan. They incited the innocent villagers to take actions as their own Guru had taken against evil. The innocent villagers were touched by his speech and the refugees among them vowed to avenge the people who were responsible for their ill fate. Under the influence of the instigating speech even some of the Mano Majrans forgot all the love and bonding they had been sharing with their Muslim co-villagers till then. The purpose of the group that came to form an army against the Muslim subjects was met. The young boy who was leading the group had created quite a furor in the group and people listened to him with wrapped open mouthed attention and anguished expression. He yelled,

Do you know how many train loads of dead Sikhs and Hindus have come over? Do you know of the massacres in Rawalpindi and Multan, Gujranwala and Sheikhpora? What are you doing about it? You just eat and sleep and you call yourselves Sikhs- the brave Sikhs! The martial class!' he added, raising both his arms to emphasize his sarcasm. He surveyed his audience with the bright eyes daring anyone to contradict him. People looked down somewhat ashamed of themselves. (156)

The Sikh refugees from Pakistan who were there in the crowd felt a sense of guilty for not being able to do anything in order to save the lives of the people of their own community. They felt ashamed and uncomfortable and decided to fight back. Under the able and inciting leadership of the young Sikh lad they planned to create the same terror through a massacre aiming at the train that was to go to Pakistan the next day. However, amidst all these heart rending massacres of humans by humans, the ray of hope in the form of people who had not succumbed to the circumstances, but had their faith on each other

intact did not fade completely. There were people who saved many others from different religious mind set by defying the gory crowd of their own community. People, who did not let their feet in goodness and love for humanity die, not only tried to save others from getting victimized by the schizophrenic mob but also sacrificed their own self for the noble cause.

Khushwant Singh has sketched characters who think on humanitarian grounds rather than getting swayed by the horrors of Partition. Meet Singh, the priest of the Gurdwara was one such simple man. He opined that the Muslims in India should not be punished for the crimes committed by Muslims of Pakistan, though he agrees that the guilty should be severely punished for their wild and inhuman behaviour.

Hukum Chand, the regional magistrate in the village was one character who was concerned that the air of communalism should not affect the simple peasant population of Mano Majra. He, being on a responsible post felt himself responsible to change the course of the way if anything negative happened. He was lusty, womanizer and a boozier, yet he was good at heart and did not approve of the killing of innocent people. He thus tried his level best to save the people from such heinous crimes. Amidst all this, he was still nurturing a ray of hope,

'It will not last forever. You see how things change. Within a week they will be back in Chundunnugger and the Sikhs and Muslims will be drinking water out of the same pitcher.' (165)

Albeit, he himself was aware that his statement was nothing more than a false hope. Yet he was shrewd and sagacious enough to do something about it. He ordered the sub inspector to release both Iqbal Singh and Juggat Singh from police custody quickly and ordered him to make arrangements for a tonga to ensure that they reach Mano Majra in time. He was expecting these two men to do something to change the course of the plot made by the anti Muslim group and thus changing the course of the destiny of those expected to board the train to Pakistan. He was a veteran in the art of diplomacy, something that his job required of him, and it paid off handsomely.

Iqbal, who was slightly effeminate, well educated, England returned atheist and a social worker who thought politically, was representing a social group and came to the village to spread awareness about the fact that nobody was going to be benefited from the Hindu-Muslim rift. It would only lead to venom against each other, wounds of which would not be healed in years to come.

He realized that the Mano Majrans were innocent and lived in perfect harmony and peace unlike people in other parts of the country. He was taken in by the police, however when he came out of the prison, he realized a change in the village. All the Muslims of the village had already left for the refugee camp to be taken to Pakistan from there. There was also a change in the form of a good number of refugees immigrated from Pakistan who had planned to avenge their wrongdoers. Iqbal's motives could be seen just as of anybody who wanted to earn a name in politics. When he came to know about the dangers in the village he only wanted to run away to the capital so that he could be safe. He thought little about his purpose of coming to the village. He started thinking on the ground that how he was going to present his stay in the village to the party back in Delhi that would make him a hero in the eyes of others. He felt,

...when people go about with guns and spears you can only talk back with guns and spears. If you cannot do that, then it is best to keep out of their way. (177)

However, going out of the Gurdwara and preaching people regarding their wrong intentions was what came to Iqbal's mind but on second thoughts he felt that his words would fall on a deaf ear to the agitated crowd, he would not be listened to and would be killed and no one would see his act of sacrifice. He thought it to be of no use to the society and even if he sacrificed his life in his effort to teach them, his act would go futile. Iqbal, who was thought to be capable of revolutionizing and possessing logical acumen, failed to take action when the time of taking serious action came.

Juggat Singh or Jugga, who again fell in the same category as Hukum Chand and Iqbal, who are concerned about the people

boarding on the train to Pakistan, is one of the main characters of the novel and is the man of good and bad character both. He is the son of a dacoit and was himself in the gang once, and is therefore named Jugga badmash by the police and the villagers alike. He is uncivil, barbarous; mercurial tempered and had police case over him, yet he had a soft corner to his personality as well. He loved Nooran and went out of his ways to see she was safe. Unlike Iqbal Singh who could have veered the direction of the crowd by lecturing them on ethical grounds but opted to stay out of it, Jugga was sure of his potential to save the train to Pakistan from turning into a carrier of corpses. He was sure that he would have to lose his life in the bargain; nevertheless he acted with full conviction on his instinct after he found out about the fiasco that was planned by the refugees and the gang of dacoits. Jugga knew what he was to do; he went to the Gurudwara to take the blessings of the Guru in order to get success in his venture, that is all. He did not need anybody's suggestions or advice on the matter. He was not the one to be influenced by any other's thought process. He was resolute that he himself would have to do something against Malli and his gang to save the train. He then plotted against their plan; he climbed the bridge and reached the top where the rope was tied. He stretched himself on the rope and slashed the rope. The leader of the gang fired at him. Though he was successful in making their plan go haywire, in the bargain he lost his life. Jugga sacrificed himself for the cause of greater human values- love, loyalty and humanity.

Unlike Iqbal he did not think that Nooran and the other fellow villagers would never come to know of his sacrifice in order to save their lives and that he would always be remembered as Jugga badmash by them even if they happen to remember him sometime somewhere in Pakistan.

Train to Pakistan thus ends in a note of hope, a ray of hope amidst gory events all over. The novel is a testimony to the fact that there are still greater human values that are valued by at least some of us. Khushwant Singh exudes that there is no categorical distinction of good or bad, and even the best of relationships built on the human

values of empathy and trust can be shattered to debris during trying times in the light of lesser human traits like selfishness, intolerance and hypocrisy. Khushwant Singh portrayed his utter positive approach towards life and human virtues through the novel.

The ultimate optimism of the novelist is shown in the end that shows the victory of virtue and love over vice and hatred even in this utter chaos. (Khatrī, 100)

Addendum : I was unable to make up my mind about which book on partition should I write about as my paper for the journal when I was to write one. I was thinking on these grounds when the next day I was shocked to hear about the sad demise of the literary giant Khushwant Singh. I then made up my mind to pen down my paper on this man of letters as a tribute to the veteran author.

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Time the Destroyer is Time the Preserver: The Representation of Partition in Anita Desai's *Clear Light of the Day*

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Abstract:

Partition violence has been represented in literature written in several languages such as Hindi, Urdu, Panjabi and English. The Urdu short story writers such as Saadat Hasan Manto and Ismat Chughtai as well as the Urdu poetry of Faiz Ahmad Faiz are a few examples of vernacular literary works that represent the brutality and savagery with which people were exploited and killed during Partition. Amrita Pritam's Punjabi poem "Ajj akhaan Waris Shah nu" (1948) and novel *Pinjar* (1950), Attia Hosain's English short stories "Phoenix Fled" and "After the Storm" (1953), and her novel *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961), Bhisham Sahni's Hindi novel *Tamas* (1974), Anita Desai's English novel *Clear Light of the Day* (1980), Bapsi Sidhwa's English novel *Cracking India* (1988), Shauna Singh Baldwin's English novel *What the Body Remembers* (2000), and Samina Ali's English novel *Madras on Rainy Days* (2004) are only a handful of examples from what we get a very rich and diverse collection of writing that addresses difficult questions associated with Partition. This Paper intends to show how Hyderabad was completely transformed and underwent significant cultural, linguistic, social, political, and economic changes during Partition in Anita Desai's novel *Clear Light of the Day*.

Key Words: Partition, Conflict, Exploitation, Discord, Violence, Horror.

In Anita Desai's novel *Clear Light of the Day* (1980), the character named Raja befriends a Hyderabad Muslim family that later flees to Hyderabad from its house in Old Delhi during the turmoil of Partition. About the theme of this novel, Anita Desai says:

My novel is set in old Delhi and records the tremendous changes that a Hindu family goes through since 1947. Basically, my pre-occupation was with recording the passage of time. I was trying to write a four dimensional piece on how a family's life moves backwards and forwards in a period of time. My novel is about time as a destroyer, as a preserver, and about what the bondage of time does to people. I have tried to tunnel under the mundane surface of domesticity. (Sunil Sethi, 142)

The novel is divided into four parts. Part 1 and IV are intermixed with the tormenting memories of the past of Bim and Tara. Part II and III deal with the partition of India. It revolves around two brothers and two sisters in a house in Old Delhi. The childhood intimacy of the four children – Tara, Bim, Raja and Baba is gradually lost as they grow older and become aware of their dreams and aspirations.

In part one of the novel, Desai described elaborately the cultural decadence of Old Delhi through the family life of Mishras. When Tara comes to Old Delhi with her husband Bakul after a long gap for attending the wedding of Raja's daughter Noyan, they find the house unchanged. The old monotony is still there. Bim explains to Tara the boredom and monotony in Delhi:

That is the risk of coming to Old Delhi. Old Delhi does not change. It only decays. My students tell me it is a great cemetery... every house is a tomb. Nothing but sleeping graves. Now New Delhi, they say is different. That is where things happen. The way they describe it, it sounds like a nest of fleas. So much happens there, it must be a jumping place. I never go. Baba never goes. And, here, here nothing

happens at all. Whatever happened, happened long ago.(5)

By this explanation Tara is not convinced, rather she resents at this statement of facts in which her family lived. Because of her deep obsession with childhood, Tara does not comprehend the passage of time. She does not feel how time changes, distorts or destroys various things in human life. Later on she is shocked to find changed relationship and an economic way of living in her old family. She is surprised to see Bim's attitude towards Raja:

Enclosed world of love and admiration in which Bim and Raja moved, watching them, sucking her finger.... Now here was Bim, cruelly and wilfully smashing up that charmed world with her cynicism, her criticism. She stood dismayed. (26)

Tara expressed her astonishment at the changed relationship between Bim and Raja: "I wouldn't ever have believed-no one would ever have believed that you and Raja who were so close could be against each other ever. It is just unbelievable." (28-29) Now Tara realizes how time changes everything.

The partition of India and Pakistan creates a crack in their familial ties. The Partition brought barriers between people who had lived together for centuries in an atmosphere of mutual social and cultural understanding. It disintegrated their family. Tara, Bim and Raja face severe identity crisis during the turmoil of partition. They are unable to relate their present to the past. Santosh Gupta observes:

The period that lies in between – the growing consciousness and search for individuality of adolescence – fails to provide a continuity from the early period of childhood to the later stage of adulthood, causing deep psychological trauma and stress. (The Fiction of Anita Desai: 22)

Part second of the novel deals with the life in Delhi during the

partition riots of 1947. Desai in an interview with Sunil Sethi describes her personal experience: "I was ten at the time

Of partition and profoundly affected by it, so much in our life suddenly changed character."

The opening lines of part two are: "The city was in flames that summer, every night fires lit up the horizon beyond the city walls so that the sky was luridly tinted with festive flames of orange and pink." (44) The murder of Mahatma Gandhi is also referred to in part ii as the outcome of the partition.

Raja is excited to receive a letter from the Hyder Ali informing him that they are:

[i]n Hyderabad – quite safe. In Hyder Ali Sahib's home – his mother lives there, and his sister. They're all safe. He says there is no trouble in Hyderabad. They are in hiding, but they are safe and well, and they even found a friend to post this letter to me ... He even says Benazir sends her best wishes. (115)

Hyder Ali's letter shows the fact that the family is in hiding in spite of their being "no trouble in Hyderabad." during Partition. Indeed, Raja uses the word "safe" thrice, and very emphatically. Hyder Ali family were worried about their political, social, and economic futures amidst all the political upheaval around them. it is possible to speculate that what Raja knows about Hyderabad is what the average Delhiite knew and believed about Hyderabad at the time. However, Desai too is culpable, in terms of her careless construction of a "safe" Hyderabad for the Hyder Ali family to flee to, a representation that becomes part of the erasure by Indian literature and history of Hyderabad's Partition history.

Out of all the characters in *Clear Light of Day*, Raja is the one through whom we receive the most vocal criticism of communalist politics. An aspiring Urdu poet who refuses to join a group of

communalist students in Hindu College that targets Muslims in Delhi during Partition. Raja marries a Muslim woman, Hyder Ali's daughter Benazir. His marriage is a radical act of secularism at a time when there had been unprecedented violence between Hindus and Muslims. In this paper, I will focus on Benazir whose "absent presence" in the text encodes Desai's patriarchal silencing of the experiences of Hyderabad Muslim women during the upheaval of Partition. Her voice is represented by other characters in the novel.

Raja's irresponsible departure from Old Delhi leaves Bim alone to take care of Aunt Mira and Baba on a small income. Consequently Bim's terrible anger towards Benazir is represented in the context of anger at Raja's betrayal. The text dwells repeatedly upon on the predicament of Bim who assumes the role of Baba's caregiver and looks after the family business. Even Bim rejects Dr. Biswas' offer of marriage and prefers to spend a life as a single working woman. Arun Mukherjee concludes: "(b)y creating a heroine who wants autonomy rather than domestic bliss, and having her turn down the Bengali doctor, Desai creates a new script for Indian women at the same time that she mocks the earlier ones" (200)

While Desai has designed a new script for a certain section of Indian women, it is clear that women like Benazir remain silenced. As a young Muslim girl fleeing from Delhi surrounded by the raging fires of Partition, Benazir exemplifies women who were at the receiving end of Partition violence.

Boosted by Hyder Ali's encouragement and his own fertile imagination, Raja "cultivates a self-identity in Urdu" and decides to become an Urdu scholar. Desai's representation of Raja as an eager Urdu student during the time of Partition marks her concern about the fact that Urdu language, literature, and culture were also casualties of Partition politics and violence. It is because of the inextricable connection between Urdu and Muslims, and Hindi and Hindus. As a result of the process of communalization during Partition Raja is

not yet bridged despite perennial endeavours by the government. Partition is the goriest event in the Indian history with millions of people getting homeless, jobless, penniless and even family less due to the massacre that they were thrust into by the few who benefited from these riots in their political motives. Various novelists were over and over again lured by the theme of Partition. They have not only depicted the heart rending tale of the aftermath of Partition but also have tried to adhere to its historical significance.

The Partition of India is said to be the most bloody communal divide in the Indian subcontinent in which the people were brutally ripped apart. The communal riots that followed devoured everything that supports life sustaining principles. People acted as wild beasts killing each other like vegetables devoid of any feelings. Millions of girls were raped, mass slaughter was a common scene that could be seen in every others street and *mohalla*, leading to affright and panic all around.

Train to Pakistan narrates the hapless tale of individuals and communities who became the victim of the swirl of communal rights that preceded and followed the Partition of India under the British rule. During Partition thousands of people fled from both the sides as an outcome of the trauma that followed the division of India in two political boundaries. The natives, that took shelter on both the sides of the border what uprooted to seek refuge and security in their said nation, India for the Hindus and Sikhs and Pakistan for the Muslims. It would really be a penetrating trauma of leaving ones possessions back where they belonged to, to move to a totally unknown destination. The fear, trauma, terror, misery and anguish faced by the people cannot be imagined.

Born in Hadali (now in Pakistan), Khushwant Singh himself was the victim of Partition and has experienced the adversities of the great divide in real life. *Train to Pakistan* happens to be his first novel published in 1956. Partition was an event that disillusioned the author from his views that India and its people are peace loving. His notion about India as a secular nation was shattered and he wrote this novel to exude his mental agony and inner conflict. He asserts,

The beliefs that I had cherished all my life were shattered. I had believed in the innate goodness of the common man. The division of India had been accompanied by the most savage massacres known in the history of the country. I had believed that we Indian were peace-loving and non-violent, that we were more concerned with the matters of spirit. After the experience of the autumn of 1947, I could no longer subscribe to these views. I became an angry middle-aged man.

Though, Partition moved the whole nation which had become a burning pyre for days just before and after the division, yet this situation was more grave in the towns and villages that were near or on the border. Mano Majra was one such village, situated at the bank of river Satluj and on the border of the two newly divided nations. Albeit, the village was dominated by the Sikh community, it also had, as its inhabitants, the Hindus and Muslims. Mano Majra was a small village with around seventy families that acted as a microcosm representing India.

Mano Majra was in a way secluded from the outer world as the people in the village were little aware of the situation prevailing in the whole nation. Most of the time one could see the villagers indulged in conversation that portrayed their unawareness of the major happenings in the capital or other parts of the world outside their village. Mano Majrans were simple and loving people with small hopes and aspirations. All the communities the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs in the village lived in proper harmony and brotherhood. They had a sense of respect for each other and lived like brothers. The only threat they lived under, until Partition was that of dacoits. Mono Majrans were thus leading a happy, contented and peaceful life until a train full of corpses arrived one day to the village as an aftermath of the great divide.

The railway station at Mano Majra held a great significance for its inhabitants. Majority of their activities were guided by the arrival and departures of the trains. The priests in the village knew that this was the time for prayer when the morning mail train to Lahore passed by the station. The villagers knew it was time for afternoon siesta when the midday express passed by and so on.

prevented by his father from pursuing Urdu at Delhi's Jamia Millia Islamia. It is also for these same reasons that Raja's sisters cannot read Urdu because Hindi has replaced Urdu in North Indian schools. Although Bim finds the superficiality of Raja's poetic and political ideals associated with the Hyder Ali family, there is no attempt to remedy the absence of Hyderabad perspective on partition in the text. Even his refuge in the aesthetic of Romanticism during partition is criticised by all.

Partition is thus remembered as a private history of the Das family. On a couple of occasions in *Clear Light of Day*, the characters do consciously appreciate and discuss the life-changing impact Partition had on their lives. Desai successfully constructs the concept of a private history of Partition by positing narrative modes like flashback, perspective, stream-of-consciousness, point of view, and associative thought processes that connect memories with meaningful symbols. Through the conversation of Bim and Tara, the harsh realities of Partition are completely elided. Bim's attitude changes and she is repentant of her negative thinking towards Raja. Her misconception disappears in the "clear light of day". She is also reminded of Eliot's line : Time the destroyer is time the preserver. A novel in four parts, having four leading characters, *Clear Light of Day* is a four dimensional novel. This is the only Desai novel in which the domestic drama of absurdity is harmoniously juxtaposed against the backdrop of the Partition of the country. Partition recalled as an

intimate portrait of familial history allows Desai to counter the panoptic view of Indian history filled with generalizations and often inaccuracies. She centres on a woman who stays in Old Delhi, a woman who is the most connected physically and psychologically to a family's past. It is within the geography of Bim's private space, her own house, that time is recorded and her own memories, or history, relived. (Thaggert 93)

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Psychological Traumas in *Difficult Daughters*

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Abstract:

Modern Indian fiction has given vent to Indian feminine sensibility; their increasing awareness, unyielding determination to combat men's hypocrisy and search for self-fulfillment. It has obtained its sustenance from various socio-political events like Indian freedom movement, independence, right to vote, spread of education, employment opportunities and legal developments for the protection of women's rights etc. In this period Manju Kapur, unquestionably in her debut novel entitled *Difficult Daughters* has left an indelible imprint among the modern female writers in English, as she truthfully mirrors the socio-political scenario of the era. Manju Kapur gives a tribute to country's celebration of fifty years of independence as her protagonist, Virmati projected as a faction to impugn the set norms and taboos impose on women in the male dominated Indian society. This paper aims at tracing this kind of metamorphosis, which Manju Kapur has successfully presented by drawing a parallel between Virmati's struggle for self-liberation and the freedom movement that was prevalent during that period.

Key Words: Feminine, Mirrors, Metamorphosis, Movement.

The catastrophic event of Partition deeply affected the social, political, economic and cultural lives of millions of people. In the words of Mushirul Hasan (2005):

No other country in the twentieth century has seen two such contrary movements taking place at the same time. If one was a

popular nationalist movement, unique in the annals of world history for ousting the colonizers through non-violent means, the other, in its underbelly, was the counter movement of Partition, marked by violence, cruelty, bloodshed, displacement and massacres.

The twentieth century was a period of incredible upheaval and change both in social organization and in the philosophical themes, which emerged out of it. While Europe saw the consequences of the Industrial Revolution, the Great War, the Great Depression and the violence of the Second World War, India was to face the struggle for independence and the holocaust that followed in the wake of the division of the country in 1947. The turbulent days that preceded and followed the partition of British India were loaded with political hatred and violence, with passions, which had seized people in a communal rage. In the words of Manohar Malgaonkar, "The entire land was being splattered by the blood of its citizens, blistered and disfigured with the fires of religious hatred, its roads gutted with enough dead bodies to satisfy the ghouls of a major war."

Manju Kapur's novel *Difficult Daughters* reflects India's struggle for Independence, communal tumult carnage and slaughter of partition like the novel of Khushwant Singh's 'Train to Pakistan', Raja Rao's 'Kanthapura', Chaman Nahal's 'Azadi' etc, *Difficult Daughter* is written during the time period of partition of 1947, The communal riots wrath in Bengal and Punjab. The main protagonist of this novel Virmati's brother named Gopi Nath describes the ken of a railway train from Pakistan was laden with hemorrhage corpses and senseless killing.

"A few days after the Assembly was dissolved, I had to go to the station. I will never forget the sight of that train. I threw up on the platform. It was taken straight to the shed to be washed. There was blood everywhere; dried and crusted, still oozing from the doorways, arms and legs hanging out, windows smashed." (268). This research paper is an attempt to study on how Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters* imposes on her fiction a shape, which gives expression to her own view of a changing world.

Joya Chakravarty says, "Manju Kapur had initially named her first novel "Partition" but changed it on the suggestion of her publisher". In an interview with *rediff.com*—an Indian news magazine; she tells that the novel took five years to complete; three years for fieldwork in Amritsar and Lahore and two years in writing the draft and getting it published.

Difficult Daughters narrated in the flashback technique. Ida, daughter of Virmati narrates the entire events through her eyes. It begins with the third generation daughter Ida's quest for her mother's roots- a quest which will take her to a world before 1947 and before India had witnessed the horror of partition. However, it is also a world in which the seeds of change sown. For Ida, recently divorced and childless, this search is essential to a quest for her own selfhood and identity. To resolve the conflicts within her, best reflected in the opening sentence of the novel, she nursed a grudge against her mother and ferociously states, "The one thing I had wanted was not to be like my mother," Ida, who failed to understand her mother all her life. Realization dawned only after her mother's death engulfing her into an abyss of guilt and shame. Picking up the fragments of memory, she looks back and begins to look at her mother's life in a newer light. Her journey into the past takes her to Amritsar, "a place which I associated with my mother."

With the help of aunts and uncles, Ida relives her mother's life. Virmati born in a wealthy and distinguished family, residing in Lahore before independence, comes and settles in Amritsar after independence. Virmati is the eldest of a long train of children that her mother produces at the rate of one a year. Her childhood is lost in being a young mother to her siblings as her own mother is pregnant most of the time. Virmati's mother, Kasturi is educated too. Though Kasturi and other family members believe in value of education for girls, they also opine that girls must be married off at the completion of necessary education. Girls are not encouraged for higher studies and selecting a career or a life partner for themselves. The novel traces Virmati's revolt against the family traditions. The reason for her desire

to study attributed to her cousin Shakuntala's influence. Shakuntala, is an M.Sc. in Chemistry and works at Lahore College. She is strong willed and career-oriented. She is self-assured and cherishes the idea of being something other than wife. In an intimate conversation, she tells Virmati: "Here we are fighting for the freedom of the nation, but women are still supposed to marry and nothing else." (14) Shakuntala always inspires Virmati, the protagonist, to think above the interest, get involved, and fight for social and national cause. She says "Times are changing, and women are moving out of the house, so why not you?" (16) Virmati too often marvels at the ways of Shakuntala, her cousin and all appreciation for her. When Virmati comes to know that Shakuntala reads papers, attend seminars and travels with her friends, Virmati replies, "I want to be like you, Pehnji". We find the novelist speaking the protagonist's mind in the very ensuing paragraph: 'It was useless looking answers inside the home. One had to look outside. To education, freedom and the bright lights of Lahore colleges.' (17)

These burning new ideas and thoughts churning in Virmati's mind coincide with a break in the generations' old joint family. Virmati's grandfather forced to pension off his older son and the family shift residence from the old ancestral house in the heart of the city to a new one with separate apartments. "What he thought was a final solution, finally turned out to be the beginning of a long chain of partitions." (25)

Manju Kapur gives clue about partition through Swarnalata Sondhi:

"When they received the worried, secret warning from a Muslim friend they too hastily departed. They had seen too much arson, looting, and people drunk with the lust of killing to feel exceptions. As it was, they were hanging on by a long emotional thread that needed but one direct threat to snap." (136)

The "education verses marriage" argument is reiterated many times in the novel, but with Virmati getting permission to study further, one is forced to accept that the changing times brought more

and better educational opportunities for women. Virmati torn between family loyalty, her love for the professor, which is a social aberration, and her desire to be educated and independent. Virmati went to Lahore to continue her studies. In Lahore, through her roommate Swarnalata, Virmati is exposed to the major events preceding the partition of India in 1947- debating societies, meetings of the Muslim League and Indian National Congress, Gandhian non-cooperation and communal tension which was on increase during the forties. Swarnalata who first makes Virmati realize that people have strong religious identities. Virmati finds Swarnalata committed and articulate. When Ida meets Swarnalata to find her more about her mother, the old woman relives the "division that had ploughed furrows of blood through her generation... had always co-existed. Why not now?" (124)

Virmati attends the Punjab Women's student Conference with Swarnalata. Here she sees, hears and listens to women who exude confidence and strength. They explain the meaning of the flag, the importance of freedom for the development of the human spirit, impact of war, human rights, strikes, academic freedom, rural upliftment, language etc. She finds herself in adequate and memories of the stolen moments she shared with the professor do not allow her to concentrate on the issues spoken about. Swarnalata tries to make Virmati realize how she is wasting her life on a love, which cannot be trusted. "Marriage is not the only thing in life, Viru. The war, the Satyagrah movement- because of these things women is coming out of their houses- taking jobs, fighting, and going to jail- wake up from your stale dream." (139)

Finally, decided on a career, she married to professor, who hurriedly contacted and persuaded her to marry him. The professor's family hated her; a war- like atmosphere prevails in the house, with Virmati belonging to one faction. Towards the end of the novel, Kapur allows the shadow of partition to loom large over the lives of Virmati and the Professor. The British Empire "fights for survival," while the people are buried under the pressures of rising prices, shortages, black

marketing and communal tension. Suraj Prakash, Virmati's father, caught in a riot and murdered by a Muslim. Just as India undergoes a huge change, Virmati too undergoes a change. With the passage of time, through suffering and endurance Virmati finds dignity and self-respect. She flights the humiliation meted out to her by the professor's first wife and mother by going back to Lahore and to studies. She now enrolls herself for a post-graduate degree in philosophy.

As Virmati moves towards achieving a sense of identity, the call for "Lal Quila tor do" and "Azad fauj chor do" becomes louder. The atmosphere of revolt, courage and resistance around her infuses Virmati with confidence and determination. "I have tried adjustment and compromise, now I will try non-cooperation." (239) There is unrest all over the country by 1946. It is a year of meetings, hearings, deputations and missions, to resolve the issue of Indian Independence. The idea of Pakistan becomes more and more real. Kapur gives us vivid descriptions of the bloodshed and hate that the partition brings. "People die- roasted, quartered, chopped, mutilated, turning meat on a spit- are raped and converted in rampages gone mad and leave a legacy of thousands of tales of sorrow, thousands more episodes shrouded in silence." (243)

Large-scale killings start on a province – wide scale by March 1947. In the novel different characters like Kailashnath, Gopinath and Kanhiya Lal relive for Ida the hell that they underwent during those terrible months. India's birth into a free nation proves to be difficult and bloody one.

The smell of fear, distrust and hatred is in all over the places. Kapur brings out the psychological traumas that people underwent during those trying days through Kailashnath's experience. With a few Lakhs dead, the dispossessed could not stop talking of all that they had lost- their houses, animals and furnishings. Ironically, in this period of unrest and the scourge of death, which covered the entire city, Virmati finds the "space" and peace for which she had been carving. Alone with the professor at the Amritsar house, she feels drained but free. Here she conceived. Virmati's mother Kasturi finally sheds the burden

of hatred and anger, which she had carried for many years and forgives Virmati. Virmati now shifts to her mother's house where the past forgotten and all gathered to feed the scores of people who, on fleeing from Pakistan, pass through Amritsar. The house made safe by raised boundary walls and barbed wires. *Roti* and *Dal* simple meal served to the people steaming in. "Thousands marched in footstone, weary, raped, mutilated, confused and lost." The whole city became an "open house." If there was hatred and revenge, then there was also the spirit of generosity, understanding and fellow feeling. "Overnight we had become a border city; a destination much longed for and reached with relief. Walking, some in ones and twos, some in small groups.... We took them all." (250)

The majority of the people streaming in moved further into "the new India," searching for a place to settle down and get on with their lives. Many settle on in Amritsar, anxiously waiting for some news of those left behind or lost during the journey. Some, out of despair, just wanted to kill "anyone who was not their own." With the irrevocable cries of pain and separation around her, Virmati too breaks away from her past. She sweeps everything out of the cupboards and donates large bundles to the refugee camps. It symbolically implies her ability to free herself from the feelings of guilt, hesitation and self-doubt, which had held her in their grip until then. Even the professor, in an attempt to put the horrors of partition behind him, refuses to name his newborn child Bharati, as suggested by Virmati, and decides to name her Ida. For him, "it means a new slate, a blank beginning." Too many expectations from Ida, the attempt to make her a model daughter result in contradictions and conflicts. Ida grows up struggling to be herself, something that she never allowed to do. The novel ends where it had begun- with Virmati's death. Now we see a new Ida determined to put the past behind her and live her life the way she wants to.

Difficult Daughters successfully recreates India's painful passage in to a new nation and a new world. This birth interwoven with Virmati's story of rebellion Virmati survives and so does India. We find

in Kapur's treatment a radical retelling, which emphasizes the strength and endurance, which are essential for survival in a violent world. The novelist uses the backdrop of partition to build a story of absorbing passion but it is a partition in many ways. The social changes of the time also alter something deep inside the individual and this Kapur tries to express. Her novel touches myriad issues like revolt against deep rooted family tradition, the search for selfhood, woman's rights, marriage and the battle for independence at both fronts-personal and national. Along with suffering are mingled hope and its renewal. By the end of the novel, when we have gone through the horror of partition, there is feeling of upliftment. Ironically, Virmati and the professor find some semblance of peace after the turbulent events of 1947. Ida too in reliving those years has exorcized her ghosts and ready to begin life afresh. The novel depicts the triumph of the spirit, the longing to beat the odds, to conquer weakness and to move forward. What it seems to assert is that the forces of love and life are greater and most powerful than those of hatred and death.

Difficult Daughters is an odor, breathed, taste to savoured and emotion to be felt. The book works on two levels. On one level, it is India's fight for freedom against the British Raj and on the other; it deals with Virmati's conflict to live life on her own terms and conditions. As readers, we begin to feel sorry for Virmati even through her forbidden love affair; India's victory mirrored through Virmati's life. No doubt India attained freedom but at the cost of partition and communal hatred. Virmati was victorious in breaking the age-old manacles of a country, which is tradition, bound but at the cost of mental, torture and the tag of being the 'other'. Both the victories are hollow. Today as a country or as individuals we may have our freedom, but our souls still locked up in the limits of some clear-cut construct. There is an ingredient of fear, which looms large over our lives. Every moment and the future stand to be unpredictable. An outstanding presentation by Manju Kapur, who leaves no stone unturned in presenting human desires and the urge to lead a self-designed life very often creates an irrevocable line of pain which even time cannot spoil.

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Partition and Cinema: *the aesthetic link.*

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Abstract:

Technology has made films as an art form very effective, but the challenge still remains in sustaining the aesthetic pleasure through this medium. Films provide a new context to the issue of partition. This paper discusses the different premise of films made on the issue of partition and how adaptations and media have affected the mind sets of the audience through this genre. Films leave an everlasting impression and play a major role in shaping the popular mindset of the people of both Pakistan and India. Hindi films are also very popular in Pakistan. The film industries of both India and Pakistan abound with people who are Partition victims, in varied capacities of direction to acting. Both film industries of the country were affected after partition and were reestablished in Bombay and Lahore.

Keywords: Partition, Aesthetics, Media, Pinjar, Hindu-Muslim

Aesthetics has been an inseparable part of the Fine Arts – literature, painting, sculpture, music and architecture but above all, it forms an inseparable part of cinema, which is regarded as the most expressive medium. It is now regarded as the most expressive medium of external reality of our present times. Technology has made this art form very effective, but the challenge still remains in sustaining the aesthetic pleasure through this medium. When compared to other forms of narratives like novel, which is regarded as the most prominent

form of “cultural signification”, since the 19th century, aesthetic pleasure through cinema reaches a new high. This difference can be understood through a value system or cultural signifiers. While defining the term, 'Cultural signification', it means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. It is a mode of value system developed by Swiss Linguist Count Ferdinand de Saussure who points out that all meanings are arbitrarily added to some verbal signifiers.

In this premise, if we focus on the word 'partition', which means 'division' it can denote differently for Hindus and Muslims, who actually faced this phenomena. Therefore words or terms like these threat the limit of its own meaning. Partition means formation of Muslim Pakistan and also breaking of Hindu India and vice versa. Narration in modernism has been regarded as the greatest site for attention, as is proved in the popularity of the novel. Post structuralists believe that all Western philosophy is loge centric. This undermines phonocentrism, which in contrast to the novel is found in the genre of 'films'. The 'sound image' and 'concept image' of the sign used in dialogues limits the imagination of the viewer to the specific area on which the film revolves. When films are made from adaptations, novels are re-written as scripts, providing a new context (1991).

John Harrington in his book *Film And/Is Art* estimates that a third of all films ever made have been adapted from novels. (1977:117) The major differentiation between film and book is that visual images stimulate the perception directly, while the written word can do this only indirectly, comparatively film is a more sensory experience. The Partition of India is a subject taken up by many film makers to express brutalities, violence and the breakdown of the apparatus of law and order. The scale and nature of violence which has been depicted through films has brought in greater deal of attention to the event, than any other genre. Historians have rather reluctantly expressed the gravity, therefore actual portrayal has been left upon

creative writers and filmmakers. Gayaendra Pandey explains, "Because the historian's craft has ever been particularly comfortable with such matters, the horror of Partition, the anguish and sorrow, the pain and brutality of the 'riots' has been left almost entirely to creative writers and film makers." (1994:134)

Media also plays an important role in influencing the thought process and ideologies of residents on both side of India and Pakistan. It serves as an alternate channel of dialogue and communication through which nations and populations perceive each other, but the most effective medium is the genre of films. Films leave an everlasting impression and play a major role in shaping the popular mindset of the people of both Pakistan and India. Hindi films are also very popular in Pakistan. The film industries of both India and Pakistan abound with people who are Partition victims, in varied capacities of direction to acting. Both film industries of the country were affected after partition and were reestablished in Bombay and Lahore. Legendary film personality like Ghulam Mohammed, Noor Jehan, and Zia Sarhadi settled in Pakistan. While some prominent filmmakers like Govind Nihlani, B.R. Chopra, Yash Chopra and Gulzar travelled to India from what had become Pakistan. The famous actor Bhisham Sahani, who had written a famous Hindi novel 'Tamas' which was also made into TV serial and a film, is entirely based on partition. Sahani belonged to Rawalpindi in Pakistan but had to migrate to Indian Punjab.

Ian Talbot in his well acclaimed book on Partition notes, "that even in secular India the Muslim actors felt apprehensive of the audiences acceptance and therefore functioned with Hindu names. He cites the example of Dilip Kumar who adapted this screen name and even refused to perform roles of Muslim characters with the exception of Mughal-e-Azam as the Secularism portrayed in the film matched the Nehruvian through of those times." (2000:58) The chronological sequence of films on partition goes way back from the

silent movie 'Bhakt Vidur' (1921), and then Nemai Ghosh's 'Chinnamul' (1950), but the focus on the issue of partition actually began with Yash Chopra's 'Dharmputra', (1961) which became the first movie that addressed the communal crisis as well as partition as a social and political reality. The partition caravans and trains added to the impact generated, the technique used by film makers held enormous melodramatic potential which was gradually capitalized by filmmakers.

Then followed M.S. Sathy's 'Garam Hawa' (1977) and Govind Nihlani's television serial 'Tamas' (1989). The next phase came with the demolition of Babri Masjid followed by Bombay riots, the subjects which were considered a taboo for nearly 38 years came again in the limelight, with the rise of Hindutva, racial and communal sentiments and erosion of secular values. Many films in the mainstream cinema which came after the 60's were 'Garam Hava' (1973), 'Mammo', (1994) 'Earth', (1998), 'Hey Ram' (2000), 'Refugee' (2000), 'Gadar: Ek Prem Katha' (2001), 'Pinjar' (2003), 'Veer Zaara' (2004) and 'Partition' (2007). Besides many films in regional languages, especially Punjabi took up this issue with different points of view, while there are many which mentioned the subject in an indirect manner. Biopics like 'Gandhi' (1982), 'Jinnah' (1998) and 'Sardar' (1993) were few which depicted partition from socio-political angles. All the films had an impact on the audience in the sense that a total social change fashioned by the partition with the closeness of emotion was projected and appreciated in both the nations.

If according to Stuart Hall, popular culture is a site where "collective social understandings are created", one can analyze and understand social attitude which cinemas makes us understand and visualize the issue in a larger context. (1996:151) Audiences go for a movie mainly for entertainment and when partition is shown as a subject one becomes aware of forced killings, suicides of women during partition through cinematic representation. A generation

which is moving away from that particular period, cinematic depiction becomes a powerful tool to create awareness and retain the collective consciousness of the generation who had to face it. Past which can be easily forgotten can thus be regained by all generations and the idea of nation can become more real. All Partition films in the process of narrativising history, many times without making a conscious effort, negotiate the category of nation as the 'other'.

Another film 'Gadar' made in 2001 contributed significantly to the construction of national and social memory. All partition films belong to the broad genre of historical films as their referent. The dominant mode through which partition is represented is through the largely popular genre of melodrama. In the words of Gledhill, "Melodrama exists as a cross cultural form with a complex international two hundred years history" (1987:1). In the Indian context strong family ties and friendships and their subsequent breakdowns are central themes that go into the making of partition cinema. Ideological conflicts are personalized through the drama of emotionally created/encumbered family situations. Partition films also focus on women per se, as thousands of women become victims to violence during the partition riots. Films have portrayed the fragmented identities of women and their negotiation with the state, going far beyond their own private sphere. The partition sensibility which both the nations share is very similar. A large gamut of research has been done after the 90s, which study the issue of identity in the backdrop of partition. To mention a few are Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasins *Borders and Boundaries* (1998), Urvashi Butalia's *The Other Side of Silence* (1999) and Gyandera Pandey's, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (2001).

Among Partition films 'Pinjar' stands out for various reasons. It is originally a poetic novel by Amrita Pritam, which raises the issue of nationalism from the women's point of view. When dominant nationalist ideologies are applied to women, the question of identity

takes on abstract dimensions not just of gender but of the boundary lines of politics, culture thus leading on to family, nation and community. For Amrita Pritam partition was a firsthand experience. Through her protagonist Puro, she seems to question the whole idea of national or religious borders and bondages. Even the uneducated village girl questions the identity politics.

The transformed adaption shows the effect of partition on the common man, especially on women who are by and large on sacrificial social contract. A common belief during war was that woman is the property of the enemy and can be looted, plundered and exploited as a commodity. A woman has to forfeit her identity, her selfhood during such difficult times as partition, kidnapping, wars, fighting and all, and is reduced from her subject to an object. The film shows the same intensity and depth as the novel portrays in matter of theme but the film has shown the role of women in a more promising manner.

'Pinjar' is a 2003 film directed by Chandra Prakash Dwivedi. The movie is about the Hindu-Muslim identity issue during the partition of India. Urmila Matondkar, Manoj Bajpai and Sanjay Suri are in the lead roles. Besides critical acclaim, the film also won the National Film award for best Feature Film on National Integration. The story unfolds itself in the form of a Hindu girl Puro, abducted by a Muslim, Rashid whose parents refuse to recover the defiled girl when she manages to run to her parents from Rashid's home. 'Pinjar' is the best literature written with backdrop of Partition of India. The film's narrative completely allegorizes the story of Partition. The visual signifies borders, fences and the like which recall the drawing of lines between Pakistan and India and the separation of families and friends.

Narratives on partition essentialise community identities. They do not give enough space to different nuances. Many individual experiences which were much more complex are depicted into singular homogenous manner. The film 'Pinjar' focuses on two women who are abducted. Though Rashid's portrayal is that of a kind hearted,

considerate human being, still he is a Muslim and the abductor. Lajo, Puro's sister-in-law is also raped by a Muslim. The focused gendered experiences make partition into a "Hindu tragedy", according to Jasodhara Bagchi (2003:112). The novel adopts the role of woman in partition, but the movie refines it. Though critics have accused the producer for adulteration.

In the novel Puro is described as the new women, while the rest of the women characters are submissive to the dominant patriarchal norms. The change is also very perceptible in the film. In the beginning Puro who is portrayed as a mere object before us, evolves into a new women after her abduction. She starts influencing Rashid, who had kidnapped her. She is shown as a woman who is possessive for her own family members and also of her acquired family. The novel is more of a detailed version of the story, but in the film, the story tends to become adulterated. The simple logic is that the film adaption of the novel cannot be a word to word reproduction or replication of the film that satisfies the expected taste of audience.

In real terms cinema, refashions itself to match the secondary reference of all historical narratives. As a record and interpretation of a particular era, popular cinema on the partition, may be understood as one of the several ways of showing history. Popular cinema demonstrates how it can engage in critical history which is couched in the vocabulary of melodrama. Partition cinema invests heavily in the private sphere of emotions and family relations. Literature on the other hand not only has the power to upturn such historical narratives, which silence alternative narratives like cinema, but that literature itself must also be scrutinized as a narrative, ideologically motivated and politically interested. "These individual voices resonate with the collective anguish, as also the affinity, of all mankind; and it is these voices that need to be recognized."(2005:65)

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The Agony and Pain of Partition in Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan

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Abstract:

(I)

1947 witnessed the torturous dismembering of a subcontinent, in which Siamese twins became two different entities. This division also marked the end of the British rule in the sub-continent. While departing from the sub-continent the Britishers created two independent states India and Pakistan. This division was based on two 'Nation Theory' with the argument that the Hindus and the Muslims cannot live together as one nation since both have distinct social, cultural and religious identities. The Muslim majority regions of Punjab and Bengal were divided, with West Punjab and East Bengal forming West and East Pakistan, and India in the middle of two (Hasan:130). It resulted in massive and violent migration of people across the borders. Large number of Muslims moved into Pakistan, and Sikhs and Hindus moved into India uprooted like *muhajirs*. Salman Rushdie refers to in *Shame*, the migrants left their past behind in a history less vacuity.

Keywords: Nation Theory, Muhajirs, Partition, Partition trauma.

This mass scale migration was traumatic for all and it led to unprecedented crimes of violence, murders, rapes and bestiality. It is very difficult to gauge the velocity of pain from the oral history of the

people who became victims of the trauma of Partition but its "impact can be compared to that of great war on Britain or the second world war on Japan and France" (Roy: 365-369). The monstrosity of the partition was such that it left one million dead, 75000 women abducted and raped, and turning twelve million displaced into refugees status.

High politics of Partition led people of both the states believe that Partition would bring peace and prosperity, but instead it heightened hostilities. Thousands of families suffered the brunt, as they were split apart, several houses were charred to ashes, people abandoned the villages out of fear and the civil tension mounted for months together. Women were subjected to sexual abuse which embarrassed them and they refused to return home while some other opted to commit suicide. Multitude of families faced destruction due to suicide, murder, kidnapping which caused uncountable partition trauma.

Hasan regards it as one of the most cataclysmic event in the history of 20th century. Its impact could be seen on the contemporary culture, history and historiography. Only recently historians have begun to invoke literature to comprehend the suffering people faced. Veena Das rightly points out "Some realities need to be fictionalized before they can be apprehended." (69) Partition literature engages with issues of loss, rupture, exile and trauma, which mainstream historiography has glossed over.

(II)

The Partition of India is the darkest chapter in the history of both the nations. It had agonizing result of fear, destruction and bloodshed. The communal riots that erupted were harrowing and it affected the society per se, the politicians and the intellectuals. The pain, agony and distress of partition motivated the creative genius of Indian English writers to produce works like *Azadi* by Chaman Nahal and *The Rape* by Raj Gill, Manohar Malgaokars, *A Bend in the Ganges* and Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* which was conceived on epic dimension based on partition trauma. *Train to Pakistan* is considered

to be the first and the most powerful novel on Partition of India and Pakistan. Khushwant Singh's name is bound to go down in Indian Literary history as one of the finest historian and novelist, a forthright, political commentator and an out-standing observer and social critic. He is known as one of India's distinguished men of letters with an international reputation, besides, being a significant post-colonial writer in Indian English. He is well known for his clear cut secularism, wit and a deep passion for poetry. In July 2000, he was conferred the "honest man of the year".

The then external affairs minister described the secret of Khushwant Singh's success that it lay in his learning discipline and his staunch belief in the veneer of the superficiality. Khushwant Singh has worldwide readership. He has written for almost all major national and international newspapers in India and abroad. He has also had numerous radio appearances at home and internationally. He has an extraordinary career as writer. He has written a very well researched and scholarly book on the scholarly works of Sikhs entitled *A history of Sikhs*, which is considered to be the best. He has to his credit several novels and non-fiction, which have been translated into many languages. His novel, *Train to Pakistan* won him international acclaim and Grove Press Award in 1954. He has over 80 publications and is considered as the bestselling author. He was described as the capital's best known living monument by *India Today*. Khushwant was bestowed with the prestigious Padma Bhushan in 1974 by the Govt. of India. In a protest on the attack on Golden Temple he returned the citation to the then President of India, Giani Jai Singh almost ten years later after being awarded the Padma Bhushan. In 2007 he was bestowed with more prestigious honour, the Padma Vibhushan. Khushwant Singh is a multifaceted personality- a novelist, a critic, a journalist, diplomat, naturalist, a politician- all rolled into one, who passed away on 20th March 2014.

(III)

Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* portrays a picture of

bestial horrors enacted on the Indo-Pakistan border during the partition period. It narrates the tragic tale of the partition of India and the events that followed, which will be remembered as one of the blackest chapters of human history. Just on the eve of independence, India was partitioned causing a great upheaval in the history of India, the upshot of this, was that twelve million had to flee their home nearly half a million were killed.

The harrowing and spine chilling events of 1947 had shaken the faith of the people in the innate human being. It had driven them into a state of wonder over what man has made of man. To Khushwant Singh, this was a period of great disillusionment and crisis of values, a distressing and disintegrating period of his life. The beliefs, he had cherished all his life were shattered. Giving vent to his inner struggle and agony, he says in one of his radio talks:

"the belief that I had cherished all my life was shattered. I had believed in the innate goodness of the common man but the division of Indian had been accompanied by the most savage massacres known in the history of the country. I had believed that we Indians were peace loving and nonviolent that we were concerned with matter of the spirit while rest of the world was involved in the pursuit of material things. After the experience of autumn 1947, I become an angry middle aged man, who wanted to show his disenchantment with the world. I decided to try my hand at writing." (1964)

Train to Pakistan highlights the futility of blaming each other for the unfortunate event. Also, the novel is one of the first and most effective works on Partition and perhaps should be given the credit of inspiring so many other young writers in taking up this issue to another level. In the novel, he has objectively treated the event, without blaming any community or religion. He has tried to stay away from the blame game. "Muslims said the Hindus had planned and started the killing. According to the Hindus, the Muslims were to blame. The fact is, both sides killed. Both shot and stabbed and speared and clubbed.

Both tortured. Both raped” (TTP1). Over the years partition literature has evolved with much written about in different genres but *Train to Pakistan* stands out as it does not treat the usual themes of indiscriminate killings of people. The killings and violence is no doubt a part of it but not the central theme. His focus shifts to the other associated issue at the time of partition. Talking about the treatment of the subject Bhatnagar writes:

Khushwant Singh was the first Indian novelist in English to write about the horror and holocaust of partition with great artistic concern in *Train to Pakistan*.

It is not partition but what it gets associated with and what it becomes symbolic of that attracts the attention of the writer. (Bhatnagar 152)

It mainly focuses on the consequences of partition, avoiding the graphic presentation of the horrific events. Roy also analysis the novel as:

...in *Train to Pakistan*, the violence that erupted at the time of partition is represented in a very unusual way. There is no detailed description in the novel of the train journey undertaken by the refugees-in terms of neither the practical difficulties faced nor the dangers involved. More importantly, we are also not shown the violence happening: for there is not even a reported description of the incidents in the novel. We are just informed about the end result of the violence: the trainloads of corpses that arrive at Mano Majra. What is detailed by Khushwant Singh is the aftermath of the violence... (Roy 36)

The novel is set in an imaginary village 'Mano Majra' situated on the border of India and Pakistan. It is the summer of 1947. The frontier has become a scene of rioting and bloodshed. But in Mano Majra, partition does not yet mean much. Sikhs and Muslims have lived peacefully together until independence, until the summer of 1947. The story begins:

The summer of 1947 was not like other summers. Even the weather had different feel in India that year. It was hotter than usual and drier and dustier. And the summer was longer. No one could remember when the monsoon had been so late... People began to say that God was punishing them for their (Singh 9).

This unusual mood of the summer reflected the riotous mood of the whole of the country. Like a whirlwind, the mad act of partition was uprooting masses of humanity. It was mangling them and throwing them across the border in heap after heap. “The riot had become a rout (Singh 10).” The opening lines of the novel actually have a distinct note of premonition that foreshadows the catastrophe which is looming over the tranquil atmosphere of Mano Majra. The village was an oasis of peace in the remote reaches of the frontier. The cool and calm ambience of this peaceful village at once attracts us. It is an isolated, border village on the banks of river Sutlej, with a railway bridge spanning the river. Its exceptional beauty existed in its functional integration. There were about equal number of Sikhs and Muslims and a single Hindu Family. Still the law of peaceful coexistence, and not communal strife, prevailed there. The most striking feature of this tiny village is its 'railway station'. Only two passenger trains stop here- 'One from Delhi to Lahore in the morning and the other from Lahore to Delhi in the evening. (Singh 11)' The life of the village is regulated by these trains which rattle across the nearby river bridge. We are informed that Mano Majra is very conscious of trains: “Before daybreak, the mail train rushes through on its way to Lahore and as it approaches the bridge the driver invariably blows two long blasts of the whistle. In an instant all Mano Majra come awake (Singh 12).” The next train at 10.30, a passenger train from Delhi finds all the villagers at work. The midday express passes by when the inhabitants of Mano Majra are at rest. The evening passenger train again finds Mano Majra active and at work---- men return home from their farms and women are busy with their daily chores: “When the goods train steams in, they say to each other, 'There is the goods train.' It is like saying goodnight (Singh 13).”

On the eve of the swelling act in *Mano Majra* high drama is going on, all simultaneously. Action begins with house-breaking and murder of Lala Ram Lal. Jugga that very moment is out in the fields with his fiancé, Nooran. The same night Hukum Chand, the Deputy Commissioner of the district, is camping in Mono Majra, philandering with Haseena, a hired prostitute. Murder and romance, both are going on simultaneously just before the arrival of the 'ghost-train', "We are of the mysterious East. No proof, just faith. No reason, just faith (Singh 196)." *Mano Majra* too belonged to this 'mysterious east'. It was not an exception.

The mind of communal suspicion had begun to surround it. Soon, this little oasis of communal harmony was engulfed by the fire of hatred and violence.

The tyrants did not come at the usual time. Now they were late by hours and when they came, "they were crowded with Sikh and Hindu refugees from Pakistan or with Muslims from India (Singh 44)." The storm that had begun to blow was ready to uproot whatever came in its way. The 'ghost-trains' went past at odd hours of night which disturbed the dreams of 'Mano Majra'. And the arrival of one such train shattered their dreams, for a train load of corpses from Pakistan crossed the railway bridge near *Mano Majra*. Hukum Chand tried to hush-up the matter, but the 'acrid smell' of burning flesh made implicit to the village that the train had come from Pakistan. The village which once throbbed with life 'was stilled in deathly silence.' Another 'ghost-train's arrival ignites the fire and the village becomes a battle-field of conflicting loyalties. The Deputy Commissioner plans a strategy to evacuate the Muslims dividing Mono Majra in two halves. Immediately the Sikhs become suspicious over Muslims' loyalty. The swelling up situation compels the two communities-one to leave the village and another to let them leave. The voice of sanity and reason is drowned in the voice of aggression, hatred and revenge. The Sikhs plan to send for each train load of dead from Pakistan, two across. A conspiracy is hatched to stretch a rope across the first span of the bridge a foot above the funnel of the engine so that when the train,

fully loaded with Muslim refugees, passes under it, the rope will sweep off all the people sitting on the roof of the train.

At this thrilling and nail-biting climax, Hukum Chand releases Jugga, *the badmash*, who had been imprisoned under the false charge of Lala Ram Lal's murder. His philosophy was – "individual's conscious effort should be directed to immediate ends, like saving life when endangered, preserving social structure and honoring its conventions (Singh 118)." He was concerned only with Muslim's safe departure and landing into Pakistan. Skillfully he manages to scare away the Muslims to refugee camps and incites Jugga to let the train pass on to Pakistan.

According to the scheduled plan, the avengers tie the rope making it as stiff as a shaft of steel and await the trains' arrival in tense anticipation. Suddenly Juggat Singh, manages to reach the rope: "He whipped out a small kirpan from his waist and began to slash at the rope... He went at it with the knife and then with his teeth. The engine was almost on him. There was a volley of shots. The man shivered and collapsed. The rope snapped in the centre as he fell. The train went over him and went to Pakistan (Singh 207)."

Thus the high mounting drama brings a sense of relief only at the end. When all failed, it was only Juggat Singh who saved the Muslim lives. Actually, the novel is a nightmare with an exciting finish. What is unbelievable has actually happened. A simple uncalculating love of a man (Jugga) for a woman (Nooran) saves the situation.

Mano Majra is conceived as one of the living characters in the dramatis personae of the novel. It is the archetypal village, for there were perhaps tens of thousands of such villagers where the law always has been peaceful coexistence.

But these frontier villages were atrociously destroyed under the gruesome impact of the partition. Like war and revolution, civil strife of the kind that was witnessed in parts of India in 1947 was, in fact, a bulldozer that leveled up things, leaving an ominous calm in the

wake of the precedent destructive storm. *Train to Pakistan* is silhouetted against this vast catastrophe that engulfed the entire nation and is presented with stark realism.

The Novelty of this work resides in Khushwant's approach of the theme from a humanitarian perspective. Indeed it would not have been as easy task to artistically present the plot, for the events were recent and so terrible in their utter savagery and meaninglessness. Writer confirms that the very concept of religion divided the hearts of villagers of Mano Majra- most important of all, the nation itself was divided into Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan. It is not appropriate to blame only the politicians for the division of the country but also religious frenzy was the cause of devastation and destruction. It is a fact that to the teeming millions, religion is deep-rooted in their psyche. For the masses, religion is above everything and morality is highly influenced by religious orthodoxy, superstitions, fate and destiny. And the main cause behind such thoughts is lack of awareness because awareness is a part of education.

Actually *Train to Pakistan* deals adequately enough the problem of communalism and violence. In his short 'The Riot' Khushwant satirizes the communal frenzy. *Delhi* another novel too explains in great detail the disturbances the city Delhi witnessed since the ancient times. The periods of Balban, Taimur, Mughals and the British-all saw the communal frenzy.

Delhi the novel ends with the gruesome murder of Budha Singh, the night watchman of the apartment in the riot that erupted after the assassination of Smt. Indira Gandhi in 1984.

Through all his relevant writings Khushwant tries to project that communal attitude is directly related to religious fanaticism and unless man comes to realize that human beings are more important than their religions and that there is a kind of religion which may be called human religion, communal frenzy may erupt from time to time and would endanger human civilization and culture. The first test of a cultured civilization is its spirit of tolerance, of accommodation, of

coexistence. Communalism is a blatant negation of this feeling of togetherness. Communalism is a kind of unpredictable storm which destroys the big and the small alike, without any discrimination.

Basically *Train to Pakistan* is a passionate comment on inner conflict between the communities. At the same time it reflects the feelings of the writer.

In an interview Khushwant Singh said: "I had no animosity against either the Muslims or the Pakistanis but I felt that I should do something to express that point of view. And I did that..." (Mahfil) He elucidates his opinion in one of his articles published in Hindustan Times where he states that there was nothing to choose between what the two communities were doing at the time of partition.

"I felt ashamed of all of them... I lost faith not only in humanity but also my faith in my religion... I really thought that whole country was coming to an end. (Hindustan Times)" But there was a ray of hope; thus the safe passage of the Train to Pakistan. Jugga shows the ray of light in the cruel world of darkness and despair.

(IV)

Train to Pakistan is a story everyone wants to forget yet one cannot overlook this inevitable, inescapable stark reality of our past. When the nation was on the threshold of a new dawn, it also faced unprecedented destruction, bloodshed and trauma. Khushwant Singh has successfully delineated this unpleasant phase of our national history in the novel. He has presented Mano Majra as a microcosm of the communal temper of the country during the days of partition. It is the self sacrificing love of Jugga that breaks the rule of the jungle, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. On this battleground of Mano Majra, the forces of evil are vanquished by one of the forces of good, that is love. There can be many more partitions, but the much can be avoided if a lesson is learnt, from a memorable narrative like this one.

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Book Reviews

A Voice for the Subaltern: A Review of Nandini Sahu's Sukama and Other Poems (2013), ISBN 978-81-925839-2-1

By Dr. Gayan B. Purohit, Senior Lecturer in English, R. N. College, Dura, Behrampur, Odisha.

Nandini Sahu's new poetry collection *Sukama and Other Poems* (2013) is the latest amazing and successful contribution to Indian literature written in English. Perhaps she wrote this volume with a view to reconsider our established and biased opinion on the poor and marginalized on the one hand and women in general on the other.

Sukama and Other Poems consists of 48 exquisitely crafted poems to suit to the purposes of representing the case of the subaltern. The inspiration for the volume seems to stem from the poet's visit to her native place in 2010 when she heard the sad demise of Sukama, her childhood domestic help. Nandini Sahu, the woman-inclined and thought provoking poet, steeped in feminist criticism is seen to represent the case of women, especially the marginalized and down trodden.

The title poem "Sukama" delves deep into Sahu's past to reconstruct the social milieu prevalent during her childhood in the true spirit of a woman concerned with a hierarchical system that had taken woman for granted. The tribal *Kandh* woman has been treated as a surrogate or "foster mother" who has been presented with a kind of supportive solidarity that only poet of Nandini Sahu's stature can explore. That she was a pretty and attractive woman during her youth, and her tattooed face (her mother's protective steps in order to make her less attractive and less desirable) speaks volumes about the plight of a marginalized, tribal woman. The idyllic atmosphere has been replaced by the city bred hybridity and with it the promise and

innocence of Sukama also disappear. The poet urges her readers to support the cause of this “slum-dog tale “ of the poor and helpless woman.

The next poem, “Bridge-in –Making” explores Sahu's search for roots to retain her original flavor in a globalised context where she tries to strike out a middle course between the “privileged” and “marginalized”. She rivets her attention on the indigenous flavor by willing to write “poetry as delicious as watered-rice, brinjal fry and dry fish”. She clings to her roots firmly for her very survival in the poetic world. She also candidly admits her allegiance to English without refurbishing or tarnishing image of her ancestry. She writes :

Odiais to think, feel, dream and
be my funeral pyre . English , to me ,
is my garland and my sword, my sole refuge .(5)

She has also shed the fear of colour complex and is not afraid of writing about her “wheatish brown skin”. Subaltern studies which had been out-rightly rejected as “lock, stock, barrel” has lost its hegemonic implications in recent days where women have seized opportunities to occupy significant positions. Colour complex is no more treated as potential force. Nelson Mandela's funeral ceremony being attended by over ninety heads of the countries points to this triumph of colour complex.

Elsewhere she has established herself (as all poets!) as the “unacknowledged legislator of the world“. Sahu is not scared to wage a lone battle against the loneliness, boredom and “nothingness of life” which haunt her soul routinely. She dares “the endless agony of a nude lifetime”.

To change the serious mood of struggle for survival, Sahu refreshes our mind by drawing our attention to the true love where all divergent elements vie for a symbiotic harmony. She urges her lover to forget the earthly worries and misunderstandings, and indulge in true love. She says :

I am the sea, and you the vessel .
Is life
only a game of the
victor and the vanquished ? (The Lamb-Wool Sky ,13)

She showcases “the trajectory to living” through the rich store house of images and metaphors that sing the praise of making life beautiful and worth living. But living in a metro where relationships break in seconds, Sahu is appalled with the spurious developments where she has lost her “punch word” to describe her agony. She possesses a strong wish to become “an autonomous woman / sometimes / I am my own mother”. (Chasing The Mirage, 19). She is caught “between myself and myself”, her real self and a make-shift one that she has adapted for her self, and the ambivalence comes to the fore in many a poems .

That she is bred and brought up as an Odia does not undermine her poetic credentials and her worldwide acclaim as poet is without doubt .” Odishan Landscape “becomes her forte. She showers praise for her native land : “Odisha , the melting pot of cultures / the melting point of the East and West “(31). Sahu profusely alludes to the historical roots where *Chandasoka* metamorphosed into *Dharmasoka* and the Places like Puri, Konark, Gopalpur-on-sea may remind the poet of her childhood; but her cosmopolitan placement in Delhi washes away the tag of local colour to replace it with universal acceptance. Sahu tries hard and succeeds to preserve her multicultural identity .

Whether in “Sukama” or in “The Song of The Kandha Woman” or in the “Odishan Landscapes”, she seems to represent the cause of the “New Subaltern” that would make Gayatri Spivak Chakravathy proud. Spivak's “Can The Subaltern Speak” finds its vindication in Sahu's poems and the glimpses of this vindication can be traced in Odia *Laxmi Purana* in which the subaltern Shreya (the low caste Shreya Chandaluni) has been properly represented by none other than Goddess Laxmi. She has been deserted by Jagannatha at the behest of his elder brother Balabhadra to prohibit her entrance to the

Great Temple (Bada Deula). Things so happened that both the brothers went foodless for days together finally to yield to the wishes of the defiled Goddess of wealth. They accepted food from her hand and made amends for the injustice meted out to her by allowing food from Anand Bazar open to all people irrespective of their caste.

There is a lovely poem, “*Shoes*” which talks of patriarchy and androgyny. While talking of the various men in the personae's life—grandfather ,father, husband and son— “shoes” are used as a metaphor for male-dominance. The memory of the shoes haunts her even when she has left those in a remote past:

“Now I keep myself busy
sipping cinnamon and herbal tea
eating almonds, listening to music
reading novels and
writing things of my interest.
I have heard
the edge of the shoes had
vanished decades ago
when I first began writing poems in
English
Flawless.

(But)Does memory spare you?
...Do androgyny and patriarchy
give you the space
to think otherwise ?”
(Shoes, 55)

Another poem, “*Growing Up Amid the Ruins and the Rains*”, is a nostalgic recollection of her childhood in Udayagiri, a rural village in Odisha, where the past and the present are merged in a most artistic way, revealing the pain in her present state:

“Growing up among the ruins, patiently,
I have become mature in the art of frolicking

with my shadow till sundown. Each
dark night, it creeps under my door,
that feel of love and the sense of loss borrowed
from Udayagiri. ...

In darkness I touch and feel the ruins.
Ruined pillars, archways, moth-destroyed wedding albums.
Sultry, sticky cream-powder-comb boxes. Detached parents
and sisters.”

(*Growing Up Amid the Ruins and the Rains*, 88)

Sahu writes wonderful Haiku poems:

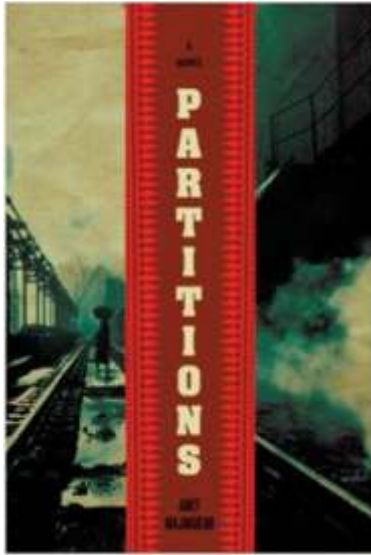
Devil

He is nowhere here or anywhere.
Very much there in
the spirit sans love.

Sleep

My sleep and sleeplessness
play hide-and-seek.
Is someone awake in me?

We readers are extremely thankful to the poet for presenting a panoramic canvas where the subaltern's case is being adequately represented. Beautifully bound, with an enigmatic photograph on the cover page, the collection deserves a refreshing outlook.



Amit Mujumdar, Category: Fiction, Pub: Metropolitan Books, New York, 2011, ISBN 978-0-8050-9395-7

By Dr. Shubha R. Mishra, Associate Prof. & Head, PWS Arts & Commerce College, Nagpur. MS

My mother witnessed Partition when she was just 16, but was among the fortunate few who lost no member of the family, though came to Punjab penniless. Having grown up hearing experiences and nostalgic yearnings from my maternal family, the Partition as an issue has been close to my heart. Having read much on this issue, this book by Amit Majumdar brought another fresh perspective. The author is also a poet and this is his first novel. He is a radiologist by profession. His wordplay and intimate knowledge of culture and history, makes an impression on the reader.

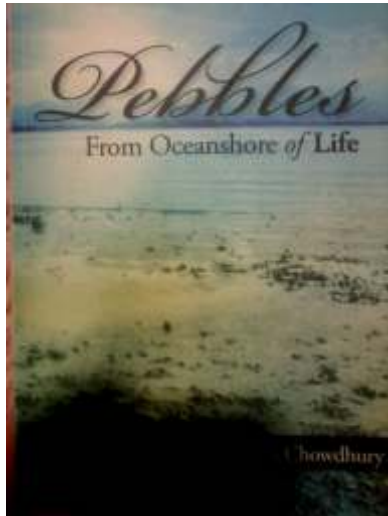
The setting is the partitioning of India and Pakistan in 1947,

Amit Mujumdar, Category: Fiction, Pub: Metropolitan Books, New York, 2011, ISBN 978-0-8050-9395-7

after India won its independence from the British Empire. As part of this act, the land was partitioned into two nations, India and Pakistan, the former designated for Hindus or Sikhs, and the latter for Muslims. Over twelve million people were displaced and migrated to new homes. The mass two-way exodus resulted in a flare-up of religious and cultural animosity, and up to a million died as a result of massacres and border conflicts.

Partitions centers around four individuals from both sides of the border and how their lives converge throughout the book. Shankar and Keshav, two Hindu Boys, have lost sight of their mother at a train station and don't know where they belong or where to go to. Simran Kaur, a young Sikh girl, has run away from her father, who would rather see her dead than dishonored. Ibrahim Masud, an elderly Muslim doctor is driven away from India towards the new Muslim State of Pakistan.

The book is about the meeting of these four characters and how they come together ironically enough, defying every political thought and viewpoint. The story is told from the point of view of a ghost, Hindu doctor Roshan Jaitly, who left behind his young wife Sonia, and young twin sons, Shankar and Kashev. He can only observe, mostly helplessly, as his family is caught up in the maelstrom of the partition, and mother is separated from children in the mob at a train station. Meanwhile, he also follows the travails of Dr. Masud, a kindly Muslim physician, and Simran, a Sikh girl who has escaped from her father's murder of his family to prevent the perceived horror of capture by the "Musselmaans". Majmudar paints the details of this dangerous time with an unflinching eye, yet stopping just short of gratuitous or graphic violence. A touch of magic realism heightens the strength of the narrative. The main theme is 'hope' and how it develops a sense of belonging among strangers. The writing is lyrical and can be compared to emotionally moving novels like *The Kite Runner*.



Cast A Stone: Book Review of 'PEBBLES' Archana Chowdhury,
Category: Short Stories Pub. Nation Press, Chennai 2014

ISBN: 978-93-8380-86-18

By Dr. Supanth Bhattacharyya, Associated Prof. & HoD., English,
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Physicians usually avoid the domain of creative writing like the bubonic plague. But on the rare occasions that they do, the outcome is clinically precise, warmly sympathetic and full of insights into our sick hurry and divided aims. The latest Indian entrant, Dr. Archana Chowdhury confirms this view with her collection of warm fuzzy, feelgood anecdotal tales, *Pebbles* (Notion Press). After going through the anthology, one is suffused with a God-is-in-his-heaven-and-all-is-right-with-the-world afterglow which very few books can offer a reader.

Generally gritty, unsparing, and yet narrated with scrupulous empathy, these little stories (one hundred and ten of them) leave us with a holistic sense of experiencing an event or a life in its entirety, be

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it the exquisite pen portrait of her father, Prakritiranjana, the anonymous HIV patient, or the beautiful Bhabhi who recovered from a serious ailment. Some stories are only a page long and yet complete and self-contained. Over all these simple episodes, there falls the gentle, caring and compassionate touch of not a professional sawbones but a healer of body, mind and soul. The narrator is never censorious, never judgmental, preferring instead to 'patiently' allow the action of her 'cases' to express their innermost impulses, motivations and consequences.

In *Pebbles*, the stories are clustered into five sections: I) Inspiration and Initiation, II) Widening Horizons, III) Close Encounters, IV) Colours and Shades of Life, V) Technology and Biology. These tales, which rarely attempt to evaluate or moralize, make the reader intensely aware of the process that selfless understanding and unselfconscious art can provide in trying to make sense of the chaotic experience of life. This assortment of stories attest to Dr. Chowdhury's ability to shift tone and mood with fluency, moving from graphic realism to more meditative ruminations to gracious and urbane humour. Her style is reminiscent of the artless art of, say a Haruki Murakami, a Michael Crichton, or even a Chetan Bhagat. The reader is compelled to close the book after each story and ruminate about the tiny, smooth pebble (as opposed to a jagged rock) which has just created an ever-increasing ripple in the placid waters of his soul. As the writer herself states so memorably in her Prologue,

“Events occur like pebbles on its immense shore of myriad hues, shades, forms which disappear like foam but etched are the imprints on the canvas of memory in invisible, indelible ink with finiteness of time and space carrying us forward to realisation of glimpses of the eternal, the universal, the transcendental, yet perceptible, palpable and pulsating in every moment of life. A physician's life is not in years but in days, hours and minutes. Journeying life many a pebble is picked from its vast shore of which a few are here. My heart and soul are thankful to life as my teacher in

whichever form, moment and way it is teaching me to live and enjoy living.”

In the humble opinion of this reviewer, most of these are not really pebbles but precious, timeless diamonds which do not just illuminate but enlighten and enrich the spirit. We wish she continues to write more in this vein and impart metaphysical impart to booklovers.

Poetry Section

The White Revolution

Nandini Sahu

To give
a sense to the thoughts
vocabulary to ideas
and after beckoning the lexis
into a festoon of verse
it's calm. Perfect tranquility.
I walk bare foot in the peace
of the personal self.
What an inward voyage is it?
A journey in pursuit of time!

The world too rushes as far as she can.
But her knot with the sun
is never wrecked.

Congregating pointed and touching words
my poetry comes effortless and intrepid.
Churned up, liberal, free-thinking.
But not infringing ties with truth, the sun.
Rhymes and calculations cannot encumber
the ashen vastness of plain papers its domain!
Meaning to the thoughts and
language to the meanings
in green letters disembark
the white insurrection.
This non-stop sport of hide-and-seek
with the Muse seizes rhythm.

Lord Jagannath, the God with half-done Limbs

When my words are overcooked
 in the double-tongued obscurity
 of the opaque heart
 I wonder
 what's the need for grief or alarm,
 independence or the lack of sovereignty,
 the heavy golden jewelry, the saving accounts,
 the artificial hair of my neighboring beauty,
 the moon, the calendar on the table, my
 Omega-3 tablets, love, lust
 or even poetry?

*Mother! Why doesn't He have complete limbs?
 Who left Him like this--half-done?
 Why is he cavernous black?
 Why are his eyes always swollen and unblinking?*

search for answers in my
 intrepid, unfazed heart,
 nonchalant at the naked rooms;
 I think of children whom the world
 has deserted
 because they have derelict or half-done limbs.
 The dark-skinned who have a
 a frozen-time. I ponder over their providence.
 Their ancient limbs and face
 spinning into a papyrus.

*It's convergence my son! It's His way of
 humanizing the mechanics of tolerance.*

*The Lord of the Universe, Lord Jagannath,
 sans complete limbs, with an ugly face,
 ogling, unblinking eyes and a dark skin, is
 the charming, absorbing of all, the pious of all.
 The most accomplished, the most adorable, most alluring.*

Then I know it's the first light of
 creative contemplation.
 It's daybreak for ingenuity
 breaking the parapets of opaque.
 without orders from above.

Dr. Nandini Sahu
 Associate Professor of English in IGNOU,
 New Delhi, India

Cleave: Divide or Adhere?

Sucharita Sarkar

I have never been to Bangladesh,
But I've seen its green and gold,
The land of my fathers, that lost home,
Gifted to me through stories told.

I have never been to Bangladesh,
Yet I have roamed the roads of Balubhara,
The white *kash-phool* waving to the blue sky
As we immersed the Durga in the river.

I have never been to Bangladesh,
But I have heard the mingled laughter
Hindus, Muslims, uncles, aunts,
Sharing the soil and toil together.

I have never been to Bangladesh,
Still I shiver at the memories of night
Sundering, uprooting, tearing away,
And the family-scattering flight.

I have never been to Bangladesh
Though it urges me in my distraught sleep
Go build your home in other lands
But never put down roots too deep.

I have never been to Bangladesh,
Yet its map is stamped indelibly
And its rivers flood my veins,
Maybe Bangladesh is still in me?

Sucharita Sarkar
Assistant Professor
D.T.S.S College of Commerce, Mumbai

Absence

Supantha Bhattacharyya

At last, two decades later,
We have finally forgotten you,
The photograph on the wall
Has cobwebbed like memory,
The wardrobe no longer has even
A camphor scented handkerchief
Of yours anymore,
At the laughter-laden dinner table
The talk is only of the golden tomorrow
We have moved on in life.
Only, some mornings,
We are surprised
By the strange, damp spots,
On our cold pillows.

The Archer

Supantha Bhattacharyya

Start of everyday, he arrives,
Stands at my back,
Legs in a wide stance,
Drawstring fully stretched,
Points at a spot
Between my shoulders,
Waits stone-faced
As I begin to run,
Watches blankly
As I struggle to escape
And not increase
Our gap by an inch.
Then, at the end of the day,
He simply goes away...
To return again the next day.

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance

Supantha Bhattacharyya

With his lifetime savings
Which he had earned
From a lifetime of service,
Father bought me a motorbike.
“Choose whatever you like”,
He declared with magnificent magnanimity.

Being a son who knew his duty
I stayed away from the superfast hot rods,
And picked a sturdier, slower, gas-guzzler,
Earning snide comments
About milkmen and vendors from friends.

Father would often hitch a ride
On the pillion, and his smiling face
In the rearview mirror,
Became that of a bollywood filmstar
With the wind playing in his sparse hair.

Thanks to an old, drunk, magician
With old machines,
And to my middle-class propensity
Of making things last to the last,
I kept the bike in very good condition.

These days, as I carry my son about
On this two decade old relic,
My dead father's face
Twinkles through his youthful eyes,
And my vintage motorbike
Moves again with the vigor of
The here and the now.

Dr. Supantha Bhattacharyya
Associate Professor,
Dept. of English, Hislop College, Nagpur

A Shadow

Nutan Agarwal

Drifting alone, I saw a shadow,
Shrivelled and furrowed,
Hobbling with a Cane,
As narrow as a lane,
With gaunt figure and arid eyes,
Looked like a naked Dryad,
Once laden with scents and sweets,
Now stripped off its leaves,
Once cherished and sustained others,
Now a parasite on others,
Torn by both time and age,
Planning for his pilgrimage,
Ashes of the past,
Roamed like an outcast,
I stood perspiring,
Pensive and shivering,
Is this me next?
No, no, Yes,
Musing descends upon me,
Every day has its evening,
The sun sets, flowers wither, men decay.

Dr. Nutan Agarwal
Reader & Head,
Bundelkhand (PG) Degree College,
Jhansi, (U.P.)

Spring Not So Far

Nutan Agrawal

Eyes are teary, lips are parched,
 Heart is heavy, life seems dark.
 I know not why?
 Love, hope, joy, no spring is here,
 Fear, fever, fret, all winter is there.
 I know not why?
 Alas, I fall and perish and die,
 Oh, send a ray to lift me high.
 Life is dry and fraught with pain,
 Oh, gift me your mercy, love and rain.
 Dreams are hazy and clipped to the nest,
 Give them wings to soar with zest.
 Goals are nearer but they seem afar,
 Give me vim and how close they are.
 Come and colour my life as a fest,
 Don't waste it in regrets and frets.
 A smile from you so noble and pure,
 Bring shine in my life, and pat and cure.
 View my love with your vision wide,
 Open the doors inside, inside, inside.
 Life is beautiful though a tale of woes,
 Remember the thorns that surround every rose.

Dr. Nutan Agarwal
 Reader & Head,
 Bundelkhand (PG) Degree College,
 Jhansi, (U.P.)

Exam Fever

Manjushree Sardeshpande

Mercury soars, develops a heat within,
 The hot whirlwind makes the dry leaves spin.
 Tension and anxiety are at their peak,
 The butterflies in the stomach make you weak.
 Oh! So early breaks the day,
 The eyes are not ready, they pray
 Have mercy; let me sleep for a while,
 The books glare at me from their pile.
 So much information is thrust in the brain,
 Memory also experiences a strain.
 The competition is for scoring marks,
 Now is the time to show your sparks.
 Again when the results are near,
 Speculations boggle the minds of the peer.
 Some are rewarded, some fret and fume,
 Some to the scolding get immune.
 What does life have in store for us?
 God reveals, steers us to our future thus.

Manjushree Sardeshpande
 Assistant Professor
 R. S. Mundle Dharampeth
 Arts & Commerce College, Nagpur

HUES OF LIFE (HOLI)

Manjushree Sardeshpande

In the spectrum of life's rainbow
Various colours radiantly glow.

Rosy Pink childhood marks
Fire of adolescence red sparks.

Man struggles, he perspires true
Makes effort to achieve the blue

There is calm, there is strife
Green shows signs of life.

With the sun's warmth, joys unfold
Happy moments are silver and gold.

But it's not always so
Sometimes there is a fiasco.

Black clouds crowd spell misery and gloom
Patience makes the flowers of happiness bloom.

Renouncing worldly pleasures it's an orange dawn
For eternal peace life gets on.

The mind fills with thoughts so pure and white
The soul proceeds on its new flight.

Dr. Manjushree Sardeshpande
Assistant Professor
R. S. Mundle Dharampeth
Arts & Commerce College, Nagpur

maush pain, the same sharp lacerations of the reader's soul as Manto's original urdu, otherwise, Manto can appear to be either sentimental or merely obscene and cynical, instead being a writer who has a deep troubled, but profoundly moral concern with human experiences and actions in a world, which has lost its political sense and social reason. Fortunately Khalid Hasan's collection 'Mottled Dawn: Fifty Sketches and stories of Partition, by Manto is of great help to the English reader. Khalid Hasan has tried his level best to bring out the original and pulse of Manto's stories.

The writings of Saadat Hasan Manto are psychoanalysis of human behavior. Manto wrote sparsely, each word carefully chosen. His diamond hard prose was in polar contrast to the Howery language of many contemporaries. Toba Tek Singh is a masterpiece, set in the lunatic asylum in Lahore at the time of partition, when whole cities are being ethnically cleansed, how can the asylum escape? The Hindu and Sikh lunatics are told by bureaucrats organizing the transfer of power that they will be forcibly transferred to institutions in India. On hearing this, the unconcerned, the unmindful lunatics rebel. Everyone is totally confused is regarding the exact geographical location of both the countries:

As to where Pakistan was located the inmates knew nothing. That was why both the mad and the partially mad were unable to decide whether they were now in India or in Pakistan. If they were in India, where on earth was Pakistan? And if they were in Pakistan, then now come that until only the other day it was India? (Hasan: trans. 2008: 10)

The protagonist of the story Toba Tek Singh, Bishan Singh is highly traumatized at being told that he is being sent off to India while his village Toba Tek Singh is in Pakistan. He has been in the asylum for more than fifteen years and has refused to sit or lie down all these years. The guards on duty try to push Bishan Singh into India but he refuses to move as he wants to live neither in India nor in Pakistan, but in Toba Tek Singh. As the meaning breaks, Bishan Singh gives a single loud shriek, falls and dies on this no-man's land between the two new nations' barbed wire borders:

Chequered Picture of Partition in Manto's Short Stories

Anupam Soni

Abstract:

The partition of India in summer of 1947 is the most unprecedented and barbaric event in the history of the subcontinent with catastrophic and inexplicable results. The whole process of a new nation was arbitrary, authoritative thrust on people led to utter confusion and disarray. A large number of writers from both the countries have narrated the theme of partition in their creative writings but seldom has anyone of them depicted the holocaust of partition as powerfully and precisely and with utter disgust and despair as Saadat Hasan Manto. In his partition stories Manto conveys as no historian could, as no politician would, the disorientation, the mystification, the shroud of nonsense that fell upon the subcontinent in 1947. In a time of national exaltation, Manto wrote not about the glories of independence and the fruits of sovereignty but ambiguities and the debris of partition. His short stories on partition scathingly highlight the physical and psychological impact of violence, abduction, migration and resettlement and most openly narrate the issues of masculinity and vulnerability of sexuality during the man-made violence.

Key Words: Partition, Saadat Hasan Manto, Disorientation, Khirki Khol do, Paradoxes.

Manto's stories will endure as perhaps the best work of fiction on the partition and its painful impact on Indo-Pak ethos... Indian Express.

The whole process of birth of a new nation was arbitrary, authoritative thrust on people led to utter confusion and disarray. The

partition of India in summer of 1947 is the most unprecedented and barbaric event in the history of the sub-continent with catastrophic and inexplicable results. Ten millions people had to leave their homes and ancestral holdings, and another millions were slaughtered in the most singular civil war in recent history: there were no leaders, no armed forces, no plans, only a spontaneous and visceral ferocity whose possibility was unanticipated and whose legacy is evident even today. Provoked by hooligan actions of a few, the vengeance that ordinary Hindus and Muslims and Sikhs wreaked on each other coarsened our social sense, distorted our political judgment and deranged our understanding of moral rightness. The realities of partition, cannot be easily put away though its “deep, personal meanings, its profound sense of rupture, the differences it engendered or streghened still lives on in many people's lives” (Butalia 1998:8).

Since the split of India and Pakistan to the present day, the tragedy of partition has been made the theme if their creative writings by a large number writers of the both countries Yash Pal, Agyeya, Bhisham Sahani, Maheep Singh, Sheikh Ayaz, Qnuatullain Haider, Khuswant Singh, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, Manohar Malegoankar, Chaman Nahal, Kamleshwar, Bapsi Sidhwa, Jamila Hashmi, Rahi Masoom Raza, Amrita Pritam are some of the popular writers who wrote about the partitions but seldom has anyone of them depintocted the people's plight as powerfully and precisely and with utter disgust and despair as Saadat Hasan Manto.

Saadat Hasan Manto was born in Punjab in 1912. He was a student agitator with a longing for revolutionary Russia; a translator of Victor Hugo and Oscar Wild; an editor; a writer for the Bombay film industry and for radio; and most importantly, a prolific author. Raised in Amritsar, Manto moved many times, from Bombay to Delhi, then back again; and finally reluctantly, in January 1948, for months after India and Pakistan raised their tarnished flags, the Muslim Manto joined his family in the old city of Lahore, in Pakistan. Here Manto's spirits sank low. A job was hard to find and harder to forget the country where once he lived. For him those years were full of continuous struggle for his survival. In return, he gave some of his best writings to the literary world. In his short life, he published twenty two collections

of short stories, one novel, five collections of radio plays, three collections of essays, two collections of personal sketches.

It was in Lahore that he wrote his masterpieces that include Thanda Ghost, Khol Do, Toba Tek Singh, Iss Manjdhar Mein, Mozalle, Babu Gopi Nath, some of his characters became legendary. In his partition stories, Manto conveys, as no historian could, as no politician would, the disorientation, the mystification, the shroud of nonsense that fell upon the subcontinent in 1947. When independence is bloodied by partition, new experiments in nationhood are stained for many years. The trauma and animosity of parting lasts long. In a time of national exaltation, Manto wrote not about the glories of independence and the fruits of sovereignty but ambiguities and the debris of partition. Manto's short stories on partition scathingly highlight the physical and psychological impact of violence, abduction, migration and resettlement and most openly narrate the issues of masculinity and vulnerability of sexuality during the phases of man-made violence. These were the days when his controversial stories like Khol Do and Thanda Ghost created a furor among the conservatives. For this, he was tried for obscenity half-a-dozen times, thrice before and thrice after independence in Pakistan, but never convicted. When it comes to chronicling the collective madness that prevailed in the Indian subcontinent during and post the partition of India in 1947, no other writer comes closer to the oeuvre of Saadt Hasan Manto:

Manto's primary focus is on human tragedy of the partition, which comes alive in the depiction of the bleak antagonist and absurd situations that were brought about in the aftermath. He voices through hia tales the infinite suffering of dislocated and dispossessed, the victims of the nation. (Katha, 101)

Khalid Hasan is the best known and the well regarded of the translators of Manto in English. There is however, one aspect of Manto's literary intelligence which can prove fatal for any translators of his stories. Manto's language may be economical but it has the sting and precision of a whiplash. An English translation of his stories may be accurate, but may still fail to capture the grating roughness of his diction, the sardonic irony of his images and the harsh rhythms of his prose. In order to be effective, it would have to cause the same night

which had kept her going till now. I did not want to pull it away from under her feet. I did not want to take her out of a vast asylum where she could make long excursions in all directions to satisfy the thirst of her untiring feet and clap her within the narrow walls of an asylum made of bricks. (Hasan: trans: 106)

In his works, Manto tried to convey that how normally decent people can, in extreme conditions, commit the most appalling atrocities. He could not resolve the paradoxes of his own life and years later he was still trying to come to grips with what had happened:

The partition of the country and the changes that followed left feelings of revolt in me... when I sat down to write I found my thoughts scattered. Though I tried hard I could not separate India from Pakistan and Pakistan from India... my mind could not resolve the question: what country did we belong to now, India or Pakistan. (Kant and Saint, 2001:153)

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Just before sunrise, Bishen Singh, the man who had stood on his legs for fifteen years, screamed and his officials from the two-sides rushed towards him, he collapsed to the ground.

There behind barbed wire, on one side, lay India and behind more barbed wire, on the other side, lay Pakistan. In between, on a bit of earth, which had no name, lay Toba Tek Singh. (Hasan: trans: 14-15)

Bishen Singh's death in the end of the story in no-man's land in Manto's ultimate rejection and critique of the "Vivisection of Mother India" his death is an act of defiance, a symbol of protest and rebellion, a challenge to history and a refusal to accept the political identity, thrust on him by arbitrary decision of policy makers. His non-sensical mutterings in the book are an indictment of the separation of the two countries. 'Toba Tek Singh' is a bitter indictment of partition in a sardonic and ironic way. It is his ultimate attempt for liberation from the clutches of fascist politics and communalism.

Manto wrote about the common people, regardless of ethnic religions or caste identities and he discovered contradictions and passions and irrationality in each of them. He was a remorseless student of partition's wreckage, of its broken souls. The ecstasy of violence in Manto's partition stories may strike a western reader as overwrought, but these fictions were no stranger than fact. He took no sides in the religion and political wars being fought around him. In his partition stories, he reflects not on politics or history but on the meaning of loyalty and dishonor, sanity and insanity, good and evil, in a time when Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs killed an estimated half million people in their wars against one another.

In "The Assignment", for example, a Muslim family an ailing father, his daughter and son stay at a place that other Muslims have abandoned. The father is a judge, a rational man. He is convinced that the communal violence will soon stop, as it always does in India. But his belief is beyond truth. One night, a young Sikh man knocks at the door. His daughter is terrified. The man identifies himself as the son of an old friend of her father's, a Sikh who was in her father's debt. She is relieved, and unbolts the door. The boy enters with a gift announcing that he had promised his father, to thank the judge for his father on his death-bed that he would continue that tradition of taking a yearly gift

to the judge. And even in the middle of all the trouble, he is here to fulfill his duty to his father, to thank the judge for his kindness. His gift is acceptable and the Sikh boy leaves. Turning the corner, the good son encountered four masked Sikhs, carrying torches, kerosene and explosives. Here, Manto makes his characteristic, demonic, utterly truthful twist. One of the men asks the boy:

“Sardarji, have you completed your assignment?”

The young man nodded “should we then proceed with ours?”

“If you like; the young man replied and walked away.” (Hasan: trans.2008: 22)

Manto's *the Return (Khol Do)* is one of the most painful stories ever penned by him. It is sordid tale of beastly behavior of man during partition whose most unfortunate victims were the helpless young girls and Muslim women. The story about a young Muslim girl Sakina who while escaping from the hands of Hindu rioters ironically falls a prey to the lust of her own coreligions Muslim *razakaars*- those very young men who were supposed to rescue all such victims.

An old Muslim man Sirajuddin while fleeing to Pakistan is separated from his beautiful daughter Sakina. He makes a frantic search from pillar to post in several refugee camps to get his daughter back. Unable to find her, he pleads before a group of *razakaars* to help locate his daughter. They assure Sirajuddin of finding her daughter. They ultimately locate Sakina but instead of escorting her safely to the refugee camp, take her away, rape her brutally almost to death and bring her back in a comatose state after a couple of days. Upon learning that an almost dead young girl has been brought to the camp hospital, Sirajuddin rushes there to find that she is indeed his last daughter. Sirajuddin takes her to the doctor. The room is stuffy and dark and the doctor-on-duty gestures to Sirajuddin to open the window to have a better look at the patient saying, *Khirkhi Khol do*. The words 'Khol do' automatically set into motion the hands of the near dead Sakina in coma as she unties her shalwar and pushes it down, baring her thighs as if preparing herself for the onslaught of the rape. Unmindful of his daughter's mental and physical state, Sirajuddin, suddenly discovering that his daughter was alive, screams with joy-

“Zinda hai- meri beti. Zinda hai”(she is alive- my daughter is alive). This is how Manto ends his classic short story:

A light was switched on. It was a young woman with a mole on her left cheek. 'Sakina', Sirajuddin screamed.

The doctor, who had switched on the light, stared at Sirajuddin. 'I am her father; he stammered.

The doctor looked at the prostrate body and felt the pulse. Then said to the old man, pointing at the window, 'open it'.

The young woman on the stretcher moved slightly. Her hands grouped for the cord which kept her shalwar tied around her wrist. With painful slowness, she unfastened it, pulled the garments down and opened her thighs:

'She is alive. My daughter is alive', Sirajuddin shouted with joy. The doctor broke into cold sweat. (Hasan: trans.2008: 41)

The story puts a question mark. Can one human being ever trust another? Where is the line drawn between one who saves and that same person then does not? Who describes the integrity of people? Is there any line left at all? The sense of helplessness and confusion that Sirajuddin faces echoes the idea of M. J. Larrabee, S. Weine and P. Woollcott:

The arrival of trauma- the unexpected death of a healthy partner, for example- undercuts the usual, slashes unspoken assumptions to shreds, and attacks the very meaning of one's life, even as the trauma experiences sometimes continues the motions of everyday existence. (Larabee, et al. 120)

In another story , “I Swear by God” (*Khuda ki kasam*), a Muslim woman searching her daughter, who was abducted by Hindu rioters. Refusing to believe that her daughter has been murdered, the mother wanders from city to city in North India, mumbling incoherently, half naked, her hair matted. The narrator of the story reflects on the woman's plight:

Her futile search, I realized, was now the only basis of her life

